

Monographic article

Principals re-constructing their professional performance in elementary education: A participatory contribution within the educational system in Yucatan, Mexico[☆]

Directores reconstruyendo su desempeño profesional en la educación básica: una contribución participativa en el sistema educativo de Yucatán, México

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Abstract

The Educational Reform launched in 2013 established, as fundamental, evaluation for the elements within the National Educational System (NES). An important element from NES, it is the Teaching Professional Service (TPS) at the public educational system, which requires solid processes of evaluation focused more on cultural and contextual opportunities and constraints faced by educational professionals in service. In order to foster fairer, useful and feasibility evaluation for educational professionals, the Ministry of Education, through the Center for Educational Evaluation of Yucatan State, developed a Public Consult to identify the main characteristics that professionals within the TPS should develop within their educational practice. The Public Consult included participation from teachers, principals, academic supervisors and pedagogical advisors from elementary education. In this paper, we analyze characteristics that contribute to principals' performance profile and to pedagogical leadership approach. We analyzed five main dimensions for principals' performance characteristics: educational policy and pedagogical knowledge, educational praxis, professional development, ethical and identity professional, and community commitment. We consider the Public Consult will support the educational system evaluation mainly focusing on the cultural and pedagogical context of the TPS in Yucatán, in order to contribute to the feedback for characteristics retention (performance) of principals from elementary education.

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Keywords: Educational Reform; Teaching Professional Service; Pedagogical leadership; Principals' profile from elementary education; Participatory process

Resumen

En 2013 se estableció la Reforma Educativa que fundamenta la evaluación de los elementos del Sistema Educativo Nacional (SEN), particularmente lo relacionado al Servicio Profesional Docente (SPD), el cual requiere de procesos integrales de evaluación enfocados en las oportunidades y retos culturales y contextuales enfrentados por los profesionales de la educación en servicio. Con el propósito de desarrollar evaluaciones justas, útiles y viables de los profesionales en el SPD, la Secretaría de Educación del Gobierno del Estado de Yucatán, a través del Centro de Evaluación Educativa del Estado de Yucatán (CEEY), desarrolló una consulta pública para identificar las principales características que deben poseer los profesionales del SPD en su práctica educativa. Este estudio incluyó la participación de docentes, directores, supervisores y asesores técnicos pedagógicos de la educación básica. En este artículo analizamos las principales características que conforman el perfil de desempeño de los directores y que se alinean al liderazgo pedagógico. Identificamos cinco dimensiones que integran este perfil: conocimiento educativo, práctica educativa, desarrollo profesional, ética e identidad profesional y compromiso con la comunidad. Concluimos que las características más importantes para los directores de Yucatán coinciden con las propuestas en el enfoque del liderazgo pedagógico reportado en la literatura.

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Palabras clave: Reforma educativa; Servicio profesional docente; Liderazgo pedagógico; Perfil de directores escolares; Consulta participativa

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Introduction

Mexico is currently experiencing several reforms within its whole system. A relevant case is the Educational Reform for Public Education in both elementary and middle educational levels. This Reform establishes that every professional within the Teaching Professional Service (TPS)¹ must evaluate under solid and fair processes. In addition, the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (NIEE),² the main evaluation authority in Mexico, must develop these evaluations. As part of this process, every State has the moral and social responsibility to align its own educational law for public education in order to accomplish the federal demands and provide all conditions necessary to develop it (DOF, 2013b, 2013c, 2016a, 2016b; DOGEY, 2016).

