

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION AS PEDAGOGICAL ACCOMPANIMENT CONDUCTED BY SECONDARY EDUCATION DIRECTORS



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Jose Gregorio Perez Medina

Comprehensive Education graduate. Master's Degree in Educational Management, PhD in Education. Associate professor at unidad educativa Ernesto Flores Fuenmayor. Post-graduate level teacher at Universidad Rafael Maria Baralt (UNERMB).

joseperezunica@hotmail.com

Nancy Josefina Nava Reyes

Comprehensive Education graduate in the areas of Language and Mathematics.. Master's Degree in Educational Supervision. PhD in Education. Director at Escuela Basica Nacional Maestro Marcos Pereira Olivares.

nancynava26@yahoo.es

Marys Estella Valles de Rojas

Comprehensive Education graduate, mention in Language and Mathematics. Master's Degree in Educational Management. PhD in Education. Teacher at Universidad Nacional Experimental Rafael Maria Baralt (UNERMB) and at Educacion Inicial C.E.I. Celia Celis Olivares.

marestroj@hotmail.com

Debora del Valle Giraldoto

Biology and Education graduate, mention in Biology. Master's Degree in Environmental Sciences. PhD in Education. Teacher at Universidad Rafael Maria Baralt (UNERMB) and at Unidad Educativa Ernesto Flores Fuenmayor.

giraldoto_d@hotmail.com

Lourdes Josefina Lugo Cueva

Comprehensive Education graduate. Master's Degree in Educational Management, PhD in Education. Associate professor at unidad educativa Nacional Lisandro Faria.

lourdeslc55@yahoo.es



ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to analyze the supervision conducted by secondary school principals which is intended to optimize pedagogical support at institutions designed for this purpose. This study follows the positivism paradigm, it is non-experimental, transactional and based on field design. The population and sample was made up of 24 principals and 173 teachers from the official educational units of the municipality of Miranda, in the state of Zulia. A Likert scale questionnaire was applied including five answer alternatives, which had a reliability of 0.89 for directors and 0.98 for teachers, calculated using Cronbach's alpha. Results indicated that educational supervision as pedagogical accompaniment of directors is conducted at a very low level, being moderately inadequate for their position; failing to correctly apply the characteristics of adequate educational supervision that allow the creation of a good work environment based on the application of



RESUMEN

El artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la supervisión efectuada por los directores de educación media, con la finalidad de optimizar el acompañamiento pedagógico en las instituciones destinadas para ello. Este estudio se encuentra bajo el paradigma positivista, siendo no experimental, transeccional y de campo. La población y muestra estuvo conformada por 24 directivos y 173 docentes de las unidades educativas oficiales del municipio Miranda, del Estado Zulia. Se empleó un cuestionario bajo escala tipo Likert, con cinco alternativas de respuestas, alcanzando un nivel de confiabilidad Alfa de Cronbach de 0.89 para directores y 0.98 para docentes. Los resultados indicaron que la supervisión educativa como acompañamiento pedagógico de los directores se realiza en un nivel bajo, siendo medianamente inadecuado para su cargo; no aplican correctamente las características de una adecuada supervisión educativa, que permita crear un buen clima de trabajo basado en la



RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é analisar a supervisão exercida pelos directores de escolas secundárias, com o objectivo de otimizar o apoio pedagógico nas instituições concebidas para o efeito. Este estudo está sob o paradigma positivista, sendo não experimental, transeccional e de campo. A população e a amostra foram constituídas por 24 directores e 173 professores das unidades educacionais oficiais do município de Miranda, Estado de Zulia. Foi utilizado um questionário da escala Likert, com cinco respostas alternativas, atingindo um nível de confiabilidade, Alfa de Cronbach de 0,89 para directores e 0,98 para professores. Os resultados indicaram que a Supervisão Educacional como Acompanhamento Pedagógico dos Directores é realizada em um nível baixo, sendo moderadamente inadequado para a sua posição; eles não aplicam corretamente as características de uma supervisão educacional adequada, que permite criar um bom clima de trabalho com base na aplicação de uma forma eficiente e eficaz de

an efficient and effective way of supervision, and also failing to fulfill the functions of accompaniment that generate favorable environments intended to achieve a change in behavioral and performance patterns of the people committed with the educational process. This is why neither can externalize a profile as director suitable for the demands of the case, therefore it is necessary to propose theoretical-methodological constructs of educational supervision to optimise the process.

