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Gestión de la transferencia de Comunidades de Aprendizaje al conjunto de un país desde una empresa: El caso México

Alfonso Rodríguez Oramas



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Tesis doctoral

Gestión de la transferencia de Comunidades
de Aprendizaje al conjunto de un país desde
una empresa: El caso México

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“We simply do not know what the ultimate limits to the expansion of democratic egalitarian social empowerment might be. The best we can do, then, is treat the struggle to move forward on the pathways of social empowerment as an experimental process in which we continually test and retest the limits of possibility and try, as best we can, to create new institutions which will expand those limits themselves. In doing so we not only envision real utopias, but contribute to making utopias real.”

Erik Olin Wright (2010).
Envisioning Real Utopias

“La mejora de la sociedad no es solo un derecho humano, ni una opción de la investigación, sino un deber de las ciencias y de los científicos y científicas. El impacto de las ciencias sociales sobre la sociedad es necesario para volver a los objetivos por los que las ciencias sociales fueron creadas: analizar la sociedad con el objetivo de mejorar las vidas de los colectivos que la forman. En otras palabras, servir a la ciudadanía. Más allá de analizar por qué las realidades sociales tienen lugar, el deber de las ciencias sociales es desarrollar mecanismos de cambio y mejora de dichas realidades. El papel de las y los científicos sociales es, en este marco, el de conseguir impacto social en diálogo con las muy diversas personas que se beneficiarán de dicho impacto.”

Ramón Flecha (2018).
Evaluación del impacto social de la investigación.
Revista de Fomento Social.

Agradecimientos:

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A mis padres y hermanos, por siempre estar conmigo a cada paso. No dudaron en impulsarme cuando decidí estudiar sociología, me animaron a luchar por este sueño e incluso hicieron sacrificios económicos para que pudiera emprender mi camino. Agradezco que se interesen tanto por lo que hago y que me escuchen cada vez que les cuento emocionado lo que hacemos con las escuelas. Quiero que sepan que todas esas conversaciones que hemos tenido me han ayudado a moldear esta tesis doctoral más de lo que se imaginan.

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acompañan a diario en lo profesional y en lo personal, como se verá reflejado en esta tesis doctoral. Pero lo más importante, porque las amistades entrañables que encontré en CREA me han fortalecido e impulsado desde el comienzo hasta completar con éxito mis estudios de doctorado.

Al equipo de Sustentabilidad de Natura México y del Instituto Natura, por su seriedad y compromiso al involucrarse en la transferencia de Comunidades de Aprendizaje a México. Todos estos años han cuidado la base científica del proyecto permitiendo que llegue al sistema educativo mexicano sin modificarlo y sin adueñarse de él. Su trabajo y el de miles de consultoras y consultores Natura ha permitido financiar la llegada de las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito a cientos de escuelas mexicanas. Solo una pequeña parte de las muchas mejoras que tantas personas están viviendo gracias a ello está plasmada en esta tesis doctoral. Gracias por su compañerismo, su esfuerzo, su amistad y su confianza.

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A todo el profesorado, autoridades educativas, familias y estudiantes que he tenido la fortuna de conocer, porque esta tesis doctoral fue hecha pensando en todo momento en ustedes. Todos los niños y niñas de nuestro país merecen que en sus escuelas se implementen las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito por el simple hecho de ser lo que mejor funciona en educación en la actualidad. Por esa razón sus testimonios de transformación han sido una fuente constante de sentido para la realización de esta tesis doctoral.

Antes de comenzar:

El 27 de octubre de 2018, tuvo lugar en la Ciudad de México el 4to Foro Internacional de Comunidades de Aprendizaje. Se trató de una jornada donde se mezclaron grandes aportaciones científicas con testimonios de transformación profunda y mucha esperanza de que una educación de excelencia para todos es posible. Nos encontramos ese día personas pertenecientes a escuelas de educación básica y familiares de sus estudiantes, gente de las Secretarías de Educación, integrantes de Natura, el equipo de Vía Educación, y muchos otros actores. Entre tanta diversidad, había una sola constante: la ilusión de compartir que a través de las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito una mejor escuela era posible. Y logramos ese día ampliar los lazos de amistad y colaboración entre actores tan distintos que están logrando una transformación profunda en la realidad educativa de nuestro país, al menos donde Comunidades de Aprendizaje está llegando. Estamos, no me cabe duda, frente a uno de los movimientos educativos con mayor impacto social que han tenido lugar en nuestro país en las últimas décadas. La transferencia del proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje a México está marcando un hito en la forma en la que las escuelas mexicanas conciben la educación y logran a través de ella la transformación de los contextos donde están insertas, para generar mayor inclusión social y evitar la reproducción de las desigualdades. En esta tesis doctoral se expondrán los hallazgos más importantes derivados de la investigación que he llevado a cabo los últimos cuatro años, tiempo en el que he tenido el privilegio de coordinar a nivel nacional la transferencia del proyecto a nuestro país, contratado por la empresa que impulsa el proyecto en el continente americano. Con esto, espero aportar a la sociedad nuevas evidencias científicas que contribuyan a alcanzar el sueño de que todos los niños y niñas del mundo, y de México, encuentren en sus escuelas las actuaciones educativas de mayor excelencia internacional, que les aseguren las máximas posibilidades de alcanzar una vida plena y llena de oportunidades.

Xalapa, Veracruz. México.
1 de Noviembre de 2018.

Resumen:

Esta tesis doctoral se compone de siete artículos científicos publicados en el transcurso de mi trabajo como gestor de la red mexicana de Comunidades de Aprendizaje entre 2016 y 2019, y como coordinador de la red latinoamericana de Comunidades de Aprendizaje entre 2020 y 2022 para el Instituto Natura. Tres de los artículos que se presentan a continuación aportan nuevas evidencias sobre el impacto social en línea con el Objetivo 4: *Educación de Calidad* de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de la ONU que ha tenido la transferencia de Comunidades de Aprendizaje impulsada desde el año 2014 por el Instituto Natura, en colaboración con CREA (*Community of Research on Excellence for All*) y la organización civil mexicana Vía Educación A.C., en las escuelas, el profesorado y las comunidades educativas en México. Estos resultados son relevantes científicamente porque representan las primeras evidencias publicadas en revistas indexadas sobre el impacto de la transferencia del proyecto en el país. Además, otros tres artículos aportan nuevos elementos a la discusión de fondo sobre la transferibilidad de las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito a nivel internacional y sobre las características de la investigación científica que lleva a identificar actuaciones de éxito con impacto social. Finalmente, un séptimo artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación sobre empresas cooperativas competitivas derivada de mi participación como investigador pre-doctoral en investigaciones coordinadas por CREA antes de enfocarme al estudio de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje.

Abstract:

This doctoral thesis is made up of seven scientific articles published in the course of my work as manager of the Mexican network of Schools as Learning Communities between 2016 and 2019, and as coordinator of the Latin American network of Schools as Learning Communities between 2020 and 2022 for the Natura Institute. Three of the articles presented below provide new evidence on the social impact in line with Goal 4: *Quality Education* of the UN Sustainable Development Goals that the transfer of the Schools as Learning Communities project, promoted since 2014 by the Instituto Natura in collaboration with CREA (*Community of Research on Excellence for All*) and the Mexican civil organization Vía Educación A.C., has had in schools, teachers, and educational communities in Mexico. These results are scientifically relevant because they represent the first evidence published in indexed journals on the impact of the transfer of the project to the country. In addition, three other articles contribute new elements to the substantive discussion on the transferability of Successful Educational Actions at an international level and on the characteristics of scientific research that leads to the identification of successful actions with social impact. Finally, a seventh article presents the results of a research on competitive cooperative enterprises derived from my participation as a pre-doctoral researcher in a research project coordinated by CREA before I changed the focus of my doctoral studies to the transfer of the Schools as Learning Communities project.

Índice:

1. Introducción.....	13
1.1 Presentación de los trabajos	18
1.2 Justificación	20
Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de la ONU: Educación de Calidad.....	20
Revisión de literatura científica: Participación de la iniciativa privada en la educación	22
1.3 Objetivos de la tesis.....	26
1.4 Metodología	28
2. Resultados y discusión	31
3. Conclusiones	35
4. Referencias	39
5. Anexos.....	45
I. Metodología y sistematización de la revisión de literatura sobre el involucramiento de la empresa privada en la educación.....	45
a) PRIMER ARTÍCULO.....	59
b) SEGUNDO ARTÍCULO	69
c) TERCER ARTÍCULO	85
d) CUARTO ARTÍCULO.....	109
e) QUINTO ARTÍCULO	133
f) SEXTO ARTÍCULO	151
g) SÉPTIMO ARTÍCULO.....	169

1. Introducción

Comunidades de Aprendizaje es un proyecto de transformación social y cultural de centros educativos y sus entornos que busca conseguir una sociedad de la información para todos y todas (Elboj et al., 2002; Soler-Gallart & Rodrigues de Mello, 2021). El proyecto está en consonancia con las teorías científicas a nivel internacional que destacan como factores clave para el aprendizaje las interacciones y la participación de la comunidad (Cifuentes & Gómez, 2016). Las Comunidades de Aprendizaje se fundamentan en la concepción dialógica del aprendizaje desarrollada por Ramón Flecha (Flecha 1997; Aubert et al, 2008), y basan su funcionamiento en un conjunto de Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito avaladas por la comunidad científica internacional (grupos interactivos, tertulias dialógicas, formación de familiares, participación educativa de la comunidad, y el modelo dialógico de prevención y resolución de conflictos) (Flecha, 2015). A través de esas actuaciones de éxito, las Comunidades de Aprendizaje implican a todas las personas que, además del profesorado, influyen en el aprendizaje y desarrollo del estudiantado, como son familiares, personas que viven en el barrio, y voluntariado muy diverso. Esa participación educativa de la comunidad aumenta la cantidad y la calidad de las interacciones de aprendizaje de todo el estudiantado, lo que mejora drásticamente los resultados académicos y genera una mayor inclusión social. La puesta en marcha del proyecto consiste en cinco fases, las cuales tienen una duración aproximada de un curso escolar: sensibilización, toma de decisión, sueño, selección de prioridades, y planificación (Elboj et al., 2002; García & Hawrylak, 2010; Racionero-Plaza & Puig, 2017).

El primer antecedente de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje es La Escuela de Personas Adultas La Verneda-Sant Martí. Su inicio se remonta a 1978, en la ciudad de Barcelona, España (Sánchez, 1999), cuando un grupo de personas del barrio de Sant Martí decidieron ocupar un edificio que antes había pertenecido al régimen franquista y que ahora reclamaban para crear ahí un centro cultural que pudiese ofrecer servicios a la comunidad, entre ellos un centro de educación de personas adultas (Racionero & Serradell, 2005). La organización democrática de La Verneda-Sant Martí ha permitido que por más de 40 años las miles de personas adultas que ahí han participado hayan podido elevar su nivel académico y desarrollar habilidades necesarias para superar desigualdades a las que se enfrentan en la actual sociedad de la información, mejorando así la calidad de vida del barrio y de la comunidad. El impacto social de esta escuela ha sido ampliamente documentado por diversos investigadores e investigadoras, y ha merecido publicaciones en algunas de las revistas científicas más reconocidas en el ámbito educativo, como la *Harvard Educational Review* (Sánchez, 1999) o la *Teachers College Record* (Aubert et al., 2016).

Basándose en la experiencia transformadora de La Verneda-Sant Martí, y tomando como referencia modelos educativos exitosos en los Estados Unidos como el Programa de Desarrollo Escolar (Yale), Escuelas Aceleradas (Stanford) y Éxito para Todos (Johns Hopkins), en la década de los 90 el centro de investigación CREA (*Community of Research on Excellence for All*), con sede en la Universidad de Barcelona, desarrolló el modelo educativo de Comunidades de Aprendizaje (Morlà Folch, 2015). Así, desde que en 1995 se transformó la primera escuela de educación obligatoria en Comunidad de Aprendizaje en el País Vasco, en la actualidad más de 300 centros educativos implementan el proyecto en

España, siendo Andalucía, Cataluña y Euskadi las Comunidades Autónomas con mayor concentración de escuelas en el proyecto. De estas, existen Comunidades de Aprendizaje en todo el espectro educativo, desde escuelas de educación inicial (0-3 años) hasta educación de personas adultas y formación profesional, existiendo también experiencias en educación especial. De todas, la mayor concentración de Comunidades de Aprendizaje en España se encuentra en el nivel de educación infantil y primaria¹. El impacto social de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje ha sido estudiado ampliamente por la comunidad científica internacional, existiendo un amplio cuerpo de literatura que documenta las mejoras en rendimiento académico, convivencia e inclusión social del estudiantado y sus familias en las escuelas que implementan el proyecto (por ejemplo, Flecha & Soler, 2013; Girbés-Peco, Macías-Aranda & Álvarez-Cifuentes, 2015; Villardón-Gallego et al., 2018; Díez-Palomar et al., 2020; Roca et al., 2020). Esas mejoras sociales generadas por el proyecto han valido el reconocimiento de autores y autoras clave dentro de las ciencias sociales y del aprendizaje a nivel internacional, como Courtney Cazden, Joe Kincheloe, Michael Apple o Erik O. Wright, quienes han resaltado el potencial transformador de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje (Álvarez, 2015).

De entre todos los proyectos de investigación que respaldan las bases científicas de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje, el que con mucha diferencia ha aportado más a su estudio y puesta en práctica es el proyecto Integrado INCLUD-ED, *Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from Education* (Flecha, 2006-2011; 2015), el cual fue financiado por el Sexto Programa Marco de investigación de la Comisión Europea y coordinado por Ramón Flecha desde la Universidad de Barcelona. INCLUD-ED es hasta la fecha una de las investigaciones científicas sobre educación en Europa de mayor escala, rango científico e impacto social, siendo la única investigación de ciencias sociales seleccionada por la Comisión Europea entre las 10 historias de éxito de la investigación en ese continente (Comisión Europea, 2011a). El proyecto tuvo como objetivo analizar qué prácticas educativas contribuyen a perpetuar las desigualdades sociales, y cuáles, por el contrario, generan éxito educativo, así como mayor inclusión y cohesión social en contextos muy diversos. La principal contribución científica de INCLUD-ED fue la identificación de Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito, las cuales se definen como aquellas actuaciones que aumentan el éxito escolar y contribuyen a generar cohesión social en cualquier contexto donde se implementan (Flecha, 2015, p. 3). Las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito se caracterizan por reorganizar los recursos existentes en el centro educativo y la comunidad para impulsar la mejora académica de todo el alumnado, en lugar de segregar a algunos de ellos y ellas según sus niveles de aprendizaje o reducir sus oportunidades educativas (Flecha & Soler, 2013).

Las Comunidades de Aprendizaje se han extendido más allá del territorio español gracias a la colaboración entre CREA y diversos actores internacionales interesados en transferir el proyecto a sus territorios. Por ejemplo, el Núcleo de Investigación y Acción Social y Educativa (NIASE), con sede en la Universidad Federal de São Carlos, acompaña e investiga la transferencia del proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje a escuelas en Brasil desde principios de los 2000 (Mello, 2009). En Europa, después del INCLUD-ED, la transferencia del proyecto ha sido impulsada mayormente por proyectos de investigación financiados por

¹ <https://comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net/centros-en-funcionamiento/caracteristicas/>

fondos europeos y que han sido coordinados por investigadoras e investigadores de CREA. Por ejemplo, el proyecto ChiPe (*Children's Personal Empistemologies: capitalising on children's and families' knowledge in schools towards effective teaching and learning / 2013-2015*), financiado por las Acciones Marie Curie del Séptimo Programa Marco de la Comisión Europea e implementado desde la Universidad de Cambridge, estudió la transferencia de Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito a escuelas en Inglaterra. El proyecto SEAS4ALL (*Schools as Learning Communities in Europe: Successful Educational Actions for All / 2015-2017*), cofinanciado por el programa Erasmus+ de la Unión Europea, contribuyó a transferir el proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje y las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito a más escuelas en Chipre, España, Italia e Inglaterra. El Proyecto STEP4SEAS (*Social Transformation through Educational Policies based on Successful Educational Actions / 2017-2019*), también Erasmus+, contribuyó a transferir a nuevas escuelas las Comunidades de Aprendizaje, así como el desarrollo de políticas educativas para la inclusión social basadas en las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito en Chipre, España, Italia, Inglaterra y Malta. El proyecto Enlarge SEAS (*2019-2020*), el tercer Erasmus+ en esa misma línea, coordinó la transferencia de Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito a más escuelas en República Checa, Portugal, Malta y España. En el caso de Portugal, en 2017 CREA comenzó a colaborar con la Dirección General de Educación de ese país para implementar con financiamiento de la Comisión Europea (*Support to address school failure and drop out in educational areas of priority intervention [TEIP] in Portugal. Ref number N° SRSS/S2019/057*) un piloto de transferencia de las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito, y en 2019 comenzó el proyecto de escalamiento a más de 130 escuelas ubicadas en 50 zonas escolares de intervención prioritaria (Vieites Casado et al., 2021).

En el caso de América Latina, en 2013 la empresa brasileña Natura, a través del Instituto Natura (organización encargada de llevar a cabo los programas de acción social de la empresa en el ámbito de la educación y la sustentabilidad) estableció un convenio de colaboración con CREA con el objetivo de impulsar la transferencia de las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito a los distintos países de Latinoamérica donde la empresa tiene presencia: Brasil (donde se encuentra la matriz de la empresa), Argentina, Chile, Colombia, México y Perú. Pilar Álvarez Cifuentes, en su tesis doctoral, analizó el proceso de transferencia del proyecto desde sus fases iniciales, empezando por el establecimiento de un acuerdo de transferibilidad, pasando por la creación de redes de apoyo en los distintos países, la formación de formadores/as, las primeras escuelas piloto, y el seguimiento de la experiencia en las primeras fases del proceso (Álvarez, 2015). De acuerdo con datos proporcionados por el Instituto Natura (ver Imagen 1), hasta diciembre de 2019 más de 9,000 escuelas de Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, México y Perú implementaban al menos una Actuación Educativa de Éxito, siendo 447 de ellas Comunidades de Aprendizaje en pleno funcionamiento (Morales, 2019). Entre 2020 y 2022, ya durante la pandemia, escuelas de Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Paraguay han comenzado a implementar Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito con apoyo de la red latinoamericana de Comunidades de Aprendizaje coordinada por el Instituto Natura.

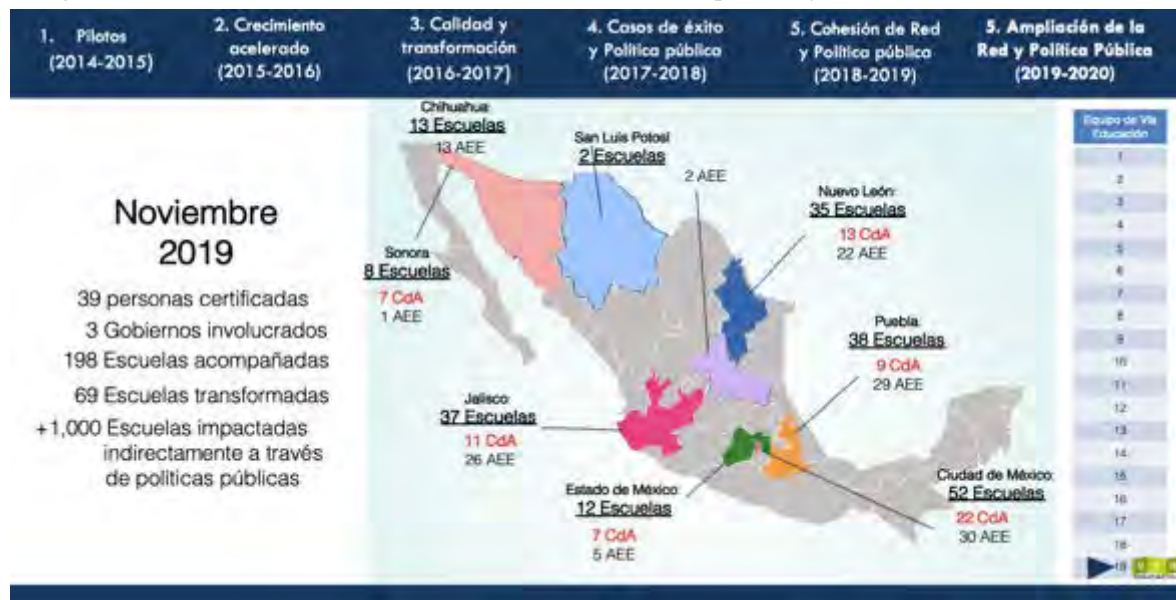
Imagen 1: Escuelas transformadas en Comunidad de Aprendizaje (CdeA) y escuelas implementando al menos una Actuación Educativa de Éxito (AEE) con apoyo de la red coordinada por el Instituto Natura.



*Imagen elaborada por Instituto Natura en noviembre de 2019.

En México, alrededor de 200 escuelas implementan Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito con acompañamiento cercano de la organización civil Vía Educación A.C., aliada del Instituto Natura para la transferencia de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje, y cientos más lo hacen a través de colaboraciones con actores políticos del país (Morales, 2019, capítulo de México).

Imagen 2: Resumen de la red mexicana de Comunidades de Aprendizaje al término del año 2019.



*Infografía elaborada por Alfonso Rodríguez Oramas en diciembre de 2019.

En 2016, cuando comencé mi investigación doctoral con un proyecto para estudiar la gestión de la transferencia de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje a México, existían aun relativamente pocas investigaciones sobre la transferencia y el impacto de este proyecto educativo en el continente latinoamericano. Sin embargo, los últimos años han visto un aumento de la literatura científica que aborda esa temática. Por mencionar algunas de las investigaciones publicadas desde entonces, García-Carrión et al. (2017) mostraron el impacto de las primeras sensibilizaciones llevadas a cabo por CREA en escuelas latinoamericanas en el marco de la colaboración con el Instituto Natura. Racionero-Plaza y Puig (2017) abordaron la colaboración entre Comunidades de Aprendizaje y los Centros Rurales de Formación por Alternancia en Perú y Guatemala. Mello y Braga (2018) estudiaron la transformación de la primera escuela para personas adultas en Comunidad de Aprendizaje en Brasil. Soler et al. (2019) documentaron el impacto en aprendizajes y convivencia de la transformación de una escuela rural colombiana en una Comunidad de Aprendizaje. En el caso mexicano, además de los artículos que componen esta tesis doctoral, la tesis doctoral de Ocampo Castillo (2020) mostró los avances en inclusión de mujeres adultas sin titulación académica a través de tertulias matemáticas dialógicas en una Comunidad de Aprendizaje en Ciudad de México. Finalmente, Troya et al. (2021) relataron las acciones emprendidas por autoridades educativas de diferentes países en Latinoamérica, entre ellos México, para desarrollar políticas públicas que impulsen las Comunidades de Aprendizaje y las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito.

Como punto de partida, esta tesis doctoral se sitúa al filo de la investigación científica sobre la transferencia e impacto del proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje en contextos internacionales. Concretamente, avanza el conocimiento científico sobre las transformaciones educativas y sociales que se consiguen cuando este modelo se implementa en contextos como el mexicano. Además, como se explicará más adelante, la tesis doctoral también abona a la discusión más amplia sobre los elementos que contribuyen a generar impacto social desde la investigación científica en ciencias sociales (Flecha, 2018) y, en concreto, a superar las desigualdades sociales a través de la educación.

1.1 Presentación de los trabajos

La presente tesis doctoral se compone de los siguientes siete artículos científicos:

Título del artículo	Año	Autoría	Revista	Bases de datos	Estatus
<i>Dialogue With Educators to Assess the Impact of Dialogic Teacher Training for a Zero-Violence Climate in a Nursery School</i>	2020	Alfonso Rodríguez-Oramas, Harkaitz Zubiri, Igone Arostegui, Olga Serradell, & Paquita Sanvicén-Torné	Qualitative Inquiry	JCR (Q1, 2020) SCOPUS (Q1, 2020)	Publicado
<i>The Impact of Evidence-Based Dialogic Training of Special Education Teachers on the Creation of More Inclusive and Interactive Learning Environments</i>	2021	Alfonso Rodríguez-Oramas, Pilar Alvarez, Mimar Ramis-Salas, & Laura Ruiz-Eugenio	Frontiers in Psychology	JCR (Q1, 2021) SCOPUS (Q1, 2021)	Publicado
<i>Recuperando el sentido de la profesión docente a través de tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas: voces de profesorado de la Sierra Norte de México</i>	2021	Alfonso Rodríguez-Oramas, & José Ramón Flecha García	Articulando e Construyendo Saberes	Latindex	Publicado
<i>Improving students' academic performance and reducing conflicts through family involvement in primary school learning activities: a Mexican case study</i>	2021	Alfonso Rodríguez-Oramas, Teresa Morla-Folch, Maria Vieites Casado, & Laura Ruiz-Eugenio	Cambridge Journal of Education	JCR (Q2, 2021) SCOPUS (Q1, 2021)	Publicado
<i>The Critical Pedagogy that Transforms the Reality</i>	2021	Rosa Valls-Carol, Roseli Rodrigues de Mello, Alfonso Rodríguez-Oramas, Andrea Khalfaoui, Esther Roca-Campos, Mengna Guo, & Gisela Redondo	RISE International Journal of Sociology of Education	JCR (Emerging Sources Citation Index, 2021) SCOPUS (Q2, 2021)	Publicado
<i>Egalitarian dialogue enriches both social impact and research methodologies</i>	2022	Esther Roca, Guiomar Merodio, Aitor Gómez, & Alfonso Rodríguez-Oramas	International Journal of Qualitative Methods	JCR (Q1, 2021) SCOPUS (Q1, 2021)	Publicado
<i>Participation and organizational commitment in the Mondragon Group</i>	2022	Alfonso Rodríguez-Oramas, Ana Burgués-Freitas, Mar Joanpere, & Ramón Flecha	Frontiers in Psychology	JCR (Q1, 2021) SCOPUS (Q1, 2021)	Publicado

Seis de ellos se enmarcan en la línea de investigación sobre aprendizaje dialógico, Comunidades de Aprendizaje y Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito desarrollada e impulsada por CREA. En esta línea de investigación se estudian actuaciones educativas basadas en evidencia que han demostrado conseguir impacto social y contribuir a la superación de las desigualdades sociales al ser implementadas en muy diversos contextos educativos en el mundo. Las investigaciones que se describen en esos artículos fueron llevadas a cabo en el transcurso de mi trabajo como gestor de la red mexicana de Comunidades de Aprendizaje entre 2016 y 2019, y como coordinador de la red latinoamericana de Comunidades de Aprendizaje entre 2020 y 2022 para el Instituto Natura.

Los artículos “*The Impact of Evidence-Based Dialogic Training of Special Education Teachers on the Creation of More Inclusive and Interactive Learning Environments*”, “*Recuperando el sentido de la profesión docente a través de tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas: voces de profesorado de la Sierra Norte de México*”, e “*Improving students’ academic performance and reducing conflicts through family involvement in primary school learning activities: a Mexican case study*”, se basan en trabajo de campo que realicé entre 2018 y 2020 en escuelas y con profesorado mexicano. Durante ese periodo, debido a mi posición como coordinador del proyecto en mi país, tuve la oportunidad de interactuar con la mayoría de las personas involucradas en las investigaciones y, en algunos casos, de participar directamente en las formaciones dialógicas del profesorado que derivaron en los impactos que ahí se describen. Aunque se trata de un botón de muestra, los tres casos ayudan a ejemplificar el impacto social que se ha conseguido en México gracias a los esfuerzos para transferir el proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje al país desde 2014. Cabe mencionar que, aunque estos tres artículos fueron publicados ya durante la pandemia de COVID-19, los hechos que ahí se relatan son previos a la misma.

Los artículos “*Dialogue With Educators to Assess the Impact of Dialogic Teacher Training for a Zero-Violence Climate in a Nursery School*”, “*The Critical Pedagogy that Transforms the Reality*”, y “*Egalitarian dialogue enriches both social impact and research methodologies*” se enmarcan en debates científicos e investigaciones en sociología y educación en las que participo por formar parte de la comunidad de investigadores e investigadoras CREA. Sería difícil explicar cuán importante ha sido esta afiliación (deseada y decidida libremente) para mi formación como investigador y para mi persona. La oportunidad de colaborar en proyectos de investigación competitivos con impacto social en ciencias sociales a nivel español y europeo. El altísimo nivel científico y ético de los debates en los que he tenido la fortuna de participar, por ejemplo, en el Seminario Jesús Gómez. El diálogo igualitario que ha acompañado todas las interacciones con las y los investigadores de CREA, incluso con quienes tienen los currículums más extensos. El ejemplo de coherencia de quienes ahí continúan trabajando incansablemente incluso después de conseguir plazas estables en sus universidades. La valiente, admirable y cada día más exitosa lucha de personas como Ramón Flecha para erradicar la violencia de género en las universidades, comenzando por la propia Universidad de Barcelona. Todo esto y más ha formado parte de mi aprendizaje como investigador durante el desarrollo de mi tesis doctoral. Y precisamente esos debates se reflejan en las discusiones de fondo que se presentan en estos tres artículos científicos. Discusiones, a mi parecer, fundamentales para el avance de la sociología de la educación.

El séptimo artículo, “*Participation and organizational commitment in the Mondragon Group*”, no se relaciona con la transferencia de Comunidades de Aprendizaje a México. Se trata de un artículo que deriva de mi participación como investigador pre-doctoral entre 2014 y 2015 en el proyecto *Cooperativismo competitivo: Aportaciones a la sostenibilidad y calidad del empleo en el momento económico actual*, financiado por el Plan nacional I+D+I del Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación, Ciencia Política, Sociología y Geografía de España, y coordinado por el profesor Ramón Flecha desde la Universidad de Barcelona. El contrato APIF que obtuve en 2014 me permitió comenzar mis estudios de doctorado en sociología en la Universidad de Barcelona ese mismo año. Participé en investigaciones para identificar y

transferir aquellas actuaciones cooperativistas que permiten a las empresas cooperativas de Mondragón ser exitosas en los mercados internacionales al tiempo de mantener altos niveles de participación democrática y ser más igualitarias que las empresas tradicionales. En 2016, cuando fui contratado por Natura México para coordinar la red mexicana de Comunidades de Aprendizaje, renuncié a mi contrato APIF y cambié mi foco de investigación hacia la transferencia de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje a México. Junto con mis directoras decidí incluir este artículo en la tesis doctoral por ser el producto de la primera etapa de mi formación como investigador pre-doctoral, además de que refleja mi capacidad de realizar investigación científica utilizando la metodología comunicativa, en la que me he especializado a lo largo del doctorado.

1.2 Justificación

En esta sección presento una revisión de literatura científica que realicé en 2019 para identificar el estado del debate internacional sobre el involucramiento de la empresa en la educación. Los vacíos en la literatura científica que logré identificar en aquel momento continúan siendo válidos para justificar las investigaciones que conforman esta tesis doctoral.

* * *

Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de la ONU: Educación de Calidad

La educación se encuentra en el centro de las agendas de distintos organismos internacionales que buscan impulsar mejoras en la calidad de vida de la población. Por ejemplo, en la Asamblea General de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) que tuvo lugar el 25 de septiembre de 2015 se aprobó la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible², en la que se delinearon los 17 Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), así como las 169 metas que servirán de guía a los países y actores interesados para asegurar el cumplimiento de los derechos humanos de toda la población, reducir las desigualdades y cuidar el medio ambiente desde una mirada global. En la declaración, quienes se suscriben se comprometen en materia educativa a:

“(…) proporcionar una educación de calidad, inclusiva e igualitaria a todos los niveles: enseñanza preescolar, primaria, secundaria y terciaria y formación técnica y profesional. Todas las personas, sea cual sea su sexo, raza y origen étnico, incluidas las personas con discapacidad, los migrantes, los pueblos indígenas, los niños y los jóvenes, especialmente si se encuentran en situaciones de vulnerabilidad, deben tener acceso a posibilidades de aprendizaje permanente que las ayuden a adquirir los conocimientos y aptitudes necesarios para aprovechar las oportunidades que se les presenten y participar plenamente en la sociedad. Nos esforzaremos por brindar a los niños y los jóvenes un entorno propicio para la plena

² Resolución aprobada por la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas el 25 de septiembre de 2015, disponible en: <https://undocs.org/es/A/RES/70/1>

realización de sus derechos y capacidades, ayudando a nuestros países a sacar partido al dividendo demográfico, incluso mediante la seguridad en las escuelas y la cohesión de las comunidades y las familias.” (p. 8)

Lo anterior queda enmarcado dentro del **Objetivo 4: Educación de Calidad**³ que fue definido como “Garantizar una educación inclusiva y equitativa de calidad y promover oportunidades de aprendizaje permanente para todos” (p. 19). Para alcanzar este Objetivo, la ONU recomienda, entre otras acciones, “*alentar al sector privado a que invierta recursos en el desarrollo de centros educativos y en la elaboración de herramientas pedagógicas*”⁴. Es decir, desde la mirada de la ONU, para abordar los retos que en materia educativa enfrentan las sociedades actuales es imprescindible incentivar la participación de la iniciativa privada en la mejora educativa, colaborando con gobiernos y organizaciones no gubernamentales para la obtención de mejores resultados educativos.

La Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO), al elaborar un análisis detallado sobre las metas específicas del Objetivo 4 y las Modalidades de aplicación para alcanzarlo, comenta sobre el involucramiento del sector privado, las organizaciones filantrópicas y las fundaciones que éstos⁵:

“(…) pueden cumplir una función importante si utilizan su experiencia, enfoques innovadores, experiencia empresarial y recursos financieros para fortalecer la educación pública. Pueden favorecer la educación y el desarrollo mediante alianzas de múltiples partes interesadas, inversión y contribuciones que sean transparentes, se ajusten a las prioridades locales y nacionales, respeten la educación como un derecho humano y no agraven las desigualdades. Asimismo, pueden:

- *Movilizar recursos adicionales para la educación pública, entre otras cosas pagando impuestos justos, y asignar dichos recursos a ámbitos prioritarios;*
- *Ayudar a los planificadores de la educación y la capacitación práctica a comprender las tendencias del mercado laboral y las necesidades en materia de calificaciones, lo que facilita la transición de la escuela al trabajo, y promover enfoques innovadores para asumir los desafíos que plantea la educación;*
- *Multiplicar las oportunidades que ofrece la educación integradora ofreciendo servicios y actividades adicionales para llegar a los más marginados, dentro del marco de normas y criterios regulados por el Estado.” (p. 58)*

Además, UNESCO señala sobre los recursos financieros privados destinados a la educación que:

“Más allá de su función esencial de contribuyente, se ha descubierto un potencial considerable del sector privado para complementar los recursos asignados a la educación y reforzar sinergias. Será fundamental velar por que el gasto que el sector

³ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/education/>

⁴ https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/10/4_Spanish_Why_it_Matters.pdf

⁵ Disponible en: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656_spa

privado destina a la educación se dirija a los países y personas que más lo necesitan, y reforzar la educación como un bien público”.

Finalmente, la UNESCO también recomienda procurar una coordinación eficaz y mecanismos de regulación que garanticen la transparencia y la rendición de cuentas para que las alianzas con el sector privado tengan éxito (p. 70).

Revisión de literatura científica: Participación de la iniciativa privada en la educación

Con la finalidad de conocer el estado del debate entre la comunidad científica internacional sobre la participación de las empresas y organismos privados en la educación, y saber si existían evidencias científicas de que la participación de la iniciativa privada en la educación hubiese contribuido con el objetivo 4 de los ODS, entre septiembre de 2018 y marzo de 2019 realicé una revisión de literatura científica a profundidad en la base de datos *ISI Web of Science* de artículos publicados en revistas indexadas en el *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)*. La revisión incluyó una combinación de búsqueda por palabras clave y una búsqueda en las revistas mejor clasificadas en JCR en las categorías *Business, Education, Ethics, Management* y *Sociology*. La metodología completa que se siguió para la realización de esta revisión de literatura, así como la sistematización del contenido de los artículos puede encontrarse en el anexo “I” de esta tesis doctoral.

En total, identifiqué 16 textos que contenían aportaciones científicas relevantes sobre el involucramiento de empresas en causas sociales y en la educación. A continuación, se presenta la lista final de textos científicos identificados, así como las revista en las que fueron publicados y el cuartil de JCR en que están clasificadas:

Tipo de texto	Título	Autores	Año	Revista	Cuartil en JCR	Veces citado (04-2019)
Artículo	The Case for and Against Business Assumption of Social Responsibilities	Keith Davis	1973	<i>The Academy of Management Journal</i>	1-Business 1-Management	517
Artículo	A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance	Carroll, Archie B.	1979	<i>The Academy of Management Review</i>	1-Business 1-Management	-
Artículo	The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders,	Carroll, Archie B.	1991	<i>Business Horizons</i>	2-Business	-
Artículo	The Competitive Advantage of Corporate Philanthropy	Michael E. Porter; Mark R. Kramer	2002	<i>Harvard Business Review</i>	1-Business 1-Management	829
Artículo	Corporate Social Responsibility: a Three-Domain Approach	Mark S. Schwartz; Archie B. Carroll	2003	<i>Business Ethics Quarterly</i>	3-Business; 1-Ethics	367
Artículo	Looking Through the Eyes of Others: assessing mutual expectations and experiences in order to shape dialogue and collaboration between business	Jan Jonker; André Nijhof	2006	<i>Corporate Governance: An International Review</i>	1-Business 1-Management	43

	and NGOs with respect to CSR					
Artículo	Strategy & Society: The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility	Michael E. Porter; Mark R. Kramer	2006	<i>Harvard Business Review</i>	1-Business 1-Management	2,395
Artículo	A life cycle model of multi-stakeholder networks	Julia Roloff	2008	<i>Business Ethics: A European Review</i>	2-Business 1-Ethics	27
Artículo	Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Sustainability: Separate Pasts, Common Futures	Ivan Montiel	2008	<i>Organization & Environment</i>	1-Environmental Studies 1-Management	167
Artículo	Corporate Motives for Social Initiative: Legitimacy, Sustainability, or the Bottom Line?	Peggy Simcic Brønn; Deborah Vidaver-Cohen	2009	<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	1-Ethics 2-Business	92
Artículo	Private foundations, philanthropy, and partnership in education and development: mapping the terrain	Prachi Srivastava; Su-Ann Oh	2010	<i>International Journal of Educational Development</i>	2-Educatio & Educational Research	17
Artículo	The Business Case for Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review of Concepts, Research and Practice	Archie B. Carroll; Kareem M. Shabana	2010	<i>International Journal of Management Reviews</i>	1-Business 1-Management	865
Artículo	Researches in Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review of Shifting Focus, Paradigms, and Methodologies	Shallini S. Taneja; Pawan Kumar Taneja; Rajen K. Gupta	2011	<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	2-Business 1-Ethics	77
Capítulo de libro	<i>Capítulo 7:</i> Private foundations, philanthropy, and partnership in education and development: mapping the terrain <i>Título del libro:</i> Public Private Partnerships in Education: New Actors and Modes of Governance in a Globalizing World	Prachi Srivastava; Su-Ann Oh	2012	<i>Edward Elgar Publishing</i>	Economics; Education & Educational Research	47 (el libro)
Capítulo de libro	<i>Capítulo 8:</i> A disconnect between motivations and education needs: Why American corporate philanthropy alone will not educate the most marginalized <i>Título del libro:</i> Public Private Partnerships in Education: New Actors and Modes of Governance in a Globalizing World	Justin van Fleet	2012	<i>Edward Elgar Publishing</i>	Economics; Education & Educational Research	47 (el libro)
Artículo	Inspiring action, building understanding: how cross-sector partnership engages business in addressing global challenges	Helen Wadham; Richard Warren	2013	<i>Business Ethics: A European Review</i>	2-Business 1-Ethics	8
Artículo	The Social Bases of Philanthropy	Emily Barman	2017	<i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>	1-Sociology	2

La revisión de la literatura científica antes enlistada me permitió identificar algunos temas ausentes en las investigaciones disponibles en la *ISI Web of Science* hasta marzo de 2019. Tomando en cuenta que existen diversas limitaciones al alcance de esta revisión (como pueden ser el rango de años consultados, las palabras clave utilizadas, o la utilización exclusiva de la *ISI Web* y no de otras bases de datos), cabe destacar tres vacíos significativos que identifiqué en la investigación consultada:

1. *Sobre el impacto en las comunidades “beneficiadas” de la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa de las empresas:*

Como señalan Porter y Kramer (2006), las empresas no suelen hacer pública información concreta sobre el impacto de sus iniciativas de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa [el cual se asume positivo] que permita valorar si sus acciones verdaderamente están contribuyendo a la mejora de las comunidades en las que invierten. Además, como señala Barman (2017), la academia tampoco ha generado un cuerpo de investigación que permita saber si las empresas están logrando contribuir a la mejora social de sus beneficiarios. Por tanto, existe un campo de oportunidad para la investigación sociológica y empresarial para abrir líneas de investigación sobre los tipos de impacto social que las iniciativas de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa y la filantropía empresarial están teniendo en distintos sectores sociales más allá del impacto en las empresas mismas. Hacer esto en países como México sería doblemente relevante ya que existe información muy limitada sobre la relación entre filantropía empresarial y educación en países en desarrollo (van Fleet, 2012).

Por esas razones, un vacío importante en la literatura científica es la falta de conocimiento sobre la eficacia (o falta de ella) de las iniciativas educativas impulsadas por las empresas a través de su Responsabilidad Social Corporativa o filantropía empresarial para mejorar los resultados educativos, mejorar las condiciones de vida y/o aumentar la inclusión social de aquellas comunidades en las que intervienen.

2. *Sobre el impacto en las comunidades “beneficiadas” de las iniciativas educativas de las fundaciones privadas:*

Similar a lo que sucede con la investigación en Responsabilidad Social Corporativa y filantropía empresarial, no existe suficiente investigación sobre el involucramiento de fundaciones privadas en la educación (la cual es otra forma en que las empresas pueden tener injerencia en los fenómenos educativos) que permita hacer afirmaciones sobre los beneficios sociales derivados de esta. Más concretamente, como quedó en evidencia en la revisión de literatura de Srivastava y Oh (2010, 2012), no hay información suficiente sobre los tipos de iniciativas educativas que son impulsadas por la variedad de fundaciones privadas que existen a nivel internacional (entre ellas, fundaciones pequeñas y fundaciones en países “del sur”) que permita valorar si éstas contribuyen de manera significativa a la mejora educativa, particularmente en favor de las poblaciones más vulnerables.

Por esas razones, otro importante vacío en la literatura científica es la falta de evidencias científicas sobre la eficacia (o falta de ella) de las intervenciones educativas impulsadas por las fundaciones privadas para mejorar los resultados educativos, mejorar las condiciones de vida y/o aumentar la inclusión social de aquellas comunidades en las que intervienen.

3. *Sobre la naturaleza de las iniciativas sociales impulsadas:*

Por último, cabe resaltar un vacío en la literatura científica que no es mencionado por ninguno de los autores antes referidos, y que está relacionado con la naturaleza de las iniciativas sociales que se impulsan desde las empresas (a través de su filantropía empresarial o las acciones de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa) y desde las fundaciones privadas. Mientras que la conversación académica parece girar en torno a asuntos como las motivaciones de las empresas para involucrarse en iniciativas sociales o los impactos que dichas iniciativas tienen en distintos aspectos de la empresa, esta rara vez se concentra en analizar las características de las intervenciones sociales en cuestión, ignorando por completo el análisis de la idoneidad de sus bases teóricas y prácticas para encarar los problemas sociales que pretenden enfrentar. En otras palabras, la investigación revisada parece meter en el mismo saco a todas las intervenciones sociales sin tomar en cuenta, por ejemplo, si la empresa a través de sus acciones de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa está promoviendo la implementación de una intervención educativa que esté basada en las últimas recomendaciones de la comunidad científica internacional, o sí, por el contrario, está promoviendo una intervención educativa bien intencionada que surge de la “creatividad” de la misma empresa pero que no cuenta con ninguna base científica e incluso puede promover (posiblemente sin saberlo) situaciones que empeoren los resultados educativos. Como puede observarse por la lista de palabras clave utilizadas en esta revisión de literatura, se intentó localizar publicaciones que ligaran el estudio de intervenciones sociales (y específicamente educativas) basadas en evidencia científica con las actividades filantrópicas de la empresa, pero no fue posible encontrar artículos con esa característica.