Despite criticism to this Educational Reform, Yucatan State remained open to the dialog between society and government. As show of this concern, Yucatan reformulated its Law for Education in Yucatan State (LEYS),³ published in November in 2013, which assured labor and educational right conditions to all Educational Professionals (EP) involved within the different evaluation processes developed by the NIEE and Local Educational Authorities, and aligned to the national level demands and the legal framework for the educational reform (DOGEY, 2016). In this context, the Ministry of Education in Yucatan required from the Center for Educational Evaluation of Yucatan State (CEEYS) to develop a participatory and democratic project with EP⁴ from the TPS. This project visualized the democratic participation from teachers, pedagogical assessors, principals and academic supervisors. The purpose of that project was to obtain opinions from those participants for establishing criteria regarding current characteristics about their Admission, Retention (professional performance), Promotion and Acknowledgment processes within the TPS in Yucatan. In this paper, we only present the results regarding to professional performance characteristics from principals in elementary education. As Donaldson and Papay (2014) argued, principals develop strategic activities that impact directly to the educational achievement. In this sense, any educational reform affects those activities related to educational success.

In addition, diverse research has shown that pedagogical leadership, specifically for principals, is an effective element to potentiate action and strategies which orient to school communities toward student learning achievement (Bass, 1997; Bolívar, 2010; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Theoretical framework

Education has become the best way for any society to face deep and new challenges and transformations (OECD, 2005). To make this possible, it is required different educational

perspectives that promote accurate competencies necessary by societies and economies (UNESCO, 2015).

An educational perspective within this context means going further than literacy and acquisition of basic knowledge. It implies new teaching and learning contexts and approaches that promote a more justice, social equity and solidarity world (UNESCO, 2015). According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development⁵ (2005) the quality of elementary education could prepare students with solid basis to help them for their lives. This means that quality education must be conceived as education that assures people achieve knowledge, capacities, abilities and attitudes focused to attain a sustainable adult life (OECD, 2005).

Facing new educational changes, Mexican Government included within its National Development Plan 2013–2018 the goal: “Mexico with quality education”, that guarantees holistic development of Mexican citizens in order to obtain trained human capital and to develop maximum potential on students” (DOF, 2013d, p. 22).

Addressing this goal under a legal framework, the Mexican Government reformed the educational system in both elementary and middle educational levels, making responsible to governmental authorities for providing necessary conditions to practice an education of quality (DOF, 2013c, 2016a, 2016b). Within this legal framework, evaluation is one of the elements included within the National Educational System (NES)⁶ and becomes a fundamental element to understand and identify necessary aspects which led us to education of quality (DOF, 2013c, 2016b). For instance, the Law for General Education (LGE)⁷ refers to a need for developing a systematic and continue evaluation for EP, and the Law for General Teaching Professional Service (LGTPS)⁸ establishes that quality of education can be attained through EP whom personal qualities and professional competencies promote students’ learning within social and cultural inequality contexts (DOF, 2013c, 2016b).

With the purpose to establish these professional characteristics, the NIEE required an extensive and continuous collaboration from all Local Ministries of Education, through the General Organization for Teaching Professional Service (GOTPS).⁹ As a main result from this collaboration was bringing together, analyzing and stablishing all state’s educational proposals regarding to personal qualities, and professional competencies that all professionals on education must accomplish (DOF, 2013a). This work allows establishing the main characteristics that EP must possess for belonging to the TPS in elementary and middle education levels. Under this framework, educational professionals have the duty for participating in all evaluation processes proposed by the NIEE (DOF, 2013b).

⁵ OCDE by its acronym in Spanish.

⁶ Sistema Educativo Nacional (SEN by its acronym in Spanish).

⁷ Ley General de Educación (LGE by its acronym in Spanish).

⁸ Ley General del Servicio Profesional Docente (LGSPD by its acronym in Spanish).

⁹ Coordinación General del Servicio Profesional Docente (CNSPD by its acronym in Spanish).

¹ Servicio Profesional Docente (SPD by its acronym in Spanish).

² Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación (INEE by its acronym in Spanish).

³ Ley de Educación del Estado de Yucatán (LEEY by its acronym in Spanish).

⁴ In this paper, we will name educational professionals (EP).