aplicación de una eficiente y eficaz forma de supervisión, no muestran funciones de acompañamiento que generen climas favorables para lograr el cambio de los patrones de conducta y de actuación de las personas comprometidas en el proceso educativo, por lo que tampoco pueden exteriorizar un perfil como supervisor acorde con las exigencias del caso, por lo que es necesario proponer constructos teóricos – metodológicos de supervisión educativa que permitan optimizar el proceso.

supervisão, eles não mostram funções de acompanhamento que geram climas favoráveis que procuram alcançar a mudança dos padrões de conduta e de desempenho das pessoas comprometidas no processo educacional, razão pela qual nem eles podem exteriorizar um perfil como supervisor em consonância com as exigências do caso, razão pela qual é necessário propor teórico - construções metodológicas de supervisão educacional que permitem o processo.

Keywords: Educational supervision, pedagogical accompaniment, director.

Palabras clave: Supervisión educativa, acompañamiento pedagógico, director.

Palavras chave: Supervisão educacional, acompanhamento pedagógico, diretor.

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INTRODUCTION

In the global educational context, supervision is one of the most challenging and demanding tasks in an educational organization, given its purpose of assuring efficient actions by a person or a group of people. In that regard, education requires supervision to primarily steer community integration, as proposed by Torres (2004, p.29): “it tries to use the administration’s elements and resources to benefit education, and for it to aim supervision towards the institution’s progress”. Hence the great need to study educational supervision as an administrative body that guarantees compliance of the educational policies that drive educational reforms, while applying valid legal regulations.

In Latin America, the aforementioned problem is being heavily addressed. The Latin-American educational system is largely influenced by the United States’ educational model, and in some cases by those of European countries; lately, the role of the educational process supervisor has been debated, i.e., in the United States, according to Solis (2008), taken from Suarez 1998 (s/p): “The topic has been debated for a long time, and some states in this country have separated officials, appointing supervisors specialized in improving teaching, real didactic supervisors with decreased administrative load”.

In that sense, said supervision would rely on officials that have the power to exercise it and to represent the superior corresponding body, the Ministry of Popular Power for Education. This is why, although the director is the institution’s natural supervisor, he/she plays an extremely important role in it, due to the fact that supervision in educational centres constitutes a function for which directors are accountable and liable, be it individually or as a team.

In connection with this matter, Lopez (2010) indicated that, given its importance and specificity, the supervising action conducted by the director is a *sui generis* activity that should be fulfilled by competent, duly trained personnel; however, there are no formal programs in place in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela regarding supervision training, it is urgent for the Ministry of Popular Power for Education to coordinate the development of said programs with some universities.

Yet, without a doubt the crisis of the educational system is originated by the scarce and insufficient supervision of teachers in different educational institutions, which has resulted in inadequate performance of daily activities. In this sense, the 6th Regional Seminar of Education of the Center-Western Region (2006, p.10) recommended “...an urgent review and evaluation of the supervising function, since it is considered key on the performance of employees and its organizations”.

The aforementioned shows that one of the functions of educational managers with the largest projection and relevance (from the technical-teaching point of view) is as school supervisor, enabling planning and execution of organized work to consequently increase efficacy and efficiency in the teaching-learning process, and thus, enhance productivity and quality of work.

But an analysis of the Venezuelan educational system in the last decades reveals a harsh reality, a conflict at the core of the system regarding supervision. This becomes evident in the deficient training offered to directors to exercise a supervising function in the technical-administrative aspect, as proposed by Article 43 of the Organic Law of Education (2009, p.28): “supervision and guidance of educational institutions will be a comprehensive part of democratic and participative management, marked by pedagogical accompaniment.”

In reference to the aforesaid, supervision exercised by educational managers must address democratic, participative, scientific and creative principles. However, this has turned into a conflictive situation in today’s educational system due to the unimportance with which these items have been addressed.

In addition to these considerations, there is lack of experience by most supervisors in terms of the required educational managers’ characteristics; there is also inefficient assessment and sporadic training by the Ministry of Popular Power for Education, mostly due to a lack of training workshops to achieve said objective.

Consequently, public schools in the state of Zulia (located in the geographical context of Altigracia Parish, municipality of Miranda) and secondary school institutions are exposed to an educational supervision that does not

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comply with the necessary competences to promote pedagogical accompaniment aimed at turning these institutions into intelligent organizations, since said supervision process is not appropriate for current educational needs based on deficient and scarce training offered to educational managers; training is of the utmost importance for educational staff to adequately fulfill their supervising function.

