

The influence of pedagogical leadership on the construction of professional identity. Systematic review.

Inmaculada García-Martínez¹ & Pedro Tadeu²

Abstract

This article corresponds to a systematic review that analyzes the relationship of pedagogical leadership with professional identity, both concepts highly demanded by international research. Methods: The process has followed the guidelines recommended by the PRISMA statement (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses), to predict its systematic nature. During the same, a thorough search was made of articles located in the databases Scopus and Web of Science, during the period 2007 to 2017. After the application of the inclusion criteria, 24 articles constituted the sample of the present article. Results: the selected articles highlight the strong influence of leadership in the construction of the professional identity of both the management and the teaching staff. In turn, the selected studies also contemplated the impact of professional identity on the figure of teachers as school leaders. Discussion: There is a certain coincidence in highlighting the importance of certain factors such as teacher collaboration, greater flexibility of organizational structures or the empowerment of teachers as a way to potential the professional capital of the professional while generating internal changes in the organization leading to a school improvement.

Key words: *the professional identity, teacher's leadership, leadership, education, professional development.*

Introduction

Professional identity is one of the strongest research trends at this time. Both the concept and its implications have been related to other factors such as educational leadership (Notman, 2017; Tubin, 2017). The incorporation of the role of leaders in the professional identity of teachers can lead to a better performance of their teaching function on the one hand, together with a reduction in their reluctance to assume responsibilities in the design and implementation of processes of change in the educational organization. Also, the teacher as a leader, facilitates school improvement, through collaboration with their peers, in the establishment of a common vision in the center, which influences student learning. Thus, the research presented here arises from the convergence of both research lines and its purpose is the analysis of their relationship, based on the findings found in the different investigations that have been carried out at an international level.

¹ Ph.D. Prof., University of Granada, igmartinez@ugr.es

² Ph.D. Prof., UDI – Polytechnic of Guarda, ptadeu@ipg.pt

Theoretical framework

International studies have identified teacher professional identity as one of the most important factors to achieve educational improvement. There is a great coincidence that a double dimension is attributed to professional identity: the individual component and the collective (Cardoso, Batista & Graça, 2014; Luehmann, 2007; Ryan, 2007), which gives strength to the assertion that professional identity is a variable process, in continuous reconstruction, fruit of the interrelation between both components. This variant concept is closely related to the career path of the professional, as well as his training. In addition, construction of professional identity involves factors such as teacher self - awareness about its work (Arvaja, 2016; Jiang, Ma & Gao, 2016), motivation and dedication to their profession or the training. In addition, it is through the narrative of his personal and professional life, where the identity of the staff is found, revealing his trajectory from the point of view of his perception (Silva Gomes, Pereira Ferreira, Pereira & Fazendeiro-Batista, 2013).

In this way, professional teaching identity could be defined as a process that takes place along the professional trajectory of the teacher, whose beginning dates back to initial training and which varies as he develops his professional practice, through experience and the feedback with other colleagues, so that it is incorporating, modifying and rejecting some values and practices, in order to face the demands imposed from the professional context.

Therefore, to speak of teacher professional identity means inexorably to speak of the set of knowledge and competencies that enable teachers to practice teaching. However, each teacher develops an individual and unique professional identity, as a result of their experiences and their negotiation for adaptation. In this sense, for the study of professional identity should be considered that there is no unique and supreme identity under which all teachers enroll. Rather, as Dubar points out (cited by Bolívar, 2016: 10) "There is not a teaching identity, but multiple identity forms. This composites forms are expressed, unstable, within a professional group."

At the same time, identity is the fruit of a social process, intervening social and cultural factors in its construction. As several authors have pointed out internationally (Day and Gu, 2007; Sutherland, Howard, & Markauskaite, 2010), identity is the product of the individual's interaction with the social context, their interaction with peers and their interpretation of these experiences (Hanuscin, Chen, Rebello, Shina & Muslu, 2014). On the other hand, metacognition is very

important in the construction of professional identity. Through the self-knowledge of oneself, the faculty is strengthening some aspects of their professional development, detecting some training needs, which leads them to continue learning and training to strength them (Arvaja, 2016; Jiang, Ma & Gao, 2016). Often, this construction process is facilitated by the development of the life story, since verbalizing thoughts about how one sees oneself and the experiences that support it, entails a dialogue in the process of being constructed. Following Bolívar (2016), subscribing to a biographical-narrative approach implies that identities are constructed in a process of socialization "like a narrative (...) that changes and is reconfigured over time. What becomes a person or a teacher is the result of the process by which the professional identity has been shaped " (p. 1). In this process, the reflection that the subject makes about the different scenarios in which he participates gives strength to his narrative identity (Arvaja, 2016).

