

Educational Management as a Strategic Factor in Strengthening the Teaching Workplace Environment

La gestión educativa como factor estratégico para el fortalecimiento del ambiente laboral docente

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Abstract

Educational management is a strategic factor in promoting a favorable work environment and strengthening institutional development. The objective of this study was to determine the influence of educational management on the teaching work environment at an educational institution in the province of Cañar, Ecuador. The research employed a quantitative approach, with a descriptive-correlational scope and a non-experimental cross-sectional design. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a Likert-type scale, administered to 50 teachers. The instrument was validated through expert review and demonstrated adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$). The results revealed weaknesses in participatory leadership, institutional communication, collaborative work, and a sense of belonging—aspects that affect the organizational climate and the well-being of the teaching staff. Furthermore, it was found that limited teacher participation in decision-making and deficiencies in communication processes hinder the consolidation of an institutional culture oriented toward continuous improvement and the strengthening of labor relations. It is concluded that educational management grounded in participatory leadership, effective communication, and human talent development significantly enhances the teaching work environment. As a contribution of this research, an intervention proposal was designed to strengthen institutional management through strategies focused on leadership, communication, collaborative work, and professional recognition, with the aim of improving the organizational climate and contributing to higher-quality education.

Keywords: educational management; teachers' work environment; educational leadership; organizational climate; teachers' professional development.

Resumen

La gestión educativa constituye un factor estratégico para promover un ambiente laboral favorable y fortalecer el desarrollo institucional. El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo determinar la influencia de la gestión educativa en el ambiente laboral docente de una institución educativa de la provincia de Cañar, Ecuador. Se desarrolló una investigación con enfoque cuantitativo, alcance descriptivo-correlacional y diseño no experimental de corte transversal. La información se recopiló mediante un cuestionario estructurado con escala tipo Likert, aplicado a 50 docentes. El instrumento fue validado mediante juicio de expertos y presentó una adecuada consistencia interna (alfa de Cronbach = 0,87). Los resultados evidenciaron debilidades en el liderazgo participativo, la comunicación institucional, el trabajo colaborativo y el sentido de pertenencia, aspectos que inciden en el clima organizacional y en el bienestar del profesorado. Asimismo, se identificó que la limitada participación docente en la toma de decisiones y las deficiencias en los procesos de comunicación dificultan la consolidación de una cultura institucional orientada a la mejora continua y al fortalecimiento de las relaciones laborales. Se concluye que una gestión educativa sustentada en el liderazgo participativo, la comunicación efectiva y el desarrollo del talento humano favorece significativamente el ambiente laboral docente. Como aporte de la investigación, se diseñó una propuesta de intervención dirigida al fortalecimiento de la gestión institucional mediante estrategias orientadas al liderazgo, la comunicación, el trabajo colaborativo y el reconocimiento profesional, con el propósito de mejorar el clima organizacional y contribuir a una educación de mayor calidad.

Palabras clave: gestión educativa; ambiente laboral docente; liderazgo educativo; clima organizacional; desarrollo profesional docente.

Introduction

Educational management is an essential component for the functioning of educational institutions, as it enables the organization and direction of human, administrative, and pedagogical resources toward the fulfillment of institutional objectives. Its importance lies in the fact that it is not limited to the operational management of an institution but involves planning, decision-making, and evaluation processes designed to promote the continuous improvement of educational quality. From this perspective, the leadership of school administrators is significant because it influences the development of an organizational culture, the coordination of institutional work, and the creation of conditions conducive to learning (UNESCO, 2024).

In today's education systems, various challenges persist that limit the efficient development of institutional processes. In the Ecuadorian context, Granda Vidal (2025) notes that the administrative overload on teachers, bureaucracy, difficulties in coordinating administrative and pedagogical processes, and the lack of adequate oversight mechanisms have a negative impact on the management of educational institutions, affecting both the quality of educational services and the performance of those who are part of the school community.

In light of these challenges, educational leadership is recognized as a key element in strengthening institutional management. Various studies conducted in Latin America

show a growing interest in professionalizing the leadership role, strengthening leadership competencies, and consolidating policies that improve the organization of educational institutions (Flessa et al., 2023). In this regard, Castro Luna et al. (2024) demonstrate that strengthening school leadership promotes more efficient management focused on the continuous improvement of educational institutions.

Educational management is also grounded in the main approaches to administration. From this perspective, Majiyd and Yazidu (2023) explain that the administrative principles proposed by Fayol remain relevant within educational institutions, especially when applied through decentralized models that promote a better distribution of functions, coordination of work, and a more efficient use of available resources.