Hence, the main objective of this research is to analyze the supervision conducted by secondary education directors, with the purpose of optimizing pedagogical accompaniment in the institutions through theoretical-methodological constructs of educational supervision.

THEORETICAL FUNDAMENTALS

Educational Supervision as Pedagogical Accompaniment

Supervising the work of others is one of the most important, challenging and demanding tasks in any company. Supervision of education, or better yet, supervision in education should be comprehensive and consequent. But in practice, two types of supervision occur: administrative and teaching.

This is why when a supervisor has a walk-through or schedules a series of visits to examine the condition of an institution's physical infrastructure, staffing, budget or programs' progress, he/she is conducting an administrative supervision, i.e., he/she is supervising specific aspects that are connected with the improvement of teaching, but that are not didactic aspects; as proposed by Fermin (2002, p.12).

On the contrary, the main function of a teaching supervisor is to help teachers improve the teaching process with the application of specialized techniques and procedures, which are the result of a planning process; as proposed by Fermin (2002, p.13). The core function of supervision is the improvement of children's learning situation, as Nérici explains:

"It is a service activity that exists to help teachers' performance of their task, school supervision can be synthesized as support to teaching activities, providing coordination, unity and continuity for the school to achieve its goals more efficiently. (2002, p.9)"

Without a doubt, the most important aspect of the supervision function is working to attain previously established objectives, considering supervision as an activity that implies a continuation of the teachers' professional education; to that extent, the process of supervision from the accompaniment perspective may be defined through different concepts: as the people who accompany others or as the people that are accompanied by others. Likewise, it is related to pedagogy because it is the art of teaching.

In that regard, Brigg (2013, p.5) states that "supervision is the daily pedagogical accompaniment conducted by the director with the purpose of guiding through technical processes, developing dexterities and maintaining sensitivity through human relationships". The supervisor's capacity becomes relevant when he/she develops employee awareness, guiding them and nurturing skills conducive to accomplishing educational goals.

Thus, education requires supervision to primarily steer community integration, as explained by Torres (2004, p.29) "it tries to tap into all of the administration's elements and resources to benefit education, and for it to guide supervision towards the institution's progress".

These ideas are fitting with pedagogical accompaniment being a positive action that contrasts the reality observed in the schools, supervision neglects this important and essential activity due to its comprehensive and holistic nature; it would bring together and steer all of the actors within the educational process towards a clear goal. To the contrary, the Year Book of the Mexican Society of History (2005, p.232), taken from Mejia (2012) recounts:

"The function of the supervisor does not take us to the classroom to make observations. Pedagogical accompaniment is a function that must be conducted by the school's leadership, mostly by the vice-principal (...) when we visit schools (...) we see if the team is doing their homework."

In that sense, Proyecto Formativo (2006, p.62) establishes that "accompaniment is a relationship of help that fosters personal growth and maturity with consistency, responsibility and freedom...". Also, UNESCO's First Intergovernmental Meeting of the Regional Education Project for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean

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(PRELAC) proposes an accompaniment model to be developed by supervisors in schools, understanding the director's process as four separate but highly articulated sub-processes: planning, school organization, control and assessment.

Borjas (2009) manifests the need to guarantee trained directors as leaders of formal programs of supervisor training, becoming aware that supervision is circumscribed by pedagogical aspects with extensive nature, meaning, it encompasses a wide part of the educational process, without limitation to the teachers' task and open to the students and community in general.

Ways to Conduct Educational Supervision

Regardless of the existing ways to conduct supervision, the educational manager must never have a radical position, he/she must be open to managing the supervision of situations when he/she can (after the conflictive situation has been identified) apply all acquired knowledge and deal with the situation in an efficient and objective way.

Likewise, educational supervision in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is governed by the Organic Law of Education (2009) and by Resolution No. 146, which sets forth the system, purposes and modalities per levels, and the organization and methodology to be applied to the person that holds the position of supervisor. In that sense, a supervisor, as explained by Lopez (2010), may be autocratic (absolute authority), democratic (shared authority) and permissive (authority that enforces free will).

