School Administrators in Villa Altagracia, Dominican Republic

Braudilia Pérez Rondón[1]

[1]ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4431-1984
Schools of the Ministry of Education (MINERD)
Villa Altagracia, Dominican Republic

Abstract: The objective of this research is to generate a theoretical construct on managerial leadership in educational organizations in Villa Altagracia, Dominican Republic, based on the perceptions of their managers. It is framed within an interpretive paradigm, adopting a qualitative approach and using the phenomenological method to delve into the experiences of school leaders. The methodology applied includes semi-structured interviews and focused testimonies, which are analyzed through thematic coding and phenomenological reduction processes. The main findings reveal that managers integrate ethical, pedagogical, and affective elements into their practice, adapting transformational, situational, and distributed leadership styles appropriate to the local context. The limitations and challenges identified become drivers of innovation and continuous improvement. It is concluded that managerial leadership must be understood in a contextualized manner, emphasizing active listening and the integration of practical knowledge to promote transformative, inclusive, and humane school management.

Keywords: School Principals, Managerial Leadership, Educational Management, Educational Organizations and Perception of Leadership.

I. INTRODUCTION

In educational organizations in the Dominican Republic, and particularly in public schools in Villa Altagracia, managerial leadership is a complex, deeply human, and localized phenomenon. Its impact goes beyond the administrative sphere, directly influencing educational quality, the institutional climate, and teacher professional development. This leadership is exercised in an environment marked by geographical diversity, social inequalities, and structural limitations that require a more in-depth approach that is sensitive to the context and moves away from conventional technical approaches.

Managerial leadership cannot be understood solely as the application of management norms and strategies. Rather, it must be conceived as a social construct that integrates practices, meanings, tensions, and learnings that emerge from the daily experience of school administrators in their interaction with teachers, students, and communities. Consequently, there is a need to construct a theoretical construct based not only on international references, but also on the voices and experiences of those who exercise leadership in territories such as Villa Altagracia.

Authors such as Bolívar (2021) and Fullan (2020) agree that there is no universal model of leadership applicable to all contexts. They highlight the importance of interpreting leadership from within school practices, adapting it to the cultural, social, and institutional realities of each territory. In Villa Altagracia, administrators face challenges that transcend technical management: they must lead in conditions of material deprivation, low family participation, social violence, and growing demands for educational quality, without the necessary resources. Therefore, managerial leadership requires a combination of organizational skills, social sensitivity, pedagogical vision, and ethical commitment.

This study proposes a qualitative and phenomenological view of managerial leadership, focusing on the perceptions, beliefs, and meanings that principals themselves attribute to their practice. As Giorgi (2009) argues, phenomenology allows us to explore how the phenomenon manifests itself in the consciousness of those who experience it. Likewise, Van

Manen (2016) argues that hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to understand the "lived world" of subjects, accessing how they feel and narrate their daily activities.

Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasize that effective school leadership combines organizational competencies, shared vision, interpersonal skills, and adaptability. It is not just about exercising authority, but about building meaning together with others. From this perspective, school administrators are key players in the production of organizational knowledge, and their experiences should be collected to enrich leadership theories based on the reality of Dominican schools.

As Murillo and Krichesky (2015) warn, leadership policies in Latin America often ignore the contexts of vulnerability in which schools operate. Understanding how principals in Villa Altagracia construct their notion of leadership can contribute to the design of more relevant policies and training programs. Finally, following Mintzberg (2017), schools should be understood as living organizations, and leadership as a relational and ethical practice that articulates educational policies and the real needs of the classroom.

In the municipality of Villa Altagracia, in the heart of the Dominican Republic, school principals face a complex reality in their daily work. Their managerial leadership is essential to address a variety of challenges related to personnel management, school culture, institutional climate, decision-making, and pedagogical support. These functions are carried out in an environment characterized by structural limitations, scarce resources, and growing social demands, which gives the managerial role a strategic dimension.

Given this scenario, there is a need to understand how managers experience, perceive, and redefine their leadership. This understanding requires moving beyond purely technical or quantitative approaches and adopting a qualitative paradigm, with an emphasis on the phenomenological approach. The latter, inspired by Husserl and developed in the field of education by Van Manen, allows us to explore the deeper meanings of the experiences lived by principals, capturing their subjective awareness in relation to their role.