Both theoretical and legal framework revision was fundamental for the Public Consult, because it allow analyzing this set of characteristics from a broader conception of leadership (Bolívar, 2010; Hargreaves & Fink, 2008; Heck, Marcoulides, & Lang, 1991; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; C.F. Webber & Scott, 2008). In this sense, Fayol and Taylor (1987), Jones and George (2010) state main leader characteristics, such as physical health, intelligence, personal and professional ethic, reflexive, responsible, shared interests, knowledge about management, functions related to general culture knowledge, competitiveness, and tolerance to stress.

At the educational field authors like Anderson (2010), Bolívar (2010), Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), Rojas and Gaspar (2006), and Weinstein et al. (2009) contributed to understand pedagogical leadership. As Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), and Rojas and Gaspar (2006) emphasize, a leader promotes social participation between a community. Weinstein et al. (2009), Anderson (2010) and Bolívar (2010) argument that a leader influences into the behavior of people to improve the education quality and student achievement.

Focused more in educational achievement, we analyzed from literature review different types of scholar leadership. For instance, learning-centered leadership, principal activities are more focused to improve teaching-learning process for teachers and students (Bolívar, 2010). Distributed or shared leadership promote participation between collaborators and delegating responsibilities (Leithwood et al., 2006). Systematic leadership states that principals gets association with others educative areas or groups to accomplish goals at educational levels and ensure successful in scholar communities (Hopkins, 2008). The sustained leadership facilitates the learning building y changes that guarantee to successful practices, ensuring an institutional conduction more than a personal conduction (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008). Finally, pedagogical leadership, named also instructional, which integrates characteristic from the others scholar leadership concepts, principals gather elements from environmental and management context to improve the quality of education (Bolívar, 2010).

Recognize and identify important elements from the pedagogical leadership framework, it has provided elemental input to the discussion about what characteristics should be included within the principals' performance profile and how such characteristics promotes or inhibit the students educational achievement.

Methodology

The CEEYS in 2013 had the main responsibility to design the project that contribute to obtain opinions from EP in order to send to GOTPS solid foundations based on proposals aligned to national requirements and the local context.

In this project, we implemented two techniques, an *On-Line Survey (O-LS)* and *Focus Group (FG)*. The *O-LS* had the purpose to obtain, from mayor representativeness from all professionals in the TPS, opinion about the main characteristics that principals must possess for the different processes (Admission, Performance, Promotion and Acknowledgment). The *O-LS*

was designed to principals had the opportunity to give opinions on other EP functions within some of processes mentioned and vice-verse, these EP provide opinions about the main principals' characteristics that must be included within their performance profile. The *Focus Group (FG)* had the purpose to understand in depth from principals, the most important characteristics about promotion and performance in their own function.

For *O-LS* and *FG* techniques, we proposed a list of ideal characteristics, previously elaborated and validated by experts. These characteristics were obtained from a literature review which included local (Model for Regional Management), national (Standards for Elementary Education Management) and international (pedagogical leadership characteristics) materials regarding to the principals' leadership pedagogical (Leithwood et al., 2006; Vázquez-Herrera, 2010; Vázquez-Vera, Aguilar Burgos, & Peniche Pérez, 2013; C. Webber & Robertson, 1998). In addition, we identify a set of dimensions, which allows us analyzing the principals' characteristics from the Public Consult (SEP, 2016; Vázquez-Herrera, 2010). After we proposed a set of characteristics, we convoke a committee integrated by teachers, principals, academic supervisors, and educational professionals from elementary education to validate this set of principals' performance profile. As a result of this validation, we made adjustments that allow presenting the final list of characteristics.

The *O-LS* consisted on an internet platform in which principals could select and rank those ideal characteristics. For this article particularly, we present results regarding to Performance process. In this technique, principals could suggest evidences that should support evaluation for each characteristic. We selected this strategy to gather a big number of participants and we used technological resources available in the CEEYS. As McLuhan (1996) indicates, using technology should be obtained more participation because it can optimize human and material resources such as number of staff, and time and money for moving to one from another place, and printed questionnaires. In this sense, we consider that principals would require electric power, access to a computer, internet and abilities for using those resources.

