

Educational Management,
Administration and Leadership

Principals’ metaphors as a lens to understand how they perceive leadership

Journal:	<i>Educational Management Administration & Leadership</i>
Manuscript ID	EMAL-2016-181.R4
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keyword:	Educational leadership, Leadership models, Leadership metaphors, Metaphorical thinking, Conceptions of leadership, Leadership motivation
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Abstract

A prolific number of researchers have chosen to study metaphorical narratives, confirming their usefulness in educational research. The aim of this paper is to analyse the metaphorical expressions used by 68 principals from infant, primary and secondary schools in Alicante (Spain), concerning the way they see the figure of the principal and how it makes them feel. The data were processed using AQUAD 7. Results indicated a weak presence of characteristics related to social and contextual leader learning, as principals' views tended more towards traditional models with duty predominating as a motivating force. Such views are usually associated with the experience of negative emotions. Findings highlighted the need to introduce an important cognitive and dispositional change in leadership education to ensure the development of professional skills aligned with current shared leadership models.

Keywords: Educational leadership; Leadership models; Leadership metaphors; Metaphorical thinking; **Leadership motivation**; Conceptions of leadership.

1. Introduction

The complexity surrounding the term leadership makes it no less attractive, as it is generally recognised as the driving force behind improvements in education. Numerous studies have

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9 highlighted the close relationship between principal's leadership practices, the quality of teaching
10 and student results (Bruggencate et al., 2012; Gu and Johansson, 2013).

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14 This research focuses on the conceptions that principals have of their position as a catalyst for their
15 action. We consider metaphors to be objects of research. They are not just figures of speech but an
16 essential mental mechanism (Avidov, 2016). Metaphors have not only linguistic but also
17 psychological consequences, since their symbolism stems from the way the physical and social
18 environment is conceived, perceived and felt (Lee and Schwartz, 2012).

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 *1.1 Metaphors as tools in educational research*

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27 We are born to learn continuously throughout our lives. Most of our learning is informal. We learn
28 through experience and inquiry, from others and with others. Our learning environment shapes us
29 and our learning is shaped both mentally and through our actions. In this process we tend to turn our
30 experiences into metaphorical stories that give meaning and expression to our life, our emotions and
31 our feelings. Metaphors also help to structure and conceptualise our cognition through the interplay
32 between experience, context and mind. They are useful not only in preserving the footprint of our
33 past, but also in helping us to act in the present (Saban, 2010).

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43 Morgan (1986) stressed the value of the metaphor as a tool to aid the actions of an organisation
44 based on the image it has of itself. Thus principals' actions can vary considerably depending on the
45 image they have of themselves as leaders, and this will be a combination of their conceptions (ideas
46 and beliefs about principalship, resulting from reflection), perceptions (processes related to their
47 position, whereby the information received via the senses is identified, organised and interpreted)

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9 and feelings (emotional states or reactions involving situations or things connected to
10 principalship). Therefore a principal who sees and feels the job as an adventure will deal proactively
11 with the different situations that arise, whereas one who sees it as a nightmare will deal with them
12 with frustration. Some of the participants in Argyropolou and Hatira's (2014) study chose to
13 represent the duality of the principals' role using metaphors of beasts of burden (e.g. horses) or
14 many-armed figures. Alvesson and Spicer (2010) present six metaphors for leaders (saint, gardener,
15 buddy, commander, cyborg and bully), which again show their potential for justifying how they act
16 based on how they see themselves.
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26 Since Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) seminal work, many researchers including Barsalou (1999) and
27 Slepian and Ambady (2014) have chosen metaphorical narratives as an object of study. They have
28 not only considered the powerful linguistic use of the metaphor, whereby two different ideas (the
29 source and the target) connect to form a comparison that brings clarity and makes a reality
30 comprehensible; they have also explored its potential as a cognitive tool that could even determine
31 the action. Discussions on these theories revolve around the unidirectionality and bidirectionality of
32 the sensorimotor-conceptual relationship in the use of metaphors. One argument is that the
33 experiences and feelings generated by leadership will unidirectionally condition how it is
34 conceptualised and what metaphor will be used to describe it. Another seeks to explain the
35 bidirectionality in this metaphor-processing sensorimotor-conceptual relationship on the basis of
36 previous experience alone. Sensorimotor experience in the area of leadership will therefore
37 condition conceptualisation, and this in turn will condition subsequent actions and experience.
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9 Meanwhile a different line of thought goes one step further by understanding that the learning of
10 metaphors for leadership, in this case with no previous sensorimotor experience, could condition the
11 way it is conceptualised and any actions deriving from it. This means that metaphors become an
12 instrument for professional learning and should be included as part of the principals' training
13 programs.
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20 However, it is not our intention in this study to advocate a theory on the relationship between
21 metaphors and cognition but to recognise its value as a tool capable of making explicit the tacit,
22 implicit knowledge resulting from the conceptions, perceptions and feelings experienced (Patchen
23 and Crawford, 2011). Metaphors are the bridge that links theory and practice, language and
24 movement, conceptualisation and action, aiding understanding of the social contexts in which we
25 participate, which in turn influence the way they are used and understood, given that we observe
26 and mentally process our environment through a cultural lens (Saban, Kocbeker & Saban, 2007).
27 Thus the tool provides descriptions and meanings that reflect the culture and contexts in which we
28 participate (Akar and Yildirim, 2011).
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40 Identifying the metaphors used by agents in the field of education enables us to ponder a number of
41 variables, such as how they perceive their role, the purpose of their actions, their educational and
42 teaching models, etc. Mahlios, et al. (2010), Pinnegar et al. (2011) and Thomas and Beauchamp
43 (2011), for instance, consistently emphasised that one way to examine students' beliefs in pre-
44 service teacher education is to identify the conceptual tools they use to make sense of their life, with
45 the analysis of metaphors being a powerful resource. Along similar lines, several authors such as
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9 Zhao et al. (2010) have highlighted how the conceptions and beliefs of these students will mark
10 certain behaviour in their future professional practice.