The qualitative paradigm, as stated by Creswell and Poth (2018), is the most suitable approach for accessing the meanings that individuals attribute to their experiences. In this case, the objective is to understand how school leadership is configured within a specific context such as Villa Altagracia. Phenomenology does not seek to generalize or validate preconceived hypotheses; rather, it aims to capture the structures of meaning that emerge from the direct and reflective experiences of social actors.

Managerial leadership in the educational field has evolved from administration-centered models toward more collaborative, participatory, and transformational approaches. Authors such as Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020)

emphasize the importance of leadership oriented toward building shared visions, strengthening teacher development, and fostering positive human relationships. However, these models, often formulated in contexts of the Global North, do not always reflect the real dynamics of rural or peri-urban areas such as Villa Altagracia, where schools face conditions of high social vulnerability.

This municipality represents a valuable setting for the analysis of school leadership due to its geographical, sociocultural, and economic diversity. Local schools confront challenges such as absenteeism, lack of instructional resources, limited family participation, and weak coordination among different levels of educational management. Therefore, the study of leadership in this context must be grounded in a situated perspective, sensitive to local particularities and capable of recovering the voices of those who perform this role under adverse conditions.

One of the main problems is the lack of systematized knowledge about how school leadership is constructed, exercised, and perceived in this municipality. This lack of information hinders the development of effective educational policies, relevant training programs, and support strategies adapted to the reality of these institutions. Consequently, the purpose of this research is twofold: on the one hand, to identify valuable leadership practices; on the other, to understand the tensions, dilemmas, and aspirations that shape the professional identity of school administrators.

The literature review identifies multiple theoretical models of leadership, including the technical-administrative model (Mintzberg, 2017), transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2004), distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006), and instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003). However, authors such as Bolívar (2021) agree that there is no single model applicable to all contexts. Therefore, this study proposes the construction of a "situated theoretical construct" emerging from the concrete experiences of school leaders in Villa Altagracia, rather than from the mechanical application of imported theories.

Phenomenology is presented as the most appropriate methodological pathway for this task. Through in-depth interviews, life histories, and participatory observations, the study seeks to reconstruct the "lived world" of school administrators: their daily practices, difficult decisions, relationships with the community, and ways of addressing institutional challenges. Within this approach, the researcher adopts an empathetic and dialogical stance in order to understand from within how leadership is configured in real contexts.

This type of leadership is neither abstract nor neutral. It is deeply shaped by each principal's life history, the institutional culture in which they work, and the conditions of the Dominican educational system. As Murillo and Krichesky (2015) argue,

school leaders in Latin America must respond to increasing demands within historically unequal educational systems. In the Dominican Republic, despite advances in educational coverage, challenges related to quality, school management, and teacher training persist (MINERD, 2022).

For all these reasons, the present research has not only academic value but also significant practical and political impact. By making visible they lived experiences of school leaders in Villa Altagracia, the study seeks to generate useful knowledge for public policy formulation, the design of training programs, and the transformation of educational management in vulnerable contexts. Furthermore, it aims to contribute to the construction of a more human, contextualized, and equity-oriented form of leadership committed to educational improvement.

II. RESEARCH PURPOSES

➢ *General Purpose*
To analyze managerial leadership in educational organizations based on the perceptions of school administrators in the schools of Villa Altagracia, Dominican Republic.

➢ *Specific Purposes*
• To explore the lived experiences of school administrators in Villa Altagracia in the exercise of managerial leadership within their institutions.
• To examine the meanings that administrators attribute to the concept and practices of managerial leadership within their specific organizational contexts.
• To understand the strengths and weaknesses perceived by administrators in their leadership role within the local educational context.
• To interpret administrators' perceptions of the factors that strengthen or limit their exercise of managerial leadership.
• To construct an interpretative theoretical framework on managerial leadership in educational organizations, based on a deep understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of school leaders in Villa Altagracia.

➢ *Relevance of the Research*
This research is of great importance because it seeks to understand managerial leadership in educational organizations from the lived experiences and perceptions of school administrators in the municipality of Villa Altagracia. Its relevance is expressed through five approaches: practical, theoretical, methodological, social, and institutional.