Furthermore, CEEYS employed both print and online media as two main strategies for diffusing the Public Consult. In addition, the *O-LS* was available along five weeks from January to February in 2014. To ensure principals answer the *O-LS* once, they have to provide their Federal Taxpayer Registration and key information from schools. The principals' information registered, it was validated with a local database from the Ministry of Education of Yucatan State.

The *FG* consisted on groups with principals for discussing mainly characteristics used in *O-LS*. In *FG* we invite to principals mainly focus and discuss on their most important characteristics of performance process.

The criteria for selecting participants in *FG* consisted on (1) principals have minimum two years in service with this function; (2) they pertain to different localities from Yucatan; (3) they participate in professional development courses, and (4) essentially, they have not participated in *O-LS*. For principals' selection, we obtained a database with the total number of schools in elementary education (2299) by educational regions (eleven localities

Table 1
Performance characteristics for principals in elementary education.

	Characteristics	Frequency	S.W.	Q.S.D.
A	To prove knowledge on content and educational approaches of elementary education.	92	2263	100
D	To have professional development and constant training within the leading function.	95	2177	96.2
J	To promote dialog, teamwork, and exposition of ideas about educational experiences and problems.	102	2130	94.1
F	To promote the enforcement of general regulations and bylaws from educational system.	82	1714	75.7
C	To conduct accurately meetings within the Academic Board of School.	83	1644	72.6
G	To develop management activities in order to accomplish academic services within the school.	72	1487	65.7
H	To develop activities for self-evaluation between teachers and Academic Board of School.	79	1482	65.5
E	To identify professional development needs of school teachers.	71	1446	63.9
L	To have leadership for promoting social relationships between teachers and community.	73	1389	61.4
K	To develop management activities in order to school implements effectively its functions.	74	1332	58.9
Y	To prove ethic relationships with other colleagues.	81	1307	57.8
M	To participate in activities which connect school and community people.	75	1215	53.7
U	To make decisions with teacher of school through a more democratic and participatory way.	74	1206	53.3
X	To develop capacity to solve conflicts.	74	1151	50.9
Q	To encourage increasing levels for student learning.	61	1141	50.4
N	To develop activities with educational authorities, teachers and students to promote school care and maintenance of technological services.	60	961	42.5
O	To initiate action in order to motivate parents interest on students' performance.	58	932	41.2
Z	To develop capacities and abilities to use technologies.	77	926	40.9
S	To accomplish established goals within the educational programs of the school.	60	867	38.3
V	To establish criteria with teachers in order to promote, spread and share policies within the school.	56	810	35.8
W	To generate a confidence and inclusive environment regarding to physical, affective and social aspects.	58	794	35.1
R	To implement action in order to promote the Model for Regional Management.	47	752	33.2
P	To conduct frequent meetings with the Academic Board for Social Participation.	54	738	32.6
I	To implement different evaluation approaches and strategies within the school.	39	678	30.0
T	To manage necessary resources in order to improve principal and teachers praxis.	47	664	29.3
B	To develop inclusion programs for students with Educational Special Needs.	37	608	26.9

Reference: Research Project for Public Consult to re-build educational professional characteristics in Elementary Education in Yucatan, State (CEEY-SEGEY, 2015).

included), modalities (nine), and type of system (public and private). With this information, we identified schools with the most representativeness of the nine modalities. According to this information, we sent invitation letters to head of educational levels from elementary education with the purpose they select principals from those schools identified.

During implementation of both *O-LS* and *FG* techniques, participants had available a space in which they could propose additional characteristics for complementing their principals' profile.

Data analysis

We used network semantic analysis because this technique allows identifying several relationships with significance (Figueroa & Solis, 1981; Noriega, Pimentel, & Batista de Albuquerque, 2005). Also, we developed content analysis (Krippendorff, 1990) for specifically qualitative data coming from *O-LS* and *FG*. We analyzed through this method evidences that support evaluation for each characteristic and other additional characteristics suggested by participants.