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13 Hence we firmly believe that principals' academic and professional background in schools
14 influences both their conceptions and beliefs, which leads us to consider that their metaphors do not
15 result only from their professional experience as principals but also from their previous thoughts
16 and feelings on the subject and from their school culture and context. Questioning and analysing
17 their leadership metaphors could be a way of activating a new cognitive and dispositional
18 background for the development of professional skills through discourse and debate.
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26 27 *1.2 Ways of understanding leadership*

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29 The concept of leadership could be compared to a polyhedron, which can be understood from
30 multiple perspectives. Despite the complexity, three common dimensions noted by Bush (2011) can
31 be identified: influence, values and vision. Leadership involves engaging in a social and cultural
32 influential process that has an impact on the activities and relationships established in a community
33 or organisation. This process directs participants towards action and goals. Thus the central concept
34 is influence and not authority; process and not product; and ultimately vision and values.
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43 An in-depth review of a range of perspectives enabled us to follow the concept's development
44 through several stages. The perspectives considered were: who exercises leadership, how goals are
45 defined and the way principals move towards achievement (Bass and Bass, 2008). A number of
46 models or patterns can be identified in these perspectives, which reflect and inform changes in
47 school leadership practices (Bush and Glover, 2014). Indeed, following an analysis of several model
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classifications (Bush, 2011; Bush and Glover, 2014; Davis et al., 2005), a shift was observed from individual, heroic and authority models to shared, collegial and distributed ones.

With individual leadership the institutional vision resides in the leader, who normally adopts an authoritarian, personalist stance. Shared leadership, however, is characterised by the fact that the institutional vision is not an individual but a common preserve. Leadership is delegated, social relations are strong and trust is high (Crawford, 2012). Thus the way other members influence and contribute to transforming and improving the community is acknowledged.

Table 1 shows the different leadership models described by Bush and Glover (2014). This amalgamation is based on either individual or shared perspectives.

Table 1. Classification of leadership models

Individual models of leadership	Shared models of leadership
Managerial leadership	Distributed leadership
Instructional leadership	Leadership for learning
Transformational leadership	Teacher leadership
Moral and authentic leadership	System leadership

Note: Based on the classification of leadership models proposed by Bush, T., and Glover, D. (2014). School leadership models: what do we know? *School Leadership & Management*, 34(5), 553-571.

As seen in Table 1, the first column contains those models with a single formal source of power. The differences between them lie in the different kinds of objectives and the way principals seek to achieve them. In managerial leadership, for example, the source of leadership focuses on administrative functions allowing the proper development of other areas in the school (Bush and Glover, 2014). Instructional leadership concentrates on teaching processes and the way principals

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9 and teachers can foster student outcomes (Robinson et al., 2008). Unlike these two examples,
10 transformational leadership is based on leaders' capacities to make other members of the
11 organisation exceed their expectations, the objective therefore being centred on cultural change
12 (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Moral and authentic models highlight how leadership actions are
13 determined by the value systems held by principals (Starratt, 2004).
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20 The opposing column emphasises different ways of exercising leadership based on collegiality,
21 collaboration and shared vision. The key source here is not the individual but the community.
22 Leadership is not based on formal power or hierarchy but on the conjunction of formal and informal
23 sources seeking expertise in the community. Distributed leadership, for instance, is based on the
24 distribution of power in the school, regardless of formal position or role (Harris, 2013; Liljengerg,
25 2015). Leadership for learning, on the other hand, has evolved from the instructional model. In this
26 case power originates not only from the principal but also from the community, focusing more on
27 learning than on teaching processes (Bush and Glover, 2014). Meanwhile, teacher leadership
28 highlights the empowerment of teachers to ensure school development (Frost, 2008). Finally,
29 system leadership promotes the existence of a school network that shares leadership, and in which
30 success comes not only from one school but from a group of schools (Hopkins and Highman, 2007).
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44 According to Alvesson and Spicer (2010), metaphors provide a way of understanding leadership
45 and the ambiguity associated with it. The way principals see leadership could determine the
46 metaphors behind the practice, with the practice leading to a reconceptualisation of the metaphors.
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9 (individual vs. social) according to who exercises leadership, how goals are defined and the way
10 principals move towards achievement.

11 12 13 *1.3 Leadership perspectives and their impact on schools*

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16 Since the 1970s and 1980s, a large number of publications have shown the value of leadership for
17 learning improvement. These have considered principal leadership as the factor with the second
18 greatest impact on learning (Gu and Johanson, 2013; May and Supovitz, 2011). In fact there is
19 general agreement that the effect of leaders on student outcomes is indirect, whereas leaders have a
20 direct influence on what teachers want to do, what they believe in and how they can improve their
21 practices and the community as a whole (Day et al., 2009; Robinson et al., 2009).

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24 Principals have an impact on learning results through teachers (Robinson et al., 2008).
25 Consequently, effective leaders usually develop a series of practices that promote professional
26 teacher development and their leadership role. This professional growth improves teachers'
27 performance in classrooms and learning outcomes. Hence, it is important to emphasise that leaders'
28 visions and actions create and cultivate learning communities where teachers share leadership,
29 practices, responsibilities and prospects (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009).

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32 Thus teachers' professional development and students' learning outcomes also depend on context
33 (Day et al., 2011), which means that the leaders' practices might be adapted to each scenario. Since
34 principals are the key for modelling the school environment, they need to strive to develop a school
35 culture that encourages student learning and teacher development.

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9 It seems that not every leadership model, i.e. the style or set of styles characterising a principal's
10 actions, has the same impact or repercussion on school culture and practices (Day et al., 2016). An
11 authoritarian model of leadership, for example, generates a restricted, static school culture very
12 different from the dynamic, collaborative culture generated by a distributed leadership model.
13 Educational literature has focused mainly on instructional, transformational and distributed
14 leadership. Experts have noted that results are better when leaders are involved in curriculum
15 planning and professional development, are interested in cultural change and are able to distribute
16 responsibility and decisions among the educational community. Bush and Glover's (2014) proposal
17 of a contingent model is very valuable when the perspectives are so blurred. A single model
18 provides helpful but partial insight, and therefore they suggest adapting the model to each particular
19 situation and context.
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33 The merging of socially, politically and economically complex aspects requires school leadership to
34 come from the shared work of leaders and educational community participants. Transforming
35 schools is possible with a set of actions that allows community participants to share and engage in
36 professional development. We firmly believe that attention to a situational model is necessary, but it
37 should focus especially on shared models (Harris, 2013; Lambert et al., 2002).
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45 Although more research is necessary for causal relationships to be established with confidence,
46 shared leadership models lead schools to efficacy and success, affecting the attractiveness of the
47 role. More empirical research is also needed to prove the correlation between the role adopted in
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9 schools and how comfortable leaders feel in their role, as leadership is becoming an ever more
10 complex task generating pressure on those who undertake it (Tucker, 2010).