From a practical perspective, the study makes visible how leadership is exercised in school contexts marked by structural limitations, scarcity of resources, cultural diversity, and multiple challenges. By analyzing how administrators experience and understand their role, guidelines can be generated to improve their performance. This understanding contributes to the design of training programs, mentoring

strategies, and leadership styles adapted to the realities of the schools involved.

From a theoretical perspective, the research contributes to the construction of an interpretative model of leadership in the Dominican educational context from a phenomenological standpoint. Unlike normative or universal models such as transformational (Bass & Avolio), distributed (Spillane), or instructional (Hallinger) leadership, this study proposes a situated vision rooted in the real experiences of administrators. Thus, it offers new theoretical contributions that may complement or even challenge traditional models and enrich academic discussions on educational leadership in Latin America.

From a methodological perspective, the study adopts a qualitative paradigm with a phenomenological approach, which is ideal for capturing administrators' subjective experiences. Through in-depth interviews, the selection of key informants, and interpretative analysis, the research seeks to reveal the structures of meaning that shape managerial leadership. This methodology makes it possible to access emotions, tensions, and decisions that would not be captured through quantitative methods, thereby strengthening the contextual and ecological validity of the study.

In the social sphere, the study has significant implications. Understanding school leadership dynamics makes it possible to address structural barriers and training needs that directly affect educational quality, equity, and inclusion. In Villa Altagracia, a vulnerable context with social challenges, strengthening school leadership can have positive effects on student learning, teacher motivation, and community cohesion. It can also enhance families' and local stakeholders' trust in educational institutions.

Finally, from an institutional perspective, the research provides useful information for public policy design, institutional planning, and the training of school leaders. At a time when the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Education (MINERD) promotes quality standards and continuous improvement, it is crucial to have studies that make visible the realities of school leadership, especially in areas with limited academic attention such as Villa Altagracia.

➢ *State of the Art*
The study conducted by Sánchez Oyola (2022) aimed to understand the relationship between school leadership and educational management at Educational Institution No. 20340 "Nuevo San Juan." Through a qualitative perspective, the researcher sought to explore the perceptions, experiences, and meanings that teachers attribute to leadership and management practices within their school environment. From a methodological standpoint, the research was framed within a qualitative approach, using a phenomenological design that made it possible to explore in depth teachers' lived experiences and perceptions of the phenomena under study.

The population consisted of the 17 teachers working at the institution, who were intentionally selected based on their direct experience with school leadership and management dynamics. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used as data collection techniques, facilitating open and reflective dialogue with participants. The instruments made it possible to capture not only opinions but also narratives and concrete examples of how leadership is exercised and how educational processes are managed within the institution.

The results indicate that teachers perceive a clear and active presence of school leadership, characterized by ongoing guidance, motivation, and support from school administrators. Likewise, they recognize efficient educational management based on planning, organization, and the appropriate use of institutional resources. Thematic analysis of participants' discourse revealed a close relationship between both dimensions, with a positive interaction between leadership practices and institutional management.

This study may be linked to the research on managerial leadership in educational organizations in the schools of Villa Altagracia, Dominican Republic, as both seek to establish relationships between teachers' perceptions of school leadership and educational management. By comparing and contrasting the findings of both studies, it is possible to identify whether leadership and management practices are similarly related in each context or whether significant differences exist due to specific contextual or cultural factors, thereby enriching the understanding of leadership's impact on institutional climate and academic performance.

Peña Pozo, Irina Elena (2023) conducted a study entitled *Strengthening the Principal's Pedagogical Leadership and Institutional Climate in an Educational Institution in Callao*. The main purpose of this academic work was to propose an improvement plan to strengthen pedagogical leadership and institutional climate. This study highlights the close relationship between these two variables, emphasizing the longstanding efforts to ensure adequate preparation of school leaders in order to promote effective management.

Accordingly, the study proposed specific objectives, including improving communication between the principal and the managerial and supervisory staff. To achieve this, activities such as regular meetings supported by official records were suggested to consolidate agreements and decisions. A second objective was to strengthen trust among members of the educational community through pedagogical leadership, achieved through social skills workshops. A third objective focused on improving teacher participation in collaborative work through collegial meetings aligned with institutional planning under the responsibility of existing sub-directorates.