As strategy for data analysis coming from both in *O-LS* and *FG*, we obtained mainly Semantic Weight (SW). The SW was relevant for our results because allows integration of principals' information coming from the nine modalities in elementary education. For both techniques, we obtained the SW by assigning the major number to the characteristic ranked in first place. For

instance, principals had to rank 26 performance characteristics from the most important to the less one. To facilitate analysis, we identified the characteristics by letters. We assigned 26 points to the characteristic selected as number one, 25 points to the characteristic selected as number two, and so on the total of characteristics.

Only for *O-LS*, to identify the characteristics groups with most concentration, we obtained the Quantitative Semantic Distance (QSD) by converting the SW in percentile (Reyes-Lagunes, 1993).

Principals' characteristics from on-line survey

From 2276 principals in elementary education, in *O-LS* participated 186 principals from different levels and kind of schools, barely 56% of the sample established (331 principals). There were 93 principals from preschool, 55 from primary, 24 from secondary, and 14 from special education level.

Participants selected those characteristics that all principal should possess. After that, they ranked those selected characteristics from the highest number to the lowest importance. Table 1 presents these characteristics with their SW, selection of frequency, and QSD (see Table 1, Figs. 1 and 2).

Principals indicated as most important three characteristics regarding to prove knowledge on content and educational approaches of elementary education (letter A), having professional development and constant training within the leading

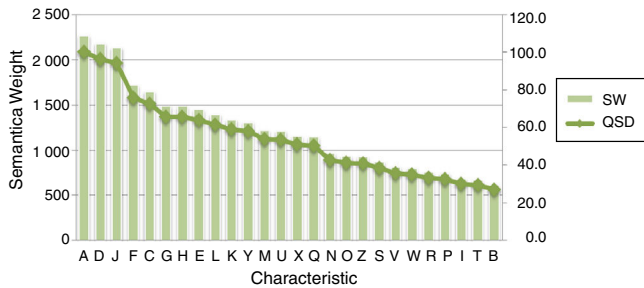


Fig. 1. Semantic Weight and Quantitative Semantic Distance for performance characteristics of principals in elementary education.

Reference: Research Project for Public Consult to re-build educational professional characteristics in Elementary Education in Yucatan, State (CEEY-SEGEY, 2015).

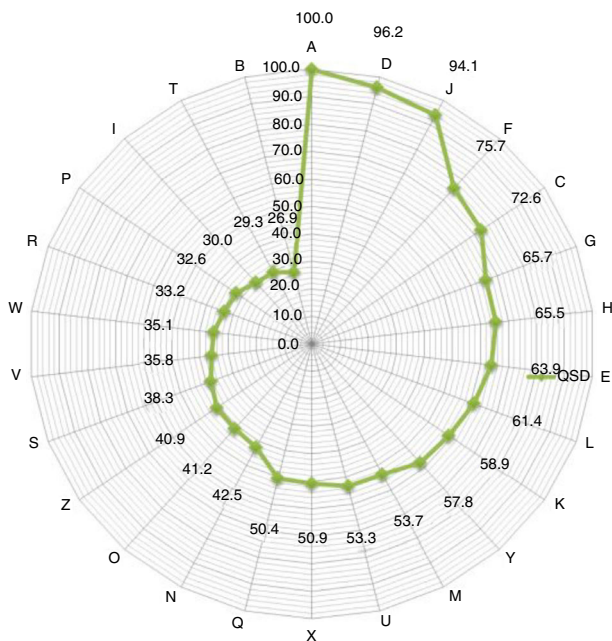


Fig. 2. Quantitative Semantic Distance for performance characteristics of principals in elementary education.

function (letter D), and promote dialog, teamwork, and exposition of ideas about educational experiences and problems (letter J). In Table 1, also we can observe that even though principals selected more frequently the “J” characteristic, it was “A” characteristic, which obtained a major SW. This suggests that

Table 3

Categories for additional performance characteristics from O-LS suggested by principals in elementary education.