Educational management, however, does not depend solely on administrative structure. Drawing on motivation theory, Maslow (1943) argues that people's behavior within an organization is influenced by the progressive satisfaction of their needs, which in turn shape their commitment, performance, and participation in achieving institutional goals. From another perspective, human relations theory emphasizes that social and psychological factors also influence organizational behavior, highlighting the importance of communication, recognition, and interpersonal relationships in strengthening the commitment of an organization's members (Bruce, 2006).

Institutional strengthening also depends on how leadership is exercised within schools. Hallinger and Heck (2010) argue that collaborative leadership fosters the development of shared goals and strengthens institutions' capacity to implement sustained processes of school improvement. Complementarily, recent research shows that teacher leadership is positively associated with well-being, motivation, and professional commitment—factors that foster more collaborative work environments and strengthen institutional performance (Ghamrawi et al., 2023).

Another essential component of educational management is the organizational climate, since working conditions directly influence the performance of the institution's staff. Mousena and Raptis (2021) conclude that effective communication, trust, and interpersonal relationships strengthen cooperation and foster healthy work environments within educational organizations. Likewise, Sagredo Lillo and Castelló Tarrida (2019) demonstrate a positive relationship between administrative management, teacher motivation, and teacher commitment, which shows that leadership practices have a direct impact on the work environment and institutional functioning.

Based on the background information presented, the following research question arises: How does educational management influence the strengthening of the teaching work environment within an educational institution in the province of Cañar, Ecuador? In response to this issue, the present study aims to determine the influence of educational management on strengthening the teachers' work environment within an educational institution in the province of Cañar, Ecuador, by analyzing teachers' perceptions, with the goal of designing an intervention proposal aimed at institutional improvement.

Materials and Methods

This research was conducted using a quantitative approach, focused on the collection and analysis of numerical data related to teachers' perceptions of educational management and the teaching work environment. To this end, a non-experimental cross-sectional design was employed, which, according to Johnson (2001), allows for the study of phenomena in their natural context, without manipulating variables, based on information collected at a single point in time.

In terms of its scope, the study was descriptive and correlational. The descriptive aspect allowed for characterizing teachers' perceptions of the variables under study, while the correlational aspect made it possible to examine the relationship between them. In this regard, Miksza (2023) argues that descriptive studies seek to identify the characteristics of a phenomenon, whereas correlational studies allow for establishing the degree of association between two or more variables without intervening in them.

The research was conducted at an educational institution in the province of Cañar, Ecuador, with a population of 50 teachers. Due to the small size and accessibility of the study population, the entire group of participants was included—constituting what Vizcaíno (2023) describes as a census or non-probabilistic convenience sample. The study was applied in nature, as it sought to analyze a problem present in the institutional context in order to develop an intervention proposal aimed at strengthening the teachers' work environment.

The variables analyzed were educational management, considered the independent variable, and the teaching work environment, considered the dependent variable. The former comprised the dimensions of leadership, institutional planning, and support; while the latter included labor relations, institutional communication, and job satisfaction. To interpret the observed reality, the deductive method was employed, which allowed for comparing theoretical foundations with the evidence obtained in the fieldwork and formulating conclusions supported by the results.

Data were collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire consisting of twelve items on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was developed based on the dimensions of both variables and administered via Google Forms, with the link distributed through institutional WhatsApp channels. Before responding, participants received information about the study's objectives and voluntarily agreed to participate, with the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses guaranteed.

The validity of the questionnaire was established through expert judgment, in which experts evaluated the clarity, relevance, and consistency of the items; their observations were incorporated prior to the questionnaire's final administration. Subsequently, reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a value of 0.87, which indicated high internal consistency of the instrument.

Once data collection was complete, the data were organized into a database and processed using computer software to generate statistical tables and graphs. Descriptive statistics were applied, using frequencies and percentages to characterize

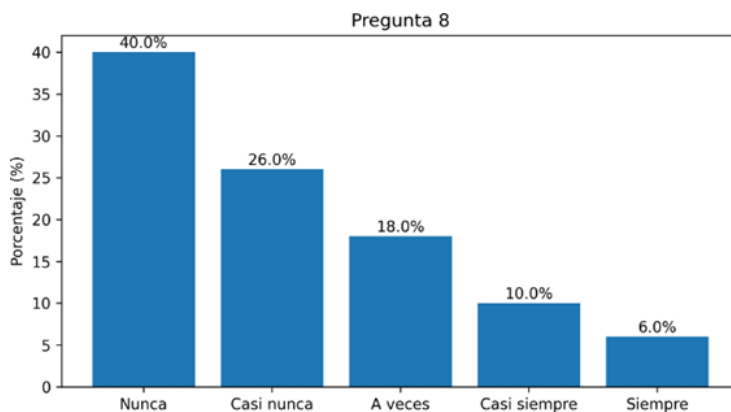
teachers' perceptions regarding the variables studied. Subsequently, a descriptive correlational analysis was conducted to identify trends in the association between educational management and the teachers' work environment, comparing the results with the reviewed theoretical frameworks. The findings served as the basis for designing an intervention proposal aimed at institutional strengthening.