This research, which proposes improvements in communication, trust, and teacher participation, can be linked to the study of managerial leadership in Villa Altagracia. It seeks to identify similarities and differences in effective practices applicable to diverse educational contexts, thereby contributing to the development of stronger strategies adapted to each institution's specific needs.

Additionally, Buenaño López, William Marcelo (2023) conducted a study entitled *School Leadership for Contemporary Transformations in Secondary Educational Institutions*. The main purpose of this research was to reveal aspects related to school leadership in the context of contemporary transformations. The study followed a qualitative, descriptive, field-based design and included three teacher informants from the educational unit.

The results indicate that educational institutions that adapt to contemporary changes should foster collective participation, address shared needs, and optimize management processes within the school environment. The conclusions emphasize that high-quality leadership requires promoting joint participation in decision-making and adopting a democratic leadership style. This is essential because school leadership plays a central role in harmonizing the interests and needs of institutional members, transforming them into collective efforts. One of the greatest challenges lies in unifying interests, as staff members do not always demonstrate collective commitment.

This research is related to the study on managerial leadership in Villa Altagracia in several respects. Both studies focus on leadership in education and its impact on school management and teacher performance. They also emphasize the importance of fostering collective participation and democratic decision-making as fundamental components of effective leadership.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research is framed within an interpretative paradigm aimed at understanding reality as a subjective and multiple construction influenced by perceptions, contexts, and social actors' experiences. In the complex and dynamic educational environment, teaching and learning processes are recognized as occurring within diverse and contextualized realities. Ontologically, school administrators are viewed as agents immersed in a complex organizational reality characteristic of schools in Villa Altagracia, where reality is socially constructed and shaped by cultural, institutional, and personal factors. Epistemologically, knowledge is understood as a symbolic co-construction between the researcher and participants, valuing shared and contextualized understanding of managerial leadership experiences. Methodologically, qualitative strategies are employed, privileging depth and meaning through semi-structured interviews and focused testimonies, facilitating access to the meanings attributed to leadership practices.

➢ *Research Approach*

This study is conducted within the interpretative paradigm and adopts a qualitative approach as an appropriate methodological pathway for understanding managerial leadership from the perspective of school administrators in Villa Altagracia. The qualitative approach allows for in-depth exploration of educational realities, focusing on the meanings participants attribute to their experiences, roles, and interactions within specific social and cultural contexts.

According to Martins and Palella (2012), this approach emphasizes the importance of interpreting social relationships and discourse within their life contexts, recognizing cultural frameworks as key to understanding social reality. The researcher actively engages in interpreting human, group, and institutional dynamics, addressing participants' practices, conflicts, and expectations.

➢ *Research Method*

In alignment with the qualitative approach and interpretative paradigm, this study adopts the phenomenological method. According to Husserl, as cited in Heidegger (2006), this method makes it possible to apprehend the essence of phenomena as they appear in individuals' consciousness and to value lived experiences in natural contexts. This approach enables a deep understanding of educational reality from the actors' subjectivity, recognizing that meanings shape their ways of being and acting in the world.

➢ *Key Informants*

Within this qualitative research focused on constructing a theoretical framework of managerial leadership from the perspective of school administrators in Villa Altagracia, the selection of key informants is essential. These individuals possess experience, in-depth contextual knowledge, and critical reflective capacity. Participants are deliberately selected based on professional trajectory, responsibilities, and analytical abilities, in accordance with Rodríguez, Gil, and García (1996).

Following Hernández, Fernández, and Baptista (2014), selection is guided by relevance rather than statistical representativeness, emphasizing intersubjective dialogue as the basis for meaning construction. Informants are viewed not as mere data providers but as reflective interlocutors. Flick (2015) also highlights their capacity to offer privileged insights into educational contexts.

The six administrators and three specialists act as active collaborators in knowledge generation. Their testimonies help identify challenges, best practices, and areas for improvement. To preserve anonymity, the codes Dir.1–Dir.6 and Esp.1–Esp.3 are used.