Categories for additional performance characteristics from O-LS		
Code	Category	Frequency
1	Values	3
2	Attitudes	1
3	Mental Health	3
4	General Culture Knowledge	1

Reference: Research Project for Public Consult to re-build educational professional characteristics in Elementary Education in Yucatan, State (CEEY-SEGEY, 2015).

principals considered more important having knowledge on content and educational approaches of elementary education.

One important concerning within the project was about the main evidences, which help evaluate the characteristic selected. Table 2 shows some of those evidences proposed by principals for evaluating three most important characteristics.

Evidences suggested with major frequency were for “A” characteristic: questionnaires, exams and tests, official documents and evaluation results from leading performance; for “D” characteristic: official documents, reports, acts and agreements; and finally, for “J” characteristic: acts and agreements, observation and results from principal performance evaluations.

Principals recommended additional performance characteristics. These were categorized by values such as: *proving professional honesty*, attitudes such as: *being analytic*, mental health such as: *having mental and psychologic capacity for teaching and leading*, and having general culture knowledge about *history, civic, arts and environment* (see Table 3).

Principals’ characteristics from FOCUS GROUP

We developed nine FG during two different days. In FG technique, we had 51 participants from which 15 of them worked in preschool, 14 in primary and 22 in secondary level. We also identified that principals belong to different kind of schools. For example, 20 principals worked in general and state schools; 20 in rural, four in technical; and seven principals are from special education (see Table 4).

From results of FG, we decided only present the best ten characteristics ranked by principals about performance. This ranked was determined by using the characteristics’ SW. We decided

Table 2

Main evidences to support evaluation for each performance characteristic of principals in elementary education.

Frequent evidences					
A		D		J	
Evidence	Fr	Evidence	Fr	Evidence	Fr
Questionnaires, exams and tests	56	Official documents	167	Acts and agreements	74
Official documents (professional and academic development diploma)	23	Reports	26	Observation	54
Results from principal performance evaluations	26	Acts and agreements	23	Results from principal performance evaluations	45

Fr: Frequency.

Reference: Research Project for Public Consult to re-build educational professional characteristics in Elementary Education in Yucatan, State (CEEY-SEGEY, 2015).

Table 4
Demographic characteristics of schools where principals worked.

Date	FG locality	Level	Type	Region	# of participants
10-Jun-14	Maxcanú	Preschool	Rural	Maxcanú	8
	CEEYS	Preschool	General	Merida	7
	Peto	Primary	Rural	Peto	8
	CEEYS	Primary	General	Mérida	6
	Center for Educational Development (CEDE)	Especial E.	Especial E.	Merida	7
12-Jun-14	CEEYS	Secondary	General	Merida	3
	CEEYS	Secondary	State	Merida	4
	CEEYS	Secondary	Technical	Merida	4
	Valladolid	Secondary	Rural	Valladolid	4
Total	9 FG			Total	51

Reference: Research Project for Public Consult to re-build educational professional characteristics in Elementary Education in Yucatan State (CEEY-SEGUEY, 2015).

Table 5
Performance characteristics for principals in elementary education from FG.

Performance characteristics for principals in elementary education from FG						
Position	Preschool		Primary		Secondary	
	Letter	SW	Letter	SW	Letter	SW
1	A	52	L	50	L	100
2	D	50	D	49	J	93
3	F	45	F	47	D	85
4	L	44	J	47	X	78
5	H	41	A	45	A	73
6	U	24	H	36	Y	66
7	E	22	C	30	H	63
8	J	22	U	22	E	54
9	G	20	V	21	I	51
10	R	20	B	19	F	49

Reference: Research Project for Public Consult to re-build educational professional characteristics in Elementary Education in Yucatan, State (CEEY-SEGUEY, 2015).

only present the ten most important ones because some characteristics in the list were not selected and others obtained a low SW.