Por esas razones, un último vacío importante en la investigación científica es la falta de estudios que analicen si las intervenciones educativas y sociales que se promueven a través de la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa, la filantropía empresarial y las fundaciones privadas, se basan en evidencias científicas internacionales que avalen su capacidad de generar impacto social (contribuyendo con objetivos sociales como los ODS) o sí, por el contrario, carecen de base científica demostrable.

1.3 Objetivos de la tesis

Partiendo de los vacíos identificados en la literatura científica internacional sobre el involucramiento de la empresa privada en la educación, y tomando en cuenta la historia de la transferencia del proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje a México, decidí plantear los siguientes dos objetivos para la presente tesis doctoral:

Objetivo 1. Aportar evidencias (en caso de existir) sobre el impacto social en línea con el objetivo 4 de los ODS que ha tenido la transferencia de Comunidades de Aprendizaje impulsada desde el año 2014 por el Instituto Natura, en colaboración con CREA y la organización civil mexicana Vía Educación A.C., en las escuelas, el profesorado y/o las comunidades educativas donde se ha implementado el proyecto en México.

Objetivo 2. Contribuir a la discusión sobre la transferibilidad de las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito a nivel internacional y sobre las características de la investigación científica que lleva a identificar actuaciones de éxito con impacto social.

A continuación, se muestra una tabla que presenta la relación entre los artículos publicados y los objetivos de la tesis a los que contribuyen:

Orden de presentación	Título	Objetivo que contribuye
1°	<i>Dialogue With Educators to Assess the Impact of Dialogic Teacher Training for a Zero-Violence Climate in a Nursery School</i>	O2
2°	<i>The Impact of Evidence-Based Dialogic Training of Special Education Teachers on the Creation of More Inclusive and Interactive Learning Environments</i>	O1
3°	<i>Recuperando el sentido de la profesión docente a través de tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas: voces de profesorado de la Sierra Norte de México</i>	O1
4°	<i>Improving students' academic performance and reducing conflicts through family involvement in primary school learning activities: a Mexican case study</i>	O1
5°	<i>The Critical Pedagogy that Transforms the Reality</i>	O2
6°	<i>Egalitarian dialogue enriches both social impact and research methodologies</i>	O2
7°	<i>Participation and organizational commitment in the Mondragon Group</i>	-

Los artículos 2° y 4° de esta tesis aportan evidencias sobre mejoras educativas y sociales derivadas del trabajo con Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito en escuelas mexicanas, respondiendo así al primer objetivo de la tesis. Específicamente, el artículo 2° da cuenta de cómo profesorado de educación especial que participó en formación pedagógica dialógica logró transferir los grupos interactivos y las tertulias dialógicas a las aulas para asegurar la inclusión del alumnado que antes no conseguían incluir. El artículo 4° da cuenta de las mejoras en resultados académicos y de disminución de conflictos violentos que fueron observados en una escuela mexicana después de involucrar durante dos años a las familias

en la implementación de grupos interactivos, tertulias literarias dialógicas y biblioteca tutorizada. Por su parte, el artículo 3º también contribuye al primer objetivo de la tesis al aportar evidencias del impacto en la profesionalización docente y la recuperación del sentido de su profesión que experimentó profesorado mexicano de una zona rural después de participar en tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas. En conjunto, los tres artículos son solo un botón de muestra de las muchas transformaciones que están teniendo lugar en el país gracias a la transferencia de este modelo educativo.

Los artículos 1º, 5º y 6º contribuyen al segundo objetivo de la tesis al aportar elementos para discutir tanto el impacto de las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito como las características de las teorías e investigaciones que llevan a ese impacto social. El artículo 1º aporta evidencias sobre cómo la formación pedagógica dialógica ha contribuido a crear espacios libres de violencia desde la primera infancia en un centro educativo español. Sin embargo, también explica cómo el diálogo igualitario con las personas investigadas, elemento fundamental de la metodología comunicativa de investigación, es una herramienta de gran utilidad para analizar con mayor profundidad las realidades sociales y poder identificar claramente los impactos de intervenciones educativas como la que ahí se describe.

El artículo 5º abre un debate de suma importancia para la sociología de la educación a nivel internacional, a decir, se plantea la diferencia entre la pedagogía crítica que desarrollan personas en todo el mundo que sí consigue mejoras educativas y sociales, y el uso por algunos autores y autoras de la etiqueta “pedagogía crítica” para obtener beneficios personales pero que está lejos de contribuir a la superación de las desigualdades sociales. Este debate no solo es de utilidad dentro de la academia, sino que permite al público en general (incluidas potencialmente las personas que trabajan en las empresas y las fundaciones privadas) identificar más fácilmente a las y los referentes en educación cuyas aportaciones teóricas y prácticas tienen mayor potencial de conseguir impacto social.

El artículo 6º retoma de manera mucho más amplia la importancia de incorporar el diálogo igualitario en la investigación científica para lograr aumentar el impacto social de las investigaciones y también enriquecer las metodologías de investigación. A través de una revisión de literatura científica a profundidad se muestra cómo en las últimas décadas ha aumentado la incorporación del diálogo igualitario en las investigaciones de mayor rango científico en Europa y otras partes del mundo. Además, se muestra cómo la incorporación del diálogo igualitario durante la investigación fue clave en un proyecto para transferir Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito y lograr con ello impacto social con el estudiantado y sus familias.

Finalmente, aunque no responde directamente a ninguno de los dos objetivos de esta tesis, el artículo 7º se enmarca de manera más amplia en las investigaciones lideradas por CREA que buscan identificar actuaciones de éxito en distintos ámbitos que contribuyan a superar las desigualdades sociales que sufren diversos grupos vulnerables. La investigación que ahí se presenta aporta evidencias que sugieren que la participación democrática en ambientes laborales como los que ahí se describen está relacionada con un mayor compromiso hacia las organizaciones en donde se trabaja. Aunque en otro ámbito completamente, este debate comparte elementos con las investigaciones sobre liderazgo dialógico en las Comunidades de Aprendizaje que han identificado cómo el diálogo igualitario que promueve la

participación de toda la comunidad en la escuela es fundamental para lograr la implicación de más personas y con ello conseguir mayores mejoras en resultados académicos y de inclusión social (Redondo-Sama, 2015).

1.4 Metodología

La presente tesis doctoral se enmarca en la metodología comunicativa de investigación (Gómez et al., 2004; Flecha & Soler, 2014; Gómez, Puigvert & Flecha, 2011; Gómez et al., 2019). Esta se caracteriza por incorporar a las personas o comunidades estudiadas en todo el proceso, desde la planeación hasta el análisis de resultados, con la finalidad de investigar *con* y *para* la mejora de los grupos vulnerables, y no a costa de ellos. Para ello se establece un diálogo igualitario e intersubjetivo en el que el personal investigador aporta las evidencias científicas en el tema en cuestión y estas se contrastan con las experiencias cotidianas de las personas que participan en la investigación, lo que permite construir nuevo conocimiento útil para transformar las realidades. Las técnicas de recogida de información propias de esta metodología son el relato de vida comunicativo, el grupo de discusión comunicativo, y la observación comunicativa. El análisis de la información en la metodología comunicativa tiene como objetivo identificar elementos que reproducen o incrementan las desigualdades sociales (dimensión exclusora) así como aquellos elementos que permiten disminuir y superar las desigualdades (dimensión transformadora).

La metodología comunicativa ha demostrado ampliamente su capacidad para generar impacto social (Puigvert, Christou & Holdford, 2012; Redondo-Sama et al., 2020). Ha sido utilizada en algunos de los proyectos de investigación con mayor rango científico e impacto social de la investigación europea en ciencias sociales (Gómez et al., 2019), como son WORKALÓ (Flecha, 2001-2004), e INCLUD-ED (Flecha, 2006-2011). Por esa razón organismos como la Comisión Europea han reconocido su alto potencial para transformar los sistemas sociales, generar impacto político y beneficiar a los grupos más vulnerables (Comisión Europea, 2011b). Además, está respaldada por un amplio cuerpo de literatura científica, entre los que destacan tres números especiales de la revista JCR cuartil 1 *Qualitative Inquiry* (Volume 17 Issue 3, March 2011; Volume 21 Issue 10, December 2015; Volume 26 Issue 8-9, October-November 2020) y publicaciones en la colección especial sobre impacto social de la revista JCR cuartil 2 *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* (Volume 20 Issue, January-December 2021; Volume 21 Issue, January-December 2022). Dos de los artículos de esta tesis doctoral forman parte de los números especiales de dichas revistas.

Los artículos “*Dialogue With Educators to Assess the Impact of Dialogic Teacher Training for a Zero-Violence Climate in a Nursery School*” e “*Improving students’ academic performance and reducing conflicts through family involvement in primary school learning activities: a Mexican case study*” son estudios de caso. El primero presenta datos empíricos recogidos a través de entrevistas con enfoque comunicativo con educadoras que trabajan en el centro educativo. El segundo combina el uso de entrevistas semiestructuradas con enfoque comunicativo, grupos de enfoque comunicativos y observaciones comunicativas con una

revisión de documentos que incluye, entre otros, los resultados educativos en pruebas estandarizadas y los reportes de conducta de la escuela.

Los artículos *“The Impact of Evidence-Based Dialogic Training of Special Education Teachers on the Creation of More Inclusive and Interactive Learning Environments”* y *“Recuperando el sentido de la profesión docente a través de tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas: voces de profesorado de la Sierra Norte de México”* recogen las voces de profesorado perteneciente a distintas escuelas mexicanas, tratándose de profesorado de educación especial en el primero y profesorado “regular” en el segundo. Ambos se basan en entrevistas semiestructuradas con enfoque comunicativo, y el análisis de la información obtenida siguiendo la metodología comunicativa permitió identificar barreras y elementos transformadores. El mismo enfoque metodológico se siguió en el artículo *“Participation and organizational commitment in the Mondragon Group”*, pero aplicándolo al estudio de empresas cooperativas de Mondragón.

Todas las personas que participaron en las investigaciones que se mencionan arriba fueron claramente informadas de los objetivos de los estudios, las implicaciones de su participación y las técnicas de recogida de información que se llevarían a cabo. Recibieron información por escrito sobre los objetivos del estudio, el carácter voluntario de su participación en las investigaciones, y su capacidad de abandonar el estudio en cualquier momento sin que su información fuese utilizada. Los consentimientos informados fueron firmados por las personas participantes en papel, y solo en casos puntuales dieron su consentimiento de manera oral por no poder hacerlo de manera escrita. En el caso de los dos grupos de enfoque comunicativo con estudiantes menores de edad llevados a cabo para el artículo *“Improving students’ academic performance and reducing conflicts through family involvement in primary school learning activities: a Mexican case study”*, el consentimiento informado fue firmado por sus familiares responsables. Las observaciones comunicativas de aula llevadas a cabo para el mismo artículo tuvieron lugar siempre en presencia del profesorado titular y de familiares adultos que participaban como voluntarios durante las observaciones.

El artículo *“The Critical Pedagogy that Transforms the Reality”* presenta un análisis crítico desde la sociología de la educación del campo de la pedagogía crítica. Los argumentos que ahí se desarrollan se basan en tres décadas de investigación en teorías y prácticas superadoras de desigualdades sociales de CREA, así como en la lectura directa de las y los autores más relevantes a nivel internacional en el ámbito de la pedagogía crítica.

Finalmente, el artículo *“Egalitarian dialogue enriches both social impact and research methodologies”* está basado en una revisión narrativa de literatura científica en las bases de datos ISI Web of Science y Scopus, haciendo énfasis en las principales revistas de metodología cualitativa. La búsqueda fue complementada con la revisión de proyectos europeos incluidos en la base de datos CORDIS correspondientes a las convocatorias Horizonte 2020 y al Séptimo Programa Marco de Investigación de la Comisión Europea. El artículo finaliza analizando un proyecto de investigación en específico por ejemplificar los principales hallazgos de la revisión de literatura.

2. Resultados y discusión

Tres de las investigaciones antes presentadas responden al **primer objetivo** de la presente tesis doctoral: aportan nuevas evidencias sobre el impacto social en línea con el objetivo 4 de los ODS que ha tenido la transferencia de Comunidades de Aprendizaje impulsada desde el año 2014 por el Instituto Natura, en colaboración con CREA y la organización civil mexicana Vía Educación A.C., en las escuelas, el profesorado y/o las comunidades educativas donde se ha implementado el proyecto en México.

En concreto, el artículo “*The Impact of Evidence-Based Dialogic Training of Special Education Teachers on the Creation of More Inclusive and Interactive Learning Environments*” muestra cómo profesorado de educación especial de la Ciudad de México logró conseguir mayor inclusión educativa del alumnado al que atiende gracias a la implementación en aulas regulares de Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito, esto después de participar en formación pedagógica dialógica. El artículo “*Recuperando el sentido de la profesión docente a través de tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas: voces de profesorado de la Sierra Norte de México*” muestra como profesorado de Puebla, México, que participa de manera regular en tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas ha visto incrementado su interés por las fuentes de conocimiento científico en educación, lo que les permite identificar con mayor facilidad las prácticas educativas que no contribuyen a mejorar los resultados y sustituirlas por actuaciones educativas basadas en evidencia científica. El artículo “*Improving students’ academic performance and reducing conflicts through family involvement in primary school learning activities: a Mexican case study*” es el primer caso de estudio de una Comunidad de Aprendizaje mexicana, ubicada en Jalisco, México, en el que se demuestra la relación entre la participación educativa de la comunidad a través de Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito y la mejora observada en resultados académicos en pruebas estandarizadas nacionales y en la convivencia entre estudiantes.

Estos resultados son relevantes científicamente porque representan las primeras evidencias publicadas en revistas indexadas sobre el impacto de la transferencia del proyecto a México. Como se mencionó en la introducción de esta tesis doctoral, unas pocas investigaciones habían abordado ya la transferencia a México sobre todo en sus fases iniciales (Álvarez, 2015; García-Carrión et al., 2017). Además, otra tesis doctoral había analizado ya el impacto de una Actuación Educativa de Éxito en la inclusión social de mujeres adultas una Comunidad de Aprendizaje de nivel primaria en Ciudad de México (Ocampo Castillo, 2020). Sin embargo, ningún artículo científico no había mostrado evidencias de impacto social en el contexto mexicano hasta ahora.

Cabe mencionar que el impacto social descrito en el artículo “*The Impact of Evidence-Based Dialogic Training of Special Education Teachers on the Creation of More Inclusive and Interactive Learning Environments*” deriva de un caso de impacto político, toda vez que las formaciones dialógicas en las cuales participó dicho profesorado fueron parte de una estrategia integral para impulsar las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito diseñada y ejecutada conjuntamente entre la Autoridad Educativa Federal en la Ciudad de México (la Dirección General de Innovación y Fortalecimiento Académico por un lado, y la Dirección de

Educación Especial por el otro), el Instituto Natura, y Vía Educación (ver Morales, 2019, capítulo de México).

También en línea con el primer objetivo de la tesis, es importante resaltar que esos tres artículos aportan a la literatura científica internacional unas de las pocas (si no es que las únicas) evidencias científicas que existen actualmente sobre impacto social en línea con el objetivo 4 de los ODS derivado de intervenciones educativas impulsadas por la iniciativa privada. Como mostré en la revisión de literatura presentada en la sección de justificación, la investigación científica no había identificado hasta ahora casos de empresas o fundaciones privadas cuyas iniciativas para mejorar la educación hubiesen efectivamente contribuido a mejorar resultados académicos, de convivencia o de inclusión social de las comunidades “beneficiadas”. En ese sentido, la colaboración entre el Instituto Natura y el centro de investigación CREA para transferir a América Latina las Comunidades de Aprendizaje emerge como un caso de referencia internacional para el estudio de la responsabilidad social corporativa con impacto social. Además, los resultados de dichos artículos sugieren que para conseguir impacto social desde la filantropía empresarial es clave que las iniciativas sociales impulsadas estén basadas en evidencia científica que haya demostrado su eficacia, como es el caso del proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje y las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito.

Respecto al *segundo objetivo* de esta tesis doctoral, tres de las investigaciones presentadas previamente responden al mismo: aportan nuevos elementos a la discusión sobre la transferibilidad de las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito a nivel internacional y sobre las características de la investigación científica que lleva a identificar actuaciones de éxito con impacto social.

El artículo “*Dialogue With Educators to Assess the Impact of Dialogic Teacher Training for a Zero-Violence Climate in a Nursery School*” ejemplifica, a través del caso de una guardería Comunidad de Aprendizaje española que ha conseguido crear espacios libres de violencia gracias a la formación pedagógica dialógica, cómo el diálogo igualitario que se establece en investigaciones como esa es clave para identificar las mejoras producidas por las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito. Esta aportación se enmarca en la línea de investigación en socialización preventiva de la violencia de género liderada por CREA, y contribuye a mostrar que los elementos esenciales del Modelo Dialógico de Prevención y Resolución de Conflictos pueden ser transferidos y son efectivos también en entornos de educativos de la primera infancia.

El artículo “*The Critical Pedagogy that Transforms the Reality*” propone a la comunidad científica internacional una serie de criterios para diferenciar la pedagogía crítica que sí contribuye a transformar las realidades sociales y mejorar la vida de las personas, del uso de la etiqueta “pedagogía crítica” que algunas personas hacen en beneficio propio sin aportar ningún beneficio a la sociedad, y quienes incluso llegan a ejercer o ser cómplices de la violencia de género en las universidades (Mallart et al., 2021). Para poder superar teorías sin fundamento que “expertos en educación” han impuesto y difundido durante décadas en España (López de Aguilera & Soler-Gallart, 2021) y posteriormente en Latinoamérica, es clave conocer la trayectoria de quienes se presentan como referentes en las ciencias sociales para identificar si realmente las teorías que promueven y su actuar personal son coherentes con la transformación social que dicen promover. Mucho mayor éxito educativo se consigue

cuando quienes trabajamos en la educación tenemos como referentes a autores como Paulo Freire o Ramón Flecha, cuyas aportaciones teóricas han mejorado la vida de miles de personas en el mundo a la vez que mantienen coherencia entre su discurso y su acción en favor de la transformación social (ver: Freire, 1997; Giner, 2018).

El artículo *“Egalitarian dialogue enriches both social impact and research methodologies”* muestra cómo en las últimas décadas un número creciente de investigaciones científicas en ciencias sociales ha incorporado el diálogo igualitario como parte central de sus metodologías, lo que a su vez incrementa su capacidad para conseguir impacto social en beneficio de la sociedad. Ese enfoque metodológico es el que siguió el proyecto INCLUDED, el cual le permitió identificar las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito que han mejorado los resultados en tantas escuelas en el mundo. Por ello, la incorporación del diálogo igualitario en las metodologías de investigación cualitativa representa un potencial enorme para aumentar el impacto social de las investigaciones en educación y también en otros ámbitos de las ciencias sociales. Por ejemplo, CREA utiliza la metodología comunicativa que incorpora el diálogo igualitario en todas sus investigaciones para identificar actuaciones de éxito que superen las desigualdades sociales. Esto incluye, por ejemplo, a las investigaciones sobre cooperativas competitivas como la presentada en el artículo *“Participation and organizational commitment in the Mondragon Group”* de esta tesis doctoral.

3. Conclusiones

La presente tesis doctoral abona al cuerpo de investigación que ha estudiado y demostrado la transferibilidad de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje y su impacto social en diferentes partes del mundo, y específicamente en el contexto mexicano. Los casos que se describen sirven como muestra de las transformaciones que numerosas comunidades educativas en México están experimentando gracias a la implementación de este modelo educativo. Existe mucho aun por investigar en el caso mexicano. En la actualidad el proyecto se implementa en escuelas públicas y privadas, de educación básica y de educación especial, “regulares” y de educación indígena, en entornos urbanos y rurales, algunas implementan todas las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito y otras solo implementan una o dos. También están distribuidas por cada vez más Estados del país: desde la frontera norte en Sonora, pasando por la zona centro del país, hasta el sur en la península de Yucatán. En los últimos 5 años han tenido lugar colaboraciones con distintos gobiernos y autoridades educativas para impulsar las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito en más escuelas del país, y se han incorporado nuevos financiadores que contribuyen a la expansión del proyecto. Además, en México como en el resto del mundo, la pandemia de COVID-19 alteró la vida cotidiana de las escuelas al forzar el traslado durante casi dos años de la educación a la enseñanza a distancia. Los impactos sociales que este gran número de escuelas tan diversas está experimentando, así como las formas en las que las Actuaciones Educativas de Éxito les permiten superar las barreras que enfrentan en sus contextos, representan solo algunos de los temas de investigación que quedan por explorar.

Igual de importante es la confirmación de que la iniciativa privada puede contribuir a la transformación social cuando las intervenciones que impulsa se basan en evidencia científica. El caso de la colaboración entre el Instituto Natura y CREA para transferir a América Latina el proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje es único a nivel internacional por haber demostrado conseguir impacto social en línea con los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, en particular el Objetivo 4: Educación de calidad (además de los artículos de esta tesis, ver: Soler et al., 2019). Desde el punto de vista de las decisiones tomadas por una fundación privada como el Instituto Natura, la clave de tal éxito se encuentra en haber elegido comprometerse con un proyecto que ya había demostrado efectividad para mejorar la educación en otras partes del mundo y que contaba con un amplio bagaje de investigación científica que respaldaba su capacidad de generar impacto social en contextos diversos. Conociendo esto, otras empresas y fundaciones privadas pueden decidir seguir el ejemplo del Instituto Natura si desean contribuir efectivamente a mejorar la inclusión social en las comunidades donde intervienen. Aumentar el número de intervenciones educativas y sociales basadas en evidencias científicas con impacto social impulsadas por la iniciativa privada puede contribuir ampliamente a superar las desigualdades sociales en nuestras sociedades.

Por su parte, la comunidad científica internacional, quien juega un papel crucial en la identificación de actuaciones que transformen las desigualdades sociales, puede aumentar el impacto social de sus aportaciones al incorporar el diálogo igualitario en sus metodologías de investigación. De hacerlo, el valor social de la investigación en ciencias sociales podría aumentar significativamente. Al igual que en la actualidad nadie se cuestiona la vital importancia para la sociedad de quienes investigan tratamientos para prevenir y superar las

infecciones por COVID-19, en el futuro cobrarán cada vez mayor relevancia quienes trabajen en investigación científica para identificar actuaciones educativas y sociales que demuestren mejorar la calidad de vida y la inclusión social de todas las personas.

4. Referencias

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5. Anexos

I. Metodología y sistematización de la revisión de literatura sobre el involucramiento de la empresa privada en la educación

Realicé la revisión de literatura científica en dos etapas. La primera, llevada a cabo entre septiembre y octubre de 2018, constó de una búsqueda por palabras clave en la base de datos *ISI Web of Science*, reduciendo la búsqueda entre los años 2003 al 2018 y ordenando los resultados obtenidos según el número de veces citados para identificar aquellos artículos que se fuesen más centrales en el debate internacional. La lista de palabras clave se elaboró después de 1) consultar distintos documentos públicos de organismos internacionales, 2) revisar publicaciones científicas relacionadas con la temática, y 3) participar en 2018 en el curso en línea “*Sustainable Business Strategy*” [Estrategia de Negocios Sustentable] ofrecido por la Escuela de Negocios de la Universidad de Harvard; lo que permitió identificar palabras clave recurrentes y posibles combinaciones de estas. La lista de palabras clave que se fueron utilizadas en la búsqueda se presenta a continuación:

Palabras clave utilizadas en la búsqueda:
Business + education
Corporate social investment + education
Corporate social investment + education + transference
Corporate social investment + transfer + evidence-based
Corporate social investment + transference + evidence-based
Corporate social responsibility + education
Corporate social responsibility + investment in education
Corporate social responsibility + transfer + evidence-based
Corporate social responsibility + transference + evidence-based
Corporate sustainability initiative + education
Firm + education + evidence-based
Philanthropy + education
Public-private partnerships + education
Public-private partnerships + evidence-based + transfer
Public-private partnerships + evidence-based + transference
Sustainability + corporate social responsibility + education
Sustainability + corporate social responsibility + transfer
Sustainability + corporate social responsibility + transference
Sustainability + education
Sustainability + investment + education
Sustainability + transfer + evidence-based
Sustainability + transference + evidence-based
Transfer + educational project
Transfer + evidence-based + education
Transference + educational project
Transference + evidence-based + education

La segunda etapa, llevada a cabo entre febrero y marzo de 2019, constó en realizar una búsqueda de artículos relacionados con la participación de las empresas en la educación en las revistas mejor clasificadas por JCR según su factor de impacto (descartando algunas cuyos títulos no tuviesen relación aparente con el tema) en cinco campos de conocimiento: Negocios, Educación, Ética, Gestión de Empresas, y Sociología (*Business, Education, Ethics, Management, y Sociology*, por sus nombres en inglés respectivamente). La búsqueda, que se redujo a los artículos publicados entre 2017 y 2019, se hizo en las 19 revistas siguientes:

Campo de conocimiento en JCR:	Nombre de la revista:	Clasificación en JCR en su campo de conocimiento, según factor de impacto:
Business	Academy of Management Annals	1
	Academy of Management Review	2
	Journal of Management	4
	Academy of Management Journal	7
	International Journal of Management Reviews	8
Education	Review of Educational Research	1
	Educational Research Review	3
	Educational Psychologist	5
	Educational Researcher	6
	Learning and Instruction	7
Ethics	Business Ethics: A European Review	2
	Journal of Business Ethics	3
	Business Ethics Quarterly	9
Management	Journal of International Business Studies	6
Sociology	Annual Review of Sociology	1
	American Sociological Review	3
	American Journal of Sociology	4
	Socio-Economic Review	8
	Sociology of Education	10

Después de revisar los artículos identificados en la primera y segunda etapa, se discriminó aquellos que no tuviesen relación directa con la temática. La búsqueda se complementó con la revisión de otros textos citados en los artículos más relevantes, así como con otros artículos citados en otras fuentes, como lo son las publicaciones de organismos internacionales. De esta forma fueron identificados un total de 16 textos que contienen aportaciones científicas relevantes sobre el involucramiento de empresas en causas sociales y en la educación. El cuadro con los detalles de los artículos se encuentra en la sección “1.2 Justificación” de esta tesis doctoral.

Una vez revisada la literatura científica, decidí englobar en cuatro subtemas que surgieron de la sistematización del contenido de los artículos, comprendiendo: 1) los motivos de las

empresas para involucrarse en iniciativas sociales, 2) la concepción de la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa, 3) la filantropía social a través de fundaciones privadas, y 4) el recuento de vacíos detectados en la literatura científica revisada.

1. Motivos de las empresas para involucrarse en iniciativas sociales:

El involucramiento de las empresas en causas sociales, como puede ser la educación, es cuestión de debate desde hace décadas. Muestra de ello es la publicación de Keith Davis (1973) en la prestigiosa revista *The Academy of Management Journal*, donde el autor se preguntaba si las empresas deberían priorizar la maximización de sus ganancias y mantenerse fuera de los asuntos sociales o si, por el contrario, éstas deberían involucrar sus distintos recursos para contribuir a la mejora social, lo que entonces se empezaba a discutir como la “responsabilidad social de las empresas”. En su revisión del debate a inicios de la década de los 70, el autor identificó argumentos que respaldaban ambas posiciones. Por un lado, Davis identificó en la literatura diez argumentos a favor de las acciones de Responsabilidad Social de las empresas, los cuales son que: 1) favorecen los intereses de la empresa en el largo plazo, 2) favorece la imagen pública de la empresa, 3) aseguran la viabilidad del sistema empresarial en el largo plazo, 4) permiten evitar regulaciones del gobierno, 5) la empresa se alinea con los cambios en las normas socio-culturales que apuntan en la dirección de la responsabilidad social, 6) a los accionistas les conviene que la empresa se involucre en actividades responsables, 7) hay que dejar a las empresas intentar lidiar con los problemas que otras instituciones no han podido resolver, 8) la sociedad podría usar los recursos que tienen las empresas para resolver los problemas sociales, 9) los problemas sociales pueden convertirse en oportunidades de negocio, y 10) es más “económico” lidiar ahora con los problemas sociales que después cuando afecten la viabilidad de los negocios. En contraparte, Davis documentó ocho ideas en contra de la Responsabilidad Social de las empresas, que giraban en torno a que: 1) las empresas no deben desperdiciar recursos o esfuerzos en nada más que maximizar sus ganancias, 2) el involucramiento social es costoso y no es sostenible para la empresa asumir esos costos tan altos, 3) la empresa puede no contar con las habilidades sociales y los conocimientos necesarios para enfrentar problemas sociales, 4) puede diluir el énfasis empresarial en la productividad y hacer que no rinda ni en lo económico ni en lo social, 5) los costos de la responsabilidad social pondrían en desventaja competitiva a las empresas contra sus contrapartes internacionales, 6) las empresas ya tienen demasiado poder y no hay que darles más, 7) las empresas no rinden cuentas a la sociedad, por lo que no pueden ser responsables de resolver problemas cruciales para la misma, y 8) si las empresas se involucran en asuntos sociales puede generar fricción entre quienes no apoyan esta postura y dividir más a la sociedad, afectando a su vez a la empresa.

Varias décadas han pasado desde la influyente publicación de Davis en los 70s, y lo que ha quedado claro con el tiempo es que el mundo empresarial abraza cada vez más la idea de la responsabilidad social. De hecho, en las últimas décadas ha crecido el interés del mundo académico de entender porqué las empresas se involucran en actividades que benefician a la sociedad. De acuerdo con Brønn y Vidaver-Cohen (2009), la investigación empírica muestra que quienes dirigen las empresas siguen tanto motivaciones éticas como instrumentales, y son influenciados por valores internos como por presiones externas. Además, las motivaciones que mueven a las empresas a involucrarse en iniciativas sociales frecuentemente se solapan, lo que dificulta determinar si son guiadas genuinamente por

valores morales o por consideraciones estratégicas, como puede ser el rendimiento económico o la legitimidad institucional. En su revisión de la investigación, las autoras exponen evidencias que respaldan ambas posturas. En primer lugar, dentro de la que denominan *Perspectiva Estratégica*, Brønn y Vidaver-Cohen (2009) señalan que numerosos estudios han mostrado que las empresas de diversos países encuentran fuertes razones económicas para involucrarse en iniciativas sociales, confirmando las predicciones de Davis (1973). Específicamente, los estudios enmarcados en la perspectiva estratégica identifican dos tipos principales de motivaciones: los *Motivos Instrumentales*, que parten de la creencia que involucrarse en iniciativas sociales puede impactar directamente en la rentabilidad de la empresa al aumentar sus ingresos o al proteger sus ganancias (por ello, las empresas desarrollan portafolios sociales crear ventajas competitivas, desarrollar nuevas oportunidades de negocio, protegerse de regulaciones costosas, o ayudar a cumplir con las demandas de los actores involucrados); y los *Motivos Institucionales*, que sugieren que las empresas se involucran en iniciativas sociales principalmente como respuesta a presiones institucionales (las presiones pueden surgir externamente por clientes, socios, gobiernos y comunidades, internamente por empleados, y lateralmente por competidores y asociaciones industriales).

La perspectiva estratégica es quizás el marco de análisis más utilizado por la academia para estudiar el fenómeno del involucramiento de las empresas en iniciativas sociales, como mostró Emily Barman, profesora de Sociología de la Universidad de Boston, en una revisión reciente de literatura sociológica en torno al fenómeno de la filantropía (Barman, 2017). Según su revisión, las explicaciones que las y los sociólogos y los académicos del mundo empresarial ofrecen sobre la filantropía corporativa suelen partir de la idea que las empresas se orientan mayormente por la búsqueda de ganancias económicas e intereses propios, por lo que su involucramiento en iniciativas filantrópicas se considera parte de estrategias de administración de las relaciones con diversos actores (por ejemplo, para mejorar las actitudes de los clientes o las relaciones de empleados y comunidad hacia la empresa) canalizando recursos caritativos a causas que potencian el negocio. Intencionada por intereses propios o no, las evidencias empíricas muestran que, en línea con los motivos instrumentales, la filantropía empresarial (ya sea aislada o como parte de una iniciativa más amplia de RSC) sí genera efectos positivos en la creación de valor para las y los accionistas, y que las donaciones filantrópicas también generan actitudes positivas entre los clientes y mejoran la moral de los empleados (Barman, 2017)

En segundo lugar, contrastando con la perspectiva estratégica, dentro de la *Perspectiva Moral* se considera que los motivos morales para las iniciativas sociales están basadas en la idea que las empresas tienen un deber ético para “devolver” a la sociedad, y algunas investigaciones que retoman esa perspectiva han encontrado que los valores morales y el deseo de hacer una contribución positiva a la sociedad futura también son factores de peso en la definición de la agenda social de las empresas, siendo en ocasiones incluso más determinantes que las motivaciones estratégicas (Brønn & Vidaver-Cohen, 2009). Como ejemplos, las autoras mencionan investigaciones donde dirigentes de empresas expresaron un fuerte deseo de “hacer el mundo un lugar mejor” a través de las iniciativas sociales en las que se involucran, u otras donde varios de los participantes genuinamente creían que las empresas deben contribuir a mejorar las comunidades locales y crear un mundo mejor a través de sus actividades filantrópicas.

Un ejemplo de cómo los análisis académicos sobre el involucramiento en causas sociales de las empresas se encuentran muchas veces entre los polos estratégicos y morales es la postura tomada por el economista Michael E. Porter, investigador y profesor de la Escuela de Negocios de Harvard y uno de los autores más renombrados a nivel mundial sobre estrategia competitiva. Sobre el involucramiento empresarial en causas sociales, Michael Porter y su colega Mark Kramer (2002) señalan que la mayoría de los programas de contribución filantrópica de las empresas son difusos y poco centrados, consisten en pequeñas donaciones de dinero a causas de ayuda cívica local o proveen apoyo a universidades u organizaciones benéficas, pero generalmente no están ligados a objetivos sociales o empresariales bien analizados sino que reflejan las creencias personales y los valores de ejecutivos o empleados. Además, agregan que las empresas frecuentemente se distraen por el deseo de publicitar cuánto dinero y esfuerzo contribuyen a una causa social para promover una imagen de responsabilidad social y generosidad, pero consideran que, dado el escepticismo público sobre la ética empresarial, las empresas que logran demostrar un impacto significativo en un problema social ganan mayor credibilidad que aquellas que son únicamente donadoras de grandes sumas de dinero. Por ello, como una forma de generar tanto beneficios económicos para la empresa como impacto social en la causa que se persigue, los autores sugieren la idea de conectar las donaciones caritativas y la filantropía con las áreas que incrementan el potencial competitivo de la empresa en el largo plazo (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Porter & Kramer, 2002), ya que, consideran, no existe una contradicción inherente entre mejorar el contexto competitivo y tener un compromiso sincero con mejorar la sociedad, sino que mientras más cerca esté ligada la filantropía de una empresa a su contexto competitivo mayor será la contribución de la empresa a la sociedad (Porter & Kramer, 2002). De esta forma, los autores acercan así a la filantropía corporativa a la antes mencionada *Perspectiva Estratégica*, al considerar que el involucramiento en causas sociales debe estar ligado con una mejora del contexto competitivo de la empresa, aunque también retoman algunos elementos de la *Perspectiva Moral*, al fomentar la idea que la empresa puede (y debe) comprometerse sinceramente con causas sociales.

Ya en el campo del involucramiento en temas educativos, en un estudio reciente sobre empresas estadounidenses que invertían en educación en países en desarrollo, van Fleet (2012) encontró que las razones que las empresas expresaban para justificar sus contribuciones filantrópicas variaba de empresa a empresa y usualmente se trataba de un híbrido de diversas estrategias corporativas. En concreto, el autor identificó ocho razones que las mismas empresas señalaron como justificación para realizar sus contribuciones filantrópicas en educación, incorporando una o varias de las siguientes razones en su argumentación: anticipar oportunidades de mercado globales, fortalecer las relaciones con la comunidad, empoderar e involucrar a trabajadores/as, desarrollar fuerzas de trabajo en las comunidades donde operan, generar reconocimiento de marca, innovar con productos, impulsar mayores oportunidades económicas para los consumidores, y crear demanda en los sectores público y privado. En definitiva, concluye van Fleet (2012), las compañías estadounidenses alinean sus contribuciones a la educación con sus intereses privados como una forma de cumplir sus deberes de maximizar las ganancias, en línea con estrategias como las recomendadas por Porter y Kramer (2002).

Responsabilidad Social Corporativa:

El involucramiento de las empresas en la educación puede encontrar un marco en el debate internacional más amplio sobre Responsabilidad Social Corporativa (RSC), el cual es un término que aun no cuenta con una definición ampliamente consensuada (Taneja, Taneja, & Gupta, 2011), y que en muchas ocasiones se solapa con otros términos similares o relacionados (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Sin embargo, en la actualidad el término RSC enmarca una serie de responsabilidades empresariales asociadas con la prosperidad económica, la cohesión social, la sustentabilidad ambiental y la filantropía, cuya naturaleza se supone voluntaria y que están ligadas directamente con la ética de los negocios y con acciones que van más allá de lo que la ley solicita a las empresas en términos sociales (Vázquez-Carrasco & López-Pérez, 2013).

Una breve revisión histórica de la evolución del concepto de RSC puede encontrarse en el artículo de Carroll y Shabana (2010). En su repaso histórico y análisis del concepto, los autores mencionan que las definiciones formales de RSC comenzaron a proliferar en la década de los 70s. Fue entonces cuando las ideas de responsabilidad social corporativa, sensibilidad social y desempeño económico se volvieron el centro de las discusiones. La década de los 80s trajo consigo la búsqueda, sobre todo desde la academia, de la justificación económica de la RSC, lo que derivó en un incremento de investigaciones empíricas que intentaban ligar la RSC con el desempeño financiero de las empresas. La misma tendencia se mantuvo durante la década de los 90s, tiempo en el cual el concepto de RSC maduró y cobró un alcance global. Finalmente, para inicios del 2000, la comunidad empresarial abrazó con fascinación el concepto de sustentabilidad (o desarrollo sustentable) el cual se volvió una parte integral de todas las discusiones en torno a la RSC. En la actualidad, según Carroll y Shabana (2010), el debate principal que rodea el concepto de RSC es la naturaleza y extensión de las obligaciones corporativas que van más allá de las responsabilidades económicas y legales de la empresa, por lo que la esencia de la RSC pueden considerarse las obligaciones éticas y filantrópicas de la empresa hacia la sociedad.

El concepto de RSC suele solaparse o confundirse con otros términos similares. En una revisión de literatura científica, Montiel (2008) encontró que tanto las y los académicos que estudian la RSC como quienes estudian la Sustentabilidad Corporativa usan variables similares para medir ambos constructos, entre los que se encuentran variables como las políticas de ética, las contribuciones filantrópicas, las relaciones con diversos actores internos y externos, el desarrollo urbano, los programas de apoyo a las minorías, las iniciativas de salud y seguridad, los programas de reducción de la contaminación, y la conservación de recursos naturales. En el caso de los estudios enfocados a la Sustentabilidad, Montiel menciona que mientras algunas investigaciones se centran únicamente en las dimensiones ambientales, como son la recuperación ambiental voluntaria o la disminución de residuos y emisiones, otras también engloban dimensiones económicas y sociales, como son las relaciones con los gobiernos, la salud, la seguridad y el desarrollo comunitario, demostrando que las empresas “sustentables” toman en cuenta los intereses de los distintos actores involucrados y se involucran con sus comunidades locales. Por esta razón, argumenta Montiel, las conceptualizaciones de Responsabilidad Social Corporativa y de Sustentabilidad Corporativa parecen estar convergiendo, a pesar de tener algunas diferencias de fondo en sus constructos. Esto lleva a que en el mundo empresarial ambos conceptos sean usados de manera intercambiable, pudiendo encontrarse en los reportes de las mismas empresas

términos como “Reporte de Ciudadanía Global”, “Reporte de Responsabilidad Corporativa”, “Reporte de Sustentabilidad Ambiental”, “Reporte de Sustentabilidad”, o “Reporte de Responsabilidad Ambiental y Social”, refiriendo de manera genérica a la presentación de las iniciativas sociales y ambientales de las empresas (Montiel, 2008).

Una de las concepciones de RSC que actualmente tiene mayor respaldo a nivel internacional fue la propuesta por Archie B. Carroll, profesor emérito del departamento de Dirección de Empresas de la Universidad de Georgia, quien junto con sus colegas ha desarrollado algunas de las aportaciones más influyentes en este campo de estudio. Entre otras aportaciones, destaca la distinción de cuatro componentes que constituyen la RSC, que en conjunto abarcan las diversas responsabilidades que la empresa debe asumir: componentes económicos, legales, éticos y filantrópicos (Carroll, 1979, 1991) Las *responsabilidades económicas* se refieren a la necesidad de la empresa de maximizar sus ganancias, ser tan rentable como le sea posible, ser competitiva, ser eficiente, y mantener el rendimiento en el tiempo. Las *responsabilidades legales* se refieren a actuar como la ley y el gobierno esperan de la empresa, acatar las regulaciones, ser respetuosa de la ley, cumplir sus obligaciones legales, y proveer bienes y servicios que al menos cumplan con los requerimientos legales mínimos. Las *responsabilidades éticas* se refieren a actividades y prácticas que se consideran deseables (o no) por los miembros de la sociedad a pesar de no estar plasmadas en la ley, es decir, son aquellos estándares, normas o expectativas que reflejan un interés por lo que los consumidores, trabajadores, accionistas y la comunidad consideran justo y en línea con la protección de los derechos morales. Las *responsabilidades filantrópicas* comprenden aquellas acciones que una empresa realiza en respuesta a las expectativas sociales de que las empresas sean buenos “ciudadanos corporativos”, como puede ser realizar contribuciones financieras o en especie a causas como el arte, la educación o la comunidad. De acuerdo con el autor, las comunidades desean que las empresas contribuyan con su dinero, instalaciones y horas de trabajo a causas o programas humanitarios, pero no etiquetan a las empresas como “no éticas” si no proveen el nivel deseado de sus recursos, lo que lleva a la filantropía a ser más discrecional o voluntaria por parte de la empresa a pesar de siempre haber expectativas sociales de ello (Carroll, 1991). Cabe mencionar que en publicaciones posteriores, Carroll y sus colegas revisaron y eliminaron la categoría de responsabilidades filantrópicas para integrarla dentro del análisis de las responsabilidades económicas y éticas, dejando así solamente tres componentes de la RSC en su modelo (Schwartz & Carroll, 2003), debido a que, argumentan los autores, en ocasiones es difícil distinguir entre actividades “filantrópicas” y “éticas” tanto en el nivel teórico como en el práctico, y a que las actividades filantrópicas pueden simplemente estar basadas en intereses económicos. Sea cualquiera el caso, las teorías sobre RSC de Carroll y sus colegas han tenido amplio impacto en estudios teóricos e investigaciones empíricas, las cuales sistemáticamente han incorporado su modelo de cuatro (y posteriormente tres) categorías de la RSC.