On the other hand, professional identity does not have to correspond to the role, since it covers other aspects such as the perception that the subject has about his profession, his perception of the image that others have of him and the real image that the rest have about his profession. In fact, authors like Ryan (2007) make a distinction between role and identity, attributing to the role a more predetermined and static character, while the identity is impregnated with subjectivity and negotiation, acquiring different forms depending on the context where their professional performance takes place and their interaction with other professionals.

One aspect to note is that is in the university where teaching begins to build professional identity, it is the first contact with the professional field. In turn, the different courses and training itineraries aimed at strengthening some aspects of training, also have their place in the aforesaid construction. Another factor that has a decisive influence on the construction of the teaching identity is the educational level where he develops or will develop his later professional work (Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014). In fact, it is in the workplace that the teacher, through his experience, strengthens his identity essence. In turn, their professional practices will also be conditioned by the place they occupy within the organization, as well as by the relationship established with their peers. Equally important will be the work environment that exists in the educational center. If there is a collaborative environment among the teaching staff (and even the management), the likelihood is that the teaching staff will develop a cooperative professional identity, with a willingness to change. On the contrary, if that environment does not favor the possibility of sharing practices or

feedback, professional identity of teachers will be more static, impassive to the changes demanded by the context (Hanuscin et al, 2014).

In the case of secondary education, for example, the formation of identity is a complex process. On the one hand, we find that the teachers at this level of education are specialists in the subject and present, at least at the beginning of their profession, certain training deficiencies, remedied by a course (former CAP) or a master's degree. On the other, we find that secondary education runs a strong school culture, with very specific purposes: a) preparatory (propaedeutic) for certain higher studies -humanistic, scientific-; b) technical or professional (for certain medium-level professions); c) terminal or finalist (general training needed to live in society and participate in social life) (Lorenzo-Vicente, Muñoz-Galiano & Beas-Miranda, 2014).

Numerous studies addressed in this level of education have indicated that teachers are more open to change, showing greater degrees of commitment when establishing a common mission in school. The establishment of a common mission by the leader or school leaders will considerably affect the professional identities of the staff working at the center (Medina Revilla & Gómez-Díaz, 2014), since in most cases, the teaching staff tend to identify with the subject they teach, reducing their identity or their professional performance to a specific subject and not as the main part of the educational center as a whole.

In this regard, other investigations have highlighted some problems that teachers often suffer in the process of building their identity. Hökkä & Eteläpelto (2014), for example, focus on (a) the obstacles to renegotiating professional identity, (b) internal competition among the thematic groups within the department, and (c) discrepancies between individual agency and development organizational (p. 39).

Another factor that also influences the development of teachers' professional identity is leadership. Since its inclusion in the educational world for a few decades, leadership is increasingly being re-evaluated, placing it at the top of the educational agendas between countries. However, as some authors indicate, despite the boom that is being given to leadership, few teachers feel themselves leaders (Hanuscin et al, 2014). However, they recognize the importance of establishing an effective pedagogical leadership in the centers to build the necessary conditions for the achievement of an optimal professional development throughout the educational organization although they still reduce the possibility of being leaders to those who hold positions in the schools. In this sense, the pedagogical leadership in its distributed and shared variant is subject to a culture of collaboration

in the school. This collaboration is forged by the management as the formal leader of the educational organization, who tries to build working conditions that facilitate exchange and professional learning shared among the staff. Given that the professional identity of teachers is a result, in part, of the teachers' experience and the challenges they face in their day-to-day life, as well as their way of coping with them, the existence of pedagogical leadership in schools educational, facilitated by management, inexorably impacts on the construction of the identity of teachers as a leader. As the teachers have to assume responsibilities regarding the teaching and learning processes of the educational center and be empowered, their leadership role will be strengthened.