According to the results, we identify three best characteristics by preschool educational level, indicating letters “A” in regards to *prove knowledge on content and educational approaches of elementary education*, “D” referred to *having professional development and constant training within the leading function*, and “F” referred to *promotion for the enforcement of general regulations and bylaws from educational system* (see Table 5).

Also in Table 5, we observe that characteristic “L” regarding to *leadership to promote social relationships between teachers and community* was the most important characteristic presented in primary and secondary educational levels.

On the other side, this same table indicates that characteristic letter “J” in regards to *promote dialog, teamwork, and exposition of ideas about educational experiences and problems* result the second most important characteristic included only in secondary educational level.

Results from FG indicate that in preschool, primary and secondary educational levels there are similitudes regarding the most important characteristics principals must possess. For instance, characteristic with letter “D” was the only one of three most important characteristics presented within the three

educational levels. Letter “F” was selected within the preschool and primary levels and it was placed in third position. In addition, by one side, letter “A” was the only and most important characteristic presented in preschool level.

Moreover, from FG results we can observe letters “F”, regarding to promote the enforcement of general regulations and bylaws from educational system and “H”, regarding to develop activities for self-evaluation between teachers and Academic Board of School, as important characteristics because principals selected them within the three educational levels of elementary education.

In FG principals had the space for recommending additional performance characteristics that were not considered within the list (see Table 6).

As results from this section, participants provided other characteristics such as to know Mayan language, to promote cultural values from the community, to organize and participate within the Native Languages Fest, to participate in formal courses to elaborate school regulations and internal bylaws in order to solve school conflicts, to identify social, psychological and health problems presented by students in the school, as important characteristics that also must be included in the principals’ performance profile.

Table 6

Categories for additional performance characteristics from *FG* suggested by principals in elementary education.

Additional performance characteristics from <i>FG</i>	
Principal	To know Mayan language. To promote cultural values from the community. To organize and participate within the Native Languages Fest. To participate in formal courses to elaborate school regulations and internal bylaws in order to solve school conflicts. To identify social, psychological and health problems presented by students in the school.
Reference: Research Project for Public Consult to re-build educational professional characteristics in Elementary Education in Yucatan, State (CEEY-SEGEY, 2015).	

Table 7

Five dimensions for principals' performance profile in elementary education.

Five dimensions for principals' performance profile				
Educational policy and pedagogical knowledge	Educational praxis	Professional development	Ethical and identity professional	Community commitment
A	G H J K	D	Y	L
F	Q S U	E		O

As we stated at the objective of this article, we analyzed some characteristics that contribute to principals' performance profile and to pedagogical leadership approach through main five dimensions: educational policy and pedagogical knowledge, educational praxis, professional development, ethical and identity professional, and community commitment (see Table 7).

These dimensions were obtained from two national proposals which describe a set of characteristics regarding to the principals' performance profile. We identify a major number characteristics emphasized within the educational praxis dimension. This result has much coherence because characteristics from the other four dimensions also are reflected within the educational praxis.

Discussion

Our study results not only show characteristics that must integrate the principal's profile according literature review and the opinion from participants, but also to recognize those characteristics that represent the mayor relevance for principals. In this section we present discussion from the theoretical framework and our results according to five established dimensions.

Related to the Educational policy and pedagogical knowledge dimension, as Bolívar (2010) suggested, we state it is necessary to demonstrate knowledge about pedagogical approach and content to promote the effectiveness in teaching and learning process. As Vázquez-Herrera (2010) highlighted, the principals recognized the necessity for getting knowledge related to the educational policies with the purpose to promote the enforcement of general, national and local laws and agreements, and guide their own and others functions.