En un enfoque un tanto distinto aunque relacionado, Porter y Kramer (2006) identifican cuatro argumentos que los impulsores de la RSC han utilizado para justificar su presencia dentro de las actividades empresariales, y critican algunos aspectos que, según su análisis, entorpecen la capacidad de las empresas de lograr tanto un mayor impacto social como mayores niveles de competitividad. Los argumentos que identifican giran en torno a: *las obligaciones morales* –argumentando que las empresas tienen la obligación de ser buenos “ciudadanos” y de “hacer lo que es correcto”–, *la sustentabilidad* –enfaticando la importancia

cuidar la viabilidad a largo plazo evitando acciones en el corto plazo que sean ambiental y socialmente perjudiciales–, *la autorización para operar* –que se obtiene más fácilmente cuando el negocio se involucra en la solución de asuntos sociales que les interesan a los gobiernos y las comunidades–, y *la reputación* –considerando que la RSC mejora la imagen, fortalece la marca, anima la moral e incluso aumenta el valor de las acciones–. Según los autores, las cuatro argumentaciones comparten la misma debilidad: se enfocan en la tensión entre empresas y sociedad en lugar de en su interdependencia, creando situaciones que no están ligadas con la estrategia u operación de las empresas ni con los lugares donde éstas operan. Para diferenciar los tipos de RSC que desde su punto de vista tienen mayor impacto social, proponen la diferenciación entre *RSC Reactiva* (actuar como buen ciudadano corporativo en sintonía con las preocupaciones sociales, y mitigar los efectos adversos de las actividades empresariales) y *RSC Estratégica* (teniendo como ideal agregar una dimensión social a la “oferta de valor” de la empresa, integrando el impacto social a la estrategia global), y argumentan que es solo a través de la segunda que las empresas pueden generar el impacto social más relevante al mismo tiempo de generar los mayores incrementos de las ganancias. Cabe mencionar que los autores consideran que “la cosa más importante que una empresa puede hacer por la sociedad, y por una comunidad, es contribuir a una economía próspera”, por lo que se desmarcan de cualquier postura que promueva un enfoque de *RSC Reactivo*, considerando que este no promueve la creación de “valor compartido”, es decir, que al abordar asuntos sociales desconectados del contexto competitivo de la empresa no se fortalece ningún aspecto estratégico de la misma (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

Aunque en la actualidad las responsabilidades éticas y filantrópicas de las empresas puedan estar en la esencia de la RSC, la academia y las empresas suele dirigir el debate a cómo justificar “racionalmente” las iniciativas sociales de las empresas desde una perspectiva mayormente financiera y económica. Este tipo de análisis basados en la búsqueda de modelos de negocio sostienen que las empresas que se involucran en actividades de RSC son beneficiadas por el mercado económica y financieramente (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Las razones para justificar el beneficio para la empresa que conlleva la RSC se puede resumir en cuatro argumentos principales: 1) reducir costos y riesgos –obteniendo beneficios fiscales, evitando regulaciones estrictas, o reduciendo la oposición de distintos actores–; 2) fortalecer la legitimidad y la reputación –siendo percibida como miembro de la comunidad y recibiendo aprobación para sus actividades–; 3) desarrollar ventajas competitivas –como menor rotación laboral, acceso a una mayor fuente de talentos o aumentando la lealtad de los clientes–; y 4) crear situaciones ganar-ganar a través de la creación de valor sinérgicas –satisfaciendo las necesidades de las partes involucradas al tiempo de alcanzar sus metas de negocio–. En este marco de argumentación, tanto la academia como el mundo empresarial han llevado a enmarcar la RSC dentro de los modelos de negocio utilizados por las empresas, recomendando el impulso de aquellas actividades de responsabilidad social que puedan lograr convergencia entre los objetivos económicos de la empresa y los objetivos sociales de la comunidad en su conjunto (Carroll & Shabana, 2010)

Cabe mencionar que mientras la academia y el mundo empresarial se han concentrado en demostrar que las iniciativas de RSC generan impacto positivo en la viabilidad financiera y económica de las empresas, poco se conoce sobre el verdadero impacto social de las mismas en las comunidades y en la sociedad. Sobre la información que las mismas empresas proveen, Porter y Kramer (2006) señalan que en 2005, de las 250 corporaciones multinacionales más

grandes del mundo, 64% de ellas publicaron reportes de RSC (como parte de sus reportes anuales o por separado en reportes de sustentabilidad), y por norma dichos reportes no ofrecían un panorama coherente de las actividades de RSC, sino que solían agrupar anécdotas sobre iniciativas descoordinadas para demostrar la sensibilidad social de la empresa; además, comentan los autores, las iniciativas filantrópicas usualmente eran descritas en términos de dólares y horas de voluntariado, pero casi nunca en términos de impacto, y los compromisos prospectivos para alcanzar metas concretas eran incluso más escasos. Del lado de la investigación sociológica, Barman (2017) encontró en su revisión de literatura que la academia no ha logrado determinar [o no ha profundizado en] si la filantropía empresarial realmente produce efectos positivos en las comunidades a las que se dirige, lo que representa un vacío importante en el conocimiento científico. Por esto, el impacto social de las iniciativas empresariales en la educación sigue siendo un campo de estudio que ofrece grandes oportunidades para la investigación futura.

Fundaciones privadas y la educación:

Si bien la RSC implica un involucramiento relativamente directo de la empresa en las causas sociales que busca impulsar, las empresas también pueden tener impacto en la educación de manera indirecta a través de fundaciones privadas, establecidas por ellas mismas o por otros actores, que captan distintos tipos de donaciones para llevar a cabo proyectos o intervenciones sociales diversas. Propiamente en el campo de la educación, en un artículo publicado en 2010, Srivastava y Oh (2010, 2012) analizaron el involucramiento de la iniciativa privada en la educación a través de fundaciones privadas, filantropía corporativa y asociaciones público-privadas en el campo de la educación y el desarrollo. Las autoras resaltan la importancia de estudiar a las fundaciones privadas ya que, argumentan, su número ha crecido a nivel internacional y se ha acompañado del surgimiento de “mega-donadores”, como son la *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*, la *David and Lucille Packard Foundation* o la *UN Foundation*, todas conocidas por la enorme escala de sus iniciativas sociales a nivel internacional, lo que coloca a la filantropía y al rol de las fundaciones privadas como temas relevantes de debate.

En su investigación, Srivastava y Oh (2010, 2012) estudiaron fundaciones que tuviesen como características ser organizaciones sin fines de lucro, no ser parte del sector público, usar sus propios recursos financieros, estar dirigidas por Consejos de Administración o Directores Generales independientes, y abordar asuntos para el bien público (como el desarrollo o el ambiente). Además, de acuerdo con clasificaciones utilizadas en publicaciones previas, las fundaciones fueron clasificadas en dos tipos, el primero tratándose de fundaciones que financian proyectos y programas que son implementados por otros actores (usualmente ONGs); y el segundo refiriéndose a fundaciones que financian e implementan sus propios proyectos y programas de manera independiente o en cooperación con otros actores. El análisis de Srivastava y Oh examinó, a través de una revisión de literatura científica, la fundamentación de los argumentos que defienden la neutralidad, la eficiencia y la efectividad de la filantropía privada y del papel de las fundaciones privadas. En resumen, las autoras encontraron que: 1) debido a la falta de información e investigación seria reciente en la materia, no se sabe suficiente sobre las contribuciones y actividades de la amplia gama de fundaciones privadas (ente ellas las fundaciones pequeñas o las fundaciones en los “países del Sur”) a la educación a nivel internacional como para realizar una evaluación precisa de

su papel; 2) aunque las contribuciones privadas tienen fortalezas innegables, no existen suficientes evidencias para juzgar su eficiencia y efectividad para proveer servicios de calidad (incluyendo la educación); 3) existe un consenso en la literatura respecto a que la creación de fundaciones es un proceso altamente personal, lo que implica que las fundaciones privadas tienen intenciones y motivaciones diversas que deben ser tomadas en cuenta en cualquier discusión sobre su papel en la educación y sobre su compromiso para alcanzar objetivos acordados internacionalmente; 4) debido a su relativa independencia, los tipos de asistencia provistos por las fundaciones privadas no están coordinados, favorecen ciertos tipos de proyectos sobre otros, y no necesariamente llegan a las poblaciones más pobres, lo que muestra el poco progreso que este sector ha tenido en relación a los objetivos establecidos en la Declaración de París sobre la Eficacia de la Ayuda⁶.

Los hallazgos de Srivastava y Oh cobran mayor relevancia cuando se compara el volumen de las contribuciones filantrópicas hechas directamente por las empresas contra aquellas hechas por (o a través de) fundaciones privadas. En los Estados Unidos, por ejemplo, del total de donaciones filantrópicas registradas en 2016 en todas las áreas sociales solo el 5% fueron realizadas por empresas (que hacen donaciones económicas o en especie a través de fundaciones o directamente a los beneficiarios), mientras que el 15% fueron realizadas por fundaciones sin fines de lucro (es decir, organizaciones benéficas exentas de impuestos como la *Carnegie Foundation*, la *Ford Foundation* o la *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*) (Barman, 2017). Si el involucramiento en la educación a través de fundaciones privadas puede ser mucho mayor que aquel hecho directamente por las empresas cabe profundizar en los tipos y amplitud del impacto social que estas consiguen, así como en las formas en que sus iniciativas pueden estar mejor coordinadas para atender a las poblaciones más vulnerables.

⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>

ARTÍCULOS

a) PRIMER ARTÍCULO

Dialogue With Educators to Assess the Impact of Dialogic Teacher Training for a Zero-Violence Climate in a Nursery School

Afiliación de los coautores y coautoras como aparece en el artículo:

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Dialogue With Educators to Assess the Impact of Dialogic Teacher Training for a Zero-Violence Climate in a Nursery School

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Abstract

Research has revealed the importance of preventing violence from early childhood. Some quantitative analyses have studied the persistence of being an aggressor throughout the different educational stages and its relationship with criminal behavior in youth and adulthood. However, there is a need for qualitative methodologies that deepen the impact of preventive actions from early childhood. Dialogic teacher training (DTT) is based on reading and discussing scientific evidences based on egalitarian dialogue, and it helps educators implement only successful actions in schools. The dialogues and reflections with two experienced educators in an urban nursery that implements DTT are presented, through which the impact of this action on their practice is evaluated. As a result, it is identified that educators have modified their practices in relation to the situations of aggression that occurred in their nursery, achieving a zero-violence climate perceived by educators, families, and researchers.

Keywords

dialogue, teacher training, preventing violence, early childhood, nursery school

Introduction

Bullying and aggression are suffered by children worldwide regardless of their age and country. According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF; 2014), teenagers between 9 and 18 are commonly bullied by their peers at school, with 27% of the students in Australia self-reporting as victims, 28% in the United States, and 28% in Brazil. However, violence is learned and experienced long before students reach these ages. Aggressions among peers are already usual in early childhood (Slaby et al., 1995), for instance, in the form of hitting, biting, or taking objects by force (Tremblay et al., 1999), and they are often used to negotiate social dominance (Hawley et al., 2007). Furthermore, contrary to common belief, research shows that the period in life in which people display more physical aggressions to others is the preschool age (Tremblay et al., 2008). Accordingly, while nonscientific discourses normalize and tolerate these behaviors, scientific approaches are studying ways to create zero-violence environments—schools free of any form of violence—from early childhood (Oliver, 2014), the age when interventions to prevent aggressions are more effective (Tremblay et al., 2008).

The scientific literature shows that aggressive behaviors need to be approached starting with the first signs of their appearance to prevent the long-term negative consequences that they have on victims and perpetrators. Bullied children, on one hand, commonly suffer psychological and physical health problems that can persist into adulthood (Espelage et al., 2012; Ttofi et al., 2011). Victims develop greater social difficulties (Hart & Ostrov, 2013) and face enhanced school failure that hinder their academic future (Cornell et al., 2013; Juvonen et al., 2011; Twemlow & Sacco, 2013), and in the worst cases, they can even hurt themselves or commit suicide (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999; Mayes et al., 2002). On the other hand, children who perpetrate bullying and aggressions also tend to suffer many long-term consequences.

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Perpetrators tend to suffer psychological problems (Glew et al., 2008; Ttofi & Farrington, 2008), engage in juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior (Bender & Lösel, 2011; Farrington et al., 2011), and engage in other risk behaviors (Broidy et al., 2003; Williford et al., 2011).

Fortunately, the scientific community now provides many insights on how to identify and overcome violence, aggression, and bullying in educational environments from early childhood (e.g., Kiuu et al., 2012; Mayes et al., 2002; Slaby et al., 1995; Thapa et al., 2013; Tremblay et al., 2008). More specifically, different investigations have studied the impact of preventive interventions in preschool and school-aged children (e.g., the Chicago Child-Parent Center Program: Niles et al., 2008, or the Early Childhood Friendship Project: Ostrov et al., 2009) as well as in the later stages of childhood and adolescence (e.g., the Expect Respect Project: Meraviglia et al., 2003, or the Green Dot project: Coker et al., 2017). However, there is a need for qualitative research that deepens the impact of similar preventive actions and the mechanisms that lead to their positive outcomes in the prevention of violence and aggression, particularly in early childhood.

The present article aims to contribute to the body of research on the qualitative impact evaluation of preventive interventions of violence and bullying in early childhood by presenting the analysis of an intervention implemented in a Spanish nursery school that is achieving zero-violence environments owing to an evidence-based action called dialogic teacher training (DTT). For that purpose, the article is structured as follows: First, the functioning of DTT is presented. Second, the case of the Cappont Nursery school is contextualized. Third, the communicative methodology (CM) used in this analysis is outlined. Fourth, the main results of the analysis, derived from dialogues with two of the nursery's educators, are presented. Finally, the conclusions and final remarks are presented.

DTT: Sharing Science to Transform Educational Realities

One of the investigations that is contributing the most to improving the results of schools in Spain, and in other countries in Europe and Latin America, is the 5-year integrated project INCLUD-ED *Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education* (Community of Researchers on Excellence for All [CREA] 2006–2011), funded by the Sixth Framework Program of the European Commission, which was highlighted by the Commission as one of the 10 success stories of its Framework Program of Research (European Commission, 2011). As its main result, the INCLUD-ED project identified a series of successful educational actions (SEAs) that are useful for overcoming school failure, promoting social cohesion and improving coexistence for all children in any given context where they

are implemented (Flecha, 2015). One of these SEAs is DTT, which consists of implementing evidence-based training in schools interested in improving their educational results. DTT brings together the voices of all the agents involved in the educational process, namely, teachers, families, and members of the community, who collectively analyze the scientific evidence and contrast it with their personal or professional experience to create new knowledge that is useful for transforming their own contexts (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017).

One of the most common ways of implementing DTT is by carrying out dialogic pedagogical gatherings (DPGs), also known as “Seminars on the Shoulders of Giants” (Campos et al., 2015). In DPGs, teachers, often together with families and other educational agents, meet periodically to read and debate the world's best scientific foundations and theories in the field of pedagogy and education. DPGs base their functioning on the theory of dialogic learning (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017), according to which interactions mediated by egalitarian dialogues promote the creation of knowledge that is useful for the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of the educational process. The texts read in DPGs range from multidisciplinary books written by the best authors in the field of educational science (e.g., Lev Vygotsky or Paulo Freire) to articles published in the highest-ranked scientific journals, publications by the best universities and research centers worldwide, and publications that summarize the findings of the best research projects in the field of education. Through the egalitarian dialogue established in the DPGs around the scientific evidence, the teachers and other agents involved in the encounters enrich their educational practices after learning and agreeing on what practices are most efficient for overcoming the situations that they face in their schools (Campos et al., 2015).

DPGs can be used to tackle specific topics, such as how to effectively create a zero-violence environment at school. For that purpose, schools that implement this SEA read and debate the world's most important scientific evidence on the matter. They include guides to prevent violence by top research centers on childhood development (e.g., Tremblay et al., 2008) as well as scientific articles in journals, indexed in Journal Citation Reports and other databases, that analyze successful strategies for stopping aggressions and bullying, such as the bystander intervention approach for breaking the silence and protecting victims (Saarento & Salmivalli, 2015; Thornberg et al., 2012; Twemlow et al., 2004) or the participation of the community in the prevention of violence (A. Gómez et al., 2014; Gottfredson et al., 1993). School staff may also analyze specific interventions that put in practice these successful approaches, such as the Early Childhood Friendship Project (Ostrov et al., 2009), the Expect Respect Project (Meraviglia et al., 2003), or the dialogic model of conflict prevention and resolution (Oliver, 2014). In line with the latter, many schools include in their

DPG the study of the pioneering research line on the preventive socialization of gender violence (J. Gómez & Puigvert, 2014), which analyzes how schools can increase violence by justifying it, trivializing it, or praising the aggressors and how, instead, they can eradicate it by creating a safe environment where no violence is tolerated and aggressions of any kind are rejected by peers and adults using the language of desire, thus shaping children's behavior (Valls et al., 2008).

The Cappont Nursery Case Study

The Cappont Nursery is a municipal school for children from 1 to 3 years of age located in the city of Lleida, Spain. It receives more than 50 children annually, and approximately 40 of them are 2 years of age. Some of the children, reflecting the sociocultural diversity of the neighborhood, come from migrant backgrounds. Six educators, who have between 13 to 30 years of service, form the nursery staff.

The nursery implements the Schools as Learning Communities project, which consists of carrying out evidence-based SEA with the aim of improving academic achievement, reducing school dropout, and promoting social cohesion (Flecha, 2015). This educational model, developed by CREA, a research center at the University of Barcelona, is in line with the theories that stress the importance of interactions and community involvement for improving education (Gatt et al., 2011). There are currently more than 200 schools implementing the Schools as Learning Communities project in Spain and more than 400 in Latin America, at all educational levels from early childhood education to adult education.

Since its transformation into a learning community in 2004, the nursery has opened its doors to the participation of the community and implemented the SEA, among them the DPG. As a result of the success of the project, the nursery has been awarded different prizes and recognitions, such as second place in the prestigious Evens Prize for Peace Education 2015 for international initiatives for children that awaken and strengthen "skills that facilitate a constructive attitude towards conflict" (Evens Foundation, 2015).

Egalitarian Dialogue With Educators as a Qualitative Tool for Analyzing the Impact of DPGs for a Zero-Violence Climate

The CM of research (Flecha & Soler, 2014; Puigvert et al., 2012) is a methodological approach particularly suited for investigating the social impact of interventions such as the DPG. The CM is grounded in a communicative perspective that considers that scientific knowledge useful for transforming social realities (not only for describing them)

emerges from the egalitarian dialogues established between the researchers and the people participating in investigations, who discuss the most relevant scientific evidence to date and contrast it with their everyday lives. Thus, based on the points of view and reflections of the participants, the focus of the CM becomes identifying elements that reproduce the existing inequalities and those that contribute to overcoming them (Puigvert et al., 2012).

With the aim of learning the impact that the DPG has had on the creation of a zero-violence climate in the Cappont Nursery, a qualitative analysis was carried out following the CM. Two female educators, whom in the following section will be referred to as Jessica and Maria, who have worked in the nursery since 1994 and 1999, respectively, and who are both the main promoters of the transformation of the school into a learning community and regular participants in the nursery's DPG, agreed to participate in the analysis. Following the CM, in the 2-hr interview with a communicative approach that was carried out and recorded, the researcher brought to the dialogue evidence of the success of the DPG, while the participants reflected on matters such as the methodology of the DPG as well as its impact on the prevention of conflicts and the creation of a zero-violence environment in the nursery. Thus, in this dialogic process, the interpretation of the social reality was carried out by contrasting the theories and analyses brought to the conversation by the researcher with the interpretations of the educators that emerged from their daily professional experience.

The Impact of DPGs for a Zero-Violence Climate in the Cappont Nursery: A Communicative Analysis

The focus of the communicative analysis of information carried out in the CM is to identify elements that reproduce the existing inequalities—exclusionary elements—and those that contribute to overcoming them—transformative elements (Puigvert et al., 2012). However, in the present analysis, the focus is placed on the transformative elements of the DPG that have contributed to promoting a zero-violence climate in the Cappont Nursery as no exclusionary elements were identified. Thus, the following are the main transformative elements identified through the communicative analysis carried out with the nursery educators.

Overcoming School Violence Through Dialogic Training

The transformation of the Cappont Nursery into a school as learning community back in 2004 marked a deep change in its organization because the implementation of the SEA entailed carrying out new evidence-based practices and opening the school to the broad participation of the

community. The DPG is an example of this participation. For almost two decades now, the nursery staff has included the families in their own dialogic training, and together, they have debated many scientific publications such as books (e.g., Flecha, 2000; Freire, 2000; J. Gómez & Puigvert, 2014; Habermas, 1984), scientific articles (e.g., Sancho Longas & Pulido Rodríguez, 2016), and reports containing the results of research projects (e.g., Burgués de Freitas et al., 2015). The discussion of this scientific evidence helped find ways to improve the relationship with the families, as highlighted by Maria, who noted that in the DPG, the nursery staff learned to empower the families by reinforcing positive attitudes and minimizing negative attitudes, leading to an improvement of the school climate:

Maria: We used to harp on the families about norms, continuously repeating to them that they were not doing things right. "You didn't bring this or that, and the kid needs it" . . . Continuously. One day, after a reading, we noticed that it was useless and that, instead, it created malaise. In the end, we sat, talked about it and found the objectives we truly wanted to achieve. And we radically changed the approach. Since then, we have improved the climate a lot.

The educators in Cappont have studied in their DPG some of the world's top research in early childhood violence prevention, including that which emphasizes the importance of using the language of desire, instead of the language of ethics, to shape children's behavior and eradicate violence in schools (J. Gómez & Puigvert, 2014; Oliver, 2014; Valls et al., 2008). As a result of the debate over such readings, the school staff has undertaken a radically different approach to addressing violent and abusive situations: Instead of paying too much attention to the negative attitudes and labels that children may have, the educators now place the focus on the positive traits that they want to promote both in front of the children and with their parents, which has resulted in an improvement in the children's behavior.

Jessica: We have learned very well that it is important not to label anybody. The children can reach their maximum if you show them trust, and so can the families . . . It is a matter of having high expectations. If a child goes to school carrying a label like being a "crybaby" or that "he hits all the time" or others . . . That used to influence us [the educators] a lot. Not any more, to the contrary: we systematically highlight more the positive actions that the children do when their parents come to pick them up. Now, we never address them using the labels that they bring from home, nor do we ever use those labels. That idea is strengthened with the readings. That's because you witness that very diverse people advance, and that strengthens your trust in people. You help them

to go as far as they want to go, already in their very first years.

Reading and sharing books in the DPG such as those of the world's most historically renowned pedagogue, Paulo Freire, have provided the staff and families with valuable lessons to prevent violence in the nursery. For example, Maria highlighted that by reading Freire (2000), they learned the importance of teaching by example as all their actions (and inactions) teach the children different behaviors and attitudes:

Maria: The basis of preventing violence is to agree on actions . . . to agree as a team that it is important to prevent it and, most of all, to be conscious that everything you do educates. That is [Paulo] Freire's. Reading Freire is essential if you feel that you have a responsibility in education. You educate with what you do and what you don't do. Everything you do says something, you are showing the children behaviors, attitudes . . . To prevent violence, it is essential that both individually and as a team you are conscious of everything you do or not. As a teacher with the children, with the families . . . it all has consequences. You learn all this reading articles and discussing successful experiences; discussing, listening to others, respecting their interpretations . . .

The dialogic learning that occurs in the DPG, which involves all members of the school staff in the process and not only a few of them, contributes to creating a shared view of the ideal school climate and to making agreements on how to achieve it. Such coherence in the actions of the entire staff was highlighted in the interview as a positive aspect that has contributed to eradicating aggressive behaviors in the nursery. According to Jessica, the DPG has contributed to aligning their values and attitudes toward violence, thus sending a unanimous message to the children that prevents conflicts:

Jessica: When trainings are given to people separately, they never improve the cohesion of the group. But cohesion and coherence in the actions of the adults are crucial to prevent violence with children between 0 and 3. The values and high expectations can't be shared if we all don't share the training and learning . . . The coherence with which we work to achieve the objective of zero violence, of reaching agreements to deal with any matter and do it all in the same way, is the product of the dialogic learning that is shared as a team. Just with seeing us all acting the same way, the child changes. That prevents conflicts, improves the climate.

Furthermore, the dialogic methodology of the DPG, which opens doors to the participation of families and other

members of the community in the dialogic training, has made it possible to align not only the school staff but also the rest of the adults who interact with the children in the common objective of stopping violence. Thus, the Cappont Nursery achieved a climate of rejection of aggressive behaviors when the educational community (staff, families, and children themselves) shared the same dream of zero violence within the nursery:

Jessica: The more you read and discuss with others, the more you understand the process of learning. And that has a lot to do with violence. You pass from convincing to sharing . . . How do we reach the objective of zero violence? How do we act? If it is only me wishing it, I won't achieve anything. But if I share it with my team, with the families, with the children, and we all agree that we don't want violence . . . We then can work together at once for that purpose . . . and it works, it works!

Discussion and Final Remarks

The international scientific community stresses the importance of preventing bullying, violence, and aggressions from early childhood if children are to avoid their harmful long-term consequences. The negative effects may range from school failure to psychological problems or suicide, and they affect both victims and aggressors, frequently persisting into adulthood. Although some investigations have studied the impact of specific preventive interventions for different school ages, there is a lack of qualitative studies that deepen the mechanisms that cause such interventions to be truly effective.

With the aim of contributing to the scientific literature in this line, this article presented a communicative impact analysis of an educational practice that is contributing to eradicating violent behaviors in a Spanish school. The DPG, which consists of implementing evidence-based training for teachers based on the principles of dialogic learning, is carried out in the Cappont Nursery school, a municipal nursery in the city of Lleida, Spain. Since 2004, both the school staff and families have participated in this dialogic training, gaining access to and sharing the top international evidence in education, which includes the latest research on violence prevention.

The CM followed in this investigation made it possible to identify the impacts of the DPG that quantitative methodologies alone would not have been able to capture. Owing to its communicative approach, which is characterized by the egalitarian dialogue established between researchers and participants who debate the latest scientific evidence and contrast it with their everyday lives, the analysis of the communicative interview identified elements of the DPG that led to the creation of a zero-violence climate in the Cappont Nursery. The dialogic learning and the methodology of the DPG were found to contribute to improving the relationship between the school staff and the families as well as to aligning the entire educational community (including educators,

families, and children) in the objective of eradicating aggressive behaviors and violence from the nursery.

Furthermore, the egalitarian dialogue established with the educators and the communicative analysis carried out in this study showed that the methodology of the DPG enriched the educational practices of the nursery staff, providing it with insights and strategies that are useful for creating a zero-violence environment, such as shaping the children's behavior using the language of desire to promote positive attitudes. Thus, it was by using the CM that the deep impact that the DPG has on the Cappont nursery's organization and functioning was identified, particularly in terms of its contribution to the creation of a safe and peaceful environment for all the children of the school.

Authors' Note

Alfonso Rodríguez Oramas is now affiliated with University of Barcelona, Spain.

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b) SEGUNDO ARTÍCULO

The Impact of Evidence-Based Dialogic Training of Special Education Teachers on the Creation of More Inclusive and Interactive Learning Environments

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The Impact of Evidence-Based Dialogic Training of Special Education Teachers on the Creation of More Inclusive and Interactive Learning Environments

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In the international context of a progress toward more inclusive educational systems and practices, the role of Special Education teachers is being transformed. From an inclusive perspective, these professionals increasingly support students and their teachers in the mainstream classroom, avoiding segregation. However, Special Education teachers often struggle to reach and support all students with special needs and their teachers to provide quality inclusive education. For this reason, more research is still needed on in-service training strategies for the inclusion of students with special needs that effectively translate into evidence-based school practices that improve the education of all students. This article analyses the impact of two evidence-based dialogic training programs of Special Education teachers working in mainstream schools carried out in Mexico during the 2018–2019 school year. Through in-depth interviews with participants, it was identified how, after the training, teachers increasingly grounded their actions on scientific evidence and promoted interactive learning environments that improved the educational inclusion of their students with special needs. This training also became the venue to make evidence-based educational actions available to other students without special needs, improving the quality of education provided to all students.

Keywords: evidence-based dialogic teacher education, special educational needs, Mexico, interactive learning environments, inclusion

INTRODUCTION

In the current social scenario, it is increasingly important to promote a high-quality education as a key requirement to prepare all students—including those students with diverse needs—for the acquisition of the basic skills that are necessary to actively participate in society. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) included in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015) highlights the need to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Inclusive education involves “transforming education systems so they can better respond to learners’ diversity and needs (...) fulfilling the right to education with equality (...) not only to access, but also to participation and

achievement of all students” (United Nations, 2016, p. 44). Thus, despite the existing differences in the definition of what inclusion means across countries (Cooc, 2019), inclusive education is today recognized as the appropriate educational strategy to promote the education of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disabilities in the international scenario (Malinen et al., 2013; Chao et al., 2017; De Haro et al., 2019).

In this context of increasing support to the inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs into mainstream education (European Commission, 2019), the need to go beyond the integration of students with diverse needs in the general classroom should be noted. This becomes the necessary condition for guaranteeing a truly inclusive educational response that makes possible an adequate participation and learning for all students. In this way, as it is warned in the Global Education Monitoring report 2020 (UNESCO, 2020), including students with Special Educational needs in mainstream schools that are not prepared to provide them with an adequate inclusive response can end up leading to a worsening of the situations of exclusion experienced by these students. As recent studies point out, the mere integration of students with diverse needs into the general classroom does not immediately translate into the creation of better opportunities for interaction and collaborative work that are fruitful for the whole class (Pinto et al., 2019).

In relation to the pathways to improve the educational response for all students, prior research has pointed toward the creation of interactive learning environments as an effective strategy to transform schools into more inclusive spaces, in which shared opportunities for learning and social participation between students with special needs and their peers can emerge (Garrote et al., 2017). Different studies reveal that maximizing opportunities for contact and social interaction between students with special needs and their peers can help alleviate the obstacles to participation and social acceptance that students with diverse needs often suffer (Avramidis et al., 2018), while it can also increase their opportunities for academic development (Pinto et al., 2019). In a similar vein, recent research has provided evidence of the social impact obtained by the implementation of Successful Educational Actions (Duque et al., 2020) aimed at increasing the learning and social interactions among students with diverse needs, though the participation of family and community members in various learning activities. Interestingly, Duque et al. (2020) explored venues to develop more interactive learning environments both when including students with special needs and their typically developing peers in general classrooms, as well as among those students with special needs enrolled in Special Education schools.

Moving toward a more inclusive education through the promotion of interactive learning environments often implies reexamining and expanding the role of Special Education teachers. From the focus on responding individually to the needs of students with special needs—which often implies withdrawing them from the general classroom, thus limiting their opportunities for social interaction with their typically developing peers—recent conceptions of the role of specialist teachers are evolving toward more inclusive approaches, aimed at promoting opportunities for collaborative work and social

participation among diverse peers within the general classroom (Rose and Shevlin, 2020). Consequently, if the goal is to transform classrooms into interactive environments that offer the maximum opportunities for learning and development for all students, it is necessary to better prepare and support teachers to offer adequate scaffolding to students, so that high-quality interactions among diverse students can take place (Hong et al., 2020). In fact, the pedagogical competence of professionals working in the field of Special Education has been highlighted as a determining factor in promoting interaction between peers to improve the communicative and social skills of children (Syrjämäki et al., 2017).

Despite the evidence supporting the creation of interactive learning environments that allow students with special needs to increase their opportunities for learning and socialization within the general classroom (Vetoniemi and Kärnä, 2019), the educational practice with these students in segregated classroom settings is still a persistent trend in many countries (Somma, 2020). This reveals the need to better align the educational practices carried out in schools with the evidence-based knowledge about the most effective ways to promote a more inclusive response to the learning and developmental needs of all students (Mitchell and Sutherland, 2020). Some recent studies (Brock et al., 2020) have warned that, despite the existence of evidence-based knowledge in the field of Special Education, there is a significant gap between the available research-based knowledge and the practices implemented in schools (Cook and Odom, 2013).

Improving teacher education and professional development can be a decisive factor to address this gap. The scientific literature has long pointed to the importance of teacher education and professional development, and its impact on improving the quality of education (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Regarding the role of teacher education in enhancing inclusion (Florian and Camedda, 2020; Ní Bhroin and King, 2020), the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) highlighted the recruitment and training of educational personnel as one of the key axes to advance toward a more inclusive approach to Special Educational needs. Among other contributions, the Declaration stressed that one of main challenges for achieving inclusion was to provide in-service training to all teachers, considering the varied and often difficult conditions in which they provide services. Likewise, it was pointed out that training for in-service teachers should be developed, when possible, at the school level, through interaction with the trainers and with the support of distance education and other self-instruction techniques.

When it comes to examining the challenges to improve the professional development needs of Special Education teachers, Cooc (2019) identified two international trends: many schools around the world face a shortage of teachers with competency in the field of Special Education, and a significant proportion of teachers express the need for more professional development, especially those who work with a bigger share of students with special needs. If we look at the characteristics that should be present in teacher education and professional development initiatives in the field of Special Education, some studies have highlighted the need to pay attention to the self-efficacy of

teachers when it comes to providing an educational response to students with Special Educational Needs or disabilities (Sharma et al., 2012; Malinen et al., 2013). Not in vain, increasing teachers' sense of efficacy is related to the use of the best educational practices, as well as with the improvement of attitudes toward diversity and inclusion (Sharma et al., 2012). Furthermore, the scientific literature has pointed to the power of collaborative work between different types of teachers (Malinen et al., 2013; Robinson, 2017), as well as among teachers and other key actors (families, other professionals) when developing plans to improve the educational response to students with Special Educational Needs (Ní Bhroin and King, 2020). Furthermore, it should be noted that, when it comes to support teachers to getting evidence into use in the field of education (Gorard et al., 2020; Joram et al., 2020), this must go beyond sharing research trends among the teaching staff and encouraging teachers to make more use of research outcomes. It also implies promoting changes in the "research culture" at the district/regional level, so that teachers can develop a stronger sense of "agency" to take part of decision-making regarding the educational agenda in their schools or districts (Joram et al., 2020).

The present study aimed to contribute to the scholarship on how to support teachers working in the field of Special Education to get evidence-based knowledge into use in their school practice, in order to improve the learning and development opportunities of all their students. More specifically, our study analyzed the impact of two dialogic teacher education initiatives developed in Mexico City (Mexico), aimed at preparing in-service teachers working in the field of Special Education to implement evidence-based educational actions to promote more interactive learning environments for all students, including students with Special Educational Needs enrolled in general classrooms.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Questions

The present study aimed to address two research questions:

- What has been the impact of the participation in two evidence-based dialogic teacher education programs for a group of in-service teachers in Mexico as regards the transformation of their educational response to students with Special Educational Needs enrolled in mainstream schools?
- What are the main strategies that have allowed participants to translate this evidence-based knowledge to their educational practice, with the goal of transforming their classrooms into more interactive learning environments for all students?

Context of the Study

Implementation of Successful Educational Actions: The Relevance of Dialogic Teacher Education

The study focused on analyzing the impact of two teacher education programs developed in Mexico City (Mexico). These training actions were put into practice within the framework of implementation of a broader educational program, entitled Schools as Learning Communities (García-Carrion, 2016). This project, first developed in Spain, consists in the

transformation of schools into Learning Communities, through the implementation of a set of so-called Successful Educational Actions (Flecha, 2015). Successful Educational Actions are evidence-based actions aimed at promoting dialogue and interaction among students, together with the participation of family and community members in learning activities and decision-making at school. Because of the impact obtained by the Schools as Learning Communities in Spain, which was analyzed by the FP6 INCLUD-ED research project (2006–2011) (Flecha, 2015), in recent years, the Successful Educational Actions have been transferred to a wealth of schools in different countries (Rodríguez Mello and Marini Braga, 2018; Soler et al., 2019; Díez-Palomar et al., 2020).

Among the Successful Educational Actions analyzed by the INCLUD-ED project, it is worth highlighting two of them which are expressly aimed at transforming the classroom into an interactive learning environment for all students: Interactive Groups and Dialogic Literary Gatherings. In Interactive Groups, the classroom is split into small heterogeneous groups of students (in terms of language, learning level, ethnic origin, etc.). Each small group works collaboratively on different classroom activities, accompanied by an adult volunteer, who is responsible for stimulating interaction between all students as a means to help them complete the different tasks. During a classroom session, each group completes as many activities as groups are formed in the classroom. Through this type of classroom organization, all students are encouraged to participate in learning activities on an equal footing with the rest of the class, thanks to the mutual help among peers and the support of adult volunteers (Valero et al., 2018; Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020). In turn, Dialogic Gatherings consist of transforming the classroom into an interactive learning environment in which students read and share their views on world literature books, in an environment marked by egalitarian dialogue and respect for the diversity of opinions. The Dialogic Gatherings support the development of communication skills and school-relevant knowledge, while creating opportunities for students to build shared meanings about socially relevant issues (Lopez de Aguilera et al., 2020). As stressed by Aguilera-Jiménez and Prados-Gallardo (2020) the implementation of both Successful Educational Actions allow teachers to intensify the interactions among all students, not only in terms of quantity (maximizing the opportunities for cooperation among students), but also in terms of quality and diversity (promoting solidarity and mutual help among students with diverse needs, with the support of adult volunteers).

One decisive feature for the rigorous transferability of the Successful Educational Actions to new schools and contexts is the dialogic teacher education (Roca et al., 2015), which seeks to promote evidence-based dialogic training among teachers, allowing them to better sustain their educational practice on the most relevant educational theories and the latest scientific developments in the field. Dialogic teacher education promotes a first-hand approach to primary scientific sources among teachers, in a context marked by egalitarian dialogue between the participants, aimed to promote reflection on how to better translate evidence-based knowledge into their teaching practice. Prior research (Roca et al., 2015; Rodríguez et al., 2020) examined

the impact of dialogic teacher education in Spain, showing that the participation in these training initiatives allowed teachers to build shared knowledge on how to provide a more effective response to the problems found in their school practice.

Dialogic Teacher Education for Special Education Teachers in Mexico

Regarding the current scenario of inclusive education in Mexico, in recent years, different efforts have been undertaken to ensure quality education for all (Hrusa et al., 2020), aimed at transforming educational practices and policies in the field of Special Education in Mexico to promote an inclusive education (García-Cedillo et al., 2014). However, research shows that a greater drive is needed to translate the inclusion discourse present in the latest reforms to the educational practices put into practice in schools (García-Cedillo, 2018). Among the pending challenges to move toward the successful implementation of inclusive education in Mexico, the need for greater collaboration among all stakeholders in the education of students with Special Educational needs—teachers, administrators, families and the community as a whole—has been pointed out. Likewise, the need to advance in the implementation of educational practices and programs aimed at providing equitable and high-quality education for all students, with and without disabilities, has been highlighted (García-Cedillo et al., 2014). Furthermore, improving teacher professional development has also been identified as a critical step to foster equity and inclusion (Hrusa et al., 2020).

Against this backdrop, the present study explored how dialogic teacher education can equip teachers with evidence-based knowledge, to give a new impetus to inclusive practices in schools, in order to transform their classrooms and schools into more interactive learning environments. More specifically, we analyzed the impact of two evidence-based dialogic teacher education programs for in-service teachers in Mexico City launched in 2018, during the end of the 2017–2018 and the beginning of the 2018–2019 school years. These two programs were delivered by a team of educational professionals trained in the scientific bases of the Schools as Learning Communities project, who work for the civil organization *Vía Educación* and the *Natura* Institute in Mexico. Since 2015, this team collaborates with local authorities to transfer the Successful Educational Actions to schools in the city. With this aim, in the last years they have organized numerous evidence-based dialogic training courses targeted at teachers and other education staff. Specifically, our study focused on the experiences of a group of teachers who work in the field of Special Education in Mexico City, which participated in one or both programs described below:

- **Initial dialogic professional development program:** Throughout 2018, a number of intensive training actions were carried out aimed at teachers, principals, school supervisors and technical-pedagogical advisors at various educational levels (from early childhood to secondary education), in order to train them on the scientific bases that underpin the Successful Educational Actions carried out in the Schools as Learning Communities project. Different evidence-based dialogic training initiatives were implemented, which

included a 40 h online training program (which had an estimated participation of over 120 people in total, and a duration of 10 weeks), a 20 h in-person intensive training program for regular and Special Education staff (which had ~125 participants, and lasted one week), as well as a 25 h in-person training program specifically for Special Education professionals (which had ~200 participants and was carried out in three moments over 12 weeks; namely, a first moment, with a duration of 16 h, during the first week, a second moment, with a duration of 5 h, in the middle and, finally, a third moment, with a duration of 4 h in the last week of the training program). Despite having different formats and lengths, all the three initiatives fully covered the modules that comprise the “Raising Awareness” training course that teachers must receive prior to transform their schools into Learning Communities (García-Carrion et al., 2017). Thus, the topics of the intensive trainings included the theory of Dialogic Learning and the bases of the Successful Educational Actions (Flecha, 2015), with a focus on the creation of interactive learning environments to promote the educational inclusion of all students, including students with Special Education Needs or disabilities.

- **Ongoing dialogic professional development program (dialogic pedagogical gatherings):** At the beginning of the 2018–2019 school year, a permanent teacher training seminar was created in Mexico City, based on the experience of the “On the Shoulders of Giants” seminars created in Valencia, Spain (Rodríguez et al., 2020). These are monthly encounters in which teachers and other educational professionals participate in dialogic pedagogical gatherings (Roca et al., 2015), with the aim of deepening on the theoretical foundations of the Successful Educational Actions and improving the educational practice in their schools. For that purpose, the participants read and debate, based on an egalitarian dialogue, the most important theoretical contributions of authors like Paulo Freire, Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner, among others, as well as recent scientific articles published in high-profile journals and top research reports on education. Generally, these monthly encounters are divided into two parts: a first part, which is devoted to the discussion of the selected readings, and a second part, in which different committees are formed, which allow an in-depth discussion on different topics related to classroom practice which are of interest for the participants. The permanent seminar in Mexico City, which was open for anyone who completed any of the initial dialogic teacher education actions described above, had the participation of an average of 60 professionals, including teachers, principals, school supervisors and technical-pedagogical advisors, some of them working in the field of Special Education. The permanent seminar was active during the entire 2018–2019 school year, and sessions were held monthly, with a duration of 4 h per session.

Data Collection

The study reported data collected through in-depth interviews with five teachers working with students with Special Educational Needs or disabilities enrolled in different mainstream schools

in Mexico City (Mexico). The criteria used for the selection of participants were the following: (1) participants must be teachers in the field of special education, (2) which had attended at least one of the actions within the Initial dialogic professional development program and/or had been part of the permanent seminar (Ongoing dialogic professional development program), and (3) which had expressed the improvement of their students from the work carried out in dialogic training and the implementation of Successful Educational Actions. **Table 1** describes the group of participants in the study, paying attention to their professional position, as well as their experience participating in dialogic teacher education. In order to preserve confidentiality and anonymity, all the names that appear in the study are pseudonyms.

Data collection was performed in two stages between 2019 and 2020. Firstly, between July and August 2019, we conducted two paired in-depth interviews (one with Anita and Nora, and another one with Diana and Miguel), as well as one in-depth interview with Roberta. After the preliminary analysis of the information, it was considered suitable to delve into the views and perceptions of two of the research participants, which had been previously paired-interviewed, due to their significant involvement in the dialogic teacher education initiatives conducted, and because they could provide us information of special value (Read, 2018) to shed light on the impact of the training actions conducted. Therefore, a second round of fieldwork was planned and carried out in July 2020, which included two additional individual in-depth interviews, one with Anita and one with Nora. This allowed us to obtain a deep insight of the training experiences carried out, as well as on how taking part in dialogic teacher education contributed to transform the participants' educational practice toward their students with Special Educational Needs.

In order to ensure that the study followed the international ethical guidelines for conducting research with human beings, all participants were informed about the objectives and the characteristics of the research, as well as about their rights as

participants, including the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time. Furthermore, all participants in the study provided their informed consent to participate in the research. The study was fully approved by the Ethics Board of the Community of Researchers on Excellence for All (CREA).