Throughout the process, the ethical principles applicable to research involving human subjects were respected. Participation was voluntary; the information was used exclusively for academic purposes; and the confidentiality of the data, the anonymity of the participants, and respect for the principles of autonomy and scientific integrity were guaranteed.

Results

Analysis of the collected data revealed faculty members' perceptions regarding educational administration and the work environment within the institution under study. In general, the responses showed a higher concentration in the categories "Never," "Almost Never," and "Sometimes," reflecting an unfavorable assessment of several components of institutional administration. The lowest ratings were recorded for aspects related to collaborative work, institutional communication, and a sense of belonging—elements closely linked to strengthening the teaching work environment. The results corresponding to each of these indicators are presented below.

Figure 1. Teachers' Perceptions of the Culture of Institutional Cooperation

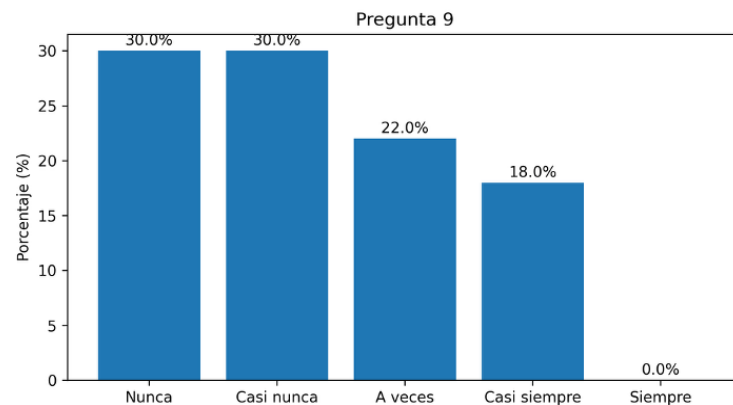


Note: Data obtained from a survey administered to 50 teachers, Naranjo & Pillaga, 2026.

As shown in Figure 1, the majority of faculty members perceived that cooperation among members of the institution occurs infrequently. Sixty-six percent of faculty members responded "Never" or "Almost never," 18% indicated "Sometimes," and only 16% indicated that collaborative work occurs regularly—"Almost always" and "Always." Overall, the results revealed a limited culture of collaboration, reflected in a low perception of mutual support and coordination among faculty members. This distribution of responses showed that collaborative work is not yet an established

practice within the institution, which could limit the development of collective actions aimed at achieving institutional goals.

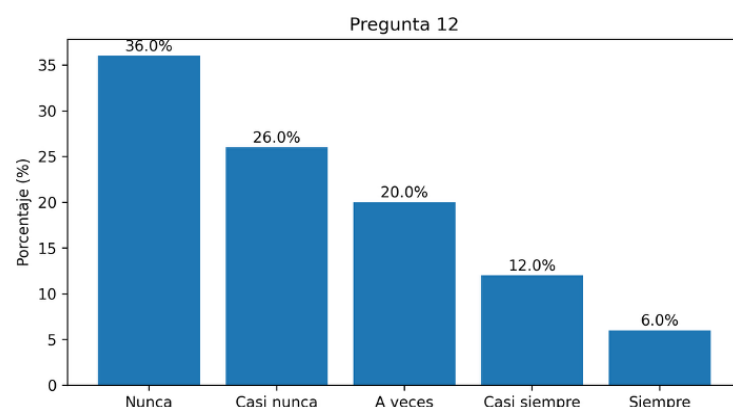
Figure 2. Teachers' Perceptions of Institutional Communication



Note: Data obtained from a survey administered to 50 teachers, Naranjo & Pillaga, 2026.

Figure 2 shows a low rating of institutional communication between the administrative team and faculty members. Sixty percent of participants indicated that such communication occurs "Never" or "Almost never," while 22% noted that it occurs "Sometimes." In contrast, only 18% considered communication to be open and transparent on a frequent basis—"Almost always" and "Always." Taken together, these results revealed limitations in institutional communication processes, reflected in a low perception of transparency and openness in the exchange of information. This distribution of responses showed that communication between administrators and faculty is not yet perceived as a strength by the faculty, which could hinder the coordination of activities and participation in institutional processes.