11 12 13 *1.4 Metaphors and leadership models: research questions*

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16 Metaphors, as a research instrument, form part of educational literature and have made a significant
17 contribution to professional teacher learning (Seiler, 2013). They could therefore be a significant
18 source of knowledge for leaders' professional learning too.

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20 This study uses principals' metaphorical narratives as a source of inquiry into the views and
21 perspectives underlying leadership. To this end, three research questions were formulated:

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28 1) How do principals view leadership?
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30 2) How do these principals feel about their role as leaders?
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32 3) To what extent do they perceive that the way they do their job follows an individual or
33 shared leadership model?
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37 **2. Methodology**

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40 The research falls within the framework of the paradigm of naturalist inquiry (Lincoln and Guba,
41 1985) insofar as it is adapted to the subject under study, being based on an analysis of the
42 metaphors contributed by 68 principals regarding how they perceive their role and the feelings
43 implicit in the models identified. It also identifies the character that this conception takes on,
44 depending on how far they see their position as being shared. From this methodological approach
45 and by way of an analysis of the content of their metaphors, the principals' conceptions, perceptions
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9 and feelings are analysed in their professional context, since studying them outside this scenario
10 would be meaningless.

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13 The research technique chosen was content analysis, defined as a method for classifying spoken or
14 written information into categories with similar meanings (Cole, 1988). Unlike grounded theory
15 (Glasser and Strauss, 1967), and despite the fact that the aim of the study was not just to generate
16 new theory on leadership, the analysis process has not been closed. In this case the intention was to
17 assess the participants' leadership models on the basis of a pre-defined theoretical framework.
18 However, no theoretical benchmark has been used to analyse their type of motivation or the
19 emotions associated with it and with their roles, which means that the information has emerged
20 from the data. Therefore, bearing in mind Hsieh and Shannon's (2005) classification of content
21 analysis approaches, we used direct content analysis (based on pre-defined theoretical ideas) to
22 identify the leadership models, conventional analysis (open coding) to describe the motivations and
23 the emotions associated with both dimensions (roles and motivations), and summative content
24 analysis, whereby frequencies have been located to complement information of a narrative nature.
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40 2.1 Context

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42 Under current Spanish legislation, the *General Act of Parliament 8/2013, of 9 December, for the*
43 *Improvement of Quality in Education,*¹ the requirements necessary for becoming a principal include
44 (1) having been a career civil servant in public education for at least five years, (2) having taught
45 directly as a career civil servant for at least five years in one of the teaching areas applied for, (3)
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9 being accredited as having completed a training course given by the Ministry of Education and
10 Culture or relevant Education Authority, and (4) presenting a principal's plan of action.

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14 Principal selection is carried out via a process which includes participation by the education
15 community and the Education Authority. Selection is made through competition, following
16 principles of equality, advertising, merit and ability. Highly valued aspects include previous
17 experience in a school management team, active service situation, current position and, where
18 applicable, having gained a positive assessment in the development of quality action plans. The
19 Education Authority appoints principals for a period of four years, renewable for further four-year
20 periods (subject to positive assessment), although it can also set a limit on renewing mandates.
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30 An analysis of the various laws governing the Spanish education system shows the changes to the
31 profile and tasks performed by principals. The current law, LOMCE (2013), has given principals
32 stronger decision-making powers to the detriment of the competencies of the School Council. The
33 most prominent are management autonomy in developing quality actions and an increasing
34 importance in exercising pedagogical leadership, with consequent innovation and improvement
35 activities for schools. However, despite progress being made, some authors have stressed that the
36 last Education Act disregarded the leadership guidelines proposed by the international literature and
37 maintained a bureaucratic and managerial model (Bolívar and San Fabián, 2013). This could stem
38 from the fact that, regardless of what state legislation says, in practice leadership in schools tends to
39 be closely linked to an administrative vision. Principals in Spain have very little autonomy, as in
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9 other countries within the European framework such as France and Germany (Ärlestig et al., 2016;
10 Hancock et al., 2012), and their work is greatly restricted by the Administration.

11 12 13 *2.2 Participants*

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16 This study comprised 68 principals from infant, primary and secondary schools in Alicante (Spain).
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18 Of these, 35.3% were women and 64.7% men. The highest proportion of participants (29.4%) were
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20 aged between 51 and 55, followed by 22% between 56 and 60, which shows the personal maturity
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22 of those surveyed.
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25 38.8% of participants had between 31 and 35 years' teaching experience, while 19.1% had between
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27 26 and 30 years' experience. These figures show that many participants have a lengthy teaching
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29 trajectory. As regards the time spent as principal, most have been in the job between 0 and 12 years
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31 (75%). In this case the highest proportion was of principals who, when the interviews were carried
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33 out, had been in the post for between 5 and 8 years (27.9%), followed by 25% between 9 and 12
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35 years.
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39 As for where they work, 58.8% were principals in infant and primary schools and 41.2% in
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41 secondary schools. Generally speaking many of these schools (38.2%) have between 401 and 600
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43 pupils and, in many cases (45.7%), between 26 and 50 teachers.
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46 The candidate selection process was aided by three inspectors from the Alicante Education
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48 Inspectorate, who provided us with a list of contacts. The inspectors selected those candidates that
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50 they considered would be amenable to participating and whose opinions would be representative of
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9 principals in the cultural and social context of Alicante. The inspectors had a professional
10 relationship with them, as they were part of their allocated districts. Of the 100 principals
11 interviewed, 68 answered the question requesting that they suggest a metaphor representing the
12 principal.
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18 The inspectors sent these participants an e-mail informing them of the study's aims and that we
19 would contact them direct.
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22 *2.3 Data collection instrument*

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24 Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Given that this study was part of a larger one
25 on educational leadership, the final instrument—validated by three experts on educational research
26 — contained nine closed items for collecting socio-demographic data and twelve open questions
27 (Appendix A). These questions were designed to collect data on five subjects: i) willingness to take
28 up the post; ii) professional identity of the principals; iii) professional development; iv)
29 achievements and difficulties; and v) needs and proposals. The study emerged from the responses to
30 the last interview question, where participants were asked to suggest a metaphor to represent the
31 figure of the principal, associated with the second of the subject areas listed above.
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43 All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants. They were informed that
44 participation in the study was voluntary and that their responses would remain anonymous. The
45 participants suggested the day, time and place of the meeting. The interviews were carried out by a
46 single interviewer.
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9 Most interviews took place in the principals' offices and lasted an average of approximately thirty
10 minutes each. The data collection process took place over a four-month period.