Data Analysis

In line with the two research questions posed, the data analysis was aimed at examining the impact of their participation in the dialogic teacher education programs on the teachers involved in the project. The audio recordings from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed, in order to allow a thorough exploration of participants' experiences, perspectives and views. From this preliminary analysis, a series of themes emerged that illustrate, firstly, the impact that participation in the dialogic teacher education programs had on the participants, in relation to their adoption of evidence-based knowledge, as well as to their vision of their role as teachers in the field of Special Education. Secondly, our analysis brought out the different ways in which participants have managed to translate the evidence-based knowledge gained through the participation in dialogic teacher education into their teaching practice, in order to transform their classrooms into more inclusive learning environments for all their students, including those with Special Education needs. **Table 2** summarizes the main themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis:

RESULTS

Impact of the Participation in Evidence-Based Dialogic Teacher Education

First, the findings about the impact that the dialogic teacher education had on the teachers participating in our study are presented. The transformation of their conception of the role of specialist teachers, as well as their commitment to adopt evidence-based knowledge are discussed.

TABLE 1 | Participants in the study.

Name	Age	Years in service	Professional task	Experience in dialogic teacher education
Anita	42	20	School supervisor in the field of Special Education. She is the coordinator of a team in charge of the supervision of Special Education teachers working in a total of 42 early childhood, elementary and secondary schools.	Completed the 25 h in-person training program for Special Education professionals and then joined the permanent seminar, which she attended regularly throughout the year.
Nora	47	24	Technical-pedagogical advisor in the field of Special Education. She advises 15 kindergarten schools. She works under Anita's supervision.	Completed the 40 h online training program and then joined the permanent seminar, which she attended regularly throughout the year.
Diana	38	15	Technical-pedagogical advisor in the field of Special Education. She advises 8 kindergarten schools.	Completed the 25 h in-person training program for Special Education professionals and the 20 h in-person training program.
Miguel	53	26	Special Education teacher in a kindergarten school. He is advised by Diana.	Completed the 20 h in-person training program.
Roberta	44	21	Technical-pedagogical advisor in the field of Special Education. She serves 21 kindergarten schools.	Completed the 25 h in-person training program for Special Education professionals, the 40 h online training program and the 20 h in-person training program.

TABLE 2 | Coding scheme.

Category	Themes
1. Impact of evidence-based dialogic teacher education on participants	1.1 Embracing evidence-based knowledge 1.2 Rethinking the role of teachers in Special Education
2. Strategies to translating the evidence-based knowledge gained through dialogic teacher education into practice, to develop more interactive learning environments	2.1 Successful Educational Actions to promote more interactive learning environments for all 2.2 Promoting the participation of the entire community 2.3 Making dialogic training sustainable to keep improving practice

Embracing Evidence-based Knowledge

Dialogic teacher training was aimed at making teachers aware of the scientific bases that underlie the Successful Educational Actions (SEA), to promote their rigorous implementation in the field of Special Education. Notably, this evidence-based knowledge is aligned with the need to promote the inclusion of all students, as well as with the key role of interaction as a tool to promote learning the importance of interaction for learning and social participation of the Students with Special Needs in such inclusive settings. For so doing, an intensive initial training was established, aimed at introducing the theories and evidence that support the Successful Educational Actions to participants. The evidence-based dialogic approach that underpins this training program, which involves presenting primary scientific sources to teachers, meant for many teachers examining their prior educational practice in the light of the scientific evidence. Some participants exposed the initial difficulties to carry out this reflective analysis about their ways of teaching their students, because of their lack of experience in evidence-based training:

For me the project was rich, but at the same time it struck me because I said, I mean, what I was trained on, is it not supported? Have I been doing it wrong all these years? (Roberta, Technical pedagogical advisor, Special Education)

Of course, it was a shock because it is something you do not know. I have been a teacher for 25 years. And this was new to me. Totally different, it broke all the schemes (Miguel, Special Education teacher, Kindergarten).

In fact, the emphasis on putting evidence-based knowledge at the service of teachers, in the eyes of Roberta, contrasted with previous teacher professional development experiences, which used to be very focused on presenting “trendy” educational theories, without delving into their theoretical and practical foundations. In her view, that kind of teacher education, which usually run the risk of being replaced by other new approaches when political changes take place in educational administrations, do not have a profound impact on teacher practice:

This is not common. We find a lot about the latest methodology, a lot of popular methodologies, which are “in fashion,” you know? And that, depending on the six-year term,

on the political moment in which you find yourself, you know that it will change. So, I feel that much of what we find as teachers is a bit of confusion, so to speak, because we know that we are going to acquire (knowledge on) what they give us, only for a short time. As soon as they change any person in a position, something else will come. So, they don’t allow you to adhere to it or to embrace it, they never tell you about its foundations (Roberta, Technical pedagogical advisor, Special Education).

In contrast, the dialogic teacher education is based on presenting the results of the implementation of Successful Educational Actions, which are evidence-based actions that have been previously implemented in a sustainable way in many schools in very diverse contexts and countries. During the initial dialogic teacher training, all this accumulated knowledge was shared and discussed with teachers. In Anita’s opinion, this allowed participants to obtain clear guidelines to start rethinking their practice, to transform it:

It is not something that you have to invent, the methodology is very clear, (...) it is actually rather that you respect that methodology when implementing it, so that then it achieves the results that have been already proven (Anita, Special Education supervisor).

A key aspect for the consolidation of the evidence-based approach beyond the initial dialogic teacher training was the development of dialogic pedagogical gatherings, which are spaces for horizontal continuous training, in which teachers meet to continue deepening their training. Through the reading and discussion of scientific sources, participants build new knowledge to keep on improving their practice. The fact of promoting these spaces for continuous training have been decisive for participants to make sense of evidence-based knowledge and embrace it:

This part of having read the books, of listening... because you put your experience, your experiences and so on at stake there, but when you listen to those of others it is like saying: I had not seen it from that perspective. And it has happened, for example, within the services, with the teachers, when we already talked about the readings, and at that moment there were some teachers who said: “I had never thought about it that way, and maybe I’ll do it that way.” (Anita, Special Education supervisor).

But do you know what worked? The Dialogic Pedagogical Gathering. That was what made Linda and Laura (two teachers) convince themselves to put it into practice, to say, “Ok, I didn’t want to at first, but if you give me the opportunity, and you come with me [to the classroom], I will.” (Diana, Technical-pedagogical advisor, Special Education).

Rethinking the Role of Teachers in Special Education

One of the fields in which dialogic teacher training has had the most decisive impact is the transformation of the participants’ vision of their role as Special Education teachers. As described above, dialogic teacher education follows an inclusive educational approach, which aims to help teachers develop more interactive learning environments for all students through the

implementation of Successful Education Actions. This approach contrasts with the more widespread model in Special Education, focused on providing an individual and differentiated response to students with Special Educational Needs or disabilities. This shift in perspective represented an important change for Special Education teachers and raised initial concerns among participants about the feasibility of implementing the project in classrooms serving diverse students. In the words of Roberta:

I fell in love with the project, (...) but at the same time, there were questions like “how are we going to connect it here in Special Education? How are (we going to manage) the difficult situations (...)? How are we going to let all the parents enter?” Those were questions that were being generated... (Roberta, Technical pedagogical advisor, Special Education).

In addition, the possibility of transforming classrooms into inclusive contexts aroused among the Special Education teachers the fear that their educational task with students would be blurred or could even disappear:

The point is that the changes that have occurred in the Special Education model have been complex for some teachers, because they have gone from working directly with the child, to now no longer be able to do so. So, for some it has been like taking away, to a certain extent, the tool they had to work with children (Nora, Pedagogical Advisor, Special Education).

Then suddenly I got into conflict and I told them: these 14 years that I have been a teacher have been of no use. Because at the end of the day in Special Education they have always told you... at the beginning of the school year we based (our work) on the characteristics and abilities of the children, then, from that diagnostic evaluation your work (is developed) throughout the school year. And when you told me that this was not supported (by evidence), I said: “I have not done anything right!” (Diana, Technical-pedagogical advisor, Special Education).

Overcoming these initial resistances involved creating opportunities for dialogue and meaning-making among participants, so that specialist teachers could see opportunities to redefine their role in supporting students' needs in an interactive learning environment. In this sense, the dialogic teacher training thus opened the door for teachers in the field of Special Education to rethink their vision about their own professional task, in line with the goal of transforming the classroom to maximize the opportunities for learning and social interaction of their students with Special Educational needs or disabilities in collaboration with their peers:

Sometimes I do believe that in Special Education we segregate (the students), we do not include (them). Being immersed in a school and realizing that we only serve this type of student, when we should be serving the entire school, is what limits us. But I do firmly believe that this type of educational action (...) opens the door to all of us (Diana, Technical-pedagogical advisor, Special Education).

Just the fact that you look at these other possibilities that allow you to work to favor that context, and that it is really going

to have an impact on that student, and that you can really see it, that is like changing to another perspective: that you can do what you should, not focusing on the student with SEN, but that you really must see the environment, the community (Nora, Pedagogical Advisor, Special Education).

Translating Evidence-based Knowledge into Practice

In what follows, we present the findings regarding the strategies employed by participants to translate the evidence-based knowledge acquired through their participation in dialogic teacher education to their teaching practice, in order to transform their classrooms into more inclusive interactive learning environments. Participant's efforts to implement the Successful Educational Actions, as a way to foster the learning opportunities of all their students, including those students with Special Educational Needs, together with the importance of promoting the family and community participation, as well as the need to guarantee the sustainability of the dialogic teacher education are illustrated.

Implementing Successful Actions to Promote More Interactive Learning Environments for All

When analyzing how the dialogic teacher training helped participants to start promoting changes in the schools in which they work, they emphasized the implementation of Interactive Groups and Dialogic Gatherings in their schools as the driving force for the transformation of their educational practice, aimed at building more interactive environments for all students, including those with SEN or disability. Promoting the implementation of these evidence-based actions meant, in the eyes of the participants, putting into practice a truly inclusive approach, thus favoring the participation of students with SEN in the learning activities:

When we were starting the school year, there was a lot of talk about inclusive policies, and all that stuff. But it was lip service, because really the teachers, in doing so, failed. But when Interactive Groups began to be held with children, very important changes occurred (Miguel, Special Education teacher, Kindergarten).

So (with), Interactive Groups, Dialogic Literary Gatherings, which is what has been implemented in this school year with the students, you can work on it with all the children. All students, regardless of their condition. Whatever the student, you see that they learn, that they participate and that the community is involved (Anita, Special Education supervisor).

To illustrate the changes in the classroom learning environment that took place from the implementation of Interactive Groups and Dialogic Literary Gatherings, Diana and Miguel brought up the case of Marcelo, a 5-year-old pupil with an intellectual disability and a family's history of abuse, enrolled in the 3rd year of Early Childhood Education:

This case attracted me in a special way because no one could control the poor kid. It has a very sad story (...) because the child, if we caught his attention, ran and got under the desk, as

if to protect himself. Or he would run and crawl under his own chair. (...) (Miguel, Special Education teacher, Kindergarten).

Up to that point, the educational response to Marcelo's special needs had been focused on trying to control his behavior when in class, to the detriment of his learning objectives:

The teacher, she was already a senior, and she had a hard time recognizing Marcelo's strengths. She was more determined in ensuring that the child was sitting than in his learning. Or to have him coloring (during class), so that he would not disturb others (Diana, Technical-pedagogical advisor, Special Education).

In his second year at school, and after the participation of part of the school's teaching staff in dialogic teacher education, Interactive Groups began to be implemented in Marcelo's classroom. At that point, Miguel, as the Special Education teacher, proposed that Marcelo participate in the groups with the rest of his classmates. The participation in Interactive Groups gave Marcelo the opportunity to increase his social interactions with his peers aimed at the acquisition of learning objectives. In Miguel's eyes, the opportunity of taking part of the learning activities in an environment marked by mutual help and collaborative learning with their peers and an adult volunteer contributed to boost Marcelo's learning:

I said to the teacher: you know what? We are going to work on this with him. I didn't know... And we started working at Interactive Groups. The child already recognizes quantities and numbers from 1 to 10, he recognizes them, as soon as you ask him, he says them in a skipped way. And that happened because of the Interactive Groups that we did in mathematics (Miguel, Special Education teacher, Kindergarten).

Interestingly, they also highlighted how the participation in Interactive Groups meant a personal transformation for Marcelo: from being "very labeled (...) the one who hits (his classmates), the one who cannot stay still" (in Diana's words), he started to feel just like another member of the class, able to contribute to the classroom work, and to get help from his peers when needed. Hence, the implementation of Successful Educational Actions made it possible to transform the classroom climate in favor of a more stimulating environment for interaction and learning for all. Not only students with special educational needs benefited from this change, but the entire group:

With the parents who worked with the children (as volunteers) (...) the child went unnoticed. You wouldn't say "this kid has an intellectual disability." Because he participated like the other children. (...) that was very shocking for me. And if the children themselves saw that he couldn't, they helped him.

It should be noted here that the implementation of evidence-based actions (Interactive Groups and Dialogic Literary Gatherings) meant an opportunity for participants to move from discourse to action when it comes to transforming their classroom practice to promote the full participation of students with Special Educational needs. This process required teachers to examine their own beliefs and expectations toward these students. Anita illustrates this change in perspective through the

case of Marco, a 1st grade school student with a developmental disability, which caused him a speech delay, among other communication disorders. Anita explained how the student's evolution from his participation in Successful Education Actions led her and the rest of the teachers to realize their initial low expectations toward his learning possibilities:

We saw him, and I tell you we saw him because I (saw him that way) too, and I had to "eat my words," because we saw him very far away, and then we said, "this little boy (it is enough), if he goes to school and socialize, and maybe he could learn to interact with his classmates..." Unfortunately, sometimes you resign yourself... (...) but no! When the (standardized) test was reapplied, (...) the child had already accessed literacy, in mathematical thinking the child had acquired the contents of the grade... and it was something that really surprised us a lot, because I must say that we didn't even realize when the student actually started to read! (...) With this student, our expectations, unfortunately, and yes, I accuse myself, because it wouldn't have to be that way, our expectations were very low to him.

Involvement of the Entire Community

Another key action carried out by participants to translate the evidence-based knowledge gained through the dialogic teacher training into their classroom practice with students with special needs was promoting the participation of family and community members in the school. Among the opportunities for the engagement of family members in the learning activities of students with SEN, the participants highlight the possibility that parents enter the classroom to cooperate as volunteers in the implementation of Interactive Groups. This allowed family members to get to know the educational situation of the student and their needs, while facilitating their communication with teachers:

Regarding other strategies that we carry out in Special Education, I think it has been a plus that, while you are applying the actions, the Interactive Groups or the Dialogic Literary Gathering, the parent is integrated. So, it doesn't require you to have an interview with the parent separately; the parent him/herself is realizing the needs (of the student), and you are not the spokesperson for what he/she should do with the child outside of (school), but it arises from the desire of the parent him/herself (Anita, Special Education supervisor).

The possibility of establishing this close contact with families allowed teachers to involve them directly in the student's learning, establishing formulas to transfer the support that students' needs beyond the school's hours:

We need them. But I believe, well, I am sure, that this has been something decisive and with which we have struggled the most in the 8 kindergartens (whom I supervise). The fact that a parent comes (to the school) with a specific goal, which is not to bring breakfast, nor to clean the bathroom, nor fix the desk... to let them see and have a commitment to their children's learning. Or we have many family members who are the grandfather, the uncle, the tutor... but who are clear in what

they are going to give support on. And (we have) very pleasant experiences in which they have realized how to help them (Diana, Technical-pedagogical advisor, Special Education).

Nora illustrated the possibilities that emerge from this collaboration with families through the experience of Leo, a 6-year-old student with an intellectual disability enrolled in the third year of early childhood education. In the following excerpt, she explained how Leo's Special Education teacher was able to capitalize on the participation of Leo's mother in the classroom, in order to provide her with tips to reinforce her son's learning at home:

For example, in the case of Leo, (...) just something that allowed us to see the use of the different materials, and see what caught his attention and, later, the specialist teacher designed materials that she gave to her mother, to work at home. So, it's like saying: "we already work on this in Interactive Groups, he still has a little difficulty, but look, here is the material that you are going to take this week, to work with him at home, and in a week, we'll come and see if there was further progress." So, we would meet the following week with the material and the child (...) and see if she had favored the use of the material with him. And then, she herself would say: "well, what are you going to give me now? What have you been working on with in Interactive Groups?" (Nora, Pedagogical Advisor, Special Education).

Engaging families in their children with Special Educational needs' learning not only allows them to support them more effectively outside of the classroom, but also turn family members into firsthand spectators of their children's progress, while increasing their appreciation of the work done by teachers. This was revealed in Marcelo's case when his mother began to participate regularly in Interactive Groups as a volunteer:

Marcelo's mother comes when we do Interactive Groups (...) when we finished and we asked them as volunteers what their reaction had been, what they liked and so on, she started to cry, and she said to the teacher Miguel: "Thank you very much, because I had never seen my son sitting for more than 5 min in an activity, thank you for what you have done with my son." So, I think that these types of situations leave a mark (Diana, Technical-pedagogical advisor, Special Education).

Building and nurturing this type of collaboration with families required a significant effort on the part of teachers when it comes to involving families in the evidence-based dialogic approach that underpins their classroom practice. At the same time, it required a transformation of expectations toward the role of families in their children's learning. The participants pointed out the relevance of their gained experience through dialogic teacher education to start promoting this dialogue with families. In Miguel's words:

I think magic happens when you feel heard. In addition, when you don't go to school just to hear complaints, that you don't know how to be a parent, that your child doesn't behave well, that you don't know how to do things... (Miguel, Special Education teacher, Kindergarten).

Making Dialogic Training Sustainable to Keep Improving School Practice

Transforming classrooms into interactive learning environments to promote the learning and development of all students, including those with Special Educational Needs, required an ongoing effort and commitment on the part of all educational agents, which allowed them to consolidate the transformations undertaken and to deepen the improvement of educational practice. To this end, the participating teachers highlighted the continuity of dialogic teacher education—through the participation in the dialogic pedagogical gatherings within the permanent seminar—as a key formula to make the improvements promoted in their schools sustainable. This ongoing dialogic teacher education has helped participants not to lose focus of the goal that is at the heart of all these efforts: to improve the learning opportunities of all students, especially those with special needs:

The fact of attending monthly helps you (...) to maintain this link and this part of: "Let's remember why we are in this situation, why we are dreaming this part, what we have in common". Well, I left after the seminars, at the end, with this desire to continue, with this continuity to think about what else to propose to finally achieve these objectives that we had. That I think it helped us to have them very clear (Anita, Special Education supervisor).

Stimulating this renewed and constant commitment to evidence-based dialogic training among teachers made it possible that the transformations promoted in the school do not depend on the political initiatives of the moment, nor on the commitment of a specific group of teachers, but rather transcended them and reached the community, thus becoming part of the vision of their schools:

We have good foundations, I think we have educated ourselves and we have created a network among ourselves, and that must sustain us. (...) It is not a burden that we say: "no, as people have already changed, here we leave it, and now let's see what they give us." On the contrary, the commitment is still there, and even greater, because perhaps there is no longer someone who is asking you for evidence of what you are carrying, but you are doing it because you are seeing the results, and you know that this is a benefit for the community (Anita, Special Education supervisor).

Participants recognized that commitment and rigor are necessary ingredients for the dialogic teacher training to become continuous and sustainable. At the same time, the creation of networks of support and collaboration between teachers has helped participants not to lose heart and cope with difficulties collectively:

If we meet on Tuesday, come rain or shine, on Tuesday we will be there. Be very, very formal with the commitment. In that case, yes, I admire Nora because, yes, she is extremely responsible in this type of task. And the days that we stayed, those days they were there. And what is the result? Well, obviously, the community joins in, the parents, the teachers, etc (Anita, Special Education supervisor).

I do believe that the entire team is willing to follow this as far as it must go (...) We are going to carry on, and for me it is a pride to say that (so shall) despite the limitations... (Diana, Technical-pedagogical advisor, Special Education).

DISCUSSION

The present study explored the transformative pathway undertaken by a group of in-service teachers working in the field of Special Education in Mexico. After engaging in two different dialogic teacher education programs, participants introduced changes in their educational practice with the aim of increasing the opportunities for learning and social participation of their students with Special Educational Needs enrolled in general classrooms. In addition, the study identified the forms through which the participating teachers managed to embrace this evidence-based knowledge and translate it into their daily educational practice, in order to create more inclusive and interactive learning environments for all their students, including their students with Special Educational Needs. Hence, the emphasis of dialogic teaching education on preparing participating teachers to implement interactive, evidence-based interactive learning environments had an impact on participants, helping them to redefine their practice as Special Education teachers working in mainstream schools.

While there is growing consensus regarding the relevance of creating evidence-based interactive learning environments to move toward the goal of ensuring an inclusive education for all (Pinto et al., 2019; Duque et al., 2020), segregation—usually in the form of withdrawing pupils with Special Education needs from the general classroom for support—is still a common practice in the field of Special Education in many countries (Rose and Shevlin, 2020; Somma, 2020). Faced with this reality, our study pointed to dialogic teacher education as a powerful strategy for the professional development of Special Education teachers, a field that is facing important changes (Rock et al., 2016) linked to the need to promote more transformative teacher education models aligned with the principles of inclusive education.

Our findings revealed the importance of creating spaces for dialogue and exchange that allow teachers to get familiar with evidence-based scientific knowledge, while they reflect on the role that Special Education teachers should play, to contribute to the goal of increasing the opportunities for learning and social interaction of students with Special Educational Needs within regular classrooms. Our results are in line with those of other studies placing teacher education as a critical tool to move toward more inclusive educational approaches (Robinson and Goodey, 2017; Florian and Camedda, 2020), and stressing the need to advance in the study of the tools and programs that offer better support and preparation for teachers when developing their teaching work in more inclusive contexts.

Furthermore, the study has made it possible to identify keys to transferring evidence-based knowledge regarding the relevance of interactions for learning to everyday practice in the field of Special Education, an aspect in which a gap had been identified (Cook and Odom, 2013). In this regard, the study revealed a series of strategies that have allowed participating teachers to translate the knowledge acquired

through dialogic teacher education into their daily practice, in order to ground their educational actions in evidence-based knowledge. Firstly, our findings revealed how through the implementation of two evidence-based Successful Educational Actions that transform the classroom into an interactive learning environment (namely, Interactive Groups and Dialogic Literary Gatherings) they have managed to increase the interactions among students with and without Special Educational Needs, aimed at solving learning activities within the classroom. These findings coincide with those of previous studies, which have pointed to the power of Successful Educational Actions as tools that fosters inclusivity, through the social interaction between students with diverse needs (Duque et al., 2020; Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020). The transformation of the learning environment through the implementation of these Successful Actions not only had an impact on students with Special Educational Needs' opportunities for learning, but also on their peers, since it allowed students without special needs to actively get involved in the academic process of their peers with diverse needs, thus increasing the opportunities to maximize interactions among students in terms of quantity, quality and diversity (Aguilera-Jiménez and Prados-Gallardo, 2020). In addition, our findings revealed how, through the involvement of families and other members of the community in the classroom, teachers were able to strengthen the impact of the Successful Actions aimed at improving the learning and social outcomes of students with Special Educational needs, thus extending the impact of these interactive learning environments beyond the classroom. In line with the findings of other studies that highlight the need for teachers to join forces with key stakeholders to improve the educational response to students with special needs (Ní Bhroin and King, 2020), our study showed how engaging families in the transformation of the classroom's learning environment has been a critical tool to move from discourse to action when increasing the learning opportunities of students with Special Educational Needs. Furthermore, participants highlighted the importance of a sustainable commitment to dialogic training, in order to continue improving their educational practice through the implementation of evidence-based knowledge aimed at favoring the inclusion of their students with Special Educational Needs.

In the context of growing global agreement on the need to move toward inclusive education for all (United Nations, 2015), our study has contributed to shed light on two dialogic teacher training initiatives (initial and ongoing dialogic professional development programs) that allowed a group of teachers working in the field of Special Education to improve their preparedness to respond to the needs of Special Education students enrolled in general classrooms. Through an evidence-based dialogic approach aimed at equipping teachers with theoretical and practical tools to strengthen their collaborative work (Robinson, 2017) with general teachers and with families and other members of the community, dialogic teacher education provided an opportunity for the participants to rethink and give a new impetus to their role as teachers in the field of Special Education. In this sense, the participants' renewed vision of the centrality of Special Education teachers when it comes to transforming general classrooms into more inclusive spaces for all students—which emerged and flourished from the

participation in evidence-based training—is aligned with prior research emphasizing the need to support teacher’s self-efficacy when serving students with Special Educational Needs (Sharma et al., 2012; Malinen et al., 2013; Chao et al., 2017). Furthermore, our findings are in line with those of Ruppert et al. (2018), which highlighted how the efforts of teachers to value the capacities of students with diverse needs and raise expectations toward their learning possibilities have an impact on the professionalization and recognition of teachers working in Special Education. The ways in which the participating teachers detected their (prior) low expectations regarding the learning possibilities of their students with special needs and, as a consequence, started promoting transformations in the classroom (such as the implementation of evidence-based actions like Interactive Groups or Dialogic Gatherings, the participation of families in the classroom and the creation of spaces for continuous dialogic teacher education, etc.) offered an example of the impact of involving Special Education teachers in high-quality training opportunities on the improvement of their educational work with Special Education students in the general classroom.

The study has some limitations that must be noted. First, the information collected in the study is largely based on the perspectives of the participating teachers collected through in-depth interviews. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the evidence-based dialogic teacher education on the academic experiences of their students with Special Educational Needs, further studies must delve into these processes, collecting the voices of other relevant stakeholders (families, students with Special Educational needs, peers without Special Educational needs, etc.). This may allow us to provide a more nuanced and in-depth picture of the role of the different actors involved in transforming the classroom into a more inclusive learning environment. Likewise, the study focused on the results obtained after the first year of implementation of the Successful Educational Actions. Although the information analyzed provided detailed evidence of the improvements achieved in the classrooms involved in the study, more research is needed in order to analyze the evolution of these improvements over time. In addition, further research may deepen on the necessary conditions for the dialogic training of teachers to have a direct impact on daily practice in the classrooms, which may inform future evidence-based dialogic teacher training programs in the different countries which are currently implementing Successful Educational Actions. Notwithstanding its exploratory nature, the study suggests the promising impact of dialogic teacher education on the transformation of the educational practice of a group of Special Education teachers in Mexico, a country that in recent decades is making strides to establish more inclusive educational policies (García-Cedillo et al., 2014; García-Cedillo, 2018) and to improve teacher professionalization

(Hrusa et al., 2020). The efforts of participants to align their practice with the evidence-based knowledge gained through dialogic teacher education to transform their classrooms into more interactive learning environments that embrace students’ diversity illustrate the need for further research on how to improve teacher education and professional development to contribute to the shared goal of ensuring more inclusive learning environments for all.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by Ethics Board of the Community of Researchers on Excellence for All (CREA). The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

We declare that all authors have made substantial contributions. LR-E and AR-O contributed to the conceptualization of the study under the research line successful educational actions and schools as learning communities in the framework of the Ramon y Cajal grant (awarded to LR-E) and the AR-O’s Ph.D. AR-O collected the data. PA drafted the manuscript. All authors contributed to the formal analysis, discussion of the data, and made edits for important intellectual content. LR-E and MR-S revised the final version of the manuscript. All authors approved the final manuscript.

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c) TERCER ARTÍCULO

Recuperando el sentido de la profesión docente a través de tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas: voces de profesorado de la Sierra Norte de México

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Recuperando el sentido de la profesión docente a través de tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas: voces de profesorado de la Sierra Norte de México

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RESUMEN

Hace décadas que la pedagogía crítica señala el potencial de la profesión docente para contribuir a la superación de las desigualdades, sobre todo cuando esta se concibe de manera crítica, científica y liberadora. Sin embargo, las dinámicas burocráticas y bancarias que prevalecen en nuestros sistemas educativos contribuyen al desencanto, la apatía y la progresiva pérdida de sentido del profesorado hacia su profesión, lo que merma la capacidad de la educación de transformar las realidades sociales. Las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas, que consisten en espacios formativos basados en el aprendizaje dialógico donde el profesorado accede a las evidencias científicas del impacto social de actuaciones educativas, permiten contrarrestar esa situación. Investigaciones previas han estudiado el impacto de esta actuación educativa en España, pero hasta ahora no se ha investigado su efectividad en contextos como el latinoamericano. Así, este artículo contribuye a llenar ese vacío al analizar su transferencia a profesorado de escuelas de la región rural de Huauchinango, en la Sierra Norte de México. A través de entrevistas semiestructuradas con enfoque comunicativo a profesorado de la región, este estudio indaga cómo las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas han contribuido a que los maestros y maestras de Huauchinango recuperen el sentido transformador de la educación y se reencanten en la profesión docente, lo que ha repercutido positivamente en su práctica educativa en las escuelas y en su bienestar personal.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas. Formación docente. Aprendizaje dialógico. Transformación. Creación de sentido.

Resgatando o sentido da profissão docente por meio de tertúlias pedagógicas dialógicas: vozes de professores da Serra Norte do México

RESUMO

Há décadas, a pedagogia crítica tem apontado a importância da profissão docente para contribuir com a superação das desigualdades, principalmente quando concebida de forma crítica, científica e libertadora. No entanto, as dinâmicas burocrática e bancária que prevalecem em nossos sistemas educacionais contribuem para o desencanto, a apatia e a progressiva perda de sentido dos professores em relação à profissão, o que compromete o impacto da educação na transformação das realidades sociais. As tertúlias pedagógicas dialógicas que consistem em espaços de formação baseados na

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aprendizagem dialógica onde os professores acessam as evidências científicas do impacto social das ações educativas permitem contrariar esta situação. Pesquisas anteriores estudaram o impacto dessa ação educativa na Espanha, mas até agora sua eficácia em contextos como a América Latina não foi investigada. Assim, este artigo contribui para preencher essa lacuna ao analisar sua transferência para professores de escolas na região rural de Huauchinango, na Serra Norte do México. Por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas com abordagem comunicativa aos professores da região, este estudo investiga como as tertúlias pedagógicas dialógicas têm contribuído para que os professores de Huauchinango recuperem o sentido transformador da educação e se reencantem na profissão docente que repercute positivamente na sua prática educacional, nas escolas onde atua e seu bem-estar pessoal.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Tertúlias pedagógicas dialógicas. Formação do professor. Aprendizagem dialógica. Transformação. Criação de sentido.

Introducción

Las y los profesores tienen un papel protagónico en la mejora educativa al estar involucrados cotidianamente en los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje en las escuelas. Sus prácticas docentes y la forma en que se relacionan con las comunidades educativas influyen en la trayectoria de vida de los estudiantes, lo que puede contribuir a la reproducción de sus condiciones de partida o, por el contrario, a transformarlas. Al respecto, tanto la investigación en educación (DARLING-HAMMOND, 2006, 2011, 2017; BOYD, et al., 2009; HARRIS; SASS, 2011) como los organismos internacionales (OECD, 2015; ASIA SOCIETY, 2015) coinciden en destacar la relevancia de la calidad de la docencia para la mejora de los resultados del estudiantado, posicionando así al profesorado como uno de los actores educativos con mayor capacidad de lograr la inclusión social en las sociedades actuales.

La formación docente de calidad se convierte así en un factor crucial para lograr la superación de las desigualdades desde la educación en el siglo XXI. A través de ella el profesorado no solo tiene acceso a teorías y prácticas que contribuyen a la mejora educativa, sino que también ve influida su motivación para llevar a cabo la profesión docente y configura su autoconcepto como un agente de transformación social (GIROUX, 1990). Con ese entendimiento, en las escuelas que son Comunidades de Aprendizaje se fomenta la formación dialógica del profesorado, la cual consiste en espacios formativos que se basan en los principios del aprendizaje dialógico donde el profesorado accede a las principales evidencias científicas del impacto social de actuaciones educativas (GARCÍA-CARRIÓN, et al., 2017). Las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas son la forma más común y exitosa de concretar este tipo de formación docente, ya que logran superar ocurrencias y mitos en educación ampliamente

extendidos entre el profesorado al tiempo que recuperan el sentido de la profesión docente desde una perspectiva de transformación social (ROCA; GÓMEZ; BURGUÉS, 2015).

En la actualidad las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas están siendo implementadas en un creciente número de escuelas en América Latina en el marco de la colaboración para transferir las Comunidades de Aprendizaje entre el Instituto Natura en Brasil y la Comunidad de investigadores e investigadoras CREA de la Universidad de Barcelona. En este artículo se analiza el impacto de las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas en profesorado de escuelas rurales de Huauchinango, un municipio ubicado en la Sierra Norte de México. En particular, se profundiza en cómo estos espacios de formación dialógica están contribuyendo a superar la apatía y la falta de sentido entre el profesorado de esta región, reencontrando así la pasión por la educación y recuperando el sentido transformador de la profesión docente.

1. La pedagogía crítica y el sentido de la profesión docente

La pedagogía crítica que se desarrolló en la segunda mitad del siglo XX transformó la concepción tradicional del profesorado como poseedores y transmisores del conocimiento, para dotarle de un nuevo sentido como agentes de transformación social e intelectuales críticos capaces de contribuir a la superación de las desigualdades. La obra de Paulo Freire fue una de las más influyentes en esa línea de pensamiento. En su libro más importante, *Pedagogía del Oprimido*, Freire (2005) conceptualizó la educación “bancaria” como aquella que, limitándose a narrar, transferir y transmitir saberes y valores desde el profesorado supuestamente conocedor al estudiantado pasivamente receptor e ignorante (p. 91), les impide a los segundos el desarrollo de una consciencia crítica y por tanto contribuye a perpetuar su opresión (p. 81). La práctica “bancaria”, advertía Freire, también se lleva a cabo por un gran número de educadores y educadoras de buena voluntad que, sin hacerlo de forma deliberada, limitan su actuar a “depositar” conocimientos en sus educandos (p. 83). Como alternativa liberadora, Freire propuso la posibilidad de una educación problematizadora que permita a las personas hacerse conscientes de las situaciones históricas en que están inmersas para así apropiarse de ellas y poder transformarlas (p. 99). Desde esa concepción problematizadora, la acción de las y los educadores se orienta, desde la base de una relación dialógica entre ambos, a fomentar el pensamiento crítico y auténtico de los educandos (p. 83). En una línea similar, en sus *Cartas a quien pretende enseñar*, dos décadas después, Freire enfatizó de nuevo la

seriedad con que debe entenderse la práctica educativa del profesorado, al tener esta un impacto crucial en las trayectorias vitales del estudiantado:

Tratamos con gente, con niños, adolescentes o adultos. Participamos en su formación. Los ayudamos o los perjudicamos en esta búsqueda. Estamos intrínsecamente conectados con ellos en su proceso de conocimiento. Podemos contribuir a su fracaso con nuestra incompetencia, mala preparación o irresponsabilidad. Pero también podemos contribuir con nuestra responsabilidad, con nuestra preparación científica y nuestro gusto por la enseñanza, con nuestra seriedad y nuestro testimonio de lucha contra las injusticias, a que los educandos se vayan transformando en presencias notables en el mundo (FREIRE, 1994, p.67).

En estrecho contacto con Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux es otro destacado exponente de la corriente crítica de la pedagogía. En su obra *Los profesores como intelectuales. Hacia una pedagogía crítica del aprendizaje*, Giroux (1990) advierte que las “pedagogías gestionarias”, las cuales asignan a “expertos” la tarea de pensar el currículo, la instrucción y la evaluación, relegan al profesorado a la categoría de simples ejecutores de esos pensamientos, viéndose estos apartados de los procesos de deliberación y reflexión, y convirtiendo la enseñanza en el aula en un proceso rutinario (p. 175). Sin embargo, en contraposición a esas corrientes de pensamiento, Giroux defiende la necesidad de repensar y reestructurar la naturaleza del trabajo docente para permitir al profesorado convertirse en “intelectuales transformativos” (p. 175). Esta categoría implica, por una parte, que el profesorado inserte la instrucción escolar directamente en la esfera política, promoviendo la reflexión y la acción crítica para que el estudiantado se implique de manera profunda en la superación de las injusticias y se humanice más a fondo como parte de esa lucha (p.177). Por otra parte, implica que el profesorado base su actuar en pedagogías de naturaleza liberadora, tratando al estudiantado como sujetos críticos, haciendo problemático el conocimiento, recurriendo al diálogo crítico y afirmativo, y apoyando la lucha por un mundo cualitativamente mejor para todos y todas (p. 178).

En este sentido, ambos autores destacan el papel crucial de la formación docente para desarrollar el sentido transformador de su profesión entre el profesorado. Freire (1993, p. 40), por ejemplo, enfatiza la importancia de que el profesorado y la comunidad educativa en su conjunto tengan acceso a “formación permanente, científica, en la que sobre todo no debe faltar el gusto por las prácticas democráticas, entre ellas la que conduzca a la injerencia cada vez mayor de los educandos y sus familias en los destinos de la escuela”. Giroux (1990, p. 214), por su parte, señala que la preparación del profesorado en teoría educativa está fuertemente influenciada por la psicología conductista y cognitiva acentuando aspectos inmediatos, medibles y metodológicos del aprendizaje, pero deja de lado cuestiones relativas a la naturaleza del poder, la ideología y la cultura. Por ello, considera crucial

“desarrollar programas que posibiliten que los futuros profesores sean educados como intelectuales transformativos capaces de defender y practicar el discurso de la libertad y la democracia” (p. 210), necesitando dichos programas estar basados en los avances teóricos más relevantes “con el fin de crear un currículum liberador para la educación de los profesores, sin dejarse extraviar por debates sobre temas marginales” (p. 217).

2. Diálogo igualitario como fuente de sentido

Distintas aportaciones teóricas permiten a clarificar las formas de comunicación que más contribuyen a crear sentido en las personas y promover la transformación social. Por ejemplo, la teoría de la acción comunicativa de Habermas (1987) parte de la premisa de que todas las personas tienen capacidad de lenguaje y acción, lo que les permite aportar argumentos al diálogo, pudiendo así llegar a entendimientos y alcanzar acuerdos para actuar en la realidad. Su definición de acción comunicativa “presupone el lenguaje como un medio del cual tiene lugar un tipo de procesos de entendimiento en cuyo transcurso los participantes, al relacionarse con un mundo, se presentan unos frente a otros con pretensiones de validez que pueden ser reconocidas o puestas en cuestión” (p. 143). De esta forma, Habermas distingue entre *pretensiones de validez* y *pretensiones de poder*, siendo las primeras susceptibles de crítica racional y fundamentales para alcanzar acuerdos comunicativos, y las segundas basadas en la capacidad de sanción que permite a alguien imponer a otros sus ideas o acciones (p. 389).

Tomando como base las aportaciones de Austin (1971), Searle (2001) y Habermas (1987) sobre actos de habla, CREA desarrolló el concepto de actos comunicativos (SEARLE Y SOLER, 2004; SOLER, 2017) para referirse no solo al lenguaje verbal sino también a cualquier tipo de comunicación, que incluye el lenguaje corporal, la entonación o los gestos. Además, los actos comunicativos tienen en consideración el contexto en el que se llevan a cabo las interacciones comunicativas, tanto físico-espacial como aquel creado por las estructuras sociales que son desiguales. CREA distingue entre *interacciones dialógicas*, es decir, aquellas basadas en una comunicación que permite a todas las personas involucradas compartir en libertad una acción, acuerdo, sentimiento o deseo, e *interacciones de poder*, las cuales se basan en la violencia física o simbólica de quien convierte, consciente o no de ello, a las otras personas en instrumentos para alcanzar las metas propias (SOLER, 2017, p. 28-29). En las interacciones dialógicas, todas las personas participantes tienen el mismo derecho a hacer aportaciones, y estas son consideradas en función de la validez de sus argumentaciones y en su potencial de contribuir a la mejora social. Por el contrario, en las interacciones de

poder las personas que ocupan posiciones de mayor jerarquía o estatus imponen sus intenciones gracias a la estructura social desigual que les favorece (FLECHA, 2009).

Los conceptos de pretensiones de validez de Habermas y actos comunicativos e interacciones dialógicas de CREA, entre otras aportaciones teóricas, sirven para clarificar el concepto de diálogo igualitario que se recoge en la teoría del aprendizaje dialógico (FLECHA, 1997). En el diálogo igualitario que se establece en escuelas o espacios educativos se rompen las relaciones jerárquicas y autoritarias, ya que cada aportación se considera en función de la validez de sus argumentos. En él se incluyen a todos los actores que conforman a la comunidad educativa además del profesorado, incluyendo al estudiantado, a sus familias y a todas las personas que puedan y quieran contribuir a la mejora de los aprendizajes en la escuela. Esto se hace siempre en base a pretensiones de validez, de manera igualitaria y respetuosa independientemente del nivel socioeconómico, género, cultura, nivel académico o edad de quienes participen en el diálogo (AUBERT; GARCÍA; RACIONERO, 2009).

Uno de los efectos de la presencia del diálogo en las relaciones, y en particular del diálogo igualitario, es la creación de sentido y el reencanto en la vida cotidiana. Mead (1973), desde el interaccionismo simbólico, señala que el sentido emerge en la internalización del proceso social de comunicación, una idea que sería retomada por Habermas (1990) al afirmar que los significados y el sentido surgen no en el nivel de la conciencia individual o las intenciones personales, sino en la interacción comunicativa que tiene lugar en las relaciones sociales. De manera similar, Freire y Macedo señalan que es través del intercambio de discursos y conversaciones críticas cargadas de posibilidad que se da significado y sentido a los deseos, a las aspiraciones, a los sueños y a las esperanzas (FREIRE; MACEDO, 1989; FREIRE 2005). Incluso, desde su análisis de la construcción social del amor, Gómez (2004) afirma que es a través de la comunicación y el diálogo igualitario como podemos reencantarnos y mantener viva la pasión en nuestras relaciones personales, evitando así caer en la monotonía y el desencanto. Por todo esto, en el aprendizaje dialógico el principio del diálogo igualitario es fundamental para la creación de sentido de todas aquellas personas que intervienen en los procesos educativos. En las Comunidades de Aprendizaje ese sentido se crea cuando se fomentan interacciones dialógicas que incluyen a todas las personas involucradas en las escuelas, incluidas el profesorado, el estudiantado y sus familias, para construir el sueño de una educación de excelencia y trabajar conjuntamente para hacerlo realidad (AUBERT et al., 2009).

3. Las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas

Uno de los factores que más influye en la calidad de la enseñanza y en el éxito o fracaso del estudiantado es la formación del profesorado (HATTIE, 2009; DARLING-HAMMOND; MCLAUGHLIN, 2011). Sin embargo, no todos los programas de formación docente logran el impacto deseado, ya que en repetidas ocasiones son intelectualmente superficiales, desconectados de temáticas profundas y fragmentados (BALL; COHEN, 1999), o son lejanos a las realidades que experimenta el profesorado en el aula (SCHWILLE; DEMBÉLÉ, 2007). En contraste, una de las coincidencias que surgen al estudiar los tipos de formación docente que más contribuyen a la mejora educativa y social del estudiantado es que su calidad no se mide en función de la satisfacción del profesorado, sino con base al nivel de transferencia a la práctica de aula y a la mejora de resultados que consigue en los estudiantes. Se trata de programas de formación de profesorado basados en evidencia que logran unir teoría, investigación educativa y práctica docente a través de acciones como la discusión de literatura científica, del análisis de casos y otros métodos relacionados con la investigación (FLECHA; ROCA; LOPEZ, 2019).