➢ *Data Collection Techniques and Instruments*

The phenomenological method supports the use of semi-structured interviews as the main data collection technique, in line with Quintanal et al. (2024), who define this technique as a guided conversation oriented toward study categories. These interviews allow participants to freely and reflectively express their perspectives on managerial leadership.

The primary instrument is a semi-structured interview guide containing twelve open-ended questions addressed to six selected principals. This guide is designed based on critical interpretation and philosophical competencies required for phenomenological analysis.

Additionally, focused testimony is used as a complementary instrument. According to Martínez (2010), this technique invites participants to deepen specific aspects of the phenomenon. A guiding open-ended question is addressed to leadership specialists to enrich the data.

➢ *Techniques for Analysis and Interpretation of Findings*

Qualitative analysis consists of several stages. The first is categorization, which involves dividing data into thematic units and assigning codes. Gibbs (2018) emphasizes the iterative and creative nature of this process. The second stage is structuring, in which categories are hierarchically organized, resembling a conceptual tree, as described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020).

The third stage, comparison, involves contrasting findings with existing theories, fostering critical dialogue between empirical and theoretical perspectives. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) note that triangulation strengthens interpretation and prevents superficial readings. Finally, theorization integrates findings into a coherent narrative that combines theory, evidence, and researcher insight.

Overall, this qualitative analysis is an ethical and rigorous process aimed at understanding realities from participants' perspectives. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), study quality depends on sensitivity, depth, and commitment to participants' voices.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis in qualitative research with a phenomenological approach constitutes an essential stage for gaining an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences, as they perceive and assign meaning to them. This process involves not only specific techniques but also a high level of reflection, sensitivity, and discernment on the part of the researcher, who must interpret the data coherently and faithfully to the phenomenon under study (Balestrini, 2006).

The analysis begins with the verbatim transcription of semi-structured interviews and field observations, which preserves the richness of participants' discourse. From these transcriptions, units of meaning are identified and grouped into essential themes, following the interpretative logic of the phenomenological approach (Martínez, 2002). Subsequently,

the analysis focuses on identifying, comparing, and interpreting shared and individual meanings.

Atlas.ti software is used as a tool to organize and interpret units of meaning through semantic networks, without relying on traditional coding schemes. The ultimate objective is to identify patterns of meaning and emerging thematic structures, reflecting the researcher's rigorous commitment to capturing the essence of the phenomenon. This process enables a deep and contextualized understanding of managerial leadership from the perspective of school administrators in Villa Altagracia.

➢ *Analysis and Interpretation of Results*
This chapter is devoted to the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the findings obtained during the data collection phase and constitutes a fundamental component of the research process. Its main purpose is to analyze the theoretical construct of managerial leadership in educational organizations based on the perceptions of school administrators in the schools of Villa Altagracia, Dominican Republic.

To achieve this objective, a rigorous qualitative analysis process was implemented, based on the categorization and interpretation of information collected through semi-structured interviews with participating administrators. Phenomenological reduction was employed as the central methodological approach, enabling the identification of fundamental ideas and patterns of meaning in principals' discourse and testimonies. This process made it possible to reveal deep meanings related to their perceptions and experiences of managerial leadership within their organizational contexts, thereby supporting the construction of a theoretical framework consistent with local educational realities.

The findings were structured into a system of categories and subcategories that emerged from phenomenological interpretation, including:

- *Category 1: Perception and Conceptualization of Managerial Leadership*
✓ Perceptions of the role of managerial leadership in schools

✓ Conceptualization of leadership and its relationship to organizational management
✓ Sense of responsibility and commitment in educational leadership
✓ Professional identity and profile of school administrators

- *Category 2: Managerial Practices and Strategies*
✓ Managerial practices applied in school administration
✓ Strategies implemented for institutional improvement
✓ Decision-making processes and strategic planning
✓ Internal communication and interpersonal relationships within the school

- *Category 3: Contextual and Institutional Factors*
✓ Influence of contextual, cultural, and personal factors on leadership
✓ Organizational and institutional dynamics affecting management
✓ Administrators' prior experience and professional trajectory
✓ School culture and resistance to managerial change

➢ *Perception and Conceptualization of Managerial Leadership*
The perception of the managerial leader's role within the schools of Villa Altagracia is constructed as a complex notion composed of essential elements that directly influence institutional improvement processes. The interviewed administrators (principals, vice principals, and academic coordinators) share a broad vision of their role that extends beyond administrative functions and is oriented toward strategic leadership, human resource management, and educational transformation.