As is the case with teaching, becoming a pedagogical leader requires knowledge, skills and a strengthened construction of professional identity, according to the prevailing values in the world of work. In this sense, following the findings of Luehmann (2007), the formation of identity is nourished by the opportunities to carry out the professional exercise, of how professional practice is approached, as well as the competences shown by the teaching staff, the possibility of working in a collaborative environment where exchange of practices and feedback from colleagues prevails, the assumption of responsibility, whether or not it acts as a leader or key piece in the organization, a high degree of support and the ability to be pragmatic in the face of constant changes in society and the demands of the profession.

As explained above, initial training is a central enclave in the construction of the identity of future teachers (Lorenzo-Vicente et al, 2014). The secondary case is especially critical. The professionals who practice in secondary school lack specific training as a teacher. Because for decades, it has been committed to the mastery of content rather than the possession of pedagogical skills, this teacher has gaps that limit their teaching practices. The evolution of society, together with the new values, demands and requested a criteria in the field of education leading to the focus on the professional dimension of teachers, through a more strengthened initial training that enables the teacher to face the challenges encountered in their day-to-day work, while at the same time consolidating their professional identity (Lorenzo Vicente et al, 2014). As pointed Bolívar (2007), it is necessary to achieve a balance between the disciplinary role, responsible for the domain of scientific and pedagogical content, more related to its didactic transposition, methodology, and ways of managing this knowledge in the classroom.

Method

The systematic review presented in this article has been carried out according to the guidelines recommended in the PRISMA statement (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyzes) of Urrutia and Bonfill (2010), with the intention of granting greater consistency and scientific rigor to it. At the same time, it is in tune with the standards set by Fernández-Ríos and Buela-Casal, (2009). The present work arose with the intention of analyzing all the scientific studies that accounted for the professional identity of high school teachers and their relationship with pedagogical leadership. For this, an exhaustive search was made in the Web of Science and Scopus databases. We opted for these two databases due to the relevance and quality of the scientific articles included in them. Likewise, the fact of being international databases allowed a better overview of the issue that was to be analyzed. The period of this search includes the dates between the months of July and August of 2017, the following keywords were used, both in Spanish and English: "professional identity" and "teacher leadership ", in addition it was used the boolean operators "and" "or". Then, the temporary publication range was reduced to articles that had been published in a period between 2007 and 2017, resulting in 160 articles, divided into 72 in Web of Science and 88 in Scopus.

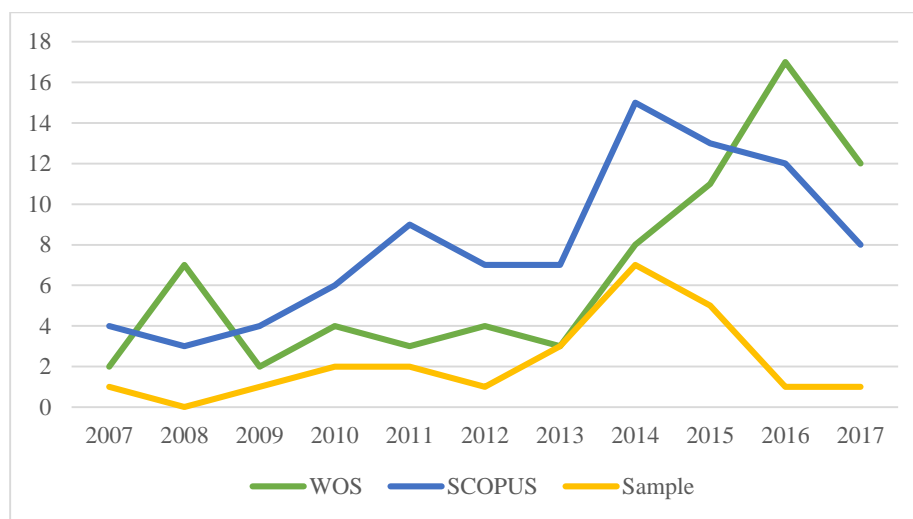


Figure 1. Distribution of publications from 2007 to 2017.