La formación dialógica del profesorado es una de las actuaciones educativas de éxito que se llevan a cabo en las Comunidades de Aprendizaje, la cual recoge precisamente ese enfoque de éxito en la formación docente. Se trata de formación continuada de calidad, basada en evidencias científicas, planteada desde el diálogo igualitario, y en línea con las mejores prácticas de formación de profesorado a nivel internacional. En esta formación dialógica el profesorado, junto con las familias y otros agentes educativos, construyen conocimiento de forma colectiva alrededor de las aportaciones científicas más relevantes para la mejora educativa y que aseguren la inclusión de todo el estudiantado (ROCA et al., 2015). Al desarrollarse en un diálogo continuo que recoge la voz de todos los actores involucrados, la formación dialógica del profesorado crea un punto de encuentro entre la información que proporciona la comunidad científica internacional y el saber acumulado en la práctica educativa, lo que permite encontrar respuestas adecuadas a los retos que enfrenta cada centro educativo. Además, debido a que promueve el acceso directo y democrático a las fuentes de conocimiento experto en educación, la formación dialógica del profesorado evita la incorporación de ocurrencias y mitos educativos que no se basan en evidencia, lo que protege la educación de los niños y niñas. En su lugar, con este enfoque de formación docente se logra transferir de manera efectiva las actuaciones educativas de éxito que han demostrado mejorar

los aprendizajes de todo el estudiantado y promover su inclusión social (GARCÍA-CARRIÓN et al., 2017).

Las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas son una de las formas más exitosas de llevar a la práctica la formación dialógica del profesorado. Se basan en el funcionamiento de las tertulias literarias dialógicas, una de las actuaciones educativas de éxito identificadas por el proyecto INCLUD-ED (FLECHA, 2015) y tienen su origen en un espacio de formación universitaria desarrollado por CREA (Community of Research on Excellence for All) llamado Seminario Jesús Gómez, en la ciudad de Barcelona. Conocidos también como “seminarios con el libro en la mano”, en las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas grupos de personas diversas implicadas en la educación (profesorado, familiares, equipos directivos, personal administrativo, apoyos técnicos, etc.) leen conjuntamente los textos científicos más relevantes a nivel internacional recurriendo siempre a las fuentes originales. En estos encuentros se debaten libros de pedagogía, sociología, psicología o neurociencia, entre otras áreas, priorizando la lectura de las obras de referencia de autores internacionalmente reconocidos, como son Paulo Freire, Lev Vygotsky, Jürgen Habermas, George Mead, Noam Chomsky, Jerome Bruner, Eric Kandel y más. También se debaten reportes de las mejores investigaciones educativas a nivel internacional y artículos científicos publicados en revistas de impacto. A través de la lectura dialógica de estos textos, todos los actores que participan en las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas tienen acceso a los mejores avances en educación, creando un puente entre pedagogía popular y pedagogía teórica que transforma radicalmente la práctica docente (RODRÍGUEZ, ET al., 2020). Durante la tertulia pedagógica dialógica, las personas que lo deseen comparten por turnos un párrafo que hayan seleccionado del texto a debatir, indicando la página y la razón por la que lo eligieron. Los comentarios del resto de participantes crean cadenas de diálogo que, sin perder el foco en los párrafos que se analizan o critican, permiten crear conocimiento de manera dialógica. Al basarse en el diálogo igualitario, las aportaciones de las y los participantes se valoran en función de los argumentos aportados y de los valores humanos universales, nunca por el estatus o jerarquía del hablante. Este aprendizaje dialógico, sumando a las interacciones de igualdad, solidaridad y amistad que tienen lugar en las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas, generan transformaciones profundas en las personas que participan, quienes reencuentran la pasión por la educación e incluso recuperan el “brillo” en sus vidas personales, entre otros beneficios (ROCA et al., 2015).

En la actualidad, las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas se implementan en todos los niveles educativos, desde escuelas de educación inicial (RODRÍGUEZ-ORAMAS, et al., 2020) hasta la formación universitaria (BARROS-DEL RIO; ÁLVAREZ; MOLINA, 2020).

Además, desde 2014, en el marco de la colaboración entre CREA y el Instituto Natura en Brasil para transferir las Comunidades de Aprendizaje a América Latina, un número creciente de escuelas lleva a cabo tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas como parte de su formación continuada. Tan solo en México, con el apoyo de la organización civil Vía Educación, aliada del Instituto Natura, alrededor de 200 escuelas funcionan como Comunidad de Aprendizaje e implementan actuaciones educativas de éxito de manera cotidiana. Un quinto de esas escuelas se encuentra en el Estado de Puebla, donde Vía Educación ha llevado a cabo numerosas formaciones de profesorado y otros actores clave en las bases científicas de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje. En esa región, específicamente en el municipio rural de Huauchinango ubicado en la Sierra Norte de México, tiene lugar la mayor concentración de tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas en el país. Ahí, de la mano de la jefatura de sector de educación primaria de la región (de quien dependen 9 zonas escolares y 139 escuelas, algunas de ellas ubicadas en zonas de habla náhuatl y otomí), desde 2018 tiene lugar una estrategia para fomentar tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas en todos los espacios de planeación y organización del profesorado, llamados consejos técnicos, los cuales tienen lugar una vez al mes a nivel jefatura de sector, supervisiones escolares y escuelas. Además, en 2019 se creó una tertulia pedagógica dialógica abierta a todos los niveles educativos, en la que participa profesorado de preescolar, primaria, secundaria y educación especial, así como profesorado universitario y estudiantes de pedagogía de Huauchinango y otros cinco municipios colindantes.

4. Metodología

Partiendo del marco teórico antes revisado y focalizando el análisis en el impacto de las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas en el profesorado de la región de Huauchinango, México, se planteó la siguiente pregunta como guía para esta investigación: ¿Qué impacto tienen las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas en la creación de sentido por la profesión docente y el reencuentro de la pasión por la educación entre el profesorado de las escuelas de Huauchinango, México?

Para dar respuesta a esta interrogante, se llevó a cabo una investigación utilizando la metodología comunicativa (GÓMEZ; SILES; TEJEDOR, 2012). Esta se caracteriza por incorporar a las personas o comunidades estudiadas en todo el proceso, desde la planeación hasta el análisis de resultados, con la finalidad de investigar *con* y *para* la mejora de los grupos vulnerables, y no a costa de ellos (GÓMEZ et al., 2019). Esto se logra estableciendo un diálogo intersubjetivo en el que se discuten las evidencias científicas y se contrastan con

las experiencias cotidianas de las personas que participan en la investigación, lo que permite construir nuevo conocimiento útil para transformar las realidades en cuestión (GÓMEZ, PADRÓS, RÍOS, MARA & PUKEPUKE, 2019). El análisis de la información en la metodología comunicativa tiene como objetivo identificar elementos que reproducen o incrementan las desigualdades sociales (dimensión exclusora) así como aquellos elementos que permiten disminuir y superar las desigualdades (dimensión transformadora). Por ello, la metodología comunicativa ha demostrado ampliamente su capacidad para generar impacto social en las ciencias sociales y la psicología educativa (PUIGVERT, CHRISTOU & HOLFORD, 2012; REDONDO-SAMA et al, 2020), lo que la hace particularmente útil para la presente investigación.

En lo que corresponde a esta investigación, tanto la definición del foco del estudio como la identificación de las personas participantes fueron hechas en diálogo con el equipo de Vía Educación y la jefa de sector de primarias de Huauchinango, quien lidera la estrategia de expansión de las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas en la región. Para el trabajo de campo se llevaron a cabo, durante agosto de 2020, trece entrevistas semiestructuradas con orientación comunicativa (GÓMEZ, 2019) con profesorado que participa en tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas, las cuales tuvieron una duración promedio de 45 minutos y fueron transcritas para su análisis posterior. Durante las entrevistas, el investigador estableció un diálogo igualitario con las personas investigadas en el que aportó a la conversación distintas evidencias científicas sobre el funcionamiento e impacto de las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas, que fue contrastado con la experiencia cotidiana de las personas investigadas para, conjuntamente, llegar a acuerdos sobre las transformaciones que están experimentando a nivel profesional y personal. Para fines de este estudio se seleccionaron cinco entrevistas que mejor se ajustan a responder la pregunta de investigación, de las cuales derivan los testimonios presentados en la sección de resultados. Se usan seudónimos para identificar a las personas participantes de la investigación, cuyos perfiles se muestran a continuación:

Entrevista 1: Sonia - *Jefa de sector de primarias*

Entrevista 2: Rosario - *Apoyo técnico pedagógico de la jefatura de sector de primarias*

Entrevista 3: Arturo - *Asesor técnico pedagógico de primarias*

Entrevista 4: Delia - *Jefa de sector de preescolares y supervisora escolar*

Entrevista 5: Tomás - *Director de escuela primaria*

El análisis de la información buscó identificar, por una parte, factores que provoquen desencanto, apatía o falta de sentido entre el profesorado, y por otro, factores que contribuyan a crear sentido y reencantar en la profesión docente relacionados con las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas. Así, los resultados que se presentan a continuación recogen voces de las personas entrevistadas que se ordenan en tres secciones, comenzando por la falta de sentido, el desencanto y la apatía entre el profesorado de la región, seguido de la recuperación del sentido transformador de la educación, y terminando con el reencanto en la profesión docente y la vida personal.

5. Resultados

La estrategia para impulsar las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas a la región de Huachinango se enmarca en un esfuerzo más amplio para transferir las actuaciones educativas de éxito con impacto social. Desde la jefatura de sector de primarias, se trabaja para llevar a cabo distintas acciones de formación dialógica del profesorado en colaboración con el personal de Vía Educación. Con su apoyo, en 2018 se comenzó un trabajo para llevar las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas a los consejos técnicos de todo el sector educativo, que son encuentros mensuales en los que el profesorado planea y organiza su trabajo. La primera tertulia pedagógica dialógica se llevó a cabo en el consejo técnico del sector, donde se reúnen supervisores y supervisoras de escuelas primarias de nueve zonas de supervisión escolar, junto con su personal de apoyo técnico pedagógico. Posteriormente, por voluntad propia y con apoyo de la jefatura de sector, las nueve supervisiones escolares comenzaron sus propias tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas en los consejos técnicos de zona, en donde participan los directores y directoras de las 139 escuelas que están a su cargo. Después, un porcentaje de esos directores y directoras decidió comenzar tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas con su profesorado en el marco de sus consejos técnicos escolares.

Además, para lograr una mayor coordinación entre todos los niveles educativos de la región, en 2019 se creó una tertulia pedagógica dialógica abierta a cualquier persona de la zona que estuviese interesada, en la que actualmente participan más de 50 profesionales de la educación de Huachinango y de otras cinco regiones cercanas. Entre quienes asisten se encuentra profesorado de educación preescolar, primaria y secundaria, especialistas de educación especial, maestras de educación física, profesorado universitario y estudiantes de pedagogía.

A través del trabajo de campo de esta investigación se pudo identificar el impacto que han tenido las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas en la transformación de la falta de sentido, el desencanto y la apatía que experimentaba una parte del profesorado de la región en un renovado sentido de la profesión docente y un reencanto con la vida cotidiana a nivel profesional y personal.

5.1 Falta de sentido, desencanto y apatía

Los diálogos que se establecieron con las personas entrevistadas permitieron ver que, en la interacción diaria, una parte del profesorado de Huauchinango y sus alrededores reflejaba falta de sentido, desencanto y apatía hacia su labor docente. De hecho, era notorio que para muchos y muchas la educación se había convertido en una actividad rutinaria. En palabras de la jefa de sector de primarias, en la región se había caído en un “letargo”, ya que el trabajo cotidiano se orientaba a cumplir con los lineamientos y programas establecidos por las autoridades educativas, sin apreciarse un sentido crítico y transformador de la labor docente entre el profesorado: “El trabajo de las maestras y maestros había caído en cierta rutina de cumplir con lo que decían los programas, de cumplir con lo que decía la Secretaría de Educación” (Sonia).

Los proyectos, actividades y programas de innovación educativa suelen estar diseñados por personal de las secretarías de educación nacionales o estatales, quienes capacitan al profesorado para su ejecución en las escuelas. Sin embargo, rara vez se aportan evidencias de la efectividad de las prácticas educativas que se promueven, y el estatus o la jerarquía suelen ser factores de peso en ese tipo de decisiones. Ante el funcionamiento burocrático del sistema educativo, gran parte de los maestros y maestras de la región de Huauchinango se habían acostumbrado a recibir e implementar de manera mecánica las prácticas educativas que llegaban a ellos a través de las distintas capacitaciones.

Los maestros hacemos muchas cosas de manera mecánica, de manera forzada, eso pasa mucho en el magisterio. Que tenemos que aplicar tal proyecto, que tenemos que hacer tal actividad porque así lo dicen las autoridades, así lo dicen los jefes, pero en realidad eso no transforma nada. (Arturo)

Estas actitudes estaban acompañadas en muchas ocasiones de un pesimismo profundo respecto a las posibilidades de lograr transformaciones sociales o educativas. Cuando desde la jefatura de sector de primarias se comenzó a promover prácticas de formación docente más

democráticas y basadas en evidencias, al principio era frecuente que una parte del profesorado hablara y participara poco. Y cuando lo hacía, solía enfocarse a la dificultad de superar los obstáculos que visualizaban en el camino para transformar sus escuelas en centros educativos de mayor éxito.

Con los directores de una zona escolar, donde me tocó implementar la tertulia pedagógica dialógica, los directores eran muy callados y se agarraban del argumento de que las cosas son así, que no podemos cambiar, que la realidad es algo complicado y veían barrera tras barrera. Decían que no se podía transformar el medio en que vivimos. Estaban en contra, en contra del cambio, toda posibilidad de cambio era nulificada. (Rosario)

De acuerdo con los testimonios recolectados, la apatía era más evidente entre las personas con más años en la docencia, quienes en ocasiones llegaban a reflejar una completa pérdida de sentido por su profesión. Ya cerca de la edad de jubilación, algunos maestros y maestras incluso expresaban sus ansias por abandonar la docencia y alejarse de la actividad escolar. Además, con frecuencia ese profesorado llegaba a tener relaciones más conflictivas con sus colegas de trabajo y peores resultados de aprendizaje con sus estudiantes.

En ocasiones se escuchan algunos comentarios como ‘a mí ya me queda un año, me jubilo, me voy y ya no quiero saber nada de esto’. Entonces esa parte también hay que trabajarla mucho porque sí hay quienes piensan así. (Tomás)

5.2 Recuperando el sentido transformador de la educación

Las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas han tenido un impacto profundo en distintos niveles entre quienes participan en ellas. Uno de los más notables es la forma en que ha contribuido a recuperar el sentido transformador de la educación entre el profesorado de la región. El acceso directo a obras referentes de la educación internacional ha ayudado a generar de nuevo una actitud crítica entre el profesorado, quien ahora puede contrastar las prácticas educativas que les son sugeridas por las autoridades con las evidencias científicas avaladas. Esto ha contribuido a su vez a despertar el interés por las fuentes de conocimiento científico, en especial por aquellas que destacan la posibilidad de lograr transformaciones sociales desde la educación.

Yo me atrevería a decir que las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas llegaron a despertarnos de un letargo de muchos años. (...) a partir justamente de la interacción, de los diálogos y del debate en torno a los textos científicos, vino a darle un aire fresco a la región. (...) La verdad ha sido muy bueno, nos ha permitido como

región entender que necesitamos transformar las escuelas, pero transformarnos primero nosotros, por convicción. (Sonia)

En las zonas de supervisión escolar de primarias donde primero se trabajaron las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas, al cabo de unos meses se comenzó a notar el cambio de actitud de las directoras y directores, quienes empezaron a apropiarse de la palabra gracias al ambiente dialógico que caracteriza a este espacio de formación y que lo diferencia de otras capacitaciones “bancarias” a las que estaban acostumbrados. Gradualmente, la falta de participación y el pesimismo fueron sustituidas por mayor diálogo y optimismo sobre la posibilidad de lograr cambios en sus escuelas. A ello contribuyó que el personal de la jefatura de sector que participa en las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas lo hiciera desde una posición horizontal, y no desde una posición de poder.

A los pocos meses de la tertulia pedagógica dialógica, se empezó a sentir el cambio en ellos mismos, y nos dábamos cuenta de que ya participaban, pero no en contra del argumento, sino viendo que sí se podían cambiar ciertas situaciones. Y fue algo genial porque ya no se quedaban callados. Entonces es algo muy bueno ver cómo va cambiando la perspectiva, cómo el ángulo desde el que ellos veían las cosas se modifica un poco. [El beneficio es] reaprender a dialogar, cuestionarnos las verdades que creíamos inamovibles. A mi me movió mucho la frase de Freire de que somos seres de transformación y no de adaptación. Creíamos que por el rango o la autoridad que uno tenía imponía su punto de vista. Entonces, esto le da el giro para ver que hay que escuchar y aprender a dialogar (Rosario)

A nivel de las escuelas, las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas han permitido transformar la práctica docente como no lo habían conseguido otros espacios de planeación y formación más verticales. Estos encuentros en donde se democratiza la palabra y se promueve el análisis de la práctica educativa a la luz de evidencias científicas permite al profesorado expresar sus opiniones basándose en pretensiones de validez, lo que estimula su capacidad de reflexión crítica de la realidad. Con ello se logra mayor coordinación entre equipos directivos y docentes, además de que permite la superación de prácticas educativas sin base científica.

En ocasiones los directores no saben cómo tratar ciertas cosas, no saben cómo animar a que los maestros cambien su manera de dar una clase, de tratar a los alumnos, porque no es fácil que te señalen tus errores (...) Entonces, justamente cuando entras a la lectura de esos textos y tienes la oportunidad de compartirlo con otros colegas tienes una gran oportunidad de aprender cosas que no habías visto. Reflexionas y piensas que hay cosas que no puedes continuar haciendo porque te das cuenta. (Arturo)

Además, el diálogo intersubjetivo que se genera en las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas transforma el pensamiento individual del profesorado al escuchar otros puntos de vista que enriquecen y amplían los propios. Durante los debates quienes participan no se quedan solo

con su interpretación subjetiva de los textos, sino que incorporan a su entendimiento las voces de sus compañeros y compañeras que interpretan de forma distinta las obras que se discuten. De esa forma, van creando conocimiento y sentido colectivamente en torno a libros como *Pedagogía del Oprimido* o artículos científicos sobre actuaciones educativas de éxito.

Entonces, esta parte de las tertulias pedagógicas te pega mucho y te hace cambiar tu perspectiva. Ver que sí se puede hacer, y ver cómo tú te estás apropiando de parte de esos textos. Conforme fuimos avanzando en las sesiones, yo le comentaba a mi compañera que es un giro impresionante. (...) El llevar a cabo las tertulias pedagógicas nos ha permitido reflexionar en que necesitamos garantizar el derecho a la educación. (...) Y a todas las maestras que ahora estamos en las tertulias nos ha enriquecido mucho, de ver que todos tenemos los mismos derechos, que debemos trabajar para la igualdad. El compartir todas estas experiencias nos han llevado a enriquecer el trabajo. (Delia)

5.3 Reencanto en la profesión docente y la vida personal

Las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas tuvieron un segundo efecto notable entre el profesorado de Huauchinango. Las personas entrevistadas identificaron con claridad la influencia que este espacio de formación dialógica había tenido en ellas mismas y en colegas de la región para recuperar la pasión en la vida cotidiana, tanto a nivel profesional como a nivel personal. De acuerdo con sus testimonios, el sentido que el profesorado encuentra en su profesión gracias a las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas les llena de energía y entusiasmo para encarar la labor docente, lo que también irradian en su relación con sus estudiantes.

Ahora, los docentes que ya están con ese entusiasmo más cimentado y son ellos los que buscan llevarlo con los niños. (...) Yo siento que cambia la mentalidad. [La tertulia pedagógica] hace que nos identifiquemos, que nos recargue la pila y que encontremos una razón para hacer lo que estamos haciendo. (Rosario)

También las personas con cargos de supervisión y asesoría técnica pedagógica de la región, quienes suelen relacionarse con el profesorado de aula desde el estatus que les confiere su puesto, descubrieron una nueva forma de relacionarse con sus colegas en las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas. La práctica del diálogo igualitario durante los debates, que implica escuchar y valorar las aportaciones de todas las personas en función de sus argumentos, permitió a personas como Arturo crear una nueva relación cercana y de confianza con el profesorado que asesoraba. Donde antes había rechazo del profesorado a recibir instrucciones de una autoridad que le fiscalizaba, ahora hay cercanía y complicidad de personas que disfrutan aprender juntas a transformar la práctica docente en favor de la mejora de todo el estudiantado.

Empiezo a participar en las tertulias pedagógicas, conozco el diálogo igualitario, y entiendo la importancia de que al llegar con un colega yo deba estar en un plano igualitario para conversar. Eso cambió mis relaciones con los colegas en mi zona. (...) Esto me ayudó a ser más aceptado en las escuelas, me dejaron de tener miedo y después de un año preguntaban cuándo iba a ir porque querían que yo estuviera en sus tertulias. Yo disfruto estas formaciones en las escuelas porque estamos sentados todos en un plano igualitario y todos tenemos la oportunidad de aprender. (Arturo)

En las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas, tanto el contenido profundamente transformador de los textos como las interacciones dialógicas que se producen han generado un ambiente de solidaridad, compañerismo y amistad entre el profesorado que no habían conseguido otros tipos de formación docente en la región. Esas relaciones de calidad que se construyen en el ambiente laboral también impactan positivamente las relaciones de amistad y de familia de las personas que participan, quienes trasladan los valores y sentimientos que internalizan en los debates a su vida personal. Con esto aumenta el bienestar del profesorado, quienes disfrutan de mejores relaciones tanto dentro como fuera del ámbito educativo.

Con este tipo de lecturas que hacemos en las tertulias pedagógicas te das cuenta de muchas cosas, y estamos cambiando nuestra perspectiva, estamos cambiando nuestra forma de ser. Incluso nos ha ayudado mucho, de manera personal y familiar, porque hemos cambiado lo que hacemos con nuestras familias, las concepciones que tenemos con nuestras familias, con nuestros hijos, nos ha llevado a establecer mejores relaciones y eso nos hace crecer como mejores personas. (Delia)

El reencanto con la profesión docente ha llegado incluso a aquellas personas que ansiaban jubilarse debido a la falta de sentido en su profesión. Tal es el caso de una profesora con más de tres décadas de servicio, quien empezó a participar en las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas de su escuela. Al principio, la maestra no intervenía y su actitud era reservada durante los encuentros. Sin embargo, poco a poco su actitud comenzó a cambiar conforme avanzaron las sesiones hasta convertirse en una participante activa de los debates. En paralelo, su desempeño docente mejoró, así como su relación con sus colegas y con los familiares de sus estudiantes. Al término del año escolar, la profesora expresó con ilusión cómo había experimentado una transformación en su persona que le permitía disfrutar de nuevo su práctica docente y la educación.

Conforme avanzaron las sesiones de la tertulia ella se animó a ir participando, la íbamos viendo más activa, más participativa. Y en el día a día, en la práctica, en el aula con sus alumnos, así como veíamos el cambio en la tertulia, veíamos el cambio en su desempeño como maestra. Y al final de ese ciclo escolar que hicimos una tertulia pedagógica en esa escuela, ella pide la palabra y se suelta a contarnos su experiencia, lo bien que se había sentido, no solo leyendo sino lo bien que se había sentido en hacer cambios, transformaciones en su manera de dar la clase. (...) Yo

sentí que la maestra había encontrado un nuevo aliento, después de más de 30 años de servicio, para continuar con la labor. Estaba terminando un ciclo escolar y ella ya tenía el ánimo de que empezara el otro, porque sabía que tenía la posibilidad de vivir la experiencia de la educación distinta. Siento que comenzó a valorarse más y vio cómo los demás cambiaron su actitud hacia ella y cambiaron cómo la trataban. La riqueza personal que recibió fue enorme, y educativamente también se notó. (Arturo)

Consideraciones finales

La educación actual requiere de maestros y maestras que se asuman como “intelectuales transformativos” (GIROUX, 1990), capaces de promover la reflexión y la acción crítica de sus estudiantes ante a los retos sociales que enfrentamos en el siglo XXI. Además, para superar las prácticas de educación bancaria, aun presentes en nuestras sociedades actuales, es imprescindible que el profesorado tenga acceso a formación científica de alto nivel, que priorice las prácticas democráticas en la educación y la implicación del estudiantado y sus familias en la escuela (FREIRE, 1993). Sin embargo, como reflejan las voces de los maestros y maestras mexicanas entrevistadas en esta investigación, las dinámicas burocráticas y jerárquicas que prevalecen en nuestros sistemas educativos pueden orillar al profesorado a desencantarse de la educación, llevándole a perder el sentido de su profesión docente y caer en apatía que se refleje en el día a día de su práctica cotidiana.

La formación dialógica del profesorado, y en particular las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas, contribuyen a contrarrestar esa situación, de acuerdo con la creciente literatura científica al respecto. Con la finalidad de explorar el impacto de las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas entre el profesorado de Huauchinango (la región del país con la mayor expansión de esta actuación educativa de éxito), esta investigación recogió las voces de maestros y maestras mexicanas utilizando la metodología comunicativa de investigación (GÓMEZ, 2019). Los testimonios obtenidos confirman que la participación en estos encuentros formativos basados en el aprendizaje dialógico ha contribuido a recuperar el sentido transformador de la educación entre el profesorado de la región, despertando un mayor interés por las fuentes de conocimiento científico y un renovado optimismo hacia las posibilidades de mejora educativa. Además, el diálogo intersubjetivo en torno a obras referentes en educación ha promovido que el profesorado analice de manera crítica las prácticas educativas que llevaban a cabo en sus escuelas y decida transformar aquellas que no contribuyen a la mejora educativa. Estos hallazgos están en línea con investigaciones previas que señalan un aumento

de las capacidades para responder a los problemas actuales y mayor transferencia del conocimiento científico a la práctica de aula (RODRÍGUEZ, et al., 2020).

El análisis de los testimonios también apunta a que la participación en tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas ha contribuido a que los maestros y maestras de Huauchinango recuperen la pasión por su profesión, lo que ha repercutido en sus vidas a nivel profesional y personal. Se encontraron evidencias de que las interacciones dialógicas que caracterizan estos encuentros han derivado en un mayor entusiasmo hacia la labor docente, en relaciones más igualitarias y satisfactorias entre colegas, y en una renovada ilusión incluso entre personas cercanas a la jubilación. Además, algunos testimonios sugieren que el profesorado también disfruta de mejores relaciones personales incluso fuera del ámbito laboral, lo que coincide con hallazgos previos que señalan una recuperación del “brillo” en la vida personal y afectiva gracias a las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas (ROCA et al., 2015).

Por todo lo anterior, esta investigación ha contribuido a clarificar cómo las maestras y maestros que participan en tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas en contextos como el estudiado crean sentido de su profesión y mantienen la pasión por la educación viva, lo que repercute positivamente en su práctica docente y en su propio bienestar.

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d) CUARTO ARTÍCULO

Improving students' academic performance and reducing conflicts through family involvement in primary school learning activities: a Mexican case study

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Improving students' academic performance and reducing conflicts through family involvement in primary school learning activities: a Mexican case study

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ABSTRACT

Research shows that family involvement in learning activities at school improves students' academic performance and social cohesion. This study analyses the impact of involving families through interactive groups, dialogic literary gatherings and tutored library in a Mexican primary school in a highly underprivileged urban area, within the framework of the Schools as Learning Communities (SaLeaCom), project in Latin America. Using communicative methodology, data were collected through interviews (school principal and members of the non-profit Via Educación which manages the project locally), focus groups (mothers, teachers and students), observations in classes, internal school reports and the comparative results of the national 2015 and 2018 standardised tests. Results show a drastic improvement in academic performance, surpassing the national average in mathematics and language by 15% and 5% respectively, and reducing conflicts in 61%. This provides evidence of how academic success and social cohesion are possible in a Mexican school like the one studied.

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Evidence-based educational actions; dialogic learning; family involvement; social inclusion; educational improvement; school climate

Introduction

Mexico faces great challenges in ensuring the right to education for all children in the country. While it has a 94.5% coverage in basic education (preschool, primary and secondary) (Secretaría Educación Pública, 2020) and an attendance rate in primary education of nearly 98% (INEE, 2019), it is estimated that 8 out of every 10 students in the country do not achieve the required knowledge at their educational level (UNICEF, 2018). At age 11, when students graduate from primary school, 49% of them perform poorly in language and communication, and 59% in mathematics, according to national standardised tests (INEE, 2019). In addition, Mexico has one of the lowest educational achievement rates in reading, mathematics and science compared to the rest of the OECD countries (OECD, 2018).

The situation is even more serious when populations suffering from social exclusion are analysed. Boys and girls who finish primary school in the country's most marginalised populations have results twice as low in mathematics and three times as low in language and communication, compared to those who live in areas without marginalisation (CONEVAL, 2018), and the same is true in secondary education (INEE, 2019). In addition, it has been identified that ethnic minorities, indigenous populations and those who speak indigenous languages see their participation in the labour market affected by lower levels of schooling, less post-basic education, and less availability of technology in their schools (UNICEF, 2018).

In light of this reality, there are evidence-based educational actions that have proven to be useful in ensuring academic and social success for all students, even in the most disadvantaged contexts (Flecha, 2015), one of them being family involvement in learning activities (Gatt, Ojala, & Soler, 2011; Swain & Cara, 2019). These educational actions are taken up by the Schools as Learning Communities project (SaLeaCom), through which around 9000 schools in Latin America and Europe are achieving improvements in academic performance, as well as reductions in drop-out and conflict (Flecha & Soler, 2013; Soler, Morla-Folch, Garcia-Carrion, & Valls, 2019). The SaLeaCom network in Latin America is promoted by the non-profit organisation, Instituto Natura. In Mexico there are more than 200 schools implementing the SaLeaCom project. This article is focused on analysing the impact of family involvement in learning activities (interactive groups, dialogic literary gatherings and tutored library) in a Mexican primary school located in one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara.

Theoretical framework

Many studies have associated parent involvement in school as a protective factor in vulnerable groups (Castro et al., 2015b; Flecha, 2015; Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2012; Jeynes, 2005). Specifically, involving family and community members in the learning processes of students of all ages has been found to be key to overcoming school failure and improving educational achievement (Castro et al., 2015b; Epstein, 2011; Roksa & Kinsley, 2019), contributing to reversing the dynamics of social exclusion (Bynner, 2020, June; Diez-Palomar, Garcia-Carrion, Hargreaves, Vieites, & Stamov Roßnagel, 2020).

Despite all available evidence, formal education generally does not include families (Downey, Workman, & von Hippel, 2019), and the relationship between schools and families is still not contributing to reducing the gaps in socio-educational inequality (Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009). Various factors contribute to this distancing. When families experience social exclusion, they face barriers to be involved in their children's education (Bhargava, Bamaca-Colbert, Witherspoon, Pomerantz, & Robins, 2017; Clark, 2020), such as not mastering the local language or not knowing the education system (Antony-Newman, 2019). Schools, on the other hand, often fall into a 'banking model of parental engagement', in which they often dictate the levels of engagement, planning the interventions of families with little or no knowledge of what they actually need or want

(Goodall, 2018). In addition, it is common for teacher–family relationships to be characterised by a deficit model, which considers that schools need to provide children with what they lack at home (Baquedano-Lopez, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013).

The dialogic conceptions of education contribute to overcoming these barriers by recognising the agency of schools and communities to transform their social contexts, which include more equal relationships between teachers and families (Villardón-Gallego, García-Carrion, Yañez-Marquina, & Estevez, 2018). Such a change is crucial to achieving educational success for all children, since decades of research show that the key to learning is found in educational interactions that include peers, family and the community (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hidalgo, Siu, & Epstein, 2002; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1962). The impact of family involvement in children’s learning activities has been studied from different angles and has been found to be beneficial independent of family structure, socioeconomic level, parental education, family background, educational level or belonging to a vulnerable group (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hidalgo et al., 2002). Family support for their children’s learning is also known to positively impact attendance, learning engagement, academic achievement and behaviour (Diez-Palomar et al., 2020; Flecha, 2015; Kim, 2020; Jeynes, 2017; Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Swain & Cara, 2019).

Family involvement is particularly beneficial for the most disadvantaged students, such as those from low SES families or with poorer prior achievement (Benner, Boyle, & Sadler, 2016), significantly reducing the academic performance gap between students from families with higher and lower levels of schooling (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006). In primary education, the engagement of families and other community members in decision-making processes in schools prevents early school leaving among vulnerable youth and increases their enrolment in secondary education (García-Carrion, Molina-Luque, & Molina-Roldan, 2018); the involvement of families at the secondary level positively impacts students’ chances of reaching university (Mwangi, Cabrera, & Kurban, 2019). In contexts where students are exposed to violence in and around the school, parental support and involvement in school have been found to reduce the negative influence of violence on student behaviour at school, their self-

esteem and their grades (Patton, Woolley, & Hong, 2012). In addition, interaction with children around learning activities also benefits adults (Levy, Hall, & Preece, 2018). Educational participation of families in school generates positive personal and social transformations in people who become active stakeholders in their communities (Tellado, 2017).

However, not all types of family involvement in education result in the same benefits. Different kinds of family involvement in school have been studied around the world, especially in East Asian countries (Kim, 2020; Liu, Peng, & Luo, 2020), the United States (Jeynes, 2017; Altschul, 2011) and Egypt (Abd-El-Fattah, 2006). The strength of the relation between family involvement and students’ achievement varies by participation type, academic socialisation and parental attitudes towards education (Kim, 2020; Wilder, 2014). Tan, Liu, and Peng (2020) in a meta-analysis of 98 studies identified six aspects of parental involvement positively associated with students’ achievement: (1) parental academic expectations; (2) parental support for child learning; (3) parent–child discussion of school matters; (4) parental participation in school governance and events; (5) parent and child reading together; and (6) parental emphasis on education. It can be stated that the relationship between parental educational expectations and academic

achievement is widely corroborated by different meta-analysis studies (i.e. Pinguart & Ebeling, 2020; Castro et al., 2015b; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2017; Wilder, 2014). Communication with children about school activities is another factor that has been identified as having a strong effect on students' academic outcomes (Castro et al., 2015b; Tan et al., 2020). Nevertheless, parental supervision of homework is controversial and there is no consensus regarding it. Castro et al. (2015b) found little influence of this factor, Hill and Tyson (2009) found a negative magnitude of effect, and, on the contrary, Jeynes (2005) pointed to it as one of the most important.

A study, developed by Flecha and his team (2015) during six years with partners from 14 countries analysing European school systems, identified three types of family participation (decisive, evaluative, educative) that most impact on students' achievement. Decisive participation implies family involvement in decision-making processes about the functioning of the school; evaluative participation engages families in evaluating students' and schools' progress; and educative participation means family involvement in learning activities for students and for themselves (De Botton, Girbes, Ruiz, & Tellado, 2014; Garcia-Carrion et al., 2018).

The case study: intervention in a primary school in Guadalajara, Mexico

The case study was carried out in a school located in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara city, in Mexico. More than 400 children aged 6–12 are enrolled in this school, which operates in the afternoon. Most families have a low to medium income, and the school receives students from some of the most vulnerable families in the area. In addition, 30% of them are itinerant, i.e. families that migrate in search of seasonal work and sometimes do not speak Spanish, the official language of the school.

There is a high presence of violence in the neighbourhood. Around the school there is drug dealing and gangs are in constant conflict, which includes death threats and murders. Until 2016, before the transformation of the school, violence also existed inside it. Among the things confiscated from students were drugs, knives and other dangerous objects. Relationships between the students themselves were very conflictive and often led to situations of peer violence inside and outside the school.

In 2016, the organisation *Vía Educación*, a partner of the *Instituto Natura* in Mexico for the transfer of the *SaLeaCom* project, offered the school intensive training on evidence-based educational actions to overcome school failure and promote social cohesion. One of the main focuses of the training was educational actions for family involvement in learning activities at school and the evidence of its positive effects on the students and their families. After the training, the school's teachers unanimously decided to implement them. With the transformation of the school to work as a *SaLeaCom* school (for the 2016–2017 academic year), the management and teaching staff began to promote for the first time the educative participation of families, inviting family members and people from the neighbourhood to participate in different learning spaces, like interactive groups, dialogic literary gatherings and tutored libraries. By the time of the data collection for this research, the end of the 2017–2018 school year, an estimated 180 family members participated in these educational actions, which had taken place for two academic years, uninterrupted. Most were mothers and grandmothers with basic education or who had not completed basic education.

Interactive groups

Interactive groups is a form of classroom organisation made up of small groups of students, heterogeneous in terms of skills, gender and culture. Each small group has an adult volunteer, in this case mostly mothers or grandmothers. This classroom organisation is implemented in instrumental subjects such as mathematics. A different activity is prepared in advance by the teacher for each of the small groups (normally four). Each activity is designed to work specific skills for around 15–20 minutes. Once the time is up, each group changes activity and volunteer. The teacher always stays in the classroom coordinating the activities and clarifying doubts about them. The role of the volunteers is not to replace the teacher, but to stimulate the interactions between the students to jointly resolve the activity. The volunteer does not need to have the knowledge to solve the activity. The role of the volunteer is to ensure interactions, so no student is left behind. When a student has finished the activity, the volunteer encourages him/her to explain it to the ones who are experiencing more difficulties without giving them the answer. For this reason, volunteers can be mothers and grandmothers who are illiterate or do not have basic education (Valls & Kyriakides, 2013). At this school, twice a month in each grade, an average of five family members were invited to join different classes, mainly maths, to work in interactive groups with the task of promoting solidarity and learning interactions between peers.

Dialogic literary gatherings

Dialogic literary gatherings are a collective creation of meaning and knowledge through the reading of and dialogue on recognised works of universal literature. Before the gathering, the students read at home and select a paragraph or idea that they would like to share in the debate with the others (Llopis, Villarejo, Soler, & Alvarez, 2016). In these gatherings, families participate in different ways, for instance, contributing their ideas and opinions, chairing the session or supporting students that need additional help to read his/her paragraph aloud, following Bruner's (1978) notion of 'scaffolding'. The school incorporated this educational action as part of their regular curriculum in language classes once a week in each group, inviting various members of the families to join the students in the debate on the books in every session.

Tutored library

The tutored library is opened once a week before regular school hours to extend learning time with the involvement of family members who provide learning support for pupils in reading, writing, maths and languages, as well as with their homework (Flecha, 2015). Two spaces were used at school as tutored libraries: the library and the computer room. The learning activities were planned by the teachers and handed over to the volunteers. Family volunteers have the role of promoting interactions among students to jointly solve the activities. Thus, as in the interactive groups, family members, regardless of their academic backgrounds, are involved in promoting learning. A teacher always stayed the whole session to clarify doubts about the content.

Materials and methods

The empirical data presented in this work are part of a case study developed with communicative methodology (CM), which has been used in research projects at the highest scientific level funded by the European Framework Programmes (Flecha & Soler, 2014; Sorde, Flecha, Rodríguez, & Bosch, 2020). One of these projects developed with CM was the large-scale European Union-funded research ‘INCLUD-ED, Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe from Education’ (6th Framework Programme of research, European Commission, 2006–2011), which identified successful educational actions that have improved students’ educational outcomes in many diverse contexts in Europe. The positive impact of some Successful Educational Actions like the interactive groups have already been published in this journal (Valls & Kyriakides, 2013), as well as one of the INCLUD-ED main case studies (Flecha & Soler, 2013) which was awarded the most-read article prize for 2013 by this journal due to its relevance and social impact.

The case study presented in this article continues and confirms this research line, transferring the social impact to one of the most disadvantaged communities in Guadalajara city, Mexico. Grounded in a communicative perspective, this case study methodology is based on an intersubjective dialogue between researchers, who bring to the dialogue the existing scientific knowledge, and the participants of the research, who bring their experience and knowledge to jointly agree the interpretation of reality (Gomez, 2019); in this case, an egalitarian dialogue between researchers, end-users and stakeholders was opened on the involvement of families in learning activities at school and its impact on the students’ achievement and school climate.

Research questions

The questions that this research aims to address are:

- (1) How did the school involve families in learning activities?
- (2) What was the impact of involving families in learning activities on students’ academic performance and school climate?

Data collection

To answer the two research questions, a documentary review and three qualitative data collection techniques with a communicative approach have been carried out. The documents reviewed are the PLANEA test results, the SiSAT (System of Early Alert) scores, the Student Learning Progress Reports and the principal’s detailed report on family involvement in learning activities, which are described in [Table 1](#). The qualitative techniques with developed communicative orientation were semi-structured interviews with the school’s principal and the SaLeaCom project team, communicative focus groups with mothers, grandmothers, teachers and students, and communicative observation in classrooms where family members were involved. Participants signed an informed consent form that specified the objectives of the research, as well as stated their voluntary

Table 1. Sources of information for documentary review.

Source of information	Description
Results of the PLANEA test	A standardised test passed every three years to all elementary schools in Mexico to measure the language and mathematics performance of sixth graders.
Results of the SISAT (System of Early Alert)	A set of indicators and assessment tools that are applied by primary school teachers to their students to determine their skill levels in language and mathematics in relation to an expected level according to the grade. The system was developed by the government and all schools in the country use it as a way of measuring their progress and to early identify students at risk of educational failure and dropout.
Student Learning Progress Report	A document in which teachers interpreted the SISAT results for the 2017–2018 school year and identified actions that contributed to student improvement in that period.
Description of family involvement in learning activities	Document written by the school principal at the request of the research team detailing: a) the characteristics of the family volunteers that participate in the school and the learning activities in which they are involved; b) the functioning and impact of the tutored library; and c) report count for misbehaviour and its typology.

Source: Authors' own creation

participation and their right to withdraw from the research at any time. All names submitted in this research are pseudonyms, and the anonymity of the school has been guaranteed.

Semi-structured interviews with a communicative approach with the school principal at different times of the intervention, and with the Vía Educación SaLeaCom team members, were conducted (see Table 2). The researchers had a script with existing evidence of the impact of family involvement in learning activities to share and promote an egalitarian dialogue in order to create joint knowledge about their experience in the whole process of the school transformation, through to the inclusion of families in learning activities.

Communicative focus groups were formed by students' mothers and one grandmother who had regularly participated in at least one type of learning activity. Another group was made up of 10–11-year-old students whose teacher regularly organised educational actions with support from family members. The last group was made up of teachers from six different classes, who regularly shared pedagogical coordination spaces in the school and who implemented family involvement in learning activities with their students (see Table 3). The researchers also had a flexible script based on the existing evidence of the topics discussed.

Finally, communicative observations were carried out in interactive groups in fifth grade and tutored library (see Table 4). Observation guidelines were elaborated based on previous literature, which focused mainly on the characteristics of the participation of family members in the specific educational actions observed. Two observations were made in interactive group sessions and two in tutored library. During the communicative

Table 2. Interviewees.

Pseudonym	Profile	Number
Ángela	Principal of the school (since 2013)	2
Sofía	Coordinator of SaLeaCom for Vía Educación in Guadalajara.	1
Clara	Trainer of SaLeaCom for Vía Educación in Guadalajara	1

Source: Authors' own creation

Table 3. Characteristics of the discussion groups.

Group	Pseudonym	Profile	Type of involvement in learning activities
1	Sandra	Grandmother of student	Volunteer in interactive groups (IG) and participant in Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG)
	Mary	Mother of student	Volunteer in IG, volunteer in the tutored library
	Tania	Mother of student	Volunteer in IG, volunteer in the tutored library
2	Cristina	Mother of student	Volunteer in IG
	Daniela	Mother of student	Volunteer in IG
	Fernanda	Mother of student	Volunteer in IG
3	Juan	11-year-old boy, fifth grade	Student. His class does DLG and IG. His mother is a volunteer in IG
	Pablo	10-year-old boy, fifth grade	Student. His class does DLG and IG. His mother is a volunteer in IG
	Elena	11-year-old girl, fifth grade	Student. Her class does both DLG and IG.
	Sonia	11-year-old girl, fifth grade	Student. Her class does both DLG and IG. Her mother and brother are volunteers in IG
4	Gabriela	Full-time teacher	First grade teacher at the school, implementing educational actions with family involvement in learning activities
	Denisse	Full-time teacher	Second grade (A) teacher at the school, implementing educational actions with family involvement in learning activities
	Patricia	Full-time teacher	Second grade (B) teacher at the school, implementing educational actions with family involvement in learning activities
	Carlos	Full-time teacher	Fifth grade teacher at the school, implementing educational actions with family involvement in learning activities
	Paula	Full-time teacher	Sixth grade (A) teacher at the school, implementing educational actions with family involvement in learning activities
	Cynthia	Full-time teacher	Sixth grade (B) teacher at the school, implementing educational actions with family involvement in learning activities

Source: Authors' own creation

Table 4. Description of the communicative observations.