11 12 13 14 *2.4 Data processing and analysis*

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16 The use of qualitative methodology allowed researchers to analyse and interpret responses within
17 that specific social context (Cho and Lee, 2014). The data collection comprised 96 metaphors
18 described by 68 principals, as this narrative tool contained and expressed the richness and variety of
19 participants' stories (Huber et al., 2013).

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21 After the narratives were collected, iterative readings of the metaphors were carried out, allowing us
22 to design a coding system to analyse them using the AQUAD 7 software tool (Huber and Gürtler,
23 2013). This Qualitative Data Analysis programme was chosen for its ability to facilitate the
24 interpretation process, providing emerging categories from participants' narratives to address the
25 research questions. The data analysis used a deductive-inductive process, which was useful in
26 adapting the analytical tool to interpretation. The inductive process, related to motivations and
27 feelings, included open coding, creating categories and abstraction (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). The
28 deductive process, related to individual and shared leadership, formed the categorisation matrix
29 development, whereby the data were reviewed for content and coded for correspondence with Bush
30 and Glover's (2014) theory.

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32 The encoding instrument was analysed and validated by three researchers until a final configuration
33 was reached. The first draft was also adjusted because the intensity and possible variants emerging
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9 from the narratives demanded a deeper understanding of the subject being studied. Narrative units
10 were identified by an alphanumeric system to ensure participant anonymity.

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13 In this recursive process between the participants' metaphors and the research questions, the coding
14 system was continuously adapted. Five codes emerged as regards the principal's view of leadership.
15 These codes were classified into two categories, given that their emotional weight enabled
16 differentiation. While the metaphors in the first category can be related to a particular leadership
17 model (directive, paternalistic and guiding) because they are formulated from a more technical and
18 rational point of view, those in the second category are of a more visceral character and cannot be
19 related to the models identified for the first; they express what motivates participants to lead. A
20 desire to make a crossover study of the two views to identify the type of motivation associated with
21 each leadership model led us to carry out another analysis.

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24 The metaphors also showed whether the principal's view was associated with positive or negative
25 emotions and whether it was experienced as something individual, concerning them alone, or
26 clearly reflected the feeling that the principal worked within a social community (see Appendix B).

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29 The individual role and social view codes were established following certain relevant indications
30 for categorisation, because principals sometimes used the same metaphor with different meanings.
31 For example, the principal as the first carriage of a train was a frequently-cited metaphor, but with
32 different connotations. For some, the first carriage plays a full role in deciding the route, while for
33 others it is just one more element of the whole. These explanations denote different visions, varying
34 individual or social perspectives, which were useful in the coding process.

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9 An individual point of view means the principal thinks they have to do everything without
10 considering any notion of sharing or delegating: “Go-to guy. A troubleshooter, that’s what it really
11 is (P_033)”. From a social point of view, although principals are an important element they still
12 recognise the relevance of the team and the community: “You’re the front carriage of the train but
13 the principal doesn’t run the school. A team runs it (P_028)”. It is important to note that this
14 perspective is not necessarily representative of a shared model of leadership. A principal may, for
15 example, show concern for the education community (social interest) but exercise leadership from
16 an individualist stance.
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26 27 **3. Results**

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29 This section shows the findings of a narrative character for the study’s two categories, which are
30 complemented by the descriptive data for the percentage of frequency. This is calculated using the
31 formula $F \times 100 / \text{Total } F$. Thus Table 2 shows the number of times principals refer to a code as a
32 proportion of all the frequencies as a whole.
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39 It can be seen that the difference between the total frequencies of one category and the other is
40 minimal (rational view 52% and motivational view 48%). As regards the individual or social
41 perspective of the job, although the total frequencies indicate that the individual view has more
42 weight, it should be pointed out that the social is predominant in the rational view ($F(\%) = 32.3$) and
43 the individual in the motivational view ($F(\%) = 42.7$).
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Table 2. Frequency percentages of research codes

Categories	Codes	F (%) Individual	F (%) Social	F (%) Total	F (%) Positive feelings	F (%) Negative feelings	F (%) Total
1. Rational view	1.1 Guiding model	13.5	21.9	35.4	12.5	22.9	35.4
	1.2 Paternalistic model	2.1	10.4	12.5	4.2	8.3	12.5
	1.3 Directive model	4.2	0	4.2	0	4.2	4.2
2. Motivational view	2.1 Duty motivation	36.5	1	37.5	0	37.5	37.5
	2.2 Hedonism motivation	6.2	4.2	10.4	10.4	0	10.4
Total		62.5	37.5	100	27.1	72.9	100

As far as the principal's emotions are concerned, the results indicate that negative emotions predominate in both views.

3.1 Category 1 Rational view

The first category covers those metaphors referring to a leadership model identified in the education literature and therefore corresponds to a more rational and technical view. Although these contributions have less emotional weight than those in the second category, they do have emotional connotations. This association (leadership model and emotions) is presented at the end of the results section.

Code 1.1 Guiding model

Code 1.1 analyses those metaphors identified as being closer to the role of a guide. The principal is seen as counsellor, coordinator and facilitator. These are the metaphors that accumulated the highest percentage of frequencies (F (%) =35.4) in the first category. Three shades of meaning can be distinguished, as shown in Table 3. The first of these includes metaphors that place the principal at the forefront, i.e. as the person who guides the group and opens up the way for everyone else, hence the frequent use of terms like bulldozer and road builder. This is the same sense given by metaphors

equating the principal to a furrow or channel, a tourist guide or a train locomotive (examples 1a and 1b).

The second shade of meaning covers the task of coordination (example 2a). Participants stress that they do not have one particular function, as would be the case with the conductor of an orchestra, who plays no particular instrument but has to be able to harmonise and coordinate the efforts and work of the musicians (example 2b).