Supervision styles highly relate to leadership styles, which are well-known and largely disseminated. This leads to the conclusion that today's supervisor leads a team, and does not act as a foreman, observer or as a keen flaw "detector",

The educational supervisor must know about and handle the paradigms that regulate the educational reform, as per what is stipulated in Chapter V of the Organic Law of Education (2009): "Supervision and direction of educational institutions will be a comprehensive part of democratic and participative management, marked by pedagogical accompaniment". An effective and efficient supervisor is a person with an

inclination for perfection, capable of overcoming obstacles to be successful and to achieve education of quality. Taking these into account, the ways to conduct supervision will be developed following the indications of De Hierro (1974, p.10), taken from Pastrano (2009), who proposes these ways or types of supervision are the same as those cited by Lemus (1975), still valid today.

Corrective Supervision

According to Requeijo and Lugo (2003, pp.226-227), cited by Balzan (2008, p.39), corrective supervision is characterized for being traditional and autocratic: "The person practicing this type of supervision is only trying to identify flaws or mistakes to correct them, without going deeper into the root causes". It must be clear that all supervision tends to be corrective, although, depending on how it is executed corrections may be applied with different means without displaying a retaliatory attitude. Once the failure is detected, the supervisor must objectively analyze its cause and hold interviews with the teacher to jointly seek a way to overcome it.

Likewise, De Hierro (1974, p.10), taken from Pastrano (2009), proposes corrective supervision intends to locate mistakes and flaws to correct them, but fails to investigate a problem's root cause. Generally, the supervisor is the person with the knowledge, and the supervisee will adhere to his/her indications, eliminating all possibilities of dialog and joint problem-solving.

Preventive Supervision

For Requeijo and Lugo (2003, pp.226-227), cited by Balzan (2008, p.39), the aim of this type of supervision is avoiding problems before they arise, to the extent possible. Clearly it is not positive for every situation since some will be unforeseeable, it is useful for the director to exercise careful observation and anticipate problems that might likely present, enabling a timely approach. This type of supervision prevents teachers to lose trust in themselves by avoiding mistakes based on lack of foresight.

For instance, the director may detect some teachers do not have enough pedagogical and/or academic preparation, he/she may plan a preventive task with courses, seminars and others, to improve the educational process

by attacking problematic aspects detected by his/her supervision.

Constructive Supervision

Regarding constructive supervision, Requeijo and Lugo (2003, pp.226-227), cited by Balzan (2008, p.39), explain that the goal is to detect not just failures and problems, but to deeply analyze pertaining causality (cause and effect). This will lead to, firstly, a unification of action criteria, and secondly, to the development of the educator's personality and technique to focus with any given situation. Also, constructive supervision leaves room to grow more and more each day, even in connection with positive things.

Thus, De Hierro (1974, p.10), taken from Pastrano (2009), suggests constructive supervision tries to comprehensively solve problems involving a series of factors that impact the teaching-learning process. This approach does not only identify failures but also seeks solutions.

Creating Supervision

This supervision, as per Requeijo and Lugo (2003, pp.226-227), cited by Balzan (2008, p.39), encourages the teacher to innovate by creating new methods, reformulating plans and programs and producing new materials. It is essential for the director (the natural supervisor) to also share this creating mindset and to avoid dreadful school routines and criteria improvisation that ultimately end up being rejected by teachers.

Similarly, De Hierro (1974, p.10), taken from Pastrano (2009), adds that creative stimulation encourages and steers educators to creatively solve problems. It promotes study and research to renew knowledge and experiences in the sense of achieving constant improvement.

METHODOLOGY

The research is non-experimental and transactional, as suggested by Mc Millany and Shumacher (2005, p.68), Hernandez, Fernandez and Baptista (2007), Arias, (2006), and Tamayo and Tamayo (2007). It intends to make a description based on data obtained through the questionnaire.

This is a field research because data collection took place in the real scenario, according to Risquel (2011), taken from Ochoa (2013), "is characterized because it is based on a method that allows collecting data directly from the scenario in which the knowledge takes place". Regarding field design, Balestrini (2006, p.71) describes that it allows observing and collecting data directly from the object of the study within its reality, to then analyze and interpret posteriorly.

Population

Chavez (2007, p.162) suggests that population is "the universe of the research on which the results are intended to be generalized, and that it is made up of traits or levels that allow distinctions between subjects". Vera (2008) explains that populations are the elements used to collect the information required for the research's continuity; these elements are known as "analysis units" and the set of all of the analysis units is known as "population".