In this way, the population of the present study could be determined. Next, the search of articles included within "Social Sciences ". With the intention of delimiting the number, the language filter

was introduced, reducing it to only those that were published in English or Spanish. The research area was one of the criteria used for a smaller number, so those scientific manuscripts were included inside the Education area. Once the previously described filters were made, others were used in order to further reduce the sample. Among them, articles that provided empirical evidence were selected; studies that had by sample or participants the teaching staff and management team and investigations that show statistical results. Leaving out of the study works such as reviews, meta-analyses, doctoral thesis, books or communications.

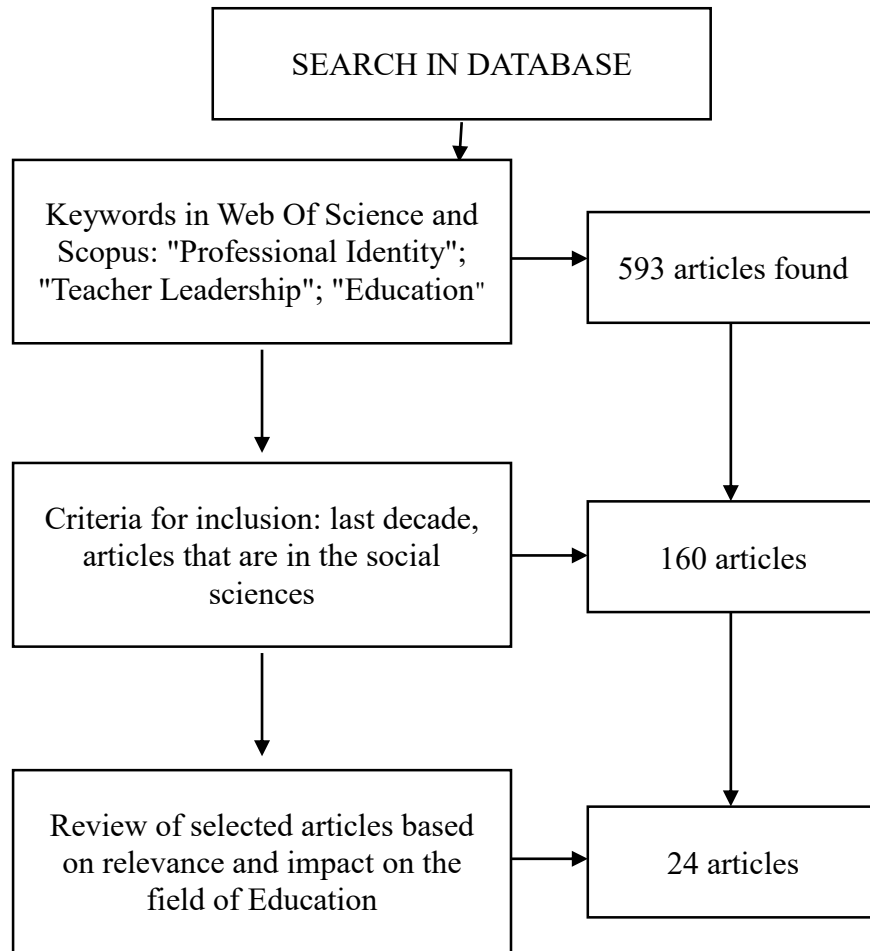


Figure 2. Articles selection Flowchart.

The process was characterized by a first reading where the focus was placed on the title and the summary of the manuscript. After this first phase, there was a second phase where special attention was paid to the method, results, and conclusions according to the relevance of the relationship between the dimensions that were intended to correlate: teacher leadership and professional teacher identity. The selection of the sample that constitutes this article concluded with a deep and

detailed reading of the complete text of the scientific manuscripts. After this process, obtained 24 potential items as a sample of the study detailed in this paper.

For the processing of the data, a logical order comparison of the data was carried out and all the information obtained was synthesized to arrive at a truthful study.

Findings

The 24 articles that make up the sample of this systematic review are characterized above all by being based on qualitative instruments, this leads to the participation of the sample, 852, is considerably less than if they were from studies whose sources were quantitative in nature. In order to expose the most notorious characteristics of the selected articles, the following coding process has been carried out (see Table 1): (1) author / s; (2) year of publication; (3) type of study (T-transversal; L-longitudinal); (4) population; (5) sample and (6) the techniques and information collection tools used.