Educational action observed	Space	Role of family members in the action observed
Interactive Groups (in history class)	Fifth grade classroom (10–11 years old)	Facilitate peer interaction and collaboration in small groups of students as they work on instrumental activities provided by the teacher.
Interactive Groups (in natural sciences class)	Fifth grade classroom (10–11 years old)	Facilitate peer interaction and collaboration in small groups of students as they work on instrumental activities provided by the teacher.
Tutored library	Computer classroom	Help students of first and second grade work on instrumental activities to accelerate their learning outside of school hours.
Tutored library	School library	Help students from third to sixth grade work on instrumental activities to accelerate their learning outside of school hours.

Source: Authors' own creation.

observations, the dialogue between researchers, family members and teachers was continuous, i.e. the researchers interacted with the participants to understand the meaning of what they did and said, seeking to reach a consensus based on the joint interpretation of the situation. The dialogues began even before the observations took place, as the

researchers discussed with the teachers and the principal the characteristics of actions to be observed. Also, after the researchers observed the learning activities, they discussed with the family members the implications of their involvement in such actions.

Data analysis

The results data extracted from the PLANEA test, the SiSAT indicators, the Student Learning Progress Report and the principal's report on family involvement in learning make it possible to identify improvements in the educational achievement of students and the reduction of conflict after promoting family involvement in learning activities.

The results of the PLANEA national standardised test show maths and language achievement for sixth grade students in 2015, the year before the intervention, and in 2018, when sixth graders had benefited from the intervention for two full academic years. This allows us to compare the results obtained in mathematics and language of a pre-intervention group of students with the group of students who benefited from this educational action. Similarly, the results of the SiSAT and the Student Learning Progress Report elaborated by the teachers showed the academic performance evolution of the students' total sample during this period. Finally, the principal's detailed description of family involvement in learning activities addressed organisational aspects as well as a record of reported conflicts.

It is important to note that any other questionnaire with a defined sample of students would have less validity than all the data collected through these information sources. However, the research team wanted to go further by triangulating these data using qualitative techniques with a communicative approach to collect information with teachers, training staff, family and students. For the analysis of the qualitative techniques, three analytical categories were formed. The first category allowed identifying characteristics and changes in the participation and involvement of families in the school, specifically in learning activities. The second category focused on identifying the impact of involving families in learning activities on students' attitudes and school climate. The third category allowed identifying the impact of this educational action on the academic performance of the students. It is widely known that in social science research, when the variables being analysed are related to human behaviour, they are infinite and cannot be isolated. Therefore, it is impossible to measure the influence that each variable had on improving educational achievement in every student and reducing conflict in the school. However, as it happens not only in social sciences but also in health sciences research, what can be done (and was one of the purposes of this study) is to validate the results to the extent that they are the same in many other cases in very diverse contexts.

In order to guarantee community participation in the whole process and to ensure the rigour of the participants' contributions, once the analysis was completed and the results were drafted, a preliminary version in Spanish was sent to them to make the adjustments to the results and conclusions that they considered necessary, allowing the building of a collective interpretation.

Results

The findings of the research presented in this section give answers to the research questions of the study and are organised following the three analytical categories explained earlier: first, the change in school organisation to encourage family involvement in learning activities is outlined; second, the impact of this educational action on students' attitudes towards learning and on coexistence among peers is shown; third, and finally, the impact of family involvement in learning activities on academic students' achievement is detailed.

Opening the school to family participation

Initially, when the transformation of the school organisation began in 2016, priority was given to the entry of parents and other relatives into the classrooms to participate in dialogic literary gatherings, as participants in debates on classic literature with the students, and interactive groups, working with small heterogeneous groups of students promoting peer interaction and solidarity. The call for volunteers was strengthened by the fact that teachers began to transform their attitudes towards families and valued their participation, which promoted the inclusion of people without basic education and those in situations of greater exclusion. Little by little, the number of volunteers grew because those who were already involved started to invite other people. The drastic increase in participation is shown by the school records: while in 2015 there were around 10 family members participating, this number increased in 2018 to 180 people participating in different educational actions. The school principal reports the change she experienced:

There was a culture of non-participation here. Parents who didn't enter in the school. Then, the door was opened to them and they entered little by little. Later, others were invited by these same people who are already in the school. [...] At the beginning there were few relatives who wanted to participate. But as some campaigns were implemented and as they were invited, the number increased. At the beginning, when we started the SaLeaCom project two years ago [in 2016] we only had 20% participation, now we can say that we have 60% or even 70% of family members who come to participate [...] Volunteers respond positively and favourably. More and more people want to participate and support. (Angela, Principal)

The number of family members that volunteered to participate in educational actions assured their involvement in learning activities multiple times a week. The dialogic literary gatherings took place once a week in each group, and most of the times one or more family members were invited to join the debate. The interactive groups took place twice a month in each group, mainly in maths class, but also in other classes, and an average of five family members joined every session. In addition, the participation of families made it possible to open the tutored library once a week. The space is run by volunteers from the community, mostly mothers and grandmothers, in coordination with the principal. The tutored library largely prevented students with greater difficulties from being segregated from their reference groups to receive reinforcement during

school hours. As Angela explains, although it was initially intended to support children with more difficulties, students of all kinds were interested in coming to the tutored library.

First, we invited the children who needed it most, the parents of these children. Then, we opened the invitation to the whole school. Two groups were formed: one with eight volunteers and 25 children from the first levels; the other group with 10 volunteers and 30 students [from the higher levels]. There they work in a dialogic way, in solidarity, they help each other. They take the educational material they want to work with. (Angela, Principal)

With this participation, after two years, the school had radically transformed its organisation and its relationship with families, creating a culture that broadly promoted their involvement in learning activities.

Changes in motivation, self-confidence and cohesion among students

Although mostly based on the testimonies of the research participants, the analysis of the information showed indications of positive changes in motivation to study, self-confidence and cohesion between students. The qualitative information obtained suggests that students enjoy the learning sessions with family participation reporting a perception of learning more. For instance, during the discussion about relatives' participation in the interactive groups, the students enthusiastically expressed that they liked the participation of volunteers in the classroom because they felt it had a positive impact on their learning.

Researcher: And why do you like adults to come?

Pablo: Because we learn more . . .

Sonia: They teach us things we didn't know . . .

Elena: And we're going over the things we've already studied so that they are clear to us. (students)

Evidence was also found to suggest that working with family members in the classroom had an impact on the self-security and self-esteem of the students, especially of those who were usually shyer and less participative in class. Testimonies show that with the support of teachers, in the interactive groups the family members acted as facilitators of interactions among students, promoting mutual help and ensuring collaboration so no child was left behind in solving the problems. Volunteers also motivated students to make an effort, showing them high expectations about their individual abilities. Such an atmosphere of solidarity and trust created by the volunteers during the interactive groups seemingly led to an increasing number of children showing greater self-confidence and taking a leading role in problem-solving. Cristina explained it like this:

There were many children that would not participate in class. We had the work to do, we handed out their sheets so that everyone could participate, a question or an answer or something . . . there were children who jumped because they didn't want to participate, and

it was like, ‘Well, look, you’re going to do it like this and like this and like this . . . And look, I’ll tell you how . . .’ Now everybody participates, and no child says ‘I don’t know’ anymore. (Cristina, mother)

A similar effect was observed in students attending the tutored library. Teachers whose students attended the sessions reported that they not only advanced in their learning, but also improved their self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as showed greater solidarity with their classmates during school hours. For instance, this is what the fourth-grade teacher expressed when interpreting her students’ SiSAT results:

Five of the students attended the tutored library, and they were able to participate more in classes, be more confident and supportive, and their performance improved. (Excerpt from the Student Learning Progress Report, fourth grade teacher)

Along the same lines, testimonies of some relatives point to great advances in the learning and attitudes towards studying of students that attend the tutored library. Such is the case of a mother who, during a communicative observation, expressed that her daughters had benefited greatly from this educational action, in which she herself participated as a volunteer. As she explains, the extension of learning time with the support of volunteers had contributed to improving the reading skills and self-confidence of her daughters, particularly of the oldest one, who was falling behind compared to her classmates before attending the tutored library:

I bring my two girls –3rd and 4th grade – so that the little one can develop more. And I also help other children. My girls have benefited a lot. For the older one, she used to have trouble reading, and she has improved. Now she also talks if she is asked for her opinion. Before, she didn’t do it. (Testimony of a mother, in observation notes)

Additionally, the involvement of family members in learning activities in the school seemed to improve the school climate. The school began to experience a significant reduction in violent conflicts between peers. An indication of this was the comparison of the number of reports of misconduct provided by the principal, who emphasised during the interview the improvement observed after two years promoting family involvement in the school. As shown in [Table 5](#), between the 2015–2016 (before becoming a SaLeaCom) and 2017–2018 school years, very serious misbehaviour (carrying drugs, knives, pistol grips, fights in and out of school, threats and bullying) decreased by 54%; serious misbehaviour (challenging behaviours, swear words and taking objects from others) by 86%; and minor misbehaviour (other behaviours considered less serious) by 75%. Overall, the 60 cases reported in 2018 represent only 39% of those reported in 2015, indicating a significant reduction in conflict at school.

Table 5. Number of reports of misbehaviour in school.

	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018
Minor misbehaviour	115	80	53
Serious misbehaviour	29	12	4
Very serious misbehaviour	12	5	3

Note: Description of family involvement in learning activities.

Impact on students' academic performance

The data and testimonies collected in this study suggest that after involving families in learning activities for two academic years, students' academic outcomes improved. This improvement was observed both with the SiSAT indicators and in the national PLANEA test. The records of the SiSAT (see Table 6), show a marked trend of improvement when comparing the overall results before and after opening the school to family participation in learning activities. In the 2015–2016 school year, the year before the school transformation, only 17% of all the student body of the school reached the expected level in reading, 10% in writing and 31% in mathematics. After two years of work with family involvement in learning activities, the percentages increased to 55%, 19% and 35% respectively. In the words of the principal: 'We saw the evolution from the first assessment to this last assessment. Three evaluations passed, and the change is surprising' (Angela, Principal).

Some testimonies point out that after two years working with family members in dialogic literary gatherings, interactive groups and the tutored library, the students have better scores in their exams, mainly because their reading skills have improved significantly, and they understand better what they read now. An example of this was expressed by the teacher Patricia during the communicative discussion group, and was corroborated by her colleague Denisse:

Patricia (second grade B teacher): In my group they have learned, because before most of them failed in the exams. Now they get six or seven [grades out of 10], and there are less children who fail the test [...]. Yes, it was very noticeable [the failure before], out of 30 children 16 failed Spanish and Maths [...]. That is because there was no culture of reading, of reasoning. When children don't read, they don't understand. They used to answer what they understood. Sometimes they would put the maths answers in the Spanish tests, or sometimes they would put numbers instead of letters. . . . Now they don't, the children read and understand [...].

Denisse (second grade A teacher): This bimester we both were surprised because there was an increase in [passing the exams], that is to say, there was very little who did not pass it.

Patricia: [Only] about three or four failed Spanish, Maths. When before it was more than half of the class.

Table 6. Comparison of the aggregated results of SiSAT of all groups in three school years.

SiSAT indicators	June 2015–2016	June 2016–2017	June 2017–2018
Reading			
Requires support	56%	27%	12%
Intermediate development	27%	36%	33%
Expected level	17%	37%	55%
Writing			
Requires support	54%	31%	17%
Intermediate development	36%	46%	64%
Expected level	10%	23%	19%
Mathematics			
Requires support	46%	37%	14%
Intermediate development	33%	32%	51%
Expected level	31%	29%	35%

Note: Elaborated by the principal using the data of the SiSAT tool.

Older students also achieved better academic results and this improvement seems to be related to working with families in learning activities. As one mother explained during a discussion group, the children were able to learn more when interacting with adult volunteers and peers in interactive groups, as they could receive explanations of school activities from people other than the teacher, which on many occasions facilitated their learning:

They were going to do an activity [in an interactive group] and I told them, ‘Look, maybe I’m not going to explain it to you like the teacher did’ [. . .]. And I started explaining, but also in my words [. . .] I explained units, tens, hundreds, and I explained it in a different way. And [one of them] told me, ‘I learned better about cents and pesos. I understand you better. [And I answered:] Well, what’s most important is that you understand something, maybe in my way, but that you learn math.’ And the boy liked it. (Tania, mother).

While in previous years a significant percentage of students reached the fifth and sixth grades without proper reading skills, in the 2017–2018 school year most children finished primary school with consolidated reading and writing skills, according to the principal. This is how Angela expressed it during her interview: ‘Now, in 6th grade there are almost no reading problems, I had children that couldn’t read in 6th grade.’ The improvement in reading results was confirmed by the 2018 national PLANEA test for sixth graders. As shown in Figure 1, in 2018, 23% of students obtained satisfactory or excellent results in language and communication, exceeding the national average by five points, and the percentage of students who failed decreased to 29%.

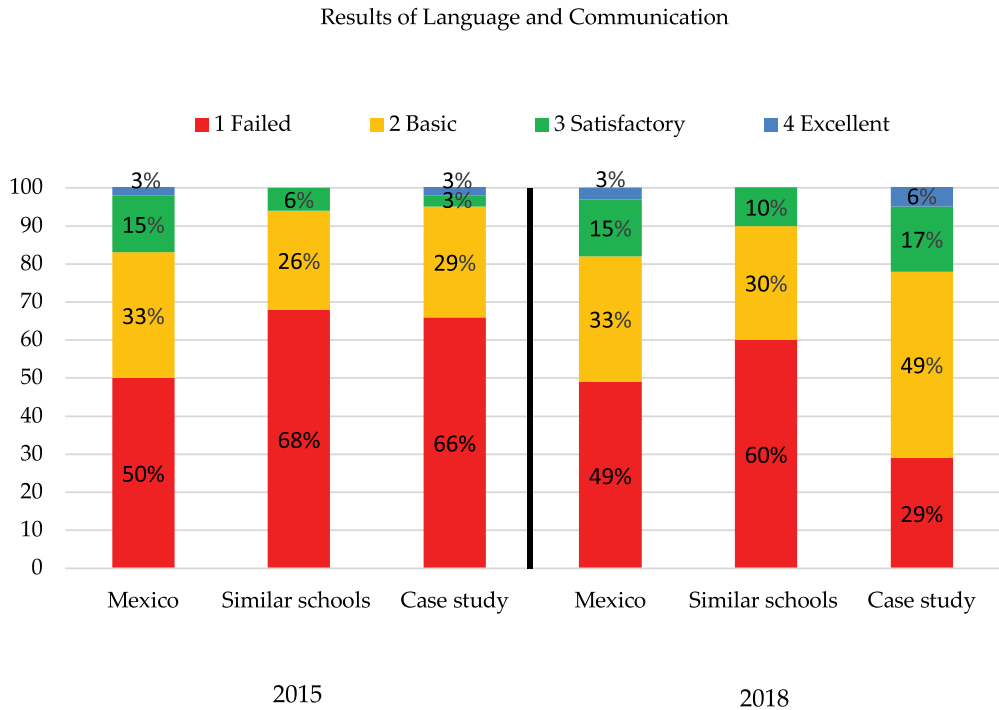


Figure 1. Comparison of results in national PLANEA for Language and Communication 2015 and 2018. Source: PLANEA 2018.

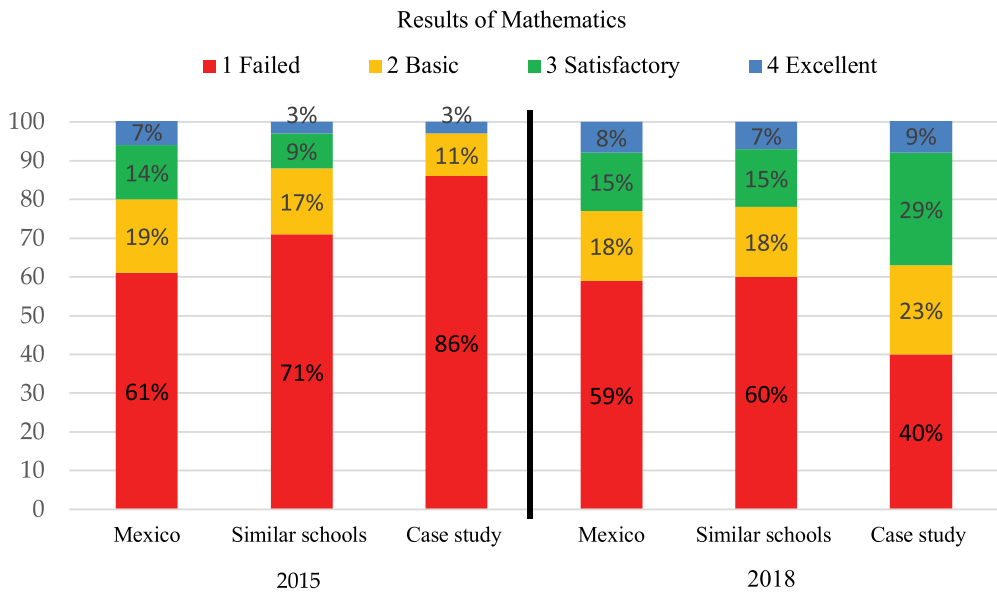


Figure 2. Comparison of results in 2015 and 2018 national PLANEA test for Mathematics. *Source:* PLANEA 2018.

At the same time, a remarkable improvement in the results on the 2018 PLANEA test in mathematics was observed. As shown in [Figure 2](#), 38% of students scored satisfactory or excellent, exceeding the national average by 15 points, while the percentage of students who failed dropped to 40% in 2018.

In short, the results show that in the 2015 evaluation (see [Figure 2](#) and [Figure 3](#)), prior to the implementation of family involvement in learning activities, the sixth graders in this school typically obtained results below the national average, comparable with schools of similar socio-economic contexts. However, after two years working with the families, in 2018 children who reached sixth grade in the school now managed to obtain results clearly above the national average and surpassed the average of schools with similar characteristics by 12% in language and 16% in mathematics.

Discussion and conclusion

In this case study, after replicating the intervention of family involvement in the same learning activities at school as in other schools from different contexts, it can be affirmed that: (1) the maths and language scores of sixth graders in national standardised tests improved; (2) the results of the SiSAT indicators for writing, reading and maths improved with a sample of the total schools' students; and (3) fewer and less severe conflicts were reported. This intervention has had a similar impact as in the other schools that applied it (Flecha, 2015; Flecha & Soler, 2013; Gomez, 2019; Gomez, Padros, Rios, Mara, & Pukepuka, 2019).

Previous research has shed light on the importance of transforming school organisation in order to promote the entry of families and the community into educational spaces (Epstein, 2011; Flecha, 2015; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hidalgo et al., 2002). The SaLeaCom collect that evidence and put them into practice, which has allowed them to overcome educational failure and violent school climates in a variety of international contexts (Flecha & Soler, 2013; Soler et al., 2019). This article analysed the case of a primary school located in a context of high vulnerability and violence in Mexico, which had the worst academic results among all the schools in its area and a high incidence of violent conflict among its students. The case study revealed that the school underwent a profound transformation because of opening its doors to the involvement of families in learning activities. The change was gradual but sustained, reaching in 2018 an increase of 1800% in the number of family members participating in the school compared to 2015, when a 'banking model of relationship with families' still prevailed (Goodall, 2018), based on the mere transmission of ideas and hierarchical authority. The change in teachers' attitudes, which happened after the school staff participated in intensive evidence-based training with *Vía Educación*, was key to encouraging the participation of family members, especially of those belonging to vulnerable groups. These families were previously more distant from school, but soon noticed that their incorporation into school activities was increasingly valued for its impact on improving students' achievement. This new, welcoming environment, characterised by high expectations of the teachers about the capabilities of the families, combined with an active search for volunteers through informative assemblies – with both identified by previous research as key factors for improving the participation of families in the school (Diez-Palomar et al., 2020; Gatt et al., 2011) – promoted the involvement of numerous and diverse family members.

The results of this study suggest that family involvement in learning activities had a positive impact on the attitudinal aspects of the students as well as on the coexistence between peers, which is in line with previous research (Flecha & Soler, 2013; Nokali et al., 2010; Valls & Kyriakides, 2013; Villarejo-Carballido, Pulido, De Botton, & Serradell, 2019). In the field work, it was common to find among the families interviewed references to the impact that their participation in school had on students' motivation towards learning, which was corroborated by the students. In the school analysed, evidence was also found of the relationship between family involvement in learning activities and student self-confidence, which later impacted positively on their academic performance. These results contrast with previous studies that observed no impact of regular schools on either increasing or decreasing the gaps in social and behavioural skills during early formal schooling (Downey et al., 2019; Jeynes, 2017), which highlights the transformative effect of involving families in learning activities at school. Particularly significant was the reduction of conflicts recorded in 2018, with a decrease in all types of aggression compared to 2015, prior to the implementation of the educative participation of families. These findings, which point to an improved school climate, are in line with the improvements observed in other SaLeaCom locations in Europe (Flecha, 2015) and Latin America (Soler et al., 2019), which experienced drastic reductions in conflict.

The limitation of this case study is that it is not possible to affirm that all the improvements observed are caused by single variable, i.e. the families' involvement in learning activities. However, it is possible to state that strong indications of a correlation between the intervention and the improvement of student educational achievement and significant reduction of conflicts occurred. The academic improvement observed in this case study gives strength to the argument that contextual conditions do not determine children's academic outcomes (Benner et al., 2016; Diez-Palomar et al., 2020; Garcia-Carrion et al., 2018), since the school is implementing successful educational actions and managing to outperform in standardised tests not only the average of schools in similar socioeconomic contexts, but also the average of all schools at the national level.

This study opens various possibilities for further research, such as, for example, if the improvements identified are sustained over time. Moreover, it would be relevant to study the medium and long-term impact of this educational action on students who successfully advance to middle school and beyond.

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e) QUINTO ARTÍCULO

The Critical Pedagogy that Transforms the Reality

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Abstract

Authors, teachers, students, family members, and other citizens from diverse cultures, gender options and countries have been and are developing critical pedagogy all over the world. However, there are authors of “critical pedagogy” who use this label for luxuries and egotism but who have never transformed nor supported the transformation of any school or educational project. This article presents four criteria to distinguish between the critical pedagogy that transforms reality and the “critical pedagogy” that only benefits those who use this label. The first criterion is the egalitarian dialogue that critical pedagogy authors use with very diverse citizens to achieve extensive and profound real transformations. The second one is the social impact of their work on society, especially on the oppressed, overcoming inequalities and improving their conditions of life. The third one is the equality of results of the oppressed in literacy as well as in sentiments and values, without segregating. The fourth one is the critical pedagogy style versus the Althusserian and market styles, highlighting the scientific and theoretical rigor of critical pedagogy authors opposed to the lack of theoretical basis of authors of “critical pedagogy”.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, oppressed, social impact, egalitarian dialogue, transformation

La Pedagogía Crítica que Transforma la Realidad

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Resumen

Autoras y autores, profesorado, estudiantes, familiares y ciudadanía de diversas culturas, opciones de género y países han desarrollado y desarrollan pedagogía crítica en todo el mundo. Sin embargo, hay autoras y autores de "pedagogía crítica" que utilizan esta etiqueta para el lujo y egoísmo pero que nunca han transformado ni apoyado la transformación de ningún proyecto educativo. Este artículo presenta cuatro criterios para distinguir entre la pedagogía crítica que transforma la realidad y la que sólo beneficia a quienes utilizan esta etiqueta. El primero es el diálogo igualitario que las y los autores de pedagogía crítica utilizan con ciudadanía muy diversa para conseguir transformaciones reales amplias y profundas. El segundo es el impacto social de su trabajo en la sociedad, especialmente en los grupos oprimidos, superando las desigualdades y mejorando sus condiciones de vida. La tercera, la igualdad de resultados de los grupos oprimidos tanto en alfabetización como en sentimientos y valores, sin segregar. La cuarta, el estilo de la pedagogía crítica frente a estilos althusseriano y de mercado, destacando el rigor científico y teórico de las y los autores de la pedagogía crítica frente a la falta de base teórica de las y los autores de la "pedagogía crítica".

Palabras clave: pedagogía crítica, oprimidos, impacto social, diálogo igualitario, transformación



In his first time in Barcelona, Freire said: *Now that I am saying words of benevolence and acknowledgment, I would also like to highlight here how much I owe and continue owing, in the process of my permanent training, not so much the academic practice I have had, as much as the workers of fields and cities from different parts of the world; peasants and urban workers, men and women with whom I'm learning, and in learning with them, I am teaching in turn* (Freire, 1989, p. 102). With this egalitarian dialogue, Paulo Freire created and implemented a literacy program in Recife which achieved extraordinary results among the oppressed. His literacy method, created in a continuous and egalitarian dialogue with the people becoming literate, oppressed people, was recreated and implemented in practice in many countries and projects. It has achieved results that are a key part of the transformation of education and society, which is the purpose and the meaning of critical pedagogy. His theory of dialogic action, his pedagogy of the oppressed, was born and developed in contrast between the best scientific and theoretical contributions then available and the practice that was already transforming reality.

For more than a hundred years, authors, professors, teachers, educators, citizens, workers, family members, students from diverse cultures, countries, genders have been developing critical pedagogy in egalitarian dialogue among them and transforming education and the world. The revision of literature of the authors of this article have found four criteria to differentiate critical pedagogy from the use of this label for publications that do not transform any school or educational project: egalitarian dialogue, social impact, equality of results, and rigorous theoretical basis.

Critical pedagogy was born and developed in the 20th century to contribute theoretical and practical elements to this real transformation of education and society. In his first minute in Barcelona, Freire asked Flecha about Ferrer y Guardia. Paulo is the main author of critical pedagogy and he recognized the previous excellent work made by authors like Ferrer y Guardia or Myles Horton; he also recognized the theoretical contributions of the Frankfurt school critical theory. Ferrer y Guardia created a school, the Escuela Moderna [Modern School], which also achieved extraordinary results in practice. As in the case of Freire, this concrete project created personally by Ferrer y Guardia was replicated and recreated in a number of countries and projects. In 1932,

Myles Horton founded Highlander, a popular school project that has promoted and collaborated in very relevant educational and social transformations highlighted by the book "We make the road by walking" (Horton & Freire, 1990); this project has not had replicability in other contexts but has been a source of inspiration for transformations in other places and countries. Rabindranath Tagore, the first non-Western Nobel Prize winner in literature, created in India the school that has succeeded in educating students as brilliant as Amartya Sen, who has made it clear that the achievements of science, culture, coexistence between cultures and gender equality do not come only from the West, but in many cases have occurred before in other places such as India. Authors of critical pedagogy have published about transformative schools, for instance Apple and Beane (1999).

In the last quarter of the 20th century, and even more so in the 21st century, the role of women in the development and improvement of both the theory and practice of critical pedagogy has finally been highlighted. The egalitarian dialogue between men and women of very different academic levels, socioeconomic status, cultures, gender options and professions is achieving more extensive and profound transformations of reality than in the past and giving visibility to other women who have preceded them, such as Sappho, creator of the first known women's school 26 centuries ago.

One of the projects developed by this egalitarian dialogue, the transformation of schools into Learning Communities, has achieved not only a previously unseen improvement in the results of the oppressed population, but also the recreation of the project in more than 10,000 contexts in very different countries and situations. This project was initiated by Ramón Flecha in La Verneda (Sánchez-Aroca, 1999) and is recreated by many and diverse scholars in different countries like Roseli Rodrigues de Mello, Maria Vieites and Rocío García-Carrión. There are authors who, without participating directly in these projects, are supporting with their writings and statements those who are transforming reality and, therefore, are also making critical pedagogy with these contributions.

In the literature available today on the subject, there is great confusion without clearly differentiating critical pedagogy from other approaches that are presented under that title and that have no impact on the transformation of reality, but only on the income, egotism and luxuries of some authors. The

objective of the research we present in this article is to provide a set of practical and theoretical indicators to distinguish between publications and approaches that have an impact on the transformation of reality, especially in favor of the most oppressed sectors, and those that do not have an impact on their real improvement.

Social Impact on Society, Especially on the Most Oppressed Groups

Critical pedagogy has a very clear aim: to transform the reality of education and society with an emphasis in overcoming the inequalities of the oppressed (Freire, 2018). The works of all authors mentioned in the first section of this paper have had a relevant social impact in relation to this aim, have transformed schools, educational and cultural projects and have contributed to transforming sciences and societies. There is evidence published in the most relevant scientific journals and in the voices of millions of citizens of the most deprived areas of all parts of the world. Most of those citizens overcame their own inequalities and then, instead of being integrated in the unjust luxury life of the unequal society, they became leaders of their societies' transformations, we have many examples from Rosa Parks, a Highlander participant, to Ana Lebron, a Verneda participant. These social impacts have been and will be the heart of critical pedagogy, its most profound creation of meaning.

Critical pedagogy is not only changing education and societies, it is also making decisive contributions to the change of science and its relations with citizens. The very notion of social impact is an increasing demand of citizens, especially the most oppressed ones, that has been promoted and supported by critical pedagogy. While oppressed citizens are living in poverty and unemployment or working very hard many hours a day, scientists and intellectuals are living with the resources created by the former. Citizens claim for the social impact of those scientists and intellectuals, they increasingly ask them for evidence of the transformations of the realities generated by their publications.

Critical pedagogy has also made key contributions to the elaboration of the notion of co-creation that is now incorporated in leading international scientific programs of research (European Commission, 2018; Gómez et al., 2019). One current requirement of an increasing number of research programs

is to create the scientific knowledge in egalitarian dialogue among authors and citizens (European Commission, 2018). This is already very well known in the poor areas in which critical pedagogists are having everyday egalitarian dialogues with their inhabitants. There are excellent professors like Carme García not only doing this but bringing excellent scientists of other disciplines there to have every day those dialogues with poor people, for instance some of the scientists that made the discovery of Atapuerca (Salvadó et al., 2021).

The success and the social prestige by this critical pedagogy have led to the achievement of other objectives very different and sometimes opposite to the aforementioned aim. In the last decades, there has been a use of the label of critical pedagogy without any social impact for oppressed people, but for the increasing of the economic retributions and fans of the authors using this label. This kind of “critical pedagogy” has a negative impact on the oppressed sectors and also on critical pedagogy (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2021). Of course, many of the followers of this “critical pedagogy” are not aware of those negative consequences and one of the objectives of this article is to open the possibility of all people about the different options and to choose freely if they want to develop critical pedagogy for the liberation of the oppressed or just for obtaining positions, remunerations and fans.

Professor Luis Huerta Charles, from the New Mexico State University, was incredibly clear and sincere making the following question to Professor Henry Giroux in one interview published in YouTube:

one big question in terms of the critical pedagogy field has been for example after almost four decades that we have been talking about critical pedagogy, why do you think we haven't reached a broad impact in universities, in normal schools in Latin American countries, or in educational policies? What has happened that has stopped us to move forward with the critical pedagogy?

Giroux is surprised by this question and asks Huerta: “Are you asking me why we have a broad impact or do not have a broad impact?”

Huerta answers clearly: “We don't have”.

Then, this is the answer of Giroux:

Well, I'm not so sure of that. I think that what we have is the rise of authoritarian governments all over the world that are doing everything they can to suppress critical pedagogy, critical thinking, critical race theory, you name it. This is really, even the attack in the United States, or the attacks in Brazil that are going on against Paulo Freire. That doesn't suggest that critical pedagogy is losing, that suggests that it's dangerous, and I think that's a very different issue. And I think critical pedagogy from its earlier inceptions when it emerged in full force in the 1960s and the 1970s has now reached a huge expanse of people throughout the world. And I'll tell you something else, I also think that as neoliberalism has failed in its promises to educate people, provide social mobility and all that sort of thing, educational systems have failed.

Giroux does not answer clarifying the evidence of the impact of critical pedagogy in universities, schools and educational policies; he recognizes that it has not had impact, situates the attacks of neoliberalism as the cause and says that neoliberalism has also failed in its promises to education. The revision of the literature makes it very clear that Luis Huertas is right, that in the last forty years there is a "critical pedagogy" that has not achieved any impact. But that is true in one kind of critical pedagogy, whereas the critical pedagogy that has its roots in Sappho, Freire, Highlander and Vineda is just the opposite, it has been, has and will have an increasing social impact, especially in the most oppressed people (Aubert et al., 2016; Flecha & Soler, 2013). Today, only in Latin American countries, there are almost 9.000 schools being transformed with the dialogic orientation. The aim of critical pedagogy is not to reach more followers of the authors, but to transform education and society.

The attacks to critical pedagogy cannot be an excuse for not having social impact. In fact, critical pedagogists like Freire or Flecha have been persecuted by dictatorships and their contributions have generated at the same time relevant social impacts. Despite the current attacks to Paulo Freire in Brazil, there are many scholars, educators and citizens in Brazil achieving relevant social impacts with the implementation of Freire's contributions. Critical pedagogy has not been created and developed for having social impact only in the non-capitalist societies, but precisely it has been created for liberating

the oppressed working under capitalists' societies and even under dictatorships.

Equality of Results without Segregating the Oppressed: Literacy, Sentiments, Anti-sexism, Anti-racism

The improvements of the social impact of Freire in the education of many countries are evident. There are some who say that Paulo was not worried about the improvement of the measurable educational results of the population; that is not true, he himself measured the number of people (300) he achieved to make literate in Recife in a very short time. He was also motivated by the improvement of the educational results of the oppressed people with the programs he oriented in different countries. All critical pedagogy authors are very motivated to combat and overcome the segregation of the results that are obtained by the privileged sectors and the oppressed sectors. Not only are they worried, but they evaluate their own actions according to whether they really contribute to that overcoming or not. Only in the “critical pedagogy” can we find authors criticizing the efforts to obtain these measurable educational results of the oppressed while they worry a lot about their success in their own careers and the educational results of their own children.

The authors of critical pedagogy work for the literacy of the whole population, prioritizing the most oppressed ones. They do not think that the others have red blood and their own children have blue blood, they do not criticize the aspiration of the oppressed for their own children to have the same results as the ones of those authors, this is a requirement of the equality they fight for. In fact, they do not struggle for equal opportunities, they struggle for equality of results. Indeed, they are obtaining this equality of results in an increasing number of schools of oppressed people in diverse countries. Authors of “critical pedagogy” do not overcome inequalities of the oppressed and they do not care about that, they cannot be found working regularly in the poorest areas, but being in the most luxurious hotels of the cities.

One excuse given by the segregationist authors is that if we care about the literacy of oppressed people in languages, mathematics, history and so on, we are subordinating the emotional development, the sentiments and the values.

They say that if those oppressed children become successful students in universities they will be individualistic, egotist, caring only about their own success and not about the inequalities of other oppressed people. This excuse has roots in the very egotism of the authors saying that, while any scientific evidence demonstrates the contrary. Many of the leaders of the social transformations in favor of oppressed people are the ones that overcame their poor origins thanks to authors caring about their success. The schools really transformed by the contributions of critical pedagogy authors are the best roots of which arise many of the best friendships and social transformers.

Some segregationist authors oppose caring about improvements of the results of literacy of oppressed people to caring about the development of non-racist and non-sexist values. Listening to them and reading them, it seems as if the oppressed children become good in language or mathematics, they will be sexist and racist, it seems like the unique possibility to be non-sexist and non-racist is to fail in mathematics and language. Of course, they establish this incompatibility only for oppressed children, not for their own children. The scientific evidence demonstrates just the opposite, it demonstrates what critical pedagogy authors have always said (Gómez et al., 2019).

The schools, educational or social projects really transformed thanks to the contributions of critical pedagogy authors give clear steps in the overcoming of inequalities of measurable results and, at the same time, they make many more steps than any other school or project towards being always active against any sexism or racism. Francisco Ferrer y Guardia, Paulo Freire, Rocío García-Carrión and so on have never made or supported any sexist or racist action, any gender violence, any isolating gender violence. Instead, an increasing number of actions, policies and legislations against sexism and racism are the result of the theoretical and practical contributions of critical pedagogy authors. Instead of that, we find actions of gender violence or isolating gender violence among “critical pedagogy” authors, sometimes in exchange of economical retributions and honors (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2021).

Critical Pedagogy Theory versus the Althusserian and Market Styles

The main authors of critical pedagogy have very rigorous, diverse and

profound theoretical bases and contributions. Freire, with his theory of dialogic action, advanced several years to the dialogic turn of social sciences and of all sciences; Habermas published his theory of communicative action thirteen years later. One of the main characteristics of the Ferrer y Guardia Modern Schools was the scientific thinking against all kinds of superstitions, including the religious and the laic superstitions, the superstitions of the right and of the left. Some people that have not profoundly read his theoretical contributions oppose Freire to science, presenting him just as one leftist ideologist. Instead, he wrote clearly that “I am absolutely certain that the educator must submit to the scientific rigor” (Flecha, 1989, p. 109). He also said that his reflection could be attacked both by right reactionaries and by left reactionaries (Freire, 1997, p. 34).

Like Freire and Ferrer y Guardia, the transformation of Schools as Learning Communities has roots in the most outstanding scientific and theoretical contributions of all disciplines including, among others, pedagogy, neuroscience, feminism, masculinities, sociology, anti-racism, psychology, linguistics, philosophy, biology. Not only university professors, also educators, family members and citizens read directly and debate the most important books of the main authors of all those disciplines (Roca-Campos et al., 2021). What they say, write and implement comes from their direct reading and dialogue of those books. They say, write and implement neuroscientific discoveries after reading and debating the books of the main author of neuroscience, Ramon y Cajal, and the main current book of this discipline: *The Principles of Neural Science* (Kandel, 1981). They talk and write about the works by Jane Adams, Lev Vygotsky or Michel Foucault by what they have directly read from their main books.

Those rigorous theoretical bases allow critical pedagogy authors to make theoretical contributions with a real effect in the transformation of education, sciences and societies. Citizens, including the most oppressed ones, know and feel enthusiastic about those contributions and the incredible consequences they have for them (Gómez et al., 2019). In the egalitarian dialogues between authors and other citizens, intellectuals do not try to impress citizens and organizations with the objective of increasing the invitations for lectures, the buying of their books. On the contrary, they are consequent with their obligation to bring to those egalitarian dialogues the main scientific and

theoretical contributions of all authors of the world in a way that citizens could clearly understand them and discriminate what is in favor of them and what is against them. This is one of the reasons why their contributions increase the reputation of critical pedagogy among leading scientists of the different disciplines.

It is the opposite of the situation of the “critical pedagogy” that does not create a real transformation of education, that does not contribute to overcoming the inequalities of the oppressed people and has not at all rigorous theoretical basis. It follows both the Althusserian style and the market style. As can be seen in the books of their most renowned authors of this “critical pedagogy”, they had Althusser and his followers as a key reference. They presented him as a theoretical and a reference against capitalism. Althusser wrote the book “To read the capital”, without having read himself “The Capital”, he was the kind of intellectual that talks and writes about authors and books they have never read directly. He killed his wife and many “critical intellectuals” of the time excused him. He was not the original creator but the most effective disseminator of the Althusserian style: how to get critical followers, how to get even reputation of being intellectual, without reading the works they talk about and committing gender violence and isolating gender violence. It is not surprising that anti-ethical individuals who publish critical books for having a luxury life instead of improving the lives of the oppressed also make gender violence and isolating gender violence and write about what they have not read. This is one of the reasons why scientists from diverse disciplines do not care about their contributions.

Several authors of the “critical pedagogy” that does not transform reality and have a lot of fans follow the Althusserian style, talking and writing about what they have never read. They combine this habit with the market style. Their followers can always find in any of their books a reference or an author they like obtaining what the authors look for: to sell many books, to be quoted and to be well paid for lectures. Their books are like markets offering consumers diverse products but all of them of very low quality. In any of those books, in any of those markets, one can find references of authors so transformative as Freire with authors who were in favor of the depenalization of pedophilia and rape as Foucault or with Nazi authors as Heidegger. Of course, they have not read directly the main works by Heidegger or Foucault,

even they do not know or they do not want to know that they were in favor of rape or Nazism; they write about them without profoundly reading them. These Althusserian and market styles are useful for their individual objectives but are totally unable to allow any real educational or social transformation, any action in favor of the oppressed people.

Conclusion

There are four clear criteria to distinguish the critical pedagogy that transforms education, sciences and societies and the “critical pedagogy” that generates benefits for a few individuals. The first criterion is the egalitarian dialogue with the oppressed to learn from them as Freire did. The second is the social impact transforming the conditions of life of citizens and mainly of the oppressed citizens. The third one is the existing evidence of the real overcoming of inequalities of the oppressed people and the opening of possibilities for them to become leaders of social transformations, as well as their clear actions in every dominion of their lives of those authors against sexism and racism. The fourth one is the theoretical and scientific rigor of their contributions.

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f) SEXTO ARTÍCULO

Egalitarian dialogue enriches both social impact and research methodologies

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Egalitarian Dialogue Enriches Both Social Impact and Research Methodologies

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Abstract

For decades, qualitative research methodologies have incorporated the voice of the participants in their designs and developments. Now, the increasing importance of social impact of the research worldwide has created a new scenario for qualitative researchers, in which the egalitarian dialogue could be one of the key elements. The traditional incorporation of participants into research process is not enough; we need to incorporate new components as the egalitarian dialogue in the research process to assure the social impact of the research. In this article, we first situate the concept of egalitarian dialogue and how it has been used in a great diversity of situation and areas, and second how when we use it, we can obtain both, a greater social impact, and an enrichment of the qualitative methodological research process. We based our work in a literature review in both, the main journals included in ISI Web of Science and Scopus, highlighting the journals on qualitative methodologies and revising Horizon 2020 and Seventh Framework Projects included in the CORDIS database. This literature review presents how different research groups and researchers have used egalitarian dialogue, mainly in the last decade, as an important element to reach social impact with their research.

Keywords

egalitarian dialogue, social impact, research methodologies, qualitative methodologies, qualitative inquiry, dialogue

Introduction

Dialogue has been the cornerstone of advances within qualitative research since a diversity of theories and perspectives, as opposed to objectivism, based the interpretation of reality on the voice of the participants. Sometimes this dialogue has been with us through autobiographies and autoethnographies; on other occasions this dialogue has been produced with participants from different perspectives. Interpreting social reality based on dialogue instead of positivism meant entering a stage of war paradigm, where qualitative and quantitative positions were confronted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Qualitative inquiry prioritized, in the beginning, the interpretation of reality based on the direct opinions of the participants, trying not to intervene in the construction of that interpretation. This subjectivism can be explained by its opposition to the more objectivist stance. The transformative power of qualitative inquiry was in participants' hands. Nowadays, "The qualitative researcher is not an objective, politically neutral observer who stands outside and above the study of the social world. But that doesn't mean he or she is simply making things up!" (Denzin & Giardina, 2019, p.6).

The transformative power of qualitative inquiry and qualitative research methodologies today are in researchers' and participants' hands, with the landscape of working together to overcome social injustices in neoliberal times (Denzin & Giardina, 2017). Aiming at doing research that reduces social injustice oriented towards achieving social impact, in this article, we will take a closer look at how the concept of egalitarian dialogue is being used and how, when it is used, could have a direct and positive impact in the results of a research process.

The concept of egalitarian dialogue that we analyze in this article is defined by Flecha (2000) as one of the seven

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principles of dialogic learning. It is understood as a dialogue-oriented to a common understanding that breaks with the traditional differences between subject and object in research. The intersubjectivity between people participating in the dialogue becomes a key fact during the entire research process (Torrás-Gómez et al., 2019).