This research's population is located in the Altigracia Parish, school municipality of Miranda, specifically involving directors and teachers designated in secondary education schools in the Altigracia Parish, municipality of Miranda, state of Zulia. As for the directors, a censal population was taken, following Nava's (2004) idea that this kind of selection (censal) allows driving relevant aspects in the subjects, considering the possibility for all subjects to be included in the study without applying sampling formulas, meaning, the 24 directors of both institutions. In terms of the teaching staff, the population includes 280 teachers that went through the sampling procedure to determine the exact amount to interview.

Chart 1.- Population of each school

Type of staff	Jose Paz Gonzalez	Ernesto Flores
DIRECTORS	18	6
TEACHERS	206	74
TOTAL	224	80

Source: compiled by the authors (2015).

Sample

The sample is based on the principle that the parts represent the whole, and as such, it reflects the characteristics that define the population from which it was extracted, this leads to the understanding that it is a

representative sample. The selection was justified on Sabino's (2002, p.118) conceptualizations, for whom the sample "is not more than a part of a whole known as a universe and it serves for its representation", therefore, the validity of the generalization depends on the sample's validity and size.

In the case of the research herein, a representative and random sample was selected from the teachers' population, presenting an error of 5% and amounting to 304 people. The Sierra-Bravo (1991, p.258) equation, cited in Chavez (2007), was applied to calculate the sample size. Thus, 173 elements of the population that is the object of this study were selected, a proportional sample was allocated for each school using the Shiffer equation. The following are the results:

Chart 2.- Population and sample of each school

SCHOOL	POPULATION	SAMPLE
JOSE PAZ	224	127
ERNESTO FLORES	80	46
TOTAL	304	173

Source: compiled by the authors (2015).

Data Collection Techniques

The arguments concerning data and information collection techniques and instruments may have two origins: information from the primary source and information from a secondary source.

In this regard, every research process needs to have a procedure in place to obtain information on the study's problem; in this case, it was conducted following the direct observation technique; also, an instrument to ease information collection was designed and applied to provide answers to the objectives set forth in the first chapter.

For Sabino (2001), cited by Ferrer (2009, p.51): "data collection techniques are the way to undertake an activity in a systemic, organized and rational manner". In order to comply with the objectives of the research herein, two instruments were designed, validated and applied.

Data collection was carried out using the direct observation technique, for this purpose, a questionnaire containing 39 questions and 5

answer alternatives was designed, answer alternatives were as follows: Always (A), Almost Always (AO), Sometimes (S), Almost Never (AN) and Never (N), valued-coded with 5 to 1 points, correspondingly, which allowed reconverting said codes for the respective analysis. Likewise, the following measurement scale was considered.

Chart 3.- Measurement scale

Range	Category	Level
81% - 100%	Very adequate	Very high
61% - 80%	Adequate	High
41% - 60%	Somewhat adequate	Moderately low
21% - 40%	Somewhat inadequate	Low
00% - 20%	Inadequate	Very low

Source: compiled by the authors (2015).

Validity

Validity is the degree with which an instrument measures the variable, Chavez (2007, p.193) defines validity as the efficiency with which an instrument measures what it is meant to measure; Reyes et al. (2009, p.78) affirm that an instrument's validity "consists of determining the point to which what is intended to be measured -the subject- is in fact measured".

This research used content validity, which implies a correspondence between the instrument and its theoretical context. Therefore, six experts and specialists in the areas of knowledge of the research were contacted to conduct validity.

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was used to establish the instrument's reliability with the support of the SPSS 10 software. Thus, Ary, Jacobs and Razaviech (2005) consider that a measurement instrument's reliability is the degree of uniformity with which it serves its purpose, the degree of congruency used for the measurement. A measurement instrument may be reliable and yet not valid, but it cannot be valid unless it is reliable. To understand the reliability of the instruments, a pilot test was conducted with 20 outsiders with the same

characteristics as the population that is the object of the study, the result was of 0.89 for directors and of 0.98 for teachers, indicating instrument reliability for its subsequent application.

ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESULTS

The following are the results from the information collection process through

Alternatives	Always		Almost always		Sometimes		Almost never		Never	
	Directors	Teachers	Directors	Teachers	Directors	Teachers	Directors	Teachers	Directors	Teachers
Corrective supervision	0%	9.52%	12%	33.33%	23.3%	23.8%	11.3%	28.57%	53.4%	4.76%
Preventive supervision	23.3	0	65.4	4.76	11.3	47.61	0	28.57	0	19.04
Constructive supervision	55.5	4.76	11.3	14.28	33.2	28.57	0	33.33	0	19.04
Creating supervision	65.4%	0%	34.6%	19.04%	0%	23.8%	0%	47.61%	0%	9.52%
Total %	144.2%	14.28%	123.3%	71.41%	67.8%	123.78%	11.3%	138.08%	53.4%	52.36%
Average %	36.05%	3.57%	30.82%	17.85%	16.95%	30.94%	2.82%	34.52%	13.35%	13.09%
%	19.81%		24.33%		23.94%	18.67%		13.22%		

Source: instrument applied to directors and teachers (Perez et al., 2015).

As Table 1 shows, the dimension of **Ways to conduct educational supervision**, for directors, the **Corrective Supervision** indicator illustrates that the highest percentage value belonged to the *Never* alternative with 53.4%; as for the **Preventive Supervision** indicator it was of 65.4% for the *Almost always* alternative; the **Constructive Supervision** indicator was of 55.5% for the *Always* alternative; and lastly, the **Creating Supervision** indicator was of 65.4% for the *Always* alternative. Comparing the largest percentages in the directors' answers, it was clear that the highest average percentage value occurred in the *Always* alternative with 36.05%, which (based on the measurement scale established by the researchers) demonstrated that the Ways to conduct educational supervision applied by directors are considered moderately inadequate, leading to the conclusion that their actions are performed at low level.

The teachers' results obtained with the instrument were contradictory compared to the directors' regarding the highest percentage values of answers, as follows: the **Corrective Supervision** indicator was of 33.3% for the

descriptive statistics, which arranged the data obtained by the instruments in tables (tabulation) according to the order of presentation of the educational supervision variable as pedagogical accompaniment by directors of secondary education, with its dimensions and indicators. Accordingly, this study's tabulation of results as done per dimensions, as suggested by Pelekais et al. (2012, p.76).

Table 1. General table of the dimension: ways to conduct educational supervision

Almost always alternative; while the **Preventive Supervision** indicator kept the trend for the *Sometimes* alternative, with 47.61%; as for the **Constructive Supervision** indicator, it was of 33.33% in the *Almost never* alternative; the **Creating Supervision** indicator was of 47.61% for the *Almost never* alternative. These percentages indicated that the execution of said indicators reached the highest percentage value in the *Almost never* alternative with 34.52%, which (based on the measurement scale) demonstrated that the Ways to conduct educational supervision applied by teachers are considered moderately inadequate, leading to the conclusion that their actions are performed at low level.

Comparing the results per groups (X) resulted in 24.33% as the highest percentage for the *Almost always* alternative of the dimension of **Ways to conduct educational supervision**, confirming the fact that the selected population answered that directors perform these ways in a moderately inadequate manner, at low level.

Taking the results obtained by the analysis of the tables as reference, and according to the questions applied in the instruments, the researchers verified that the consulted

directors almost always exercise a supervision that is considered autocratic, intending for the supervisee to comply with the instructions, without possibilities of dialog; likewise, it was observed that upon identification of possible flaws in the educational process, he/she applies corrective actions regardless of the cause.

On the other hand, sometimes the director avoids problems before they occur, exercising correct supervision; but very seldom are preventive activities such as courses or study circles offered to guarantee the normal development of the educational process, therefore, it fails to take previous experiences into account when conducting supervision. In terms of determining the possible failure causes detected throughout the supervision, it was verified that this activity almost never took place, just as with the case of looking for possible solutions to detected problems and with developing technical skills of the supervisees. Consequently, innovation of the supervisees was not encouraged enough; directors also failed at having an open mind to change, thus, the level of promotion of intellectual participation needed to renew knowledge was very low.

The aforementioned results evinced a difference with what is set forth in Chapter V of the Organic Law of Education (2009, p.28): "Supervision and direction of educational institutions will be a comprehensive part of democratic and participative management, marked by pedagogical accompaniment". Which is why the supervisor must be totally committed with the quest for change, seeing as the educational supervisor is the cornerstone of this process. An effective and efficient supervisor is oriented towards perfection, is capable of overcoming obstacles to be successful and to achieve education of quality.

It is concluded that the consulted directors almost always exercise a supervision that is considered autocratic, intending for the supervisee to comply with the instructions, without possibilities of dialog; likewise, it was observed that upon identification of possible flaws in the educational process, he/she applies corrective actions regardless of the cause.

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