

HABILITATION THESIS

Educational leadership in the digital era: interdisciplinary research directions and perspectives on organizational development

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SUMMARY

The habilitation thesis "Educational Leadership in the Digital Era: Interdisciplinary Research Directions and Perspectives on Organizational Development" falls under the broad and ever-evolving category of Educational Sciences, a field that calls for a greater integration of sociocultural, managerial, technological, and pedagogical viewpoints. Over twenty years of consistent academic, scientific, and professional activity are synthesized in this work, which reflects an ongoing engagement with the urgent issues of modern education. Throughout this time, the candidate has continuously positioned her contributions at the nexus of professional practice and scholarship by fusing theoretical reflection with empirical research and creative application.

The thesis is intended to be a thorough intellectual synthesis that unifies the three fundamental pillars of academic management, research, and teaching. Direct communication with students and aspiring professionals is made possible by teaching, which has allowed for the ongoing improvement of pedagogical strategies and curriculum innovations. The creation of new knowledge and the development of an original scientific profile based on methodological rigor and interdisciplinarity have been guaranteed by research. The institutional structure that academic management has established has made it possible for teaching and research to thrive while also enabling the application of organizational development programs, leadership techniques, and quality assurance systems.

By combining these three aspects, the habilitation thesis describes the candidate's career path in chronological order as well as the significant contribution they have made to solving the intricate

problems facing modern educational systems. The need for transformative leadership in educational institutions, the necessity of fostering teachers' professional development in cross-cultural and globalized contexts, the need for inclusive practices that advance equity and social justice, and the opportunities and risks brought about by the digital transformation of learning environments are some of these challenges.

Each of the four major sections that make up the thesis represents a different but related aspect of the candidate's academic background and scientific contributions. The first section looks closely at how academic careers have changed over time, highlighting the dynamic interactions between teaching, research, professional development, and administrative duties. It follows the gradual development of expertise, starting with the early years of mentoring students and instructing foundational courses, moving on to leadership positions in academic governance, and culminating in the development of a mature scientific profile. This section highlights the ways in which the candidate's career and the larger growth of the academic community in which she has been embedded have been influenced by the integration of pedagogical practice, scholarly inquiry, and institutional leadership.

The thesis's second section concentrates on the main scientific contributions, which are organized along four main and related lines of inquiry. With special focus on how education can serve as a catalyst for equity, social cohesion, and the decrease of exclusionary practices, the first direction tackles psycho-pedagogical interventions and socio-educational inclusion in schools. By placing these topics within current discussions on school governance, institutional resilience, and the ability of leadership to effect systemic change, the second direction explores educational leadership, organizational development, and transformative management. In light of the growing significance of equipping teachers to function well in varied, multicultural, and globalized learning environments, the third direction investigates the evolution of teaching careers in intercultural educational contexts. In the fourth direction, which focuses on the digital aspects of inclusion and socio-educational well-being, new technologies—like artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality, and digital learning ecosystems—are transforming educational practice and the social experiences of teachers and students. When taken as a whole, these research avenues point to an interdisciplinary and holistic view of education that prioritizes the values of intercultural competency, equity, resilience, and responsible digitalization as guiding principles for the field's future.

The thesis's third section examines the impact, coherence, and visibility of these contributions, as demonstrated by a large number of publications, competitive research projects, and cooperative efforts at the national, European, and global levels. This section illustrates how the candidate's work has helped close the gap between theory and practice by influencing educational policy, teacher preparation, and institutional development in addition to producing original knowledge. It also emphasizes how interdisciplinary teams, cross-institutional partnerships, and cooperative research networks can improve the scientific caliber and societal significance of research findings.

The thesis concludes by outlining potential future developments and viewpoints. In addition to providing opportunities for fresh investigations in response to new educational challenges, it highlights the continuity of scientific inquiry in the four recognized research areas. Forming and guiding doctoral students and young researchers is at the heart of this vision, as their education and assimilation into the academic community are viewed as critical to the field's sustainability and revitalization. Consolidating interdisciplinary collaborations within the university and across international research networks is equally important because it guarantees that future research will continue to be responsive to changes in society, education, and technology on a global scale.

Overall, the thesis makes the case for an integrative, theoretically sound, and practically applicable vision of educational leadership in the digital age. Three key ideas—inclusion, innovation, and organizational resilience—form the foundation of this vision and serve as a framework for rethinking education in intricate and quickly changing environments.

Inclusion is viewed as a systemic commitment to equity, diversity, and participation at all levels of the educational process, rather than just the incorporation of marginalized groups into preexisting structures. It entails creating institutional cultures and pedagogical approaches that actively remove obstacles to participation and learning while acknowledging and valuing diversity. In this way, inclusion goes beyond the classroom to the larger socio-educational ecosystem, guaranteeing that communities, colleges, and schools collaborate to advance social justice and unity.

The ability of educational systems to produce, accept, and maintain novel concepts, methods, and tools that improve instruction, learning, and institutional efficacy is known as innovation. It represents a process as well as a mindset: a process of putting transformative practices into practice that address the needs of students and society, as well as a mindset of openness to change,

experimentation, and creative problem-solving. Innovation in the digital age is inextricably linked to the responsible adoption of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, digital learning platforms, and augmented and virtual reality. These technologies have the power to transform not only teaching strategies but also the way knowledge is organized and the role of educators. The ability of educational institutions to endure, adjust to, and develop from adversities like social crises, technological disruptions, or demographic changes is known as organizational resilience. Resilience is an active, strategic adaptation that enables institutions to uphold their mission, values, and quality standards in the face of uncertainty. It does not imply a passive resistance to change. Since effective leaders are able to steer organizations through times of instability while maintaining continuity, stability, and long-term development, resilience and leadership are thus closely related. The thesis illustrates how these three ideas can be operationalized in research and practice by fusing theoretical reflection with empirical study and applied interventions. It demonstrates that resilience, innovation, and inclusion are not mutually exclusive principles but rather interrelated facets of educational leadership that support one another in the development of equitable and sustainable learning environments.

In the end, the thesis presents educational sciences as a driving force behind institutional change, professional growth, and social well-being in a world that is changing quickly. It demands that leadership in education be redefined to include interdisciplinary viewpoints, digital competencies, and a solid ethical basis, going beyond conventional managerial models. By doing this, it demonstrates that developing leaders who can bridge knowledge gaps, encourage teamwork, and balance technological advancement with human growth is essential to the future of education.