Figure 3 Teachers' Identification with the Institutional Vision



Note: Data obtained from a survey administered to 50 teachers, Naranjo & Pillaga, 2026.

On the other hand, Figure 3 shows that faculty members' perception of their identification with the institution was predominantly low. Sixty-two percent of faculty members stated that they never or almost never feel identified with the institutional vision; 20% indicated that this identification occurs sometimes; while only 18% reported feeling committed to institutional goals frequently, almost always, or always.

These results reflect a low level of ownership of the institutional vision and goals among faculty, which may limit their involvement in collective activities and in the institution's improvement processes. Furthermore, low institutional identification can hinder the consolidation of an organizational culture based on commitment, shared responsibility, and the achievement of shared goals.

In this context, the findings highlight the need to strengthen strategies that promote faculty participation in shaping the institutional vision, recognition of their work, and a sense of belonging, thereby fostering greater cohesion among members of the educational community.

The findings suggest that educational administration has a significant influence on the teaching work environment, particularly through factors such as institutional communication, collaborative work, and a sense of belonging. From the perspective of this research, the results show that the main difficulties identified by teachers are not solely due to administrative issues, but also to the way in which relationships among the various stakeholders within the institution are developed. This suggests that effective educational management requires going beyond traditional organizational functions and incorporating leadership practices that promote participation, communication, and collective commitment.

One of the most significant findings concerns the unfavorable perception of institutional communication. Most teachers felt that communication with the administrative team is neither transparent nor ongoing—a situation that can undermine trust, hinder the coordination of institutional work, and reduce opportunities for faculty participation in decision-making. This finding aligns with the position outlined by UNESCO (2024), which recognizes communication as an essential component of educational management, as it fosters the development of participatory organizational cultures oriented toward continuous improvement.

The results also revealed weaknesses related to collaborative work among teachers. This situation suggests that difficulties still exist in establishing spaces for professional exchange where teachers can share experiences, develop joint solutions, and actively participate in institutional improvement processes. This is consistent with the arguments of Hallinger and Heck (2010), who maintain that shared leadership strengthens institutions' capacity to drive school improvement processes through the participation of the entire educational community. Consequently, the findings of this study suggest that the limited cooperation identified may be hindering the development of an institutional culture based on collective learning and shared responsibility.

Another aspect deserving special attention is the low level of teachers' identification with the institutional vision. Based on the interpretation presented in this study, this

result could be associated with teachers' limited participation in planning and decision-making processes, which hinders the establishment of shared objectives and reduces commitment to institutional goals. This interpretation is supported by Maslow's (1943) theory of motivation, which posits that people increase their commitment when they are able to satisfy needs related to recognition, belonging, and self-actualization.

Taken together, the results show that institutional communication, collaborative work, and a sense of belonging— —are not independent dimensions, but rather components that interact with one another and shape the perception of the teaching work environment. Therefore, it is necessary to direct administrative actions not only toward the management of resources but also toward strengthening human relationships within the institution.

Another aspect worth highlighting is that the findings reflect issues previously described in the Ecuadorian educational context. Granda Vidal (2025) points out that educational institutions face difficulties related to administrative overload, poor coordination between pedagogical and administrative processes, and limitations in institutional monitoring mechanisms. Therefore, the results obtained not only describe a specific reality but also reflect challenges present in other educational contexts throughout the country.

Conclusions

This research confirms that educational management is a determining factor in strengthening the teaching work environment. Participatory leadership, institutional communication, and collaborative work emerge as key dimensions for promoting more favorable working relationships, increasing organizational commitment, and enhancing teachers' professional satisfaction.

The study provides evidence on the reality of an educational institution in the province of Cañar, demonstrating that the main weaknesses of the work environment are associated with limitations in teacher participation, internal communication, and a sense of institutional belonging. These findings highlight the need to orient educational management toward more participatory models, centered on people and on strengthening organizational culture.

An intervention proposal was designed based on the results obtained, aimed at strengthening participatory leadership, institutional communication, collaborative work, and professional recognition. Validation through expert review confirmed its relevance, methodological coherence, and feasibility for implementation, supporting its potential as a strategy to improve the teaching work environment and strengthen institutional management. The long-term implementation of the proposal could result in more efficient educational institutions, with a greater capacity to respond to the needs of their community and to offer higher-quality education thereby promoting student learning and the holistic development of the entire educational community.

Among the study's limitations is the fact that the research was conducted at a single educational institution and with a specific population; therefore, the results apply only to the analyzed context and should be interpreted with caution when extrapolated to other settings. In this regard, it is recommended that future research incorporate larger samples, different educational contexts, and inferential statistical analyses or longitudinal designs that allow for a deeper exploration of the relationship between educational management and the teaching work environment.

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