Egalitarian dialogue implies a process in which the different forms of knowledge (system and lifeworld) are brought together. The dialogue is oriented to transform reality, bringing together academic knowledge and the people's experiences, opinions, and reflections. Egalitarian dialogue ensures the usefulness of research and its objectivity through the direct participation of the people. It is understood that the participants do not have the academic background of the researchers since they are not experts in the problem under study. Therefore, their visions come from the lifeworld, their opinions, reflections, and experiences. Furthermore, that is why it is so important that the academics who are part of the research team bring their scientific background to the dialogue (system), breaking the methodologically relevant gap between the "subject" and "object" of the study. What is important is the force of the arguments and not the argument of the force; what counts are the best arguments regardless of who formulates them (Habermas, 1984).

Under conditions of equality, both the system world and subjects participate in the dialogue based on the contributions of the different forms of knowledge. Up to the present time, knowledge coming from the academic context has been recognized and privileged. In today's knowledge society, it is essential to acknowledge learning from cooperative and practical contexts. The knowledge of all people can multiply the knowledge about a concrete situation from different points of view, valuing the arguments on which they are based and not the position or status from which they are issued.

On the other hand, the social impact 'is the improvement of society and citizens concerning their own goals (like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals)' (Van den Besselaar et al., 2018, p. 43). In that way, the social impact of research could be understood as the benefits that citizens receive from research. Dissemination of research results is not considered social impact. We need the results to be published in journals of recognized scientific prestige (scientific impact) and then used by political decision-makers when applying new measures (political impact). When the results are transferred to the public, and it is found that social improvements have been achieved following objectives set by and for the public, such as those of sustainable development, we can say that research has had a social impact (Aiello, Donovan, Duque, Fabrizio, Flecha, Holm, Molina, Oliver & Reale, 2020).

The social impact could be evaluated before (ex-ante), during (in-itinere) and at the end (ex-post) of a research process. We are interested in the social impact obtained at the end of the project, when it could be established relations between the research process and the final results (in terms, for instance, on how the application of an egalitarian dialogue along the project impacted positively in the results).

In the following sections, we first present the methods section that includes how the literature review on egalitarian dialogue has been conducted in ISI Web of Science, Scopus and CORDIS. The first section deals with the relationship between egalitarian dialogue and social impact; the second section presents the main conceptual characteristics of egalitarian dialogue; the third section describes how egalitarian dialogue has been applied in practice and its relationship with the social impact achieved in the research projects. Finally, the article concludes with a practical example of how egalitarian dialogue was applied in a European Commission project—ChiPE—extracted from CORDIS.

Methods

This article is based on a narrative literature review in ISI Web of Science and Scopus databases under a narrative approach. The narrative literature review method has been used as a convenient approach for searching on topics on which there is not an extensive literature base, when the data is qualitative and not suitable for a systematic meta-analysis approach, for providing an overview of the topic addressed and recommendations for future research (Hall et al., 2021, p.2). Two researchers searched in December 2020 using the keywords "egalitarian dialogue" AND "social impact" without any limit of time. Most contributions, almost 90%, identified had been published in the last 10 years. These data show how the use of egalitarian dialogue has become much more critical in these years, where the need to carry out research-oriented towards social impact has become a vital issue. We intentionally used the term "egalitarian dialogue" in our search because it is a fundamental concept used in methodologies oriented towards social transformation, and this research has a great potential for obtaining social impact through the research process.

First, we searched by "egalitarian dialogue" identifying 46 articles in ISI web of Science and 57 in Scopus. Second, we searched combining "egalitarian dialogue" and "social impact" identifying five articles in Web of Science (WOS) and 13 in Scopus. The five articles identified in WOS were also contained in the 13 articles from Scopus. The articles were added to Mendeley reference management software. The Mendeley online version was selected for facilitating sharing, editing, and managing review references among the research team. First, we used Mendeley to identify duplicate articles, followed by a manual inspection screening titles and abstracts to remove duplicates. Second, two researchers analyzed the full text of the articles following the eligibility criteria of selecting papers that contributed with knowledge on:

- (1) how to implement the egalitarian dialogue in the methodological research, including in the organization, data collection techniques, and data analysis;
- (2) if it was used for researching about vulnerable groups or sensitive social issues;
- (3) the link between egalitarian dialogue and social impact;

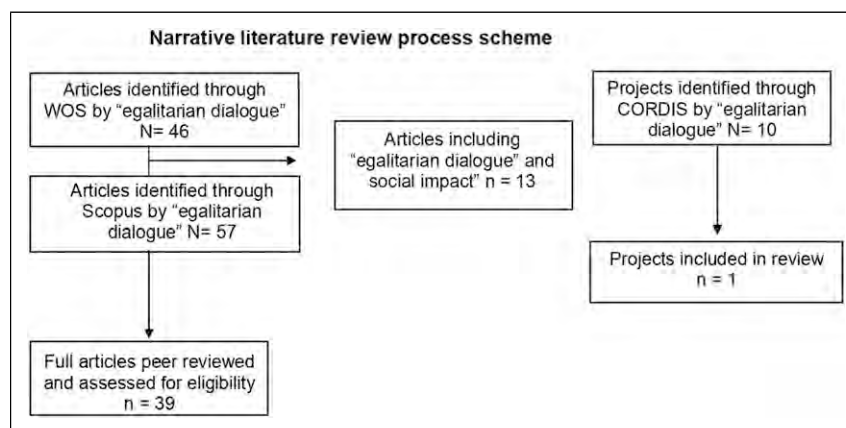


Figure 1. Narrative literature review process scheme.

- (4) how the egalitarian dialogue might enable social impact through the research process itself;
- (5) Other uses of the egalitarian dialogue that contribute to improving society, for instance in education.

Finally, a total of 39 articles that met the criteria were selected and reviewed by the authors. We did not restrict any country of publication or language although most articles were published in English (35) and a few in Spanish (4).

The search process is described above in Figure 1. Eligible papers were organized in Mendeley; they were also tabulated and used in the qualitative content analysis. The 13 articles containing both keywords (“egalitarian dialogue” and “social impact”) were exploited mainly for the third sub-section on the findings section. In turn, a search was carried out on CORDIS (European database containing research projects funded by the European Framework Programmes), also by keyword under “egalitarian dialogue,” to analyze research projects developed under H2020 and FP7¹ that have used egalitarian dialogue in their developments. The research projects analyzed applied qualitative techniques and orientations that use the dialogue but not the concept “egalitarian dialogue.” Only one of the projects used the concept, the Seventh Framework Programme project *ChiPE: Children’s personal epistemologies: capitalizing children and families knowledge in schools towards effective learning and teaching*. Analyzing this project reveals a previous one in which ChiPE was based, the Sixth Framework Programme project *INCLUD-ED: strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education*. The evolution of both research projects is the clearest example of egalitarian dialogue to achieve social impact.

We present above in Table 1 the 39 references by main topic. Most of the articles were in social sciences, highlighting education, educational research, and psychology. Therefore, some publications within other areas of knowledge such as medicine, agriculture, or energy should be highlighted. Some of the publications were in specialized methodology journals, highlighting the 10 registered in three different special issues of

Qualitative Inquiry. Others were located in *Qualitative Health Research*, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* and *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*.

Findings

After analyzing the 39 articles following the five criteria specified in the methodology section, we present the information in three main sections: the first one is on the relationship between egalitarian dialogue and social impact; the second is on the characteristics of this dialogue; the third explores how, if correctly developed, it is directly related to social impact.

The fourth section highlights one of the analyzed articles in the literature review, which explores the impact of dialogic literary gatherings on students’ relationships with a communicative approach (García-Carrion et al., 2020). This article, and the exploitation of documents extracted from the CORDIS website about the ChiPE project, exemplify how the use of egalitarian dialogue led to a high social impact in its results.

Egalitarian Dialogue and Social Impact

A new scenario is opening for qualitative research in the world due to the need to show social impact with the research results. The interpretation of reality by the participants through dialogue was the first stone in the concretion of participatory perspectives in research. However, dialogue in itself does not ensure the final social impact of research; we need to consider other elements that help to do so. The use of egalitarian dialogue (Flecha, 2000), which could be carried out under very different methodological perspectives, is one of these possible options since it allows results to be obtained that are oriented towards transformation and overcoming inequalities, which are totally linked to obtaining social impact.

We understand social impact as the improvements that research produces in the citizenry in response to social

Table I. Summary of the articles on main findings about egalitarian dialogue and relationship to social impact.

Article	Country & context	Methods & Sample	Main findings
Adame et al. (2018)	Spain. Kindergarten and primary school	Qualitative. Case study. 11 interviews & communicative observation	Communicative observation to share and contrast interpretations about reality and daily life on an equal footing between the person observed and the researcher
Álvarez et al. (2020)	Spain. The case of the integrated plan for the Roma people in Catalonia	Qualitative. 4 semi-structured interviews	Conceptualization of the dialogic public policies
Buslón et al. (2020)	Spain. Urban adult school. Scientific dialogic gathering	Qualitative. 4 semi-structured interviews with older women of low socioeconomic status and low educational level	Communicative focus groups & egalitarian dialogue between participants and researchers to exchange knowledge on innovative links between science and society
Duque et al. (2020)	Spain. Schools that implement successful educational actions (SEAs) with students with special needs	10 case studies. 18 in-depth interviews with teachers, 3 interviews with volunteers, 7 interviews with students' relatives. 5 focus groups with teachers, 8 with students, 1 with relatives. 10 observations in classrooms or teachers' meetings	Analyses the social impact obtained by SEAs using communicative methodology
Fernández (2015) Fernandez (2015)	Spain	Qualitative. A personal narrative of a teacher	Egalitarian dialogue and interactions based on validity claims rather than power claims following Habermas contributions
Flecha & Soler (2013)	Primary school located in a very deprived neighborhood of the city of Albacete, Spain	Longitudinal case study. 13 communicative life stories with family members, 1 communicative focus group with professionals working in the school, 5 communicative observations and 13 open-ended interviews with professionals and representatives from the administration and community organisations	Dialogic learning considers the importance of dialogue based on egalitarian relationships
Flecha (2014)	Primary school located in a very deprived neighborhood of the city of Albacete, Spain	Communicative mixed-methods case study	The research team engaged in intersubjective dialogue with grassroots roma throughout the entire research process
Foncillas et al. (2020)	Spain. Primary school	48 4th grade students through written stories and drawings made and commented by these boys and girls	Dialogic literary gatherings has been shown to have a positive impact in different educational contexts
García-Carrión, López de Aguilera et al. (2020)	International	A review	Research has shown that interactions based on egalitarian dialogue operating in small heterogeneous groups of students known as interactive groups (IGs) boost children's learning
García-Carrión Villardón-Gallego, (2020)	Spain. Elementary school that implements dialogic literary gatherings	2 9-year-old girls. One is an immigrant child with special educational needs, and the other one a child bullied at school	Beyond the appropriate use of language, egalitarian dialogue involves verbal interaction and consistency with the non-verbal interactions and expressions, and with what is thought and what is felt
García-Carrión (2015)	England, UK.	11-year-old boy in a rural community combination of communicative techniques, dialogic interviews, observations, and life stories	Egalitarian interaction between researcher and a 11-year-old boy participant through communicative methodology
García-Espinel et al. (2017)	Spain. Hospital context	Communicative case study with 4 Roma men. 2 communicative observations and 6 communicative daily life stories	Egalitarian dialogue favored the inclusion of Roma voices by hospital workers, thus promoting more inclusive health services

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Article	Country & context	Methods & Sample	Main findings
García Yeste et al. (2020)	Spain	Qualitative. 10 communicative daily life stories with Muslim women wearing the niqab in Spain	Egalitarian dialogue is defined in the research as situations in which participants used dialogue as a strategy to build trust and mutual understanding
Gómez et al. (2011)	International	Theoretical	Communicative qualitative techniques for data collection; exclusionary and transformative dimensions in communicative data analysis
Hargreaves & García-Carrión (2016)	England, UK. Primary school	Systematic observational research	Egalitarian dialogue allowed children participants in dialogic literary gatherings to explain and argue for and against their peers' opinions, while discussing social, moral, and ethical issues
Idakwoji (2019)	Violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Kogi State, Nigeria	mix methods	Through a communicative dialogue, the researcher managed to include participants' concerns and perceptions with a deep and empathic listening to avoid misunderstandings, resulting in solutions to the conflict
Jiménez-Herranza et al. (2016)	Municipal school supports program in Segovia, Spain	4 communicative focus groups with 3 students, 3 PE teachers, 3 mothers, 1 father, 2 grant-funded supervisor, 2 contracted supervisor, coordinator, 2 university lecturers, 1 local authority officer 1 university administrator	Implementation of communicative focus groups technique to collect data
Khalfaoui et al. (2020)	School located in a very low SES neighborhood in the outskirts of a city in Northern Spain	Case study. 6 family members (3 of them are 3 migrant mothers and other 3 are Roma) & 6 school staff	Egalitarian dialogue fostered strong collaboration between Roma and migrant families in early childhood education
Llopis et al. (2016)	Adult education school in Barcelona, Spain	Qualitative. Communicative observation of 4 DLG sessions (a total of 320 minutes) in which working class men and women with no university studies participate	Egalitarian dialogue and interactions increase argumentation, respect, and acceptance of diversity among participants in dialogic literary gatherings
López de Aguilera (2019)	School as learning Community located in one of the poorest neighborhoods at the outskirts of Terrassa, Spain	Qualitative. 6 girls and 13 boys between 11 and 13 from Spanish, Moroccan and Ecuadorian nationalities	Egalitarian dialogue in dialogic literary gatherings favors the emergence of school-relevant language and literacy skills
Matulić - Domadžić et al. (2020)	Barcelona, Spain	Qualitative. Communicative life stories with 20 adult people, 14 women and 6 men, from 35 to 70 years old who had recently experienced—or were in process of overcoming—homelessness	Communicative methodology facilitates engaging with participants and identifying barriers and facilitators for overcoming participants' vulnerable situation
Melgar et al., 2021	Morocco & Spain	25 qualitative techniques conducted with social service providers	A charity organization included screening indicators its intake protocols based on the evidence provided by the research team and applying egalitarian dialogue
Munté et al. (2011)	Spain & Europe	Review of findings from RTD projects	The communicative organization of research involves creating spaces facilitating egalitarian dialogues, including Roma people on research teams
Núñez-Solís & Murillo Estepa (2021)	Chile	Qualitative. 17 1st grade students, 11 boys and 6 girls. 1 male university Spanish professor. 1 female university student in practice. 1 1st grade teacher. 1 mother, 1 male student 14 years old, 1 female student 13 years old	In the research analysis, researchers established categories associated with egalitarian dialogue

(continued)

Table I. (continued)

Article	Country & context	Methods & Sample	Main findings
Oliver & Gatt (2010)	Europe (INCLUDE-ED FP6 project)	Review	In interactive groups, students learn in a dialogic way, that is, promoting dialogic interactions based on an egalitarian dialogue between boys and girls and adults
Oliver et al. (2011)	Pre-primary and primary schools in Finland, Lithuania, Malta, Spain and United Kingdom	6 qualitative case studies	The egalitarian dialogue promotes cultural intelligence emergence in the research, which is beneficial for including the experiences and knowledge from immigrant and cultural minority families
Pantic (2017)	Scotland, UK.	Qualitative. 6 members of the advisory committee	Egalitarian dialogue is intersubjective, in which both researchers and “researched participants” participate in dialogue, maintaining their respective roles
Racionero-Plaza (2015)	Spain	A biographical method with communicative orientation with a female homeless from deprived neighborhood	Egalitarian dialogue contributes to share creation of meaning between researchers and participants
Redondo (2015)	3 schools as learning communities	Qualitative. 9 interviews with 7 women and 2 men	Egalitarian dialogue allows people from vulnerable social groups (e.g., migrants) to have a voice in the traditionally been excluded
Redondo et al. (2020)	UK and Spain	Review of 2 research projects	Communicative methodology, including egalitarian dialogue as one of its principles present in the design and implementation of this research approach, contributes to achieve social impact in psychology
Richelle et al. (2018)	Southern Philippines	Case study. Community survey with farmers, semi-structured interviews & field observations of community meetings	Egalitarian dialogue between scientists and farmers increases the understanding of soil heterogeneity
Rodríguez-Oramas et al. (2020)	Spain. Urban nursery school	Qualitative interview with 2 female educators	Egalitarian dialogue in communicative methodology allowed to analyze the social impact of teaching training in preventing violence from early childhood
Sánchez-Aroca (1999)	Adult school of education. Barcelona, Spain	Case study	Egalitarian dialogue in dialogic literary gatherings makes dialogic learning possible in adult education
Serrano et al. (2010)	Europe	Theoretical review and analysis of didactic components	An egalitarian dialogue between adult learners participating in dialogic literary gatherings contributes to the transformation and increase of dialogic interactions in the school center and in their lives
Soler (2015)		Introduction article	The connection between egalitarian dialogue, dialogic literary gatherings, and the postulates of the communicative methodology
Torras-Gómez et al. (2019)		Theoretical	Conceptualization of egalitarian dialogue
Valls (2014)	Spain	Qualitative. Data from 14 years of meetings of a women’s group that works within a democratic adult education movement	The egalitarian dialogue and solidarity-based interactions between academic and non-academic women participating in a women’s group contribute to identifying situations of gender-based violence among participants
Valls and Padrós (2011)		Theoretical	Theoretical developments and contributions for the conceptualization of the egalitarian dialogue

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Article	Country & context	Methods & Sample	Main findings
Villardón-Gallego et al. (2018)	8 Spanish schools	Quasi-experimental design. 442 students in the fourth year of primary education, with ages ranging from 8 to 11; 239 were boys and 203 were girls	The egalitarian dialogue is a plausible explanation for the impact of dialogic literary gatherings
Villardón-Gallego (2020)	Spain	Mix methods. In-depth case studies were conducted in six second change schools	Preliminary results of the study were sent to schools, and they were discussed with the participants in a group session in order to foster an egalitarian dialogue among researchers and the schools
Zea et al. (2014)	Colombia	Mix methods. 42 life history interviews with internally displaced Colombian gay, bisexual men and transwomen between 19 and 48 years old. Quantitative survey with 113 participants	An egalitarian dialogue was crucial to create a free, safe, and respectful atmosphere so participants could share their life experiences on a sensitive topic. This egalitarian dialogue empowered participants to request medical attention
Zubiri-Esnaola et al. (2020)		8 classroom observations and 17 semi-structured interviews	Interactive groups create the conditions in which interaction, participation, and collaboration are increased to create effective dialogic learning

objectives. These improvements must be linked to social objectives where citizens have intervened to set priorities, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Competitive research funded by public bodies demands that the research carried out has this social impact. This fact directly impacts qualitative methodological processes that must be implemented to achieve this social impact, and at that point, the egalitarian dialogue could play a key role (Redondo, et al., 2020).

The articles analyzed apply the egalitarian dialogue in their methodological development. It is worth highlighting the article by Duque, et al. (2020), which analyses the social impact of successful educational actions applied to children with special educational needs. Under the auspices of the communicative methodology, egalitarian dialogue in this research was a determining factor in achieving social impact.

Similarly, the study carried out by Villardón-Gallego, et al. (2018), analyzed the effect of two concrete successful educational actions, based on egalitarian dialogue, on the development of “prosocial behaviour” in 4th-grade studies. As the author’s detail, egalitarian dialogue is a plausible explanation of the social impact achieved by these educational actions, but concrete studies must be carried out to corroborate this direct relationship.

The article by Álvarez, et al. (2020) provides an interesting contribution on dialogic public policies and the Roma community thinking in the relation of egalitarian dialogue and the social impact. The authors, introducing the concept of dialogic public policies, affirm that these types of policies have to be made using this egalitarian dialogue with the Roma people and scientific evidence to provide the best results. The link is established between the egalitarian dialogue and the best

possible results obtained through the research process. They explain the importance of creating spaces of egalitarian dialogue, like those created to present the final results of the project *Workalo: Creation of new occupational patterns for cultural minorities: The Gypsy Case* in the European Parliament in 2004. By ensuring this egalitarian space in the research process, researchers, stakeholders, politicians, and Roma people engaged in debating and discussing the research results. Months later, one of the Members of the European Parliament who attended the meeting presented a motion to the European Parliament for the recognition of the Roma community that was unanimously approved. The same happened with a Member of the Spanish Parliament. He also attended that dialogic space since he presented a motion in the Spanish Parliament to recognize the Roma community and their culture in the history of Spain that was approved unanimously.

Matulić-Domadzić et al. (2020) analyze in their article the direct relation between the social impact of psychology on programs for homeless. They used egalitarian and intersubjective dialogue among researchers and “researched” people under the communicative methodology, highlighting also how both elements are consistent with the search social impact. As they argue, using the egalitarian dialogue they are looking for “the discovery of conditions for the social transformation of their realities through a common interpretation” (Matulić-Domadzić, et al., 2020, p.4). In this vein, egalitarian dialogue, and solidarity-based interactions between academic and non-academic women in FACEPA’s (Federation of Cultural and Educational Associations for Adults) women group has contributed to generate in-depth discussions that produce dialogic knowledge that accomplished social impact by

contributing to the identification of situations of gender-based violence among participants (Valls, 2014).

In education, egalitarian dialogue has also been a facilitator for achieving social impact and improving educational outcomes. Egalitarian dialogue is one of the seven principles of Dialogic Learning, and it is present in “Successful Educational Actions” (SEAs) that promote educational success and social cohesion (Flecha & Soler, 2013) such as in Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) (Foncillas, et al., 2020; Lopez de Aguilera, 2019; Sánchez Aroca, 1999). The egalitarian dynamics fostered in DLG increase argumentation and acceptance of diversity among participants (Llopis, et al., 2016). Regarding social impact, dialogic interactions in DLG motivate participants’ transformations and self-confidence (Racionero-Plaza, 2015). Serrano, et al. (2010) explain that the dialogic communicative interactions encouraged in DLG generate transformation among adult learners because they open spaces of egalitarian dialogues that generate egalitarian transformations impacting adult learners’ families and communities. Soler (2015) points to a strong connection between the egalitarian dialogue facilitated of in DLG and the postulates of the communicative methodology.

Interactive Groups are another “Successful Educational Action” in which dialogic interactions based on equal dialogue guide participation of students in heterogeneous groups encouraging inclusion, accelerating learning, promoting solidarity and success for all students, even in vulnerable contexts (García-Carrión, López de Aguilera, 2020; Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020; Oliver & Gatt, 2010). Núñez & Murillo (2021) use the communicative methodology to analyze the actions present in Interactive Groups, which facilitate an egalitarian dialogue. In their analysis, they established the following categories associated to dialogue “listening closely, listening attentively soliciting contributions or ideas, soliciting arguments, granting equal participants opportunities and accepting arguments by contributions” (Núñez & Murillo, et al., 2021, p.6). Moreover, Khalfaoui, et al. (2020) have shown, in a study with Roma and migrant families in early childhood education, that family participation and involvement in Learning communities that implement SEAs through egalitarian dialogue encourage trust and confidence relationships together with a strong commitment between families and school in the benefit of students’ best education.

Theoretical and Conceptual Components of The Egalitarian Dialogue

Pantic (2017) applies the communicative methodology in its research on teacher agency, where egalitarian dialogue is highlighted. She introduces a fundamental question, also highlighted in most of the articles analyzed, the ethical responsibility of the research staff in terms of presenting the accumulated scientific theory to the dialogue with the “researched” people. Without the need to possess academic knowledge, any participant can question the arguments

provided by the research staff since the dialogue is established based on the best arguments and not on the power claims.

Gómez, et al. (2011) detail precisely the main characteristics of this egalitarian dialogue. Like Pantic, they highlight the involvement of research staff on equal positions, adding essential components that characterize this dialogue. They conceptualized egalitarian dialogue as an intersubjective one, in which both researchers and “researched participants” participate in dialogue, maintaining their respective roles. Researchers bring the accumulated scientific knowledge and the potential participants their feeling, emotions, personal thoughts (their life worlds) that they can link with the information provided by researchers.

The notion of egalitarian dialogue also implies addressing the dialogue to action (Freire, 1998), the capacity for language and action (Habermas, 1984), the universal ability to participate in a language-involve activity (Chomsky, 1985), and the “demonopolization of expert knowledge” (Beck, et al., 1994). All these imply breaking the traditional hierarchy between the person who has the scientific knowledge and the participants. The intersubjectivity is the basis on which a common interpretation of reality is produced, with a transformative orientation. The positive results of research depend on this transformative power in creating spaces of egalitarian dialogue where all participants share experiences, knowledge, academic background, and feelings. At the same time, the egalitarian dialogue is based on validity claims, rejecting pretensions of power (Habermas, 1984), recognizing the people’s critical consciousness of their situations and how they can change them through dialogue (Freire, 1998).

The spaces of egalitarian dialogue created in different research projects and reflected in the different analyzed articles are always directed to a final consensus with all participants. A great diversity of profiles is always promoted in these spaces, looking for a wide diversity of opinions, being inclusive in all interactions. However, this egalitarian dialogue needs not only good intentions by researchers and participants. It is essential to move from this ethics of intention to ethics of responsibility giving more importance to the consequences of the interactions (Gómez, et al., 2011).

When implementing egalitarian dialogue in qualitative research, coherence between what it is said, though, and expressed by researchers is essential. Consistency between communicative acts and expressions of feelings and beliefs enhances trusting and authentic interactions between researchers and participants (García-Carrión, López de Aguilera, 2020). Intersubjective dialogue in communicative methodology is a criterion of scientific rigor that entails an ethical responsibility and relies on people’s active implication and participation in the research through egalitarian dialogue for generating social and scientific knowledge. In this dialogic process, researchers bring the evidence and scientific knowledge to participants on the issue studied (Lopez de Aguilera, 2019). Participants, in turn, contribute with their experiences and interpretations of the knowledge provided.

Egalitarian dialogue in Communicative Methodology has been also used as mean for analyzing social impact, for instance, for evaluating the impact of Dialogic Teacher Training for preventing violence from early childhood in a Learning Community in Spain (Rodríguez-Oramas, et al., 2020).

It is important to think about what happens when this dialogue does not happen, mainly if we research with vulnerable groups. Flecha (2014) enters into this critical question and analyses how the Roma community rejects researchers who do not work with their community in equality terms. If researchers cannot assure the participation of the Roma in the research process of assuring a positive impact in their community, they reject them. Participating through this egalitarian dialogue, together with other variables, ensures that the research results are close to the concrete reality and that the problems these communities face can be overcome (Flecha, 2014).

This idea regarding “why do the Roma not like exclusionary research” is directly quoted in the article by Munté, et al. (2011, p. 257) and later on in another relevant one by Garcia-Espinell, et al., (2017). The first one, centered in education, analyses how exclusionary research has negatively impacted in the Roma community because this research reinforces stereotypes against them. To overcome this situation, the authors propose to work with Roma people using egalitarian dialogue. Applying it in different spaces of dialogue, researchers changed their perceptions. “Egalitarian dialogue between researchers and people being researched can completely change the image established based on exclusionary perspectives which strengthen the stereotypes that exist about them” (Munté, et al., 2011, p. 259).

The second article centered on health is very important in overcoming situations of inequality of Roma community in their access to health services. The article presents a communicative case study around the death of an important Roma female leader in Spain. The egalitarian dialogue established between the workers at the hospital and the Roma relatives and friends was the main factor for allowing the Roma rituals regarding death respectfully. “In the same way that this dialogue has the potential to pave the way for implementing public policies based on scientific evidence, it empowered the participants so that their voices were heard by the employees at the hospital” (Garcia-Espinell, et al., 2017, p. 2197).

Oliver, et al. (2011) link egalitarian dialogue with the notion of cultural intelligence, highlighting the importance of incorporating a diversity of voices and experiences of participants, especially underrepresented groups and cultural minorities as the Roma community. They explain how applying this egalitarian and intersubjective dialogue makes the analysis of the social reality more rigorous and objective. The participants’ voices under these conditions enrich the final analysis, and the intersubjective dialogue between researchers and “researched” people is more objective than in other conditions.

In the same way, Redondo (2015), in her analysis on dialogic leadership, emphasizes how the egalitarian dialogue allows

people from vulnerable groups to have a voice in spaces where they traditionally have been excluded. In this case, the participants in three different educational centers were empowered using this egalitarian dialogue and could act as leaders (dialogic leaders) for the whole community. These dialogic leaders are a clear example of how this dialogue transforms people’s lives and educational structures, impacting in participants, professionals and making this extensible to the community in which the centers are located.

One of the most remarkable articles also focused on education is the one by Valls and Padrós (2011). The research presented in this article was conducted using communicative methodology, assuring an egalitarian dialogue among all potential participants (researchers, people living or at risk of poverty, policy-makers, stakeholders, and representatives of NGOs).

Finally, Fernández’s (2015) article exemplifies a personal narrative of a teacher who spent 1 week in CREA (Community of Research on Excellence for All), in which research activities and functioning is based on egalitarian dialogue analyzed previously. The author explains how interactions with all personnel were based on this egalitarian dialogue in a great diversity of spaces and situations, independently from your position or if you are a newcomer in the group. Through all these interactions, new knowledge was constructed, and the author, as she explains, had the opportunity to transform themselves:

Since then, in a gentle process that has ended in the beautiful explosion of a week in CREA, I have fallen in love with education again, with its transformative power and its ability to change the world. I have found my place, I feel part of something bigger that helps me share a transformative struggle, which is real, which is already taking place in many classrooms and is well grounded in scientific excellence, with arguments that go beyond intuition from the egalitarian dialogue and love (Fernandez, 2015, p.946).

How Can Egalitarian Dialogue Be Applied To Achieve This Social Impact?

As we have seen, egalitarian dialogue has several components that can be very useful in achieving social impact. The mere fact of being part of our societies’ dialogical turn and responding to transforming features of reality gives it enormous potential. Most articles analyzed have applied communicative methodology in their methodological developments, but this does not imply that this egalitarian dialogue is exclusively articulated from this methodological orientation.

The notion of egalitarian dialogue and its practical implementation in methodological developments can be carried out from any qualitative research orientation that is approached critically to overcome difficulties. The principal objective of dialogism is to create an atmosphere of active listening and emphatic understanding to prevent misunderstanding and make a rapport in all the situations of dialogue.

This approach enabled researchers to get to know the characters and their emotions.

Dialogism premises have been proven to help identify the security and socio-economic implications and causes of severe sociopolitical issues that are very sensitive and difficult to research, such as the violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Kogi State, Nigeria. [Idakwoji's \(2019\)](#) research provides unique information and an in-depth understanding of this conflict. The mix-methods study included a qualitative study relying on respondents' perceptions and applying Mead and Bakhtin's dialogical interactive analysis approach. Through this approach, the researcher managed to know participants in the interviews, including their multiple emotions, concerns, and perceptions about the conflict, with a deep and empathic listening to avoid misunderstandings and foster a communicative dialogue ([Idakwoji, 2019](#)). Proposed solutions to the conflict emerge from the perceptions and understanding of those involved in dialogical interaction in research as a mean for change and peace.

Egalitarian dialogue has been used in a case study in the Southern Philippines in sustainable agriculture and food security. Researchers used an ethnopedological integral approach to dialogue with local farmers and built understanding on their vernacular perceptions and knowledge about agricultural soil ([Richelle, et al., 2018](#)). They conducted a community survey during two different stays at a local village. Through semi-structured interviews, local farmers participated in the study and assisted in community meetings with a local translator's support. In the second stay, the research team provided feedback to participants and used the knowledge obtained from the local people to confront the geomorphopedological analysis that they previously conducted in the area ([Richelle, et al., 2018](#)). This study shows the benefits of including the local knowledge through an egalitarian dialogue for enriching agricultural science.

The egalitarian dialogue was a central element in the mix-methods research conducted on internally displaced Colombian gay, bisexual men, and transwomen ([Zea, et al., 2014](#)). The study relied on the communicative action to create a non-coercive and respectful atmosphere where participants could feel safe, confident, and free to dialogue and share their life experiences on sensitive issues like internal displacement, violence, and survival strategies without being judged or discriminated. According to researchers, egalitarian dialogue is enhanced when the elements above are present, and participants have permanent control over their narratives and can decide whether to deepen or disclose. As a result of the dialogic interactions, some participants felt empowered to request medical attention. The research team was diverse in gender, sexual orientation, nationality, immigration status, cultural backgrounds, and disciplines. This diversity was particularly beneficial for avoiding misunderstandings of cultural or languages expressions without limiting the understanding of participants' narratives ([Zea et al., 2014](#)).

As we have seen in the analyzed articles, the egalitarian dialogue applied in the communicative methodology between researchers and participants is not only useful in generating knowledge and as a mean of interpretation of social reality, but it enables social impact through the qualitative research process itself. A qualitative study on young Moroccan girls sex trafficked in Morocco and Spain followed the communicative approach and used egalitarian dialogue in interviews with professionals. Researchers provided scientific knowledge on the topic and presented the preliminary findings that they were obtaining during fieldwork. Thanks to sharing evidence and engaging in dialogic interactions during the research, professionals contrasted evidence provided with their experiences. They started critically remembering possible cases of Moroccan girls sex trafficked that had gone unnoticed until that moment because it is a collective about which there is much invisibility and silence. As evidence of the social impact fostered by egalitarian dialogue between researchers and participants, a Moroccan charity organization decided to include screening indicators in their intake protocols to broaden the profiles of potential Moroccan victims. These indicators were based on the evidence provided by the research team in the interviews in which an egalitarian dialogue prevailed with a communicative orientation ([Melgar et al., 2021](#)).

The communicative methodology also incorporates a particular organization of research that reduces power interactions and power structures existing in society ([Soler-Gallart, 2017](#)). Throughout the organization of the communicative methodology, ensuring an egalitarian dialogue including all the voices contributes to reducing existing inequalities and disparity in society during the research process. Strategies present in the Communicative organization of research include creating an Advisory Committee, the constitution of multicultural research groups, forming functional working groups, or holding plenary meetings. A study conducted in Scotland applied the communicative methodology and formed an Advisory Committee composed with 12 members, including researchers and representatives of potential beneficiaries of the research. They met throughout the research process to discuss theoretical foundations, research tools, identify strategies for implementing fieldwork, analyze findings, and propose strategic ways to disseminate the research ([Pantic, 2017](#)).

The egalitarian dialogue in communicative methodology is implemented in the communicative data collection techniques. These are aimed at avoiding the instrumentalization of people and contributing to an intersubjective interpretation of reality on an equal footing, in which egalitarian dialogue is the means to reach a consensus on the interpretation of experiences based on argumentation. These techniques include the communicative observation ([Adame & Márquez, 2018](#)), communicative focus groups ([Buslón, et al., 2020](#); [Jiménez-Herranza, et al., 2016](#)) and daily life stories. Communicative methodology approaches have also been applied in biographical methods favoring intersubjective interpretations between

researchers and the “protagonists of the life stories” (Soler, 2015, p.840). This process, guided by an egalitarian dialogue, contributes to the shared creation of meaning by researcher and participant that identify and recreate the experience of the most biographically meaningful events. Evidence suggests that this communicative process can empower participants’ life meaning (Racionero-Plaza, 2015).

The intersubjective interpretation of results of the Communicative Methodology enables the identification of transformative and exclusionary elements of the issues studies. This fact is an essential step in the research process for achieving social impact. Under this approach, participants participate in the interpretation and discussion of findings through an egalitarian dialogue (Villardón-Gallego et al., 2020). The use of transformative and exclusionary dimensions of analysis in the Communicative Methodology allows for an in-depth analysis of social inequalities and the detection of new potential social problems by identifying barriers and difficulties. Thanks to the inter-subjective dialogue in the analysis process, inequalities emerge but also solutions and ways to overcome them based on a common interpretation of reality by both, researchers and participants.

Egalitarian dialogue itself has been proposed as transformative dimension of analysis in studies that follow a communicative approach. Garcia Yeste, et al. (2020) defined egalitarian dialogue in their study as “situations in which participants used dialogue as a strategy to build trust and mutual understanding” (Garcia Yeste et al., 2020, p.100). Focusing on egalitarian dialogue and following the communicative analysis of research, they found transformative interactions that overcome racism toward Muslim women that wear the niqab. Thus, the inter-subjective analysis of social reality through the exclusionary and transformative dimensions, and the specific analysis of egalitarian dialogue in people’s daily life interactions, glimpsed the possibilities of overcoming inequalities and social change that would otherwise go unnoticed.

The Practical Case of the ChiPE Project: Children’s Personal Epistemologies: Capitalizing On Children’s And Families’ Knowledge In Schools Towards Effective Teaching And Learning

Aiming at achieving social impact in qualitative research poses the challenge of finding strategies and methods to produce socially responsible and useful results. The concept of egalitarian dialogue was a relevant pathway towards impact in the EU-funded project *Children’s personal epistemologies: capitalizing on children’s and families’ knowledge in schools towards effective teaching and learning* (ChiPE) focused on analyzing how dialogic learning environments may facilitate an inclusive epistemic climate in primary classrooms (García-Carrión, 2013). Despite the efforts of many researchers to advance knowledge towards inclusive classrooms, teacher

discourse still prevails and hinders children’s opportunities to actively engage in their learning (García-Carrión, López de Aguilera, 2020). Aiming at tackling this challenge effectively to improve student learning, the ChiPE project deeply explored the implementation in the United Kingdom of two ‘Successful Educational Actions’ (SEAs) previously identified in the FP6 INCLUD-ED project.

The SEAs analyzed across Europe provide evidence of improving academic achievement, social inclusion, and community cohesion in many diverse schools. Drawing on these results, the ChiPE sought to determine whether two SEAs, Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) and Interactive Groups (IG), would expand and extend those improvements in other contexts by creating dialogic learning environments and bringing family and community members into classrooms to support learning.

Consequently, the ChiPE project implemented these two SEAs in six schools in England for the first time in this country. The egalitarian dialogue was an instrumental tool for transforming primary classrooms in an inclusive space in this process. After observing, monitoring, collecting, and analyzing the data, results showed a dramatic and consistent shift from teacher to pupil talk in the DLGs, compared with typical teacher-dominated classroom interaction. According to Hargreaves and García-carrión (2016, p.15) “over 75% of the class joined in the dialogue, contributing over 80% of the talk, often in extended utterances which reveal reasoning and speculation.” These results reflected a clear shift in teacher-pupil talk and increased the opportunities for children to be included in the classroom discourse.

The introduction of the egalitarian dialogue in this project had a profound impact on children’s lives. Indeed, a narrative of a 11-year-old boy showed the importance of creating a space where egalitarian dialogue can occur between the researcher and the participants, even when they are small children.

“I thought that it was very important to speak about the research and have our own ideas about it and... so then, they [researchers] can get our own perspective on what we think and what was going on and what is happening around us” (García-Carrión, 2015, p. 918, p. 918)

Indeed, research revealed that egalitarian dialogue enabled children to explain and argue for and against their peers’ opinions while discussing social, moral, and ethical issues (Hargreaves & García-carrión, 2016), thus increasing the likelihood of developments in their personal epistemologies.

The European Commission translated main ChiPE results to six languages reaching a wider audience. Indeed, the project reported positive outcomes in improving academic achievement, especially in economically deprived areas. As part of the social impact achieved, the EC highlighted the ChiPE results were socially beneficial since those helped meet the EU 2020 targets in terms of school attendance.²

Conclusions

The review of articles in ISI Web of Science and Scopus and the review of European projects in CORDIS website on egalitarian dialogue and their relationship with social impact could allow us to conclude about the increasing use of the egalitarian dialogue to reach social impact. The notion of egalitarian dialogue used by the significant part of the articles, based on critical and dialogical theories of Habermas, Freire, and Flecha among others, has an enormous potential when we try to reach social impact, improving living conditions of the most vulnerable populations. The creation of egalitarian dialogue spaces in which all potential participants, through an intersubjective dialogue, break with the traditional differences between subjects and objects basing their interpretations on the force of the arguments and addressing their observations to transform difficulties into possibilities were joint in the great majority of the analyzed articles.

The application of the egalitarian dialogue in the different analyzed articles has been made specially through communicative methodology. The combination of dialogue and communicative methodology has made it possible to achieve social impact in the research studies presented in the different articles. The communicative organization, data collection techniques, and communicative data analysis presented in some analyzed articles are elements that, under the creation of spaces for egalitarian dialogue and ideal speaking situations, have helped to achieve social impact.

Through the ChiPE Project, we have observed a particular research project where the two “Successful Educational Actions” analyzed, in which egalitarian dialogue played a fundamental role, had a remarkable social impact on their results. This egalitarian dialogue between the students themselves and teachers created the ideal conditions for the positive results to be achieved in the end.

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Notes

1. FP7 is the 7th Framework Program, and H2020 is Horizon 2020. Both of them are under the Framework Program of Research and Technological Development. This research program is the European Union’s main instrument for funding research. There have been eight Framework Programs (FP), each of them based on the EU’s strategic

priorities for Research, Technological Development, and Demonstration activities for a specific period. The current FP is Horizon 2020 (H2020), following the FP7.

2. Extracted from: <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/175142-let-school-children-speak>

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g) SÉPTIMO ARTÍCULO

Participation and organizational commitment in the Mondragon Group

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Participation and Organizational Commitment in the Mondragon Group

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The scientific literature has shown Mondragon Corporation (MC), with 65 years of history, as a clear example that cooperativism can be highly competitive in the capitalist market while being highly egalitarian and democratic. This cooperative group has focused on its corporate values of cooperation, participation, social responsibility, and innovation. Previous scientific research reports its enormous transformative and emancipatory potential. However, studies on the effects of various types of worker participation on competitiveness and workers' psychological wellbeing in this cooperative group exist to a lesser extent. Specifically, one aspect that needs further empirical research and that represents a competitive advantage for Mondragon is the degree of commitment and emotional attachment that can be observed in the people who work there. For this reason, this article aims to identify key elements of the democratic participation of workers in these cooperatives that relate to the development of organizational commitment. Based on a communicative and qualitative approach, data collection included 29 interviews to different profiles of workers (senior and junior workers, members and non-members of the cooperative, and researchers involved in the cooperatives) from eight different cooperatives of the Corporation. Through this research methodology, the participants interpret their reality through egalitarian and intersubjective dialogue because their voices are considered essential to measure the social impact. This study found three different ways in which the democratic participation of worker-members in management and ownership contributes to developing affective organizational commitment among those working in Mondragon cooperatives, generating positive psychological and economic outcomes for both workers and cooperatives.

Keywords: Mondragon Corporation, worker cooperatives, organizational commitment, participation, psychological wellbeing, organizational democracy

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INTRODUCTION

Worker cooperatives represent a democratic alternative to the traditional mainstream model of creating value and organizing work. In them, workers are highly involved in labor and capital, mainly through shared equity and participation in decision making at all levels (Cheney et al., 2014). According to the literature, cooperatives and worker-owned enterprises that combine employee

involvement and ownership can match or even exceed the productivity of conventional enterprises (Bradley et al., 1990; Bartlett et al., 1992; Doucouliagos, 1995; Logue and Yates, 2006; Artz and Kim, 2011). At the same time, cooperatives provide greater job security, particularly during times of crisis (Birchall and Ketilson, 2009), often report higher pay and benefits relative to conventional firms when they succeed in a particular industry (Artz and Kim, 2011), and contribute to dignify working life and reduce poverty (Logue and Yates, 2006). Furthermore, worker cooperatives can create some stress and demand specific emotional labor due to the complexities of their democratic organization. But compared to conventional firms, they usually offer greater emotional freedom and a more comprehensive range of genuine emotional displays (Hoffmann, 2016). For these and other reasons, cooperatives are broadly considered a factor promoting their communities' economic and social development (Johnstone and Lionais, 2004; Erdal, 2011; United Nations General Assembly, 2017).

The Mondragon Corporation (MC) is the largest and most successful group of cooperatives globally (Wright, 2010; International Co-operative Alliance, 2012), a clear example that worker cooperatives can be competitive in the capitalist market, egalitarian, and democratic. The group comprises more than 200 firms, 96 cooperatives and employs more than 81,000 people worldwide (Mondragon Corporation, 2021). MC is the leading business group in the Basque Country, where its headquarters are located, and one of the largest in Spain, having sales in more than 150 countries. In 2003, Fortune magazine ranked one of the best places to work in Europe due to the working conditions, absence of hierarchical atmosphere, equality, and personal decision-making capacity, among other aspects. Unlike most worker cooperatives, which are rare in capital-intensive sectors such as domestic appliances and industrial machinery (Dow, 2003), the Mondragon cooperatives have a presence in the finance, industry, retail, and knowledge sectors (Mondragon Corporation, 2020). Furthermore, MC has successfully managed to overcome economic recessions and internal challenges while continually expanding since its inception back in 1956, remaining committed to democratic work practices and dedication to local communities where they have a presence (Cheney et al., 2014).