In light of the selected articles, we observe how works have been developed that relate professional identity and leadership in practically all educational levels. However, according to the sample of the present study, those carried out in the secondary stage stand out in number, as shown in Table 2.

A striking aspect is the lack of studies developed in Higher or University Education, corresponding to barely 12%. At the same time, studies or programs implemented in primary education (40%) and secondary education (48%) stand out.

Regarding the analysis of studies carried out by countries, we find that most of them have been carried out in the Anglo-Saxon field, with the US at the head (40%), followed by the United Kingdom and Spain (see Table 3). In addition, it is appreciated that despite the fact that one of the selected articles is a review, another corresponds to an international investigation, which includes the results obtained in the United Kingdom and Portugal, hence obtaining a total of 24.

Table 1.

List of articles that make up the systematic review.

Author/s and Year	Type of study*	Population	Sample	Instrument*
Crow, Day & Møller, 2017	R	-	-	-
Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017	T	Teachers	3	Multiple case study: I
Vaiz & Altinay, 2017	T	-	76 teachers 6 directors	I
Allen, 2016	T	Teachers	3	Semi-structured I
Bahous et al, 2016	T	S	40 teachers 4 directors 4 students group	Case studies semi-structured I
Bolívar and Ritacco, 2016	T	Directors	15	Biographical I
Netolicky, 2016	L	Educators	14	Narrative I
Nielsen, 2016	T	Teachers, supervisors	236 26	Questionnaire I
Sales et al, 2016	T	S, HS, university	15	Focus group
Cross & Ndofirepi, 2015	T	Primary	200	Unstructured I
Rigby, 2015	T	Directors	6	deep qualitative observations and I
Wilkins & Comber, 2015	T	HS	36 teachers	Semi-structured I
Wingrave & McMahon, 2015	T	University students	8	I
Hanuscin et al, 2014	T	HS	3. 4	Questionnaire I
Montecinos et al, 2014	L	Primary teachers	5	-
Nelson & Guerra, 2014	T	Teachers, qualitative leaders	111	Qualitative instrument
Rayner, 2014	T	S, HS	3 directors	Case study: I
White, 2014	T	Teachers	7	Case study: I
Gumeseli & Eryilmaz, 2011	T	HS	756	Quantitative
López-Yáñez et al, 2011	L	S, HS, special education	3	Ethnography: an in-depth study
Wood, 2011	T	Professional learning community	2	Participant observation
Collay, 2010	L	S	20	Graduate program
Wepner et al, 2008	T	college	14 deans	I
Day, Flores and Viana, 2007	T	Sand secondary teachers	240	Questionnaire, I

* T: Transversal; L: Longitudinal; S: School; HS: High School; I: Interview

Table 2.

Percentage and number of studies according to educational level.

Education level	Percentage	No. Studies
Academic	12 %	3
Secondary Education	48 %	12
Primary Education	40 %	10
Total	100%	24*

* Some of the studies contemplate several educational levels

Table 3.

Percentage and number of studies according to the country of development.

Country	Percentage	No. Studies
USA	37.5 %	9

United Kingdom	20.83 %	5
Spain	12.5 %	3
Portugal	4.17 %	1
Lebanon	4.17 %	1
Cyprus	4.17 %	1
Australia	4.17 %	1
South Africa	4.17 %	1
Chile	4.17 %	1
Turkey	4.17 %	1
Total	100%	24