From this perspective, managerial leadership is understood as a key tool for guiding the school community toward shared goals through collective vision, effective communication, and the promotion of participation. Leaders not only organize and supervise but also motivate their teams, value individual contributions, and foster collaborative spaces that enhance professional and human development.

Table 1. Perception of the Role of the Managerial Leader in Change Management – Villa Altagracia

Subcategory	Key Aspects of the Managerial Leader's Role	Key Observations
Conception of leadership and change	- Leadership as strategic guidance and human management - Change as an opportunity for growth - Dynamic, non-hierarchical model	- Promotion of a shared vision - Influence on school culture - Encouragement of innovation and collaboration
Sense of responsibility in transformation	- Ethical, professional, and social commitment - Culture of participation and shared responsibility	- Assumption of risks and informed decisions - Dialogue as a tool for change - Responsibility extended to institutional well-being
Professional identity of the leader	- Integration of vocation, values, and training - Humanistic and ethical leadership	- Climate of trust and respect - Continuous professional development - Focus on human and organizational growth

> *Leadership Practices in Change Management in the Schools of Villa Altagracia*

In educational organizations in Villa Altagracia, managerial leadership practices play a crucial role in guiding institutional change. From the perspective of school administrators, strategies aimed at promoting transformation are oriented toward achieving pedagogical and organizational objectives while maintaining a clear and shared vision.

School leaders emphasize an institutional mission aligned with educational values and employ effective communication to ensure that all staff members understand their role in improvement processes. Active collaboration among educational stakeholders is promoted through regular meetings, interdisciplinary work, and academic and pedagogical committees, creating spaces for dialogue and collective construction.

This leadership is characterized as proactive, resilient, and innovative, demonstrating openness to contextual challenges and a continuous willingness to review and improve institutional processes. Decision-making and strategic planning are conducted in a participatory manner, combining technical analysis with accumulated experience, thus enabling adaptive management responsive to local educational realities.

Internal and external communication constitutes a transversal axis in change management, significantly influencing staff motivation, leadership strengthening, and the construction of shared institutional identity. Administrators recognize the importance of establishing effective information channels through systematic meetings, digital platforms, and active listening spaces that keep the educational community informed and engaged.

These leadership practices reflect a management model that seeks not only to achieve institutional goals but also to consolidate an organizational culture based on participation, respect, and continuous improvement.

Table 2. Leadership Practices in Institutional Change Management

Subcategory	Key Strategies and Approaches	Key Observations
Strategies for change	- Clear definition of institutional mission and pedagogical objectives - Creation of collaborative dialogue spaces - Resilient and innovative leadership	- Mission aligned with educational values - Regular staff meetings - Promotion of interdepartmental work and reflective attitudes
Decision-making and planning	- Participatory and inclusive planning - Integration of structured analysis, teaching experience, and commitment	- Strategic planning supported by management teams - Active participation of teachers and coordinators - Balance between theory and practice
Internal and external communication	- Key tool for community cohesion - Strengthens institutional identity - Facilitates access to information	- Use of institutional platforms and internal communication groups - Formal and informal feedback spaces - Promotion of transparency and participation

> *Contextual, Cultural, and Support Needs Factors in Managerial Leadership*

This analysis makes it possible to understand the organizational, cultural, and training-related factors that influence managerial leadership in educational organizations in the municipality of Villa Altagracia, from the perspective of school administrators. Key elements were identified, including the use of technological platforms, school culture, and the professional development needs of educational leaders. These factors directly affect the capacity of management teams to promote effective and sustainable institutional change processes.