Finally the third shade of meaning stresses the facilitating character that a school principal must have, but also places specific value on the work of others, i.e. it links the principal's successes to the success of community members, as in the case of sports coaches (example 3a). *The principal is considered to be just another part of the system.* It also acknowledges the pointlessness of a principal unsupported by everyone else's work, which brings to mind distributed leadership. References to cogs and assembly lines and Formula 1 drivers who need their team in order to finish the race are illustrations of this (example 3b).

Table 3. Examples of metaphors for code 1.1 Guiding model

1a/I	You're like water. You move along bit by bit, finding your way, until finally the channel opens up and you pass through. (P_009)
1b/I	You're a tourist guide marking out the route. (P_020)
2a/I	The principal's like an octopus. I've got a head and lots of arms and legs, but what I actually do is coordinate what everyone else does. (P_045)
2b/S	The principal's like the conductor of an orchestra, who doesn't play an instrument. The orchestra can function by itself without the conductor because everyone knows how to play the trombone, the cymbals and the clarinet, but they need someone who in some way coordinates. (P_004)
3a/S	I think the coach's fate depends on the successes and failures of the team. (P_037)
3b/S	You're just another driver, but to make it go you have to have a good team to help you. (P_068)

(1) Reference; (2) Coordinator; (3) Part of the system; (I) Individual perspective; (S) Social perspective

In the conception of the principal as a guide, the social perspective (F (%) = 21.9) prevailed over the individual (F (%) = 13.5). The principal's role is understood as being a guide with a social angle, involving leadership in a learning community where everyone participates and learning occurs within community practices (examples 2b-3b).

As regards the role of guide, from an individual perspective the spotlight falls on the principal who has the ability to guide, but also to take individual responsibility and make decisions that the members of the community must follow (examples 1a-2a).

Code 1.2. Paternalistic model

Table 4 shows that the participants' metaphorical stories reflect three different types of view: (1) metaphors related to a dream vision, (2) metaphors visualising principals as individual patriarchal figures who love and care for teachers and students from a heroic perspective, and (3) metaphors extolling the social capacity that the principal must have in order to keep all members of the community happy. The three types of metaphor reflect an idealised conception of the position.

Table 4. Examples of metaphors for code 1.2 Paternalistic model

1a/I	We'd have to be dream sellers. (P_009)
1b/I	The principal would have to be a smile. (P_024)
2a/S	You're the head of the family. You know your children and grandchildren. You have a duty to promote their strengths and have a good relationship with them. (P_013)
2b/S	I've often felt like a medieval knight in armour defending the school and everything inside it. (P_040)
3a/S	I think that what it most resembles is the executive board of a company. And I'd add that it's one of those companies with a soul. The board of an NGO, for example. (P_008)
3b/S	SpongeBob SquarePants embodying the quintessence of social skills, taken to extremes and aiming to

please. (P_046)

(1) Dream view; (2) Patriarchal view; (3) Servant view; (I) Individual perspective; (S) Social perspective

The metaphors in the first group revolve around elements of dreams, hopes and smiles, as in the case of examples 1a and 1b. This idyllic **vision** is complemented by the heroic aspect of the metaphors in the second group, which allude to a paternal, accommodating style of leadership. The principal is referred to at all times as the defender of the various members of the community. There are frequent mentions of metaphors similar to example 2a, likening the principal's position to that of the head of the family or other family members who have a responsibility to serve, know and protect. These qualities are also represented by elements like the sun, which has the capacity to give heat, or the heroic nature of a medieval knight (example 2b). Ultimately they reveal the concern they feel that the work they do should please all the members of the community. This leads them to stress the personal touch they bring to the job and the need to develop social skills (examples 3a and 3b).

Looking at the differences between metaphors depending on their individual or social nature, the individual paternalistic perspective (examples 1a-1b) is represented by a frequency of 2.1%, and the social **paternalistic** perspective by a frequency of 10.4%. **This social view**, which is predominant, is reflected in a group of narratives that show a kind of sweet patriarchal and servant view of the participants (examples 2a-3b).

Code 1.3 Directive model

Code 1.3 includes metaphors that express the leadership function as being hierarchical, directive and individual. These give an impression of the principal as having sole responsibility, as seen in examples 1a and 1b in Table 5. The metaphorical view magnifies the figure of the principal as the only source of decision-making. It also represents an individualised approach to leadership, where the hierarchical principal-teacher relationship is stressed.

Table 5. Examples of metaphors for code 1.3 Directive model

1a/I	You're like a navel. You're at the centre of everything and everything's your responsibility. (P_055)
1b/I	The principal is a ship's captain who has to make a decision at a certain moment in time. Stormy weather is coming, although it might not seem so, and the captain believes it necessary to change course. (P_042)

(1) Directive role; (I) Individual perspective

Metaphors that consider the principal as the main player and authority in the school community were not often found in the study ($F(\%) = 4.2$). This low frequency percentage is probably due to the social and cultural rejection of an individual perspective where the central concept is the principal's power.

3.2 Category 2. Motivational view

The second category contains metaphors referring to the participants' motivation to lead when performing their role. These metaphors are formed viscerally, and classifying them sketches out two very different extremes: (1) motivation for the leadership function through feeling a certain responsibility and pressure to take on the duty it involves, and (2) motivation due to a perception of

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9 the job as an opportunity to grow and due to a sense of hedonism. Their character means that they
10 cannot be included in the leadership models identified in the first category.

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13 *Code 2.1 Duty motivation*

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16 Code 2.1 includes metaphors that reflect that the motivation for the job stems from the pressure,
17 difficulty and duty that the principals believe the position entails, as seen in Table 6. From the
18 contributions as a whole, three different shades of meaning can be distinguished: (1) work overload,
19 (2) responsibility, and (3) negative feelings. As regards the first of these, we find a group of
20 metaphors that reflect the idea that the principal can never stop working, hence the reference to
21 Sisyphus and his boulder (example 1a), meaning that the principal's work is never-ending (example
22 1b). In this regard other metaphors, such as the Indian goddess with numerous arms and those
23 alluding to the over-qualified caretaker or troubleshooter, reflect the huge number of matters that
24 have to be dealt with and problems that have to be solved.

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27 The second shade of meaning covers metaphors that highlight the great responsibility the job is
28 assumed to carry. The shield and the front wall of a squash court are two examples that illustrate
29 this (2a and 2b).