Discussion

First, the selected studies reveal that the dimensions of the analyzed study, that is, the professional identity of teachers and the leadership of the teaching staff, demand a more qualitative than quantitative analysis, a fact already contrasted in recent systematic reviews (Crow, Day & Møller, 2017). One of the possible reasons that sustain this affirmation is the fact of deepening in the biography of the participants and knowing their personal and professional baggage (Allen, 2016; Bahous, Busher & Nabhani, 2016; López-Yáñez, Sánchez-Moreno & Altopiedi, 2011; Wepner, D'Onofrio & Whilite, 2008) to answer how he exercises his professional performance and, above all, why. With respect to identity, Bolívar and Ritacco (2016) give an account of the complexity of this construct, stating that: *"Professional identity has a subjective dimension (individual experience and social perception) and a more objective one (set of objectively determined features or standards) subject to what others expect and demand from an individual regardless of compliance"* (p. 5). Related to this, these authors highlight the socializing component in the construction of identity, emphasizing the double influence between how professionals see themselves, how they think others see them, and how the rest see them. This research is based on the belief that professional identity is the result of the interaction between the role (goal and static aspect), the person (eminently subjective and dynamic) and social identity (multipurpose, in constant reconstruction, fruit the processes of interaction of the person with the context), contemplated by Crow, Day & Møller (2017) in his review article on how to trues identity management. According to these authors, the professional identity of the directors is mediated by three fundamental characteristics: *"cultural biographies, gender factors and their values (...); the dynamic interaction between identity, educational policies and the school and its community (...) and awareness and emotional management are important elements in the stability/instability of their identities "* (p. 266).

It seems evident that personal and professional life are tangled. However, in the analyzed literature we also find other factors that directly affect the teaching career and, therefore, also do so in the professional identity of the teaching staff. Such is the case of Sinha and Hanuscin (2017), who in a study carried out in the USA, analyzed the process of teacher leadership development from a three- year program that had 86 participants. The assumptions that guided the study were the incongruence between the need (already noted) of a leader in the teaching staff and the absence of empirical evidence to demonstrate how to carry it out. Thus, based on the experience of 3 teachers with a long history of secondary education, they explained that teachers tend to increase their awareness of leadership through their experience as leaders, making a clear distinction between new and veteran teachers. In addition, they emphasize that "*teacher leadership trajectories depend on the teacher's priorities and context* " (p.367). This conception is similar to that advocated by Crow et al. (2017), who consider that the professional identity is the result of the professional, personal and situational dimension and that its stability will depend on the ability of the teaching staff to manage these three dimensions.

Rayner's (2014) work is similar in a similar line, who besides considering the school context and the socioeconomic characteristics of the educational centers, affirms that the educational policy influences the development and identity of teachers. Like other studies, such as those carried out by López-Yáñez, Sánchez-Moreno and Altopiedi (2011), Sinha & Hanuscin (2017), Wood (2011) or the one led by Vaiz & Altinay (2017), who affirm that for both teachers and directors, playing their role in a socially disadvantaged context has a significant influence both on their professional identity and on their leadership skills. According to them, working in challenging contexts awakens the motivation and desire for improvement of the staff of the centers, establishing channels of dialogue and collaboration between them (Gumeseli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Sales, Moliner & Amat, 2017), which, in turn, is reflected in the growth and improvement of teaching and learning processes (Bahous, Busher & Nabhani, 2016; Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Other factors such as the choice of teaching career as a first option (Cross & Ndofirepi, 2015) or the migration to such profession (Nielsen, 2016; Wilkins & Comber, 2015), are another of the critical incidents analyzed in this review. They emphasize the ability of those who decide to change their work context for teaching, making an overexertion that affects their professional career. With regard to the difficulties evidenced in these studies, they tend to focus on the lack of support and recognition, to those who are exposed, to those who decide to break with their old professional trajectory and

join the educational field. In parallel, among their results, a broader perspective of teaching is also evident, which enables them to reflect and make decisions (curricular, pedagogical and organizational), beyond the context where they are found.

On the other hand, this review not only has manuscripts that analyze the teaching identity or the address in the first person. The study carried out by Netolicky (2016) deals with the influence of coaching professionals, as external trainers, on the professional development and identity of teachers. Among the benefits of the program carried out was an increase in the capacity for collaboration and improvement of teaching skills. As a consequence of the coaching, higher levels of empowerment were observed in the teaching staff, which is related to a horizontal distribution of school leadership. Through it, therefore, organizational changes in the educational structure were seen, emerging in the teacher's new identity concepts that make their professional capital evolve. Some similarities are observed in the work of Allen (2016), who analyzed the professional development and instructional capacity based on peer group strategy. According to this author, positive effects are appreciated when part of the teaching staff acts as facilitator and leaders of the rest, exercising as "teachers or supervisors". Through the modeling and narration of their experience, and making use of their capacity for reflection, the facilitators or teacher leaders show the rest how their past experiences (both personal and professional), academic or social experiences, some skills learned, including of contexts foreign to the scholar, have had or have their impact on their professional practice and their identity. Consequently, these narratives act as catalysts for the rest of the teaching staff, causing a dent in their identity, construction and making them turn into a more complex one that enables them to act as facilitators. In a similar way is the research conducted by Hanuscin, Chen, Rebello, Shina & Muslu (2014), more focused on teacher training as a school leader, like Sinha and Hanuscin (2017), who through the design of a program enhanced the professional capacity of teachers as leaders, McDonough & Brandenburg (2012), which they did through a professional experience designed in an Australian university or the one carried out by Rigby (2015), which analyzed the professional performance of teachers from the perspective of six directors.