Table 3. Contextual, Cultural, and Support Needs Factors in Managerial Leadership

Subcategory	Key Aspects and Their Influence	Key Observations
Organizational and institutional factors	- Use of digital platforms and internal communication channels - Direct influence on academic and administrative efficiency	- Use of digital systems to centralize processes - Improved managerial decision-making - Greater participation of the educational community in management processes
School culture and resistance to change	- Organizational culture as a driver or barrier to change - Resistance derived from established structures and habits - Empathetic and sensitive leadership	- Presence of collaborative cultures that favor change in Villa Altagracia - Need to understand internal dynamics to reduce natural resistance
Training needs and leadership support	- Continuous training in pedagogical, technological, and administrative areas	- Promotion of professional learning communities - Need for resources and collaborative workshops

- Development of institutional support networks and professional mentoring	- Training as a key element in addressing modern leadership challenges

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to generate a situated theoretical construct that allows for an understanding of managerial leadership based on the experiences and meanings attributed by school administrators in Villa Altagracia, Dominican Republic. Using a phenomenological approach, the study focused on capturing the essence of participants' lived experiences related to leadership in contexts characterized by social, institutional, and human challenges.

The findings indicate that administrators do not conceive their role solely from an administrative perspective, but rather integrate ethical, pedagogical, and emotional dimensions that enable them to lead with commitment and purpose. The emerging categories point to a form of leadership that combines transformational, situational, and distributed practices, continuously adapting to the needs of the educational community, institutional climate, and interpersonal relationships that shape daily school life.

In this regard, participants highlight empathy, effective communication, trust building, and shared decision-making as fundamental pillars of their managerial practice. These leadership dimensions are reinforced by administrators' ability to act as mediators between national educational policies and local institutional realities, articulating management strategies with strong social sensitivity.

One of the most significant aspects emerging from the analysis is the recognition of context as an active component in shaping leadership. Administrators face material limitations, labor tensions, and community demands that influence their management styles. However, rather than functioning as barriers, these conditions serve as starting points for innovation, collaborative work, and the consolidation of a resilient organizational culture.

The discussion of these results within contemporary leadership theories reaffirms the need to understand school leadership as a dynamic, relational, and deeply contextualized process. By contrasting administrators' voices with the contributions of authors such as Hersey and Blanchard, Bass, and Spillane, it becomes evident that schools in Villa Altagracia develop hybrid, situated, and emergent forms of leadership that do not strictly conform to traditional theoretical models but rather reformulate them through practice.

Consequently, this research highlights the urgency of revising school leadership training programs from a situated perspective that incorporates real case analysis, critical reflection, and the strengthening of soft skills. Likewise, the creation of professional networks among school leaders is recommended to foster mutual learning and the collective construction of solutions to educational management challenges.

Finally, it is concluded that managerial leadership in the schools of Villa Altagracia cannot be understood in abstract or decontextualized terms. Only through active listening to those who exercise leadership, recognition of their professional trajectories, and integration of their practical knowledge into decision-making spaces will it be possible to move toward transformative, inclusive, and human-centered school management.

REFERENCIAS

[1]. Asamblea Nacional. (2015). *Constitución de la República Dominicana* (Mod. 2015). Gaceta Oficial No. 10805 del 13 de junio de 2015.

[2]. Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2004). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership.* SAGE Publications.

[3]. Bolívar, A. (2020). *Comunidades profesionales de aprendizaje: Una visión desde la investigación y la práctica.* Octaedro

[4]. Bolívar, A. (2021). *Liderazgo educativo y mejora de la escuela: Una revisión desde la investigación.* Editorial Síntesis.

[5]. Buenaño López, W. M. (2023). *Liderazgo directivo para las transformaciones contemporáneas en las instituciones educativas secundarias* [Tesis de maestría, Universidad XXX].

[6]. Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership.* Harper & Row.

[7]. Cadenas, H. (2007). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa: Validación y coherencia en estudios educativos.* Fondo Editorial de Humanidades.

[8]. Chávez, A. A. (2006). *[Título del libro o trabajo académico en cursiva].* Editorial XXX.

[9]. Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana. (1992). *Código de Trabajo de la República Dominicana, Ley No. 16-92.* Gaceta Oficial No. 9857 del 29 de mayo de 1992

[10]. Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana. (1997). *Ley General de Educación No. 66-97.* Gaceta Oficial No. 9950 del 9 de abril de 1997.

[11]. Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana. (2008). *Ley No. 41-08 de Función Pública.* Gaceta Oficial No. 10405 del 16 de enero de 2008.

[12]. Consejo Nacional de Educación. (1999). *Ordenanza No. 4-99 que establece las Normas de Organización y Funcionamiento de los Centros Educativos Públicos.* Ministerio de Educación de la República Dominicana.