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32 Finally there is a considerable number of metaphors referring to the negative feelings instilled by
33 the job, such as loneliness and frustration (examples 3a and 3b).

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47 *Table 6. Examples of metaphors for code 2.1 Duty motivation*

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1a/I It's like the boulder of Sisyphus. The guy pushes the boulder and when you get to the top of the
52 mountain you let go of the boulder, it rolls back to the bottom, and then you go back down...It's
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	never-ending. (P_005)
1b/I	It could be “The NeverEnding Story”. (P_067)
2a/I	They’re a shield; they’re what receives all the knocks. You complain, but anyone with any sort of position has to carry a lot of responsibility. (P_011)
2b/I	We’re like a wall in a squash court in the sense that, even if the school’s falling down, you have to give the impression that everything’s fine. (P_062)
2c/S	The metaphor would be flexibility because, in the end, it’s adapting to the environment. Otherwise, there is no adaptation. (P_038)
3a/I	You’re alone. Although I’m not really alone, it’s the feeling of the long-distance runner. It doesn’t matter what happens, because you’re responsible for everything. (P_014)
3b/I	It’s crossed my mind that it’s like chewing gum. At first you say it’s great and then you don’t like it as much when it turns bitter. (P_031)

(1) Work overload; (2) Responsibility; (3) Negative feelings; (I) Individual perspective; (S) Social perspective

As was shown in Table 2, the highest percentages of the study correspond to negative feelings such as frustration, anxiety, workload, etc. This sacrificial vision is more closely related to an individual perspective (F (%) = 36.5) than to a social one. According to Table 6, principals also argued that they have to be multi-faceted because of the lack of help (examples 1a and 3a). In contrast, only one example has been characterised of a metaphor that combines negative feelings with a social perspective (2c).

Code 2.2 Hedonism motivation

This code incorporates metaphors that associate the motivation to lead with personal fulfilment, satisfaction and positive experiences, as seen in Table 7. Unlike the previous code, here the principals have a pleasure motivation for the job, because it is through work that they experience high levels of satisfaction. Two shades of meaning can be distinguished: (1) metaphors comparing the principal’s position to a game or adventure (1a, 1b) and (2) metaphors associating the position with positive feelings such as optimism and happiness (2a and 2b).

Table 7. Examples of metaphors for code 2.2 Hedonism motivation

1a/I	I think it's an adventure (P_025)
1b/I	It's like a game. For people with a childlike and playful mind it's like a game, but a serious one. (P_025)
2a/I	Alice in Wonderland. (P_064)
2b/S	Optimism. Pupils will learn. (P_042)
2c/S	It's happiness. You leave school every day feeling happy, knowing that you've done something for public education in this country. (P_035)

(1) Game/Adventure; (2) Positive feelings; (I) Individual perspective; (S) Social perspective

The frequencies of code 2.2, which is related to satisfaction with work, are low. However, those who said they were satisfied with their role did so convincingly. Satisfaction was not only related to individual experiences (F (%) = 6.2), but also to social ones (AF (%) = 4.2). Narratives such as examples 2b and 2c emphasise this.

3.3 Rational view and motivational view. What type of motivation predominates in each leadership model?

In order to identify the type of motivation that characterises each leadership model, a crossover study has been made of the codes for the two categories involved.

Table 8. Type of motivation according to leadership model. A crossover study of rational and motivational views

Codes	2.1 Duty motivation	2.2 Hedonism motivation	Total F (%)
	F (%)	F (%)	
1.1 Guiding model	58	10	68
1.2 Paternalistic model	22	2	24
1.3 Directive model	8	0	8
Total F (%)	88	12	100

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9 Table 8 shows that motivation for duty is the highest in each leadership model. Next, regardless of
10 whether the principals and their metaphors indicate that their leadership is based on a guiding,
11 paternalistic or directive model, it appears that their actions are governed by pressure to take on the
12 duty and responsibility characteristic of the leadership function. Indeed, in their metaphors they
13 constantly make use of the verbs must and have to. For example: “And of course the leader always
14 has to lead the way, nobody else can do it, so they’re the team leader and head worker at the same
15 time”. (P_001).
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24 As regards motivation based on pleasure, it can be seen that there is no metaphor representative of
25 the directive model associated with this. As for the guiding and paternalistic models, the metaphors
26 that identify this type of motivation are a minority. They include expressions identified not with
27 duty but with personal satisfaction, such as believe, value, coordinate, etc. For example: “The
28 leadership function is believing in what you think and what you do above everything else”. (P_047)
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36 *3.4 The key terms that enable us to associate emotions with the leadership view*

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38 Since the metaphors from the **first category, the rational view**, make it possible to analyse certain
39 emotions that are implicit though not as intense as in the second, this section will concentrate on
40 highlighting their positive or negative character, recognising the terms that enable us to place them
41 at one extreme or the other (positive feelings and negative feelings).
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47 In Figure 1 it can be seen that principalship, from both **rational and motivational view**, is
48 experienced more negatively than positively ($F(\%) = 73$ vs. 27). Naturally the contributions
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9 collected under the duty **motivation** show that the difficulties are experienced most of all on an
10 individual level. In this case the metaphors include terms indicative of seeing principalship as a
11 burden, such as frustration, knocks, loneliness, imbalance, uncertainty, inability and sacrifice.
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18 Figure 1. Frequency percentages for the character of the emotions
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20 associated with the leadership view
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23 The positive emotions associated with the hedonism **motivation** are rather more balanced as regards
24 individual or social perspective ($F(\%) = 6.2$ vs. 4.2). The individual perspective has a predominance
25 of positive emotions. The terms that enable us to clearly recognise the implicit experience of
26 positive emotions include exciting, inherent motivation, fun, nice, utopia, love, optimism, happy,
27 etc.
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34 Although it is easier to recognize the emotions in the second category because they are explicit,
35 those in the first category – despite being less intense and explicit – can also be identified. In this
36 case, Figure 1 shows that the guiding model generates more negative than positive emotions ($F(\%)$
37 = 22.9 vs. 12.5). However, the negative emotions are associated with an individual guide model,
38 while the positive emotions are associated with a social guide model. The difficulty is expressed in
39 the physical and mental exhaustion involved in “opening up the way for everyone else”, while the
40 satisfaction comes precisely from recognition of the responsibility the principal has. The terms that
41 reflect the experience of negative emotions in this model would include tiredness, uncertainty,
42 erosion, rough waters, stumbling blocks, waves to dodge, etc. The terms used as metaphors in the
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9 social guide model, on the other hand, would include ease, help, relief, recognition, trust, energy,
10 etc.