Instead, research such as Wingrave & McMahon (2016) or the one proposed by Bahous, Busher & Nabhani (2016), are based on the motivating component of students as the ultimate goal of professional teacher performance. In it, the role and capacity of the leadership in the organization

of the center and the creation of spaces and environments for collaboration among staff, to optimize their professional capacity in an unfavorable social and economic environment is examined.

Similar in nature, but on the basis of the budget to professional learning communities (PLC – *CPA (Comunidad Profesionales de Aprendizagen)* in Spanish), is the study conducted by López-Yáñez Sánchez-Moreno & Altopiedi (2011) and undertaken by Wood (2011), who appreciated the evolution of the identity of teachers when working at a PLC. These studies, qualitative, ride towards educational improvement through promoting collaborative cultures (Sales, Moliner & Amat, 2017), strengthening professional identities of staff through learning faculty, establishing a commitment to student learning, considering leadership as favoring such claims.

Finally, investigations such as those raised by Rayner (2014), White (2014), Montecinos, Pino, Campos-Martinez Dominguez & Carreño (2014) and Day, Flowers & Viana (2007) consider education policy as a factor impact on professional capacity and leadership of school personnel. While the former has a pessimistic view respects its effects on professional performance, identity and leadership skills of management, considering that legislation, school culture, and context limit the ability of management and management leadership the second has a more optimistic assessment. For White (2014) the idea proposed by the British government to include the educational leadership and promoting a "professional collaborative learning" in schools through "training" by the most experienced teachers, who acts as an educator (and teacher), involves positive throughout the organizational structure in most cases effects, while acknowledging that there are aspects that need to be improved. Instead, the last two put the focus on the impact of reforms designed by the government (Chile, England, and Portugal, respectively) and their impact on the professional development of teachers.

At the end of this section, the result(s) obtained in the study should be re-stated and related implications should be explained. Implications should be based on and limited to the findings of the study.

Conclusions

The review conducted for this study has addressed the relationship between professional identity and leadership of teachers from different perspectives, making visible the voice of the protagonists of schools.

Proof of this is the variability of participants found in the analyzed research (teachers, management, external consultants...) and context of development studies (primary education, secondary education or higher education). Although it is not so much the objective that motivated each of them, namely school improvement through the promotion of professional capital of teachers.

Thus, various methodological designs have happened, acquiring various forms, such as training programs, seminars, legislative, organizational decisions at different levels (macro, meso, and micro) forms.

Among the findings, we have identified some common factors to all of them: the importance of collaboration as a way for school improvement, the need for a greater role of teachers as educational leaders, the result of an establishment of organizational conditions that do not restrict professional development, among others. In this regard, it has also shown a need for a paradigm shift that will facilitate the development of management as a bureaucratic manager or only leader to a dynamic of internal changes. In this line, some of the studies examined in this review have predicted that forms distributed leadership that empowers teachers is the way to go. As it seems to be the transformation centers to an LPC.

The creation of a climate of trust and collaboration in the school by the management has vital importance for the teacher to assume his leadership role and incorporate it into his identity. As it has been found in the literature when the teacher is empowered by the management and feels safe to assume the challenges implicit in the leadership, he feels able to exchange impressions with his colleagues and the shared professional learning arises, where all learn from everyone. Likewise, this professional learning promotes an improvement in the quality of the teaching and learning processes in the students.

Despite the complexity that entails, especially in the Spanish case, characterized by a strong school culture, with static structures, it encourages professional development and strengthens the identity of teachers can be the beginning of an arduous journey toward educational improvement.

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