The characteristics of the democratic model of MC and its relation to its economic and social success have long interested the scientific community (e.g., see Meek and Woodworth, 1990; Moye, 1993; Taylor, 1994; Whyte, 1995; Cheney, 2002; Mintzberg, 2009; Campbell, 2011; Redondo et al., 2011). However, one aspect that needs to be explored in more depth is the impact of the democratic participation of MC worker-members on their affective organizational commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1996), a factor that may represent a competitive advantage for the cooperatives (Agirre et al., 2014). Previous research has pointed to generalized satisfaction among worker-members of MC, particularly among highly qualified professionals who could earn more in traditional mainstream companies but who instead decide to remain in Mondragon (Flecha and Santa Cruz, 2011). Consistent with this assertion, there is evidence showing how

the organizational commitment of MC workers may be caused by the democratic management model implemented in those cooperatives (Agirre et al., 2014). This management model relies on decentralizing and distributing power, promoting employee participation in decision-making, and implementing a quality-based management based on cooperative principles. Similarly, studies have found that organizational democracy positively impacts value-based commitment (Weber et al., 2020). Besides, workers are less likely to leave their companies due to job demands in worker cooperatives than in traditional mainstream companies (Park, 2018). However, more empirical research is still needed to fully understand how the democratic participation and involvement in the Mondragon cooperatives may lead to enhanced organizational commitment of their workers.

This article aims to contribute to fill this gap in the literature by presenting the results of a qualitative study carried out in MC cooperatives, which focused on identifying ways in which the democratic participation of workers in management and ownership influences the development of affective organizational commitment. The evidence presented suggests that participation in management increases the identification of worker-members with the governance of the cooperative (i.e., the democratically elected members of the governing bodies and the leadership of the company) and promotes involvement of the worker-members in decision-making at the highest level which increases their understanding of the business and empathy toward the management. Participation in ownership appears to generate emotional attachment to the cooperatives as worker acknowledge themselves as co-owners of the cooperatives and part of a collective business effort. In sum, participation in management and ownership appears to generate identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment of workers to their cooperatives, all of which are elements that relate to the definition of affective organizational commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1996).

In the following, the article begins with a brief review of scientific literature on the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational democracy is reviewed. Then, the types of participation and involvement of workers that exist in MC cooperatives are contextualized. Third, the methodology followed is presented in detail. Fourth, the study's main findings are presented in three main sections. Finally, conclusions are presented drawn from the findings, as well as a critical discussion about them.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOCRACY

The leading concept of organizational commitment, which emerged three decades ago as a construct related to the study of work attitudes and behavior, is defined as "a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization" (Allen and Meyer, 1996). According to this conceptual model, the psychological linkage between

employees and their organizations can take three distinct forms (Meyer and Allen, 1991): *affective commitment*, which refers to identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the organization; *continuance commitment*, which refers to commitment based on the employee's recognition of the costs associated with leaving the organization; and *normative commitment*, which refers to commitment based on a sense of obligation to the organization. In other words, employees may decide to remain with an organization because they want to (affective), because they have to (continuance), or because they ought to (normative) (Allen and Meyer, 1996).

While all three forms of organizational commitment correlate negatively with withdrawal cognition and turnover, they differ in the way they correlate with organization-relevant and employee-relevant outcomes: affective commitment has been found to have the strongest positive correlation with attendance, job performance, and organizational citizenship behavior, and to be negatively correlated with stress and work-family conflict; besides, affective commitment correlates strongly with job involvement, occupational commitment, and, most vital of all, job satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002). Thus, of the three forms of organizational commitment, affective commitment has the most positive consequences for employees, just as it does for employers (Meyer and Maltin, 2010). From the point of view of the firms, affective commitment represents a competitive advantage. When employees want to remain in the organization and believe it is the right thing to do, they tend to be happier, more satisfied, more self-directed, healthier, more engaged, and more willing to exert discretionary effort on behalf of the organization (Meyer et al., 2012).

In the last decade, a large body of research has widely studied the correlation and interaction of organizational commitment with numerous psychological variables in conventional organizations and capitalist firms (e.g., Morin et al., 2011; Farooq et al., 2014; Choi et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2016; Meyer et al., 2018; Yao et al., 2019). However, democratic workplaces and democratic organizations have received far less attention on this matter. Notable exceptions are the studies that have analyzed the relationship between organizational democracy and different psychological and behavioral outcomes, including affective and normative commitment (e.g., Weber et al., 2009, 2020; Unterrainer et al., 2011). The term *organizational democracy* is referred to as an on-going, broad-based, and institutionalized employee participation that is not *ad hoc* or occasional in nature (Weber et al., 2009). In a recent meta-analysis of psychological research on organizational democracy, Weber et al. (2020) used three indicators of this construct: (1) *Structurally anchored employee participation in organizational decisions* (SAEP), focused on the organizational decision structure, distinguishing among several types of enterprises according to a typology that ranges from hierarchically structured enterprises to self-governed employee-owned firms and worker cooperatives; (2) *Employee participation in collective ownership* (EO), focused on the property situation, encompassing two variants: whether an employee possesses ownership shares of the company or not, and the number of his/her ownership shares; (3) *Individually*

perceived participation in organizational decision making (IPD), focused on the participation of individual employees, reflecting the degree of employees' *actual* and *direct* participation in strategic or tactical decision making as perceived by themselves. According to their findings, value-based commitment [an aggregate of affective and normative commitment derived from Meyer et al. (2006)] is positively influenced by all three indicators of organizational democracy almost to the same extent. Additionally, the authors found that IPD partially mediated the positive effects of SAEP and EO on value-based commitment, showing the specific relevance of workers' direct involvement in strategic and tactical decisions for promoting positive forms of organizational commitment.

Only a handful of studies have analyzed aspects related to organizational commitment in worker cooperatives. However, none have analyzed the relationship between the democratic participation of worker-members and the development of organizational commitment. A study of French agricultural cooperatives concluded that members participate in the governance of their cooperative when they are attached to it affectively and trust the directors (Barraud-Didier et al., 2012). Another study in cooperatives in Ecuador found that certain variables related to job position such as higher salary levels, involvement in strategic management (specifically being an executive), or temporary contracts all had a significant and positive relationship with organizational commitment (Hidalgo-Fernández et al., 2020). In a comparative analysis between worker cooperatives and capitalist firms in South Korea, Park (2018) found that the increase in job demands and workloads in cooperatives did not seem to reduce the organizational commitment of their members, most likely because they are provided with greater autonomy, organizational support, decision-making participation, and social support as compared to their capitalist counterparts. The only study on MC cooperatives is that of Agirre et al. (2014), which found that decentralization and participative decision making, both critical components of Mondragon's management model, have a significant influence on worker's organizational commitment. Additionally, the authors found that organizational commitment in MC cooperatives has a positive albeit indirect influence on business performance through its impact on the market orientation of the cooperatives (i.e., the generation and distribution of market information and subsequent response to it).

In retrospect, research on organizational commitment has made significant contributions in areas such as behavioral sciences and organization studies. The universal character of the construct allows the replication of quantitative research methods in various types of organizations, as is the case of the studies on worker cooperatives described above. To strengthen this fruitful area of investigation, researchers could complement the existing quantitative studies with qualitative analyzes that allow them to recover the voices and interpretations of the investigated subjects. This would contribute to broadening scientific knowledge about the processes that underlie the development of organizational commitment in organizations and its interaction with diverse psychological and social variables.

WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN MONDRAGON CORPORATION COOPERATIVES

Participation in Management

The worker cooperatives are the base level of organization in MC. In them, workers have multiple opportunities to extensively participate in decision-making processes of issues that are transcendental to the cooperatives' trajectory and their own work life. The democratic participation in the management of worker-members takes place through specific governing bodies shared by all Mondragon cooperatives (see Forcadell, 2005, p. 260–261). At the top, composed of all worker-members, the General Assembly is the supreme authority of the cooperative, which gathers at least once per year to approve strategic plans, nominate the Governing Council, the Audit Committee, and the Social Council. Every member of the cooperative can vote in the General Assembly, and their votes are weighted equally. The Governing Council is a group of up to twelve worker-members elected for 4-year periods. It is in charge of presenting the annual operational plan for approval to the General Assembly, nominating the managers of the cooperative, and periodically monitoring their performance to assure that the company's management complies with the directives of the General Assembly. The Audit Committee audits all the accounts presented to the General Assembly and obtains supplementary information when required by the cooperative members.

The governing bodies mentioned above assure workers' participation in management in the form of control instead of directly making management decisions (Campbell, 2011), which are the responsibility of the Manager and the Management Committee, a consultative body of managers of the cooperative. Along with them, another body called Social Council represents the worker-members before the authorities of the cooperative, having an advisory character to the Governing Council, and acts as a labor union and a communication channel between management and workers (Forcadell, 2005). Their co-workers directly elect the representatives of the Social Council, and the issues that they address include working conditions, compensations, remunerations, social security, and many other social topics (Campbell, 2011). Additionally, each member of the Social Council organizes individual meetings with the workers that they represent, called Small Councils, where all the issues mentioned above are discussed in-depth (Altuna, 2008).

Participation in Ownership

As worker-owned enterprises, the MC cooperatives are characterized by high levels of participation of their workers in decision-making processes and equity through individual participation of their members in ownership. Once they are eligible for membership and contribute their respective share of capital to the firm, workers acquire a series of obligations toward the cooperative, including participating in democratic processes of the cooperative and taking part in economic losses when applicable. In addition, they obtain rights such as

participating and voting in decision-making processes, being eligible to become part of governing bodies, and participating in the cooperative's profits. Of any given MC cooperative, not more than 20% of its workforce are non-member workers, and temporary contracts cannot last more than 5 years, as set by local regulations for worker cooperatives in the Basque Country (Altuna, 2008; Flecha and Santa Cruz, 2011).

In recent years CM has carried out different actions to replicate its successful cooperative model abroad. It includes the creation of mixed cooperatives and the implementation in its subsidiaries of its Corporate Management Model to promote the dissemination of democratic organization practices and participatory management (Flecha and Ngai, 2014), or the collaboration between MC and the United Steelworkers Union in the United States to develop a union co-op model based on the values of worker ownership, collective organization, democracy, and solidarity (Schlachter, 2017).

Tensions and Contradictions in a Context of International Growth

The extent to which MC cooperatives maintain their cooperative values and assure workers' participation as they grow and compete in international markets has been the subject of discussion in the past decades. A good part of the analyses has been framed within the *degeneration vs. regeneration* debate (Cornforth, 1995). The degeneration thesis (Webb and Webb, 1921; Meister, 1984) states that to survive worker cooperatives gradually and inevitably adopt organizational practices and priorities that erode the democratic participation of workers in decision making, thus becoming increasingly capitalist. In contrast, several authors that criticize such a deterministic stance state that worker cooperatives can maintain their original nature in the long-term, since worker-members can set up regeneration processes that contribute to restoring democratic, participative, and social functioning (Batstone, 1983; Rosner, 1984; Hunt, 1992; Cornforth, 1995).

A number of recent studies have criticized degenerative processes that have eroded the democratic participation of workers in MC cooperatives, although in some cases also acknowledging efforts in the opposite direction. For instance, Heras-Saizarbitoria (2014) states that Mondragon's basic cooperative values such as democratic organization, participatory management and education have become decoupled from worker's daily activity, and that the principle of secure membership and employment is the only one that encourages "most workers to remain quiet and compliant in a system that gives them limited ways to participate." On a qualitative study of Fagor Ederlan, an MC multinational worker cooperative, Bretos et al. (2018) found that international growth contributed to lessen worker-members participation in favor of managerial control. Similarly, during its expansion period, Storey et al. (2014) found that Eroski, MC largest retail cooperative, experienced a sharp reduction of its percentage of members, gave greater priority to its economic goals, and suffered from passivity and loss of interest by its members. However, the authors also assert that the economic crisis in the

post-2008 period played an essential role in the re-emergence of cooperative practices in the cooperative, as members showed an increasing desire to be informed, attend meetings and actively take part in decision-making committees and governing bodies. In a study of Fagor Ederlan, Fagor Electrodomésticos, and Maier Group, Bretos et al. (2020) state that those cooperatives have developed interesting regeneration initiatives such as cooperativizing some of their domestic subsidiaries, updating and institutionalizing cooperative education and training for managers and members of the governing bodies, and revitalizing certain employee voice structures. However, the authors emphasize that the cooperatives have kept growing through the acquisition of capitalist firms. Participation in their work areas continues to be shaped by dominant, managerially controlled systems, and education and training offered to rank-and-file worker-members suffer from a systematic deficit. It suggests that regeneration and degeneration are not mutually exclusive and can occur simultaneously.

Transferring the democratic participation of workers in management and ownership to subsidiaries of MC cooperatives has also been the subject of debate. While MC has been criticized for prioritizing the transfer of shallow, managerially oriented forms of workers' participation (Bretos and Errasti, 2017), research also suggests that some worker cooperatives have taken interesting steps toward "cooperativizing" their subsidiaries. They include the transformation of Eroski hypermarkets into cooperatives (Arando et al., 2015), the transformation into mixed cooperatives of some subsidiaries of Maier Group (Flecha and Ngai, 2014), the creation of a mixed cooperative subsidiary by Copreci, or the integration as production plans of Fagor Ederlan's subsidiaries Automoción and Victorio Luzuriaga Usurbil with the inclusion of their workers as members of the parent cooperative (Bretos et al., 2020). However, according to research MC cooperatives have been less successful in transferring their cooperative model to their subsidiaries abroad. Bretos et al. (2019) state that Fagor Ederlan and Fagor Electrodomésticos became "capitalist" firms composed of a cooperative headquarter in their multinational expansion and a capitalist periphery of subsidiaries in which cooperative membership rights are restricted for workers.

Similarly, in an analysis of Mondragon's Chinese factories, Errasti (2015) suggests an apparent disconnect between the organization's discourse regarding the encouragement of worker participation in subsidiaries and the practices observed in the Kunshan Industrial Park and concludes by stating that its Chinese subsidiaries do not differ significantly from traditional foreign subsidiaries. In this regard, Flecha and Ngai (2014) suggest that economic aspects, legal difficulties in the destination countries, the lack of a cooperative culture, and a desire to protect investments hinder MC from effectively expanding its cooperative model to its international subsidiaries. Nevertheless, the authors acknowledge that the actions taken by some cooperatives (specifically Maier, ULMA Construction and RPK, a former MC cooperative) to implement a corporate management model in their subsidiaries, albeit limited to one concrete dimension, are valuable first steps toward the objective of expanding the cooperative culture abroad.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Question and Context of the Study

The present study aims to address the following research question: How does the democratic participation of worker-members in management and ownership influence the development of affective organizational commitment in MC cooperatives?

The results presented here build on the research "The Contribution of Competitive Cooperativism to Overcoming Current Economic Problems" (Cooperativismo Competitivo: Aportaciones a la sostenibilidad y calidad del empleo en el momento económico actual) (CREA, 2012–2014), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation through the National R&D Program. The two main objectives of the R&D project were, first, to identify successful practices developed by worker cooperatives that improve the quality of work, particularly of the groups that suffer greater vulnerability; and second, to identify the possibilities of transferring those successful cooperative actions to other companies and other territories. For that purpose, numerous case studies of Spanish worker cooperatives were carried out, as well as four cross-sectional studies to identify and analyze elements that have a positive impact on the quality of work and life of different groups such as: women, young people, people with low qualifications and people with disabilities.

The study presented below corresponds to a subset of the project's field work. Specifically, 16 interviews corresponding to two in-depth case studies of the Alecop and Maier cooperatives are used in this study. In addition, with the aim of achieving a better understanding of the matter, the field work was complemented with 13 interviews of workers from six additional MC cooperatives: Fagor Automation, Laboral Kutxa Mondragon University, Orona, ULMA Architectural Solutions-Polymers, and ULMA Group. **Table 1** shows the distribution of interviews carried out for this study.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study was carried out using a qualitative methodology, which allows delving into routines, problematic moments and the meaning in the lives of individuals (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Specifically, the research was developed using the communicative

TABLE 1 | Distribution of communicative interviews.

Sector	Cooperative	Participants
Finance	Laboral Kutxa	1
Industry	Fagor Automation	2
	Maier	7
	Orona	1
	ULMA Architectural Solutions-Polymers	1
	ULMA Group	2
Knowledge	Alecop	9
	Mondragon University	6
Total:		29

methodology (Gomez, 2021), which aims not only to describe social phenomena but also to provide scientific evidence of how social realities can be changed. In this methodology, researchers establish an egalitarian dialogue with the people investigated throughout the research process, searching for a common understanding of the reality based on validity claims. During the interviews, researchers bring to the dialogue the scientific evidence on the subject in question while the participants contribute with their daily life knowledge and experience. The joint interpretation of reality on an egalitarian level allows the identification of relevant topics that would not otherwise emerge in the research, and the active participation of the people whose reality is being studied increases the social impact of such research (Gómez et al., 2019). In the field of psychological research, this methodology has proven useful for generating scientific knowledge with substantial potential to improve peoples' lives (Redondo-Sama et al., 2020).

In this study, to ensure a broader understanding of the reality, it was sought that the participants of the study had different profiles that allowed achieving a better interpretation of the situation in their cooperatives. The diversity of participants contributes to overcome the biased view of reality that some previous academic studies have offered when studying MC cooperatives derived from unilateral visions of the phenomenon (Morlà-Folch et al., 2021). In our study, profiles of interviewees included senior and junior workers, worker-members and non-members, management staff and members of the governing bodies, and researchers involved in the university of the corporation. Specifically, **Table 2** details the profile of the people interviewed.

Regarding the two in-depth study cases carried out in Alecop and Maier, first, an informant in each cooperative was contacted to access the interviewees. In the first conversation, the research and its objectives were explained. Then, the contacts of people who might be interested in conducting the interviews were facilitated. Regarding the complementary interviews, a snowball sampling was carried out, in which informants who were not designated by the cooperatives facilitated the contact of various workers of MC cooperatives.

TABLE 2 | Characteristics of interviewees.

	Description	Participants
Gender	Male	16
	Female	13
Position	President of the cooperative	1
	Manager of the cooperative	1
	Former Manager of the cooperative	1
	Human Resources Manager	1
	Member of the Governing Council	3
	Member of the Social Council	2
	Worker-member	9
	Worker-member, researcher	3
Total:	Worker-member, student	4
	Worker, not member	4
		29

The interviews followed a semi-structured protocol with themes that emerged from the literature review designed to explore the relationship between the democratic participation of worker-members in management and ownership with the development of organizational commitment in the cooperatives. During the dialogue, the researcher presented the scientific evidence available, and the interviewees contributed their points of view on those investigations from their daily life knowledge. The conversations were open and allowed the interviewees to expand on the topics they wanted, offering time to discuss those issues that they considered most relevant, some of which were not considered initially. The interviews took place at the site the interviewees decided on to ensure comfort with the conversation. For this reason, some interviews took place in the workspaces of the cooperatives, while others took place in other spaces suggested by the interviewees.

The interviews were conducted between 2012 and 2014. The average duration of the interviews was approximately 1 h, but in no case did the interviewer limit the time of the interview. All were recorded and transcribed verbatim for their analysis. All participants involved in the study provided either verbal or written consent agreeing to participate in the research. They were also informed about their right to leave the research and remove their data from the analysis at any time if they wanted. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Community of Research on Excellence for All (CREA) with the number 20211031.

For the analysis of the interviews, a first screening was carried out. All quotations that indicated a relationship between democratic participation of workers in MC cooperatives (i.e., participation in management and participation in ownership) were identified. In a second step, those quotations were classified following the next analysis chart (see **Table 3**). Based on the communicative methodology, the chart differentiates between transformative and exclusionary dimensions of three categories of analysis.

The results of the analysis were then classified into three final categories:

- *Identification with the democratic governance of the cooperative*, containing evidence of grassroot democracy underlying the process of election of members for the governing bodies.
- *Involvement in management that enhances understanding of the business*, containing evidence of learning processes that take place as worker-members participate in the governing bodies.
- *Emotional attachment to a co-owned business effort*, containing evidence of enhanced motivation and

TABLE 3 | Analysis chart.

Categories of analysis	Exclusionary dimension	Transformative dimension
Emotional attachment to the cooperative	1	2
Identification with the cooperative	3	4
Involvement in the cooperative	5	6

engagement of workers that acknowledge themselves as co-owners of the company.

The quotations presented in the following section represent the findings that had consensus among the interviewees. No major differences in the basic interpretation of the phenomenon were identified. However, some differences between the answers of worker-members and temporary workers are specified. Only in some specific cases, the interpretations varied, which was specified in the description of the results.

RESULTS

Our data analysis suggests that the democratic participation of worker-members in MC cooperatives (in management and ownership) contributes to developing affective organizational commitment in at least three ways. First, worker-members feel identified with the cooperative's governance since they postulate and democratically elect the colleagues they trust to be part of the governing bodies. Second, as worker-members elected for the governing bodies are involved in the most important decision-making processes of the cooperative, they must receive intensive training on the operation of the cooperative and interact with the management staff, which significantly enhances their understanding of the business. Third, worker-members become emotionally attached to their firms as they acknowledge themselves as co-owners of the cooperatives and part of a collective business effort.

Identification With the Democratic Governance of the Cooperative

The democratic functioning shared by all MC cooperatives enables worker-members to participate in transcendental decisions for the cooperative, such as the election of the company's leadership. During the General Assembly, all members vote to choose the president of the cooperative, who simultaneously presides the Governing and Social Councils. The Governing Council postulates the candidates. The General Assembly has the power to elect one or reject the nominees if they consider that none is adequate to preside the cooperative. Through this combination of representative democracy (postulation of nominees by the Governing Council) and participatory democracy (voting at the General Assembly), worker-members have a say in the appointment of the leadership:

“Normally, we in the Governing Council nominate those who we believe that may like the company, and that we like them [their profile]. And you say, “Ok, it seems to me that he is a good guy.” You can nominate 2 or 3 people and then the [General] Assembly decides which one. Or they can censure, and they don't choose any of them. That has happened in [Fagor] Industrial” (*Female; worker-member; Fagor Automation*).

As expressed by this former member of the Governing Council in Fagor Automation, the presidency of the cooperative is not given for granted beforehand the General Assembly takes place. Instead, worker-members have the last word on who may preside over the company. Similarly, the management of the cooperative

must count with and maintain the trust of the worker-members, although the process of choosing and removing when applicable operates indirectly through the action of the Governing Council:

The manager is elected by the Governing Council, which is the representative of the cooperative. They elect the manager for 5 years, although they can dismiss him/her at any time because it is a position of trust. In this specific case [of our cooperative], this person has been in the job for 10 years now, he was trained in the cooperative, he entered young and climbed positions, and now he is the general manager (*Male; worker-member; Laboral Kutxa*).

As explained above, the general management of the cooperative is considered a position of trust, which means that managers can be removed at any time if worker-members, through their representation in the Governing Council, assess that the direction of the cooperative is not the right one. However, as he also explains, general managers can be re-elected for additional periods if the overall results are considered positive for the cooperative.

It is worth noting that some of the interviewees coincided in pointing out that such trust in the leadership, along with other values such as transparency and honesty, may motivate the worker-members. The following quote showcases this idea:

The important thing in a company is that people who go to work motivated. (...) So, three key elements of motivation are: transparency, promotion of people, and honesty and credibility. That means that the people who are leading the company are trustworthy, that the managers are trustworthy, that they are honest. In other words, to create a climate of motivation. (...) The advantage of cooperatives is that a person feels better paid within the cooperatives, although they are never satisfied, [and] they feel they participate in the management, because they have transparency and they have information, and they feel that those who manage the cooperative are honest, they are close, and generally feel that they are honest. There will always be criticism, but I think there is honesty and credibility, and that is a bit of the great advantage of the cooperative (*Male; former Manager of the cooperative; MAIER*).

As seen in the previous quote, this former Manager of Maier emphasized that the perception of having honest and trustworthy leaders is vital for creating a climate of motivation in any company, be it cooperative or capitalist. Furthermore, he asserted that in worker cooperatives, worker-members might perceive the leadership as being more honest, transparent, and close to the workforce than other types of firms.

In that sense, according to the dialogues with the interviewees, it appears that the democratic process through which representatives of the governing bodies and the leadership of the cooperative are elected is a key element that contributes to develop trust and identification with the governance of the cooperative: “*There are advantages in giving a vote to the worker-members of the cooperative because it generates greater commitment in those elected [to form part of the governing bodies] and people identify themselves more*” (*Male; worker-member; ULMA Group*). As suggested by this worker-member of ULMA Group, this process appears to have a double positive effect. On the one hand, it influences the identification of worker-members

with the governance of their cooperatives. Such identification appears to be based on trust, as worker-members themselves nominate and choose the colleagues who they consider most suitable for the positions. On the other hand, being designated by their colleagues for those representative positions potentially increases the commitment of the elected members, as they are backed by their peers throughout the process.

Reinforcing the previous idea, some testimonies from interviewees suggest that the grassroots democracy that underlies the election of members for the governing bodies contributes to their identification with the governance of the cooperative. Specifically, because it assures that people in whom they trust make the most important decisions in the cooperative. This was clearly stated by a college professor and worker-member of the Mondragon University cooperative:

“It is important that people choose. I mean, we choose among the people those that we see in that position. Then we make a proposal, ‘Hey, we would like Pedro.’ I think that’s good, that in the representation be someone who is trusted. The confidence of saying, ‘Look, we trust you and you are in a position where the strategic decisions [of the cooperative] are made.’ I think it gives you more peace of mind. I think so” (*Female; worker-member; Mondragon University*).

As showed in the previous quote, the decision to postulate someone to the governing bodies is usually based on recognizing the commitment of a member toward the cooperative and his or her potential to look after the interests of both the business and the workers. In this process, worker-members rarely nominate themselves. Instead, worker-members postulate other colleagues they consider trustworthy and capable of achieving good results in the crucial tasks they will be assigned.

In sum, the evidence presented above suggests that the democratic election of representatives for the governing bodies may increase the identification of worker-members with the governance of their cooperatives, i.e., with the members elected for those bodies and, at least to some extent, with the leadership of their companies.

Involvement in Management That Enhances Understanding of the Business

The democratic process described in the previous section opens the possibility for any worker-member of the cooperative to be potentially elected for the governing bodies despite his or her job position or academic qualifications. Often, the members who join the governing bodies, particularly the Governing Council, lack the basic training required to understand the information at their disposal and make informed decisions. This limitation was clearly explained by this member of the Social Council at ULMA Architectural Solutions-Polymers:

Normally, the Governing Council is not all engineers or businessmen. There are people who work on the production line, people who have medium training, or even people who have high training. but in the end they are not in contact [with the administration]. For example, there may be people who are not in direct contact with the market and do not have that global perspective of the entire company to say, “this is wrong” or “this

is good.” It is not usually a common thing (*Female; member of the Social Council; ULMA Architectural Solutions-Polymers*).

As described above, all worker-members, including those that work on production lines and equivalent positions, are eligible for the Governing Council. Moreover, according to the interviewees, this situation is relatively common. In some cases, like in Alecop, a percentage of seats in the Governing Council (and other governing bodies) is even reserved for university students who work part-time at the cooperative. This situation represents a challenge for all MC cooperatives. They are faced with the need to provide intensive specialized training on cooperative business management to members that join the Governing Council with a wide range of profiles. While the specificities of the training may vary from one cooperative to another, they usually include some type of regulated training on technical matters like the interpretation balances and result accounts, among many other topics, as explained in the following quote of a member of the Governing Council of Maier:

“That training (...) is a challenge, a huge challenge to provide that. In the end, any member is eligible to the Governing Council, anybody, regardless of their education, and that person will have to make decisions once he/she is there. So, the regulated training is the interpretation of income statements and their values, although that isn’t enough, no. [However] you learn during those 4 years in the Council so much! Of course, you have meetings that are only for the Governing Council members, and then you also have meetings with the entire Directorate, the Managing Director, the Human Resources Department. You learn about your own cooperative, the systems, the processes, how it works and how things are done” (*Male; member of the Governing Council; MAIER*).

However, as the previous quote explains, only part of the learning comes from formal training. During the years in the Council, the members learn a great deal from the direct interaction with the entire management staff of the cooperative, which may include the managing director, the finance department, the human resources department, and others. Those interactions are equally important, if not more, in helping the worker-members of the Governing Council to grasp a deeper understanding of the status of the cooperative and the business.

More importantly, joining the Governing Council entails being involved in transcendental decision-making processes for the cooperative such as elaborating the annual operational plan, nominating the management staff, and monitoring their performance. Often, the members’ decisions are tough to make, as when cooperatives have needed to find ways of preserving employment at the expense of individual gains during the economic recession. Other times decisions may imply restructuring the cooperative or internationalizing its operation to compete globally. In either case, according to the interviewees, the direct involvement of worker-members in decision-making and management through their participation in the Governing Council radically transforms their understanding of the cooperative and makes them more emphatic with those in charge of managing the company. This idea was expressed by a

college professor and worker-member at Mondragon University as follows:

“The experience you acquire helps a lot in the training of workers because you see how the company works. That a person who works on a machine has the possibility of being on the governing council and making decisions. that person when he returns to the machine works in a different way. Because he already knows where the company is going and why those decisions have been made, because you are the manager. And you are going to have to make some decisions that not everybody may like. The next time that you aren't in the governing council, but those same decisions are made, you'll also understand, 'Well, I had to make those decisions too.' Even if you are part of the Council only 4 years, that lasts forever” (*Female; worker-member, researcher; Mondragon University*).

Furthermore, as the interviewee emphasizes, the experience of forming part of the Governing Council has a long-lasting impact on the motivation and commitment of worker-members once they reincorporate to their job positions at their cooperatives, since they gain a perspective of the business that they could not have gained otherwise.

Similarly, according to the interviewees' testimonies, the experience of forming part of the Social Council contributes to increasing the business's understanding of those elected for this representative body. Among other responsibilities, the members of the Social Council are responsible for communicating to their colleagues the status of the cooperative, often through monthly gatherings called Small Councils. The information is provided directly by the management of the cooperative and the Governing Council. It may include financial balances, economic forecasts, or any other relevant cooperative updates. This was explained by two worker-members of Fagor Automation, one of whom previously had formed part of the Social Council:

Female worker-member: I understand now. When I see them [the current members of the Social Council] I understand them completely. We always say that each member should give those 4 years in the Social Council to value what it takes them to prepare the document they present every month. I used to prepare slides, “Here you have the economic results, the sales, the most important things that the manager says” every month.

Male worker member: You also understand the balance sheets more.

Female worker-member: Yes, that is also positive. You learn and say, “Look, this is the operating income. Look how this affected that.” Or the financial manager may come and explain how the dollar affects the operation, because we have subsidiaries outside and there we sell in dollars. You learn those things (*Female and male; worker-members; Fagor Automation*).

As shown in the quote above, the effort that the members of the Social Council put on processing and communicating the information of the business to their colleagues impacts not only their understanding of the business, but also their empathy toward the members of the governing bodies of the cooperative.

In the case of the youngest participants of this study, namely the student worker-members of Alecop who work part-time at the cooperative as they conclude their university studies, their involvement in the governing bodies appears to have had a direct

impact on their commitment to the cooperative. Specifically, when asked about her appreciation of the experience as a worker in Alecop, one of the interviewees expressed that she had learned far more about cooperative companies than at the university, since there she had the chance to experience first-hand the democratic functioning of a cooperative:

The experience is very enriching. (...) I wanted to get involved and I found it very enriching. Both as a cooperative member and as a worker, I mean, as a student that I am. I learnt how a Governing Council works, how you can deal with the manager, how the Management Committee or the Audit Committee work. Until you are inside you really understand how it works. And yes, you see that it really does work (...) I do value it very positively. I actually liked it. I would like to continue working here if it were up to me (*Female; worker-member, student; ALECOP*).

Students who work in Alecop are accepted as cooperative members for as long as their university studies last. Once their studies conclude, so does their status as members in Alecop. Only occasionally do the students continue working in the cooperative, and often they join other cooperative or capitalist firms in the region. Notably, the student above expressed her wish to continue working in the cooperative, derived from her fruitful experience participating in the governing bodies and her interaction with the management staff. While this experience cannot be extrapolated to all student worker-members, it does suggest that involving young and/or temporary workers in the management of the cooperative, for instance, through the governing bodies of the cooperative, may positively impact their affective organizational commitment.

Emotional Attachment to a Co-owned Business Effort

While the evidence presented in the previous sections appears to suggest that democratic participation in the management of worker-members contributes to developing affective organizational commitment through somewhat indirect mechanisms, i.e., identification with the governance of the cooperative (trusting democratically elected representatives and leaders), and involvement in management that increases the understanding of the business (learning and developing empathy by participating in governing bodies), participation in ownership appears to contribute to the development of his type of organizational commitment in a rather straightforward way. When asked, most interviewees agreed on the idea that being a member of the cooperative, which first and foremost entails making an initial capital contribution, has a direct positive impact on the commitment that workers show in their workplaces and toward their cooperatives. This was stated as follows by a worker-member of ULMA Group with more than two decades of experience in the cooperative:

“You feel the company as yours. To become member, you must put money and that makes a big difference. You notice it with those who are not [members]. They don't have that feeling. It makes you more committed to the cooperative” (*Male; worker-member; ULMA Group*).

As shown in the previous quote, workers develop an emotional attachment to the company as they become members and acknowledge themselves as co-owners. Furthermore, according to this and other testimonies, such feeling is not common among temporary workers, which is to be expected as they have not yet acquired cooperative membership.

Furthermore, testimonies collected show that worker-members are more engaged in their jobs and are more willing to work harder to achieve the objectives of the cooperative when they perceive that they have opportunities to participate, and their voices are listened to. In other words, it appears that the combination of ownership and democratic participation in management, and not the former alone, is crucial for developing the emotional attachment that leads to affective organizational commitment. This was explained by a worker-member of Maier as follows:

“Because, in the end, if you think that this is really something yours, and that your opinion counts, and that you are listened to and such, the level of involvement and the level of sacrifice that you are willing to assume for something that is yours is much higher than in anywhere else” (*Male; member of the Governing Council; Maier*).

The emotional attachment that interviewees showed in the dialogues was characterized by a recognition that co-ownership is accompanied by shared responsibility. The testimonies reflected an understanding of worker cooperative as a collective project in which both benefits and risks are shared by all members. Different examples given by the interviewees showed how under certain circumstances worker-members are willing to carry out actions that may affect their individual livelihood in the short term, with the objective of strengthening the cooperative in the middle or long-term. A worker-member of Alecop expressed this idea as follows:

“I believe that for those of us who are in cooperatives, apart from the salary, the cooperative offers you other things: security, [and] you participate in the company, for me that’s important. In other words, the day that I need to lower my salary, it will not be because someone else decided it, but because it is necessary. So, when we make money, we all win. And when we lose, we all lose. For me that’s a completely different feeling. You have responsibility, you have power and responsibility” (*Female; worker-member; Alecop*).

As seen above at times worker-members may even be willing to take actions such as decreasing their income or taking part of the losses because, as co-owners of the cooperative, they acknowledge their shared responsibility of seeking the best for the company. Similarly, as reflected in other testimonies collected in the study, in difficult times worker-members may be willing to put extra effort into their jobs when needed, even if it requires working extra hours. Not because anyone exploits them, but because they feel part of a collective project in which their individual contribution is important for achieving the collective goals of the cooperative. That feeling of belonging to a shared business effort appears to be a source of motivation, as expressed by a worker-member of the Mondragon University in the following quote:

“The other day I was talking to a friend, he is a trade unionist working in a traditional company. (...) He said that we worked more than 8 h because we wanted to. And we said that no, that here you have goals, and you have to achieve them, if it takes you 7 h as it takes you 10, that is your responsibility. (...) My job is to get this done, and that if 1 day I have to work 10 h, then the next day I work 7. But I do it. If I feel part of it. Well, I do feel part of this” (*Female; worker-member, researcher; Mondragon University*).

It is worth noting the difference in feelings that both workers have toward their companies, according to the interviewee’s testimony. The worker of the capitalist firm may never consider voluntarily working additional hours because his/her work would indeed benefit the owners but not him/herself. However, the interviewee feels part of the company because she effectively is, and for that reason, she sees no trouble in working extra hours whenever is needed. In other words, she perceives that all the effort put into this job will benefit herself and all the members of the cooperative.

Interestingly, participation in ownership may also impact temporary workers’ organizational commitment, albeit not in the form of an emotional attachment to the cooperative. Normally, after completing a 4-year trial period, temporary workers are invited to join as cooperative members if they perform adequately and embrace the cooperative values. According to our findings, the expectations of becoming cooperative members may play a role in motivating workers to be engaged in the cooperative and work hard in their jobs. A temporary worker of Orona explains this idea as follows:

“People like me with temporary contracts. The fact of becoming a member of a cooperative, like the one in which I am now, is an important step. In the end, becoming a member is better than a temporary contract in these times. You become member of a company that most likely won’t go bad, you know? They make you a member and you are part of the cooperative, they can’t kick you out. You are part of the company. So that means that during those 4 years people give everything and get involved in the company, to see if they make you a member and they consolidate you. All the people that I know that are my age. Most of them keep working hard after being consolidated as members” (*Male; worker not member; Orona*).

While the previous quote does not reflect emotional attachment to the cooperative, it does suggest that the influence of participation in ownership on organizational commitment may begin years before workers become members of the cooperative, as they engage in the cooperative culture and develop expectations of achieving a similar cooperative status.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Mondragon Corporation (MC) has long interested researchers for being the most explicit example that cooperatives can thrive in capitalist markets while remaining fully committed to democratic values and work practices. One aspect that represents a competitive advantage for MC cooperatives is their worker-members generalized satisfaction and engagement, particularly noticeable among highly qualified professionals

(Flecha and Santa Cruz, 2011). However, the relation between the democratic functioning of MC cooperatives and the organizational commitment of their workers has been studied only to a lesser extent. The present study contributes to fill that gap in the literature by investigating how the democratic participation of worker-members in management and ownership in MC cooperatives influences the development of affective organizational commitment (i.e., emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization: Meyer and Allen, 1991). This type of organizational commitment is considered a beneficial psychological state that correlates with positive outcomes both for companies and employees (Meyer and Maltin, 2010). Following a research design based on the communicative methodology (Gomez, 2021), the findings of this study draw from the dialogues with 29 workers of eight MC cooperatives located in the Basque Country, in Spain. The qualitative nature of this study allows complementing, albeit modestly, the vast and fruitful quantitative research on organizational commitment of the past decades.

The results of our analysis suggest that participation in management and ownership contributes to developing affective organizational commitment in at least three ways. First, in relation to participation in management, evidence was found showing that the worker-members interviewed feel identified with the members that form part of the governing bodies of their cooperatives, particularly of the Governing and Social Councils. According to the testimonies, identification originates from the fact that worker-members themselves nominate (for the Governing Council) and choose (for the Social Council) colleagues who they rely on and trust for those representative positions. This democratic process generates a feeling that trustworthy people are in charge of making the most important decisions for the cooperative, such as appointing and monitoring the management staff. While previous research had observed that cooperative values as a democratic organization and participatory management had become decoupled from worker's daily activity (Heras-Saizarbitoria, 2014), our findings do not seem to reinforce that claim. Instead, our research suggests that a grassroots democracy underlies the process by which representatives are appointed for the governing bodies in MC cooperatives, at least in the cases documented in this study. Further research could contribute to elucidating the extent to which democratic organization and practices are present in the day-to-day life of this and other cooperatives at MC.

Second, also in relation to participation in management, our evidence shows that the involvement of worker-members in governing bodies like the Governing Council and the Social Council enhances their understanding of the business and the operation of the cooperative. According to the interviewees, this happens because the members of the governing bodies must receive specialized training that enables them to understand the information that will be at their disposal and make adequate, informed decisions. Additionally, members of these bodies frequently interact with the management staff, who share information about the status of the cooperative with them. This enhanced understanding of the business by those members seems to increase the motivation, engagement, and empathy toward other members in the same representative positions. Previous

research had already shown that involvement in strategic management (Hidalgo-Fernández et al., 2020), decentralization and participative decision-making (Agirre et al., 2014) all have a positive relationship with workers' organizational commitment in worker cooperatives. However, our research suggests that one factor that could explain such positive relationship is the intensive learning process that takes place as worker-members actively participate in management, for instance in the governing bodies of the cooperative.

Finally, in relation to participation in ownership, our evidence suggests that worker-members develop an emotional attachment to their cooperatives as they acknowledge themselves as co-owners of the companies and part of collective business efforts. The worker-members interviewed clearly expressed that this emotional attachment increased their personal commitment toward their cooperatives, as they felt more motivated to work hard and take on greater responsibilities for the sake of the business, particularly during difficult times. This finding reinforces the argument of previous research that reported that increased job demands and workloads in cooperatives do not reduce organizational commitment of their members (Park, 2018), although our study suggests that a factor that could explain those observations is the emotional attachment that participating in ownership generates. Besides, previous research on psychological ownership had demonstrated positive links between psychological ownership for the organization and employee attitudes like organizational commitment (Van Dyne and Pierce, 2004), which seems to be clearly reinforced by the findings of our research. Future research could further explore the relationship between democratic participation in MC cooperatives, both in management and ownership, with the development of psychological ownership (i.e., the feeling of possessiveness and of being psychologically tied to an organization: Pierce et al., 2001) of their workers.

Overall, in line with the findings of Weber et al. (2020) that demonstrate a positive effect of organizational democracy (i.e., SAEP, EO, and IPD) over value-based commitment, our results show that both participation in management and participation in ownership in MC cooperatives do influence the development of affective commitment of its worker-members (and perhaps also of temporary workers as suggested by some of the testimonies presented). On the one hand, these insights may contribute to inform those worker cooperatives and other democratic organizations that seek to attract and retain human talent. By means of promoting democratic participation of workers in management and ownership, as analyzed in this study, they could potentially increase the affective organizational commitment of their workers. On the other hand, these findings may also contribute to inform the actions of worker cooperatives that deal with the challenge of developing positive types of organizational commitment in their subsidiaries, as they may decide to advance with greater determination in the transfer of these types of democratic participation.

Nevertheless, we must also acknowledge at least three limitations that are inherent to our study. First, due to the size of our sample, it is not possible to extrapolate our findings to all the cooperatives that belong to MC. Instead, the results of our research represent only the feelings of the people

interviewed, which are nonetheless valuable to advance in the understanding of the reality of this cooperative group. Second, while the exclusive focus on affective organizational commitment showcased the potential of the democratic participation of workers to generate higher levels of organizational commitment, broadening the focus of analysis to other types of organizational commitment (i.e., continuance and normative) could potentially allow the identification of contradictions and/or exclusionary elements that this research did not identify. Finally, while it would be interesting to contrast the interpretations of the interviewees with quantitative measurements of organizational commitment in their cooperatives, this study did not carry out such statistical analyzes. Future studies could adopt a mixed approach that incorporates into the analysis both the voices of workers and more traditional quantitative measurements in this field of study.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data analyzed in this study is subject to the following licenses/restrictions: The information stored on the CREA server can only be consulted upon request when the person responsible for the server and the data of the CREA center is asked. Requests to access these datasets should be directed to Community of Research on Excellence for All (CREA) crea@ub.edu.

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ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Community of Research on Excellence for All (CREA) with the number 20211031. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

RF: conceptualization, funding acquisition, and supervision. AR-O and AB-F: investigation. MJ: methodology, visualization, and preparation. AR-O: writing – original draft. RF and AB-F: writing – review. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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