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13 In the case of the paternalistic model, negative emotions continue to predominate ($F(\%) = 8.3$ vs.
14 4.2). These are especially identified with the social paternalistic model. Having to look out for the
15 welfare of others means that in the metaphors we see terms like attacks, defence, protection, make
16 sure everything works out, take charge of, give warmth, look after, etc.

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18 Finally, it can be seen that the directive leadership model, which has a definite individual character,
19 also generates negative emotions. The principal experiences feelings of overload and responsibility
20 which manifest themselves through the use of terms such as authority, responsibility, change of
21 direction, unilateral decision-making, etc.

22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 **4. Discussion**

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35 This section seeks to answer the questions posed by the research as regards how principals in Spain
36 see the figure of the principal and how they feel about it.

37 38 39 *4.1 The prevalence of the guiding leadership model and the duty motivation*

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42 The metaphorical approach which referred to principals as guides was significant. This view could
43 be seen as similar to the transformational or distributed models, as established in Bush and Glover's
44 (2014) classification, depending on the individual or social perspective expressed in the metaphor.
45 From the transformational point of view, principals implement change in an institution by sharing
46 their own vision with others. Some of the metaphors referring to this would be those of the
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9 orchestra conductor, the captain of a ship, and the first carriage of a train. Rather than giving orders,
10 the principal attempts to influence and guide the members of the organisation in order to achieve the
11 objectives set by the Administration (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Other guiding metaphors, although a
12 minority, were better aligned with the distributed leadership model because they implied a shared
13 vision, as in the case of the human assembly lines, the cogs and the human body.
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20 The often-stressed role of guide could be related to instructional leadership when used to create a
21 good teaching environment in which teachers receive support and have the opportunity to contribute
22 to the school curriculum (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Some examples of such metaphors would be
23 coach and chef.
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29 Participants' metaphors alluding to a paternalistic model sometimes referred to their role being
30 more of a servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). They seek to guarantee the growth and well-being
31 of the members of their community. They put the needs of the community before their own and aim
32 to encourage, first and foremost, the personal and professional needs of teachers. This could be
33 related to the authentic leadership referred to by Bush and Glover (2014). The metaphors used by
34 the principals referred to the protection of followers by the leader, and they are of a more intimate,
35 sentimental, friendly and idyllic nature. For example, they see the principal as a medieval knight, a
36 smiling presence and a parent.
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47 Finally, it is important to highlight the very low percentage of frequencies referring to the
48 principals' directive or authoritarian role. Here the most direct relationship with the models
49 established by Bush and Glover (2014) would be leadership as a managerial role. This is formal
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9 leadership, dependent on the organisation and coercive in nature. Furthermore, it evokes
10 transactional leadership, giving excessive importance to the power, expertise and authority of
11 leaders. The metaphors used by participants rarely referred to adopting an autocratic role; when
12 they did, it was mainly for decision-making purposes, when they were faced with conflicts that
13 required a rapid solution, or in emergencies. This indicates that leaders valued participation,
14 collaboration and the shared commitment of the members of the community.
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22 As far as the motivational view is concerned, there is a clear predominance of the duty motivation.
23 This dual view of motivation is also put forward in a similar way in Gebauer et al. (2008), but to
24 assess the prosocial motivation that may be driven by the pleasure involved in helping or the
25 pressure we feel to do so. In this case in particular, the data indicate that principals lead not because
26 they find in principalship an opportunity to grow and for personal satisfaction, which could be
27 related to professional well-being and security, an area to explore in future studies, but mainly
28 because they understand it as a responsibility and a duty they have to take on. This type of
29 motivation predominates in all three leadership models in the study.
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40 *4.2 Principals' feelings about their leadership development*

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42 Principals' perceptions and feelings could help them reflect on their dilemmas and problems and are
43 an opportunity for enhancing knowledge on the subject (Alvesson and Spicer, 2010). In this case
44 the emotional charge in the motivational view of their metaphors is more than evident. In general,
45 they stressed the difficulties of the job more than its rewarding aspects, which points to a prevalence
46 of negative emotions. Their metaphors referred to being overwhelmed by responsibility, to a lack of
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9 autonomy, little recognition, a huge workload and the variety of tasks they have to perform, etc. For
10 example, they referred to the boulder of Sisyphus, a long-distance runner, a highly-qualified
11 caretaker or a bad dream. These feelings are consistent with studies in which the difficulties of the
12 directive role were identified (Tucker, 2010). These negative feelings are also particularly
13 associated with the three leadership models identified in the most rational view. It appears that the
14 directive model generates feelings of responsibility and weight from a personal perspective. The
15 paternalistic model also gives rise to negative feelings, especially from the social perspective. This
16 could possibly be explained by how responsible principals feel for the welfare of all the other
17 members of the community and the efforts they have to make in this respect. Finally, although the
18 negative and positive emotions are more balanced in the guiding model, the former are associated
19 with an individual guide model, which is predominant.

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33 It is encouraging that some metaphors, although fewer than half of those collected, described the
34 role as an adventure, a challenge. They also referred to the position of principal as being highly
35 valued, and to the positive repercussions of their work on pupils, which generates positive
36 emotions. These perceptions show how leaders can have a positive effect on learning, on
37 professional teaching development and on the building of a school culture, if their professional
38 learning becomes a joint endeavour (Day et al., 2011; May and Supovitz, 2011).