Results referred to the Educational Praxis dimension, we found both participants and literature agree that promoting

reflection, dialog and work team, and having knowledge related to management must be part of principal praxis for accomplish their leading functions and therefore for the pedagogical leadership (Fayol & Taylor, 1987; Jones & George, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2006). From our findings and literature review, we agree that principals must influence on teachers behavior and whole school community action to improve the quality of education and thereby improve the educational attainment of students (Anderson, 2010; Bolívar, 2010; Weinstein et al., 2009). Also principals must be the manager who is characterized by possessing pedagogical leadership and to make decisions with collaborators in a democratic and participatory way (Leithwood et al., 2006).

In regards to the Professional Development dimension, our findings show that principals profile must include permanent professional development for themselves and their collaborators as teachers, in order to facilitate the learning and knowledge building and guarantee successful practices (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008). As Hopkins (2008) and our results suggest, for principals it is important being associated with other educational units to achieve goals that ensure success in school and for other EP, who are involved with. In this sense, we found also that professional development must include training related to aim more institutional leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008).

For Ethical and Identity Professional dimension, as Fayol and Taylor (1987), and Jones and George (2010) state, our results suggest that a leader must develop ethical relationships with other colleagues.

Finally about the Community Commitments dimension, demonstrate pedagogical leadership is one result emphasized by principals with the aim to promote social participation among the school community and parents, and to improve the students' performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Rojas & Gaspar, 2006).

Although our results do not reflected information related to the need to have physical health, intelligence, and competitiveness, we consider that it is implicit in all characteristics, which must integrate principals' performance profile (Jones & George, 2010).

Conclusions

We conclude that principals assert that characteristics related to their performance within a local context are leadership, knowledge of content, promotion of dialog, the enforcement of general regulations and bylaws, and having professional development are the most important to contribute for raising the quality of education.

We analyzed as something important, the development of a democratic process, which involved those affected by the current Educational Reform in Mexico.

The results of Public Consult provided solid information that supports our proposals required at national level.

Principals participated in re-building and reflecting about their current performance characteristic including both national and local contexts. It is important to highlight that these results are only part of our evidence that shows how our proposal have a significant relationship with the established national performance characteristics and also have a strong relationship with the theoretical framework from pedagogical leadership. In this sense, the theoretical analysis and our results allowed understand the pedagogical leadership as the cohesive element in every characteristic of principal's performance profile at elementary educational level.

Moreover, Yucatan was the pioneer for promoting a democratic process which re-building the set of characteristics that integrates the functions of EP. This project could provide experiences and knowledge to develop democratic, fair, and equity evaluation processes within educational system.

It is important to highlight that our study could lead to other researches focused to understand how principals, at local and national level, perform those characteristics identified in our study, mainly from the pedagogical leadership perspective.

Finally, some of our challenges were the participation of principals in the *O-LS* which was less than expected. Despite the scientific rigor on the methodology, we found possible causes such as lack of interest by participants, there were not available technological resources for them as we planned, deficient technical support and insufficient diffusion for this study.

Authors' contribution

All authors contributed equally to every phase of the article. We also want to thank Dr. Wilson Jesús Pool Cibrian for his collaboration to analyze the quantitative data obtained from the On-Line Survey. Dr. Pool currently leads the Department for Analysis and Diffusion from the CEEYS.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

- CEEYS: Center for Educational Evaluation of Yucatan State
 DOF: Diario Oficial de la Federación
 DOGEY: Diario Oficial del Gobierno del Estado de Yucatán
 EP: Educational Professionals
 FG: Focus Group
 GOTPS: General Organization for Teaching Professional Service
 LEYS: Law for Education of Yucatán State
 MEYS: Ministry of Education of Yucatan State
 MRM: Model for Regional Management
 NES: National Educational System
 NIEE: National Institute for Educational Evaluation
 OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
 O-LS: On-line Survey
 QSD: Quantitative Semantic Distance
 SEN: Sistema Educativo Nacional
 SPD: Servicio Profesional Docente
 SW: Semantic Weight
 TPS: Teaching Professional Service