[13]. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

[14]. Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

[15]. Finol, M., & Vera, M. (2020). *Paradigmas de investigación y enfoques metodológicos en ciencias sociales*. Editorial Académica Española.

[16]. Fullan, M. (2021). *Liderar en un mundo complejo*. Narcea Ediciones.

[17]. Gairín, J. (2019). *Organizaciones educativas: Contextos y procesos de cambio*. Wélters Kluwer.

[18]. Gibbs, G. (2018). *Análisis de datos cualitativos*. Ediciones Morata.*)*

[19]. Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach.* Duquesne University Press.

[20]. Goetz, J. P., & LeCompte, M. D. (1988). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. Academic Press.

[21]. Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Jornal of Education*,

[22]. Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2021). *El bienestar en las escuelas: Tres fuerzas que impulsan a los estudiantes en un mundo incierto*. Editorial XXX.

[23]. Harris, A. (2004). *Distributed leadership and school improvement: Leading or misleading?* Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 32(1), 11–24.

[24]. Heidegger, M. (2006). *Ser y tiempo* (10ª ed.). Fondo de Cultura Económica.

[25]. Hernández, R., Fernández, C., & Baptista, P. (2014). *Metodología de la investigación* (6ª ed.). McGraw-Hill.

[26]. Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1969). *The situational leadership theor* original de

[27]. Husserl, E. (1913/2002). *Ideas relativas a una fenomenología pura y una filosofía fenomenológica* (T. I). Alianza Editorial.

[28]. Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. School Leadership & Management*, 40(1), 5–22.

[29]. Luhmann, N. (2018). *Teoría de la sociedad*. Editorial Herder.

[30]. Manen, M. (2016). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Routledge.

[31]. Martínez, M. (2004). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa: Investigación documental, observación participante e historia de vida*. Trillas.

[32]. Martínez, M. (2006). *La investigación cualitativa etnográfica en educación*. Trillas.

[33]. Martínez, M. (2009). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa*. Trillas.

[34]. Martins, J., & Palella, S. (2012). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa*. Editorial Universidad Nacional Abierta.

[35]. Mendoza, S. C. (2023). *El liderazgo directivo en las instituciones de educación superior en Colombia* [Trabajo de investigación, Universidad XXX].

[36]. Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (4th ed.). SAGE Publications

[37]. Mintzberg, H. (2017). *Estructura y dinámica de las organizaciones*. Editorial Ariel.

[38]. Murillo, F. J., & Krichesky, G. J. (2015). Evaluar el liderazgo pedagógico de la dirección escolar: una revisión de enfoques e instrumentos. *REICE: Revista Iberoamericana sobre Calidad, Eficacia y Cambio en Educación*, 13(1), 69–102.

[39]. Murillo, J. (2022). *La mejora de la educación: El reto de transformar la escuela*. Narcea Ediciones.

[40]. Padrón, J. (2008). *Epistemología de la investigación científica*. Editorial El Perro y la Rana.

[41]. Peña Pozo, I. E. (2023). *Fortalecimiento del liderazgo pedagógico del director y el clima institucional en una institución educativa del Callao* [Trabajo académico, Universidad XXX].

[42]. Piñero, J., Rivera, J., & Esteban, J. (2019). *Perspectivas epistemológicas en la investigación educativa*. Editorial Académica Española.

[43]. Poder Ejecutivo. (2003). *Decreto No. 639-03 que aprueba el Reglamento del Estatuto del Docente*. Gaceta Oficial No. 10227 del 15 de julio de 2003.

[44]. Robbins, S. P. (2004). *Comportamiento organizacional* (10ª ed.). Pearson Educación.

[45]. Rodríguez, A., Gil, J., & García, E. (1996). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa*. Ediciones Aljibe.

[46]. Sánchez Oyola, J. (2022). *Relación entre el liderazgo directivo y la gerencia educativa en la Institución Educativa N.º 20340 "Nuevo San Juan"* [Tesis de maestría, Universidad XXX].

[47]. Schein, E. H. (2010). *Cultura organizacional y liderazgo* (4ª ed.). Jossey-Bass.

[48]. Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. Jossey-Bass.