39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 *4.3 Individual and shared leadership models*

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49 The analysis of the individual and social perspective of the metaphors leads us to say that, while the
50 contributions indicate that leaders valued the community, the roles they stressed continue to reflect
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9 models with an individual and hierarchical perspective. While the models are not authoritarian,
10 leaders and followers were clearly identified. The formal leader of the institution was the main
11 source of power. The participants' conception of their role is very different from current leadership
12 trends, which direct the focus of attention from individuality and hierarchy towards a shared social
13 vision (Crawford, 2012; Harris, 2013). Although many metaphors with a social perspective have
14 been formulated, especially from the rational view – possibly influenced by the theoretical-practical
15 culture and the emphasis it places on this factor, given that discourses shape and are shaped by how
16 members of a culture see and act towards a given phenomenon (Alvesson and Spicer, 2010) – this
17 shift from the individual to the shared cannot be seen in their discourses. Thus it has not been
18 possible to establish a real link between the metaphors and the shared leadership models highlighted
19 by Bush and Glover (2014), since none of the participants alluded to shared perspectives in a very
20 consistent way.
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35 Finally, it is important to note that although in certain models the social perspective generates
36 satisfaction, as in the case of guiding, when exercised from an individualist and unsharing stance it
37 continues to generate emotions of responsibility, exhaustion and frustration, as can clearly be seen
38 in the social paternalistic model. Although this is an area that needs to be studied in greater detail, it
39 leads us to believe that perhaps the adoption of shared leadership models would generate positive
40 emotions. The redistribution of tasks would immediately balance some of the feelings identified,
41 such as loneliness, overload, responsibility, etc.
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5. Conclusions

The leadership models with which we have been able to associate the participants' metaphors reveal that no definite model appears in the regulations at national level. Although a slowly-growing argument in favour of more shared leadership models based on the functions established by the law has been gaining ground, in practice leadership continues to be locked into an individualist perspective. The tradition of centralisation and scant institutional autonomy give rise to unipersonal, authoritarian-type styles of leadership.

The regulatory confusion regarding the functions that principals have to take on, and therefore the model the Administration would like to see implemented, leads to inconsistencies between the implicit and explicit guidelines included in the regulations. Until these policies are brought into line with trends in leadership and signal a true commitment to shared leadership models, school management teams in Spain will be condemned to be led by principals who exercise a type of leadership that in most cases is experienced as a burden or, on the contrary, impose their own will in an attempt to develop their own leadership model, dodging administrative obstacles in the process.

On a policy level, efforts should also be made to develop new training programmes that are much more practical and contextualised. These would allow leaders to transform the perceptions they have of their own practices. In order to do this, a collaborative culture should be fostered to encourage the nurturing and development of learning communities (Aubusson et al., 2007), in which principals can reflect on their own conceptions of leadership. This recognition of their values, attributes and competences is directly related to the improvement of learning achievements.

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9 Consequently, it is of interest that principals should take part in rich and varied professional and
10 learning situations, which would have an impact on the metaphors they build (Dubinsky et al.,
11 2013).
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15 A new research path would be to assess how principals' training can change their leadership model
16 on both theoretical and practical levels. It would also be useful to go more deeply into the
17 correlations between the principals' leadership models, their type of motivation and the feelings
18 they experience. Evaluating what types of emotion are generated by different types of motivation in
19 the leadership models could be a future line of research. Finally, we consider it a limitation of this
20 study that, during the process of analysing the metaphors, we have paid little attention to factors
21 such as gender, socioeconomic context and school culture. These should also be explored in greater
22 detail to enable us to arrive at more new conclusions regarding leadership models in school
23 principals, their motivation to act and the feelings to which they give rise.
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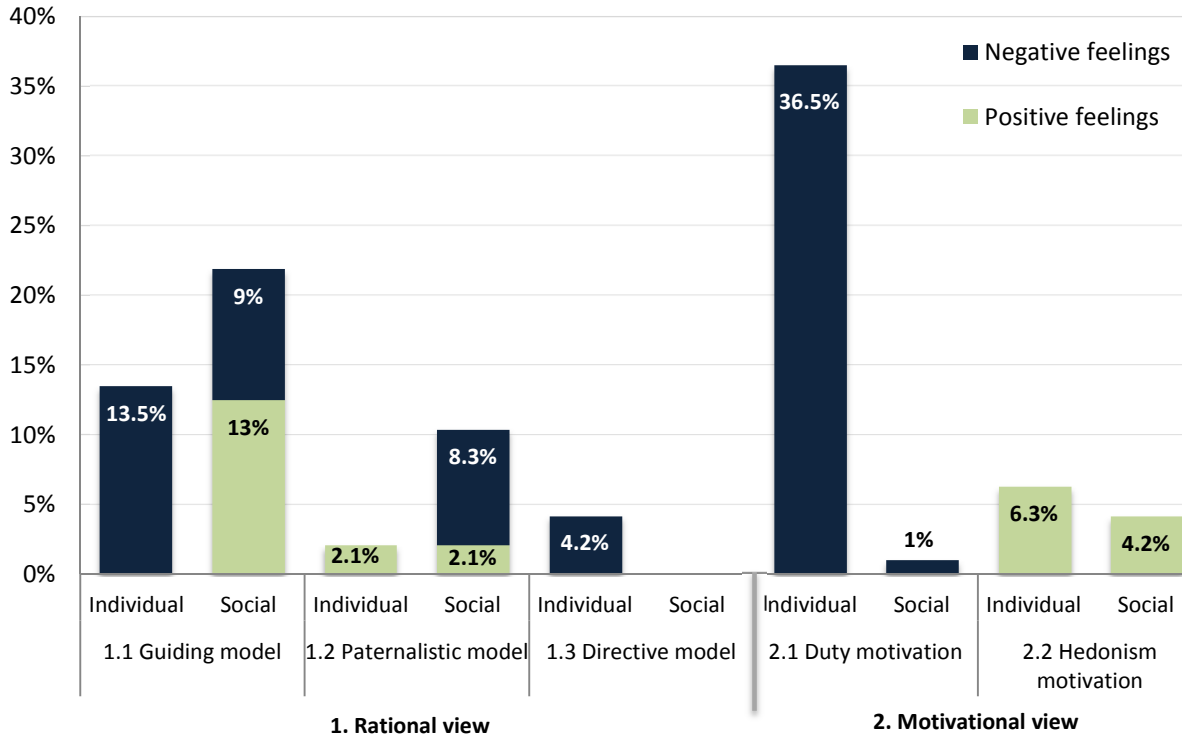
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Views	Indiv/Soc	Positive feelings	Negative feelings
1.1 Guiding mode	Individual	0%	13.5%
	Social	13%	9%
1.2 Paternalistic r	Individual	2.1%	0.00%
	Social	2.1%	8.3%
1.3 Directive moc	Individual	0.00%	4.2%
	Social	0%	0%
2.1 Duty motivati	Individual	0.00%	36.5%
	Social	0.00%	1%
2.2 Hedonism mc	Individual	6.3%	0.00%
	Social	4.2%	0%

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