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Leadership and Values-based Human Resource Management in Ensuring Early Childhood Education Quality

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to reveal how leadership, values-based human resource management and teachers' preparedness for inclusive education contribute to the quality of early childhood education, drawing on both theoretical insights and empirical findings. Based on academic literature, the article analyses contemporary concepts of educational management, the principles of value-based leadership and the essence of inclusive education, emphasizing that educational quality is determined by a value-oriented organisational culture, reflective leadership, teachers' professional values and their readiness to work in inclusive settings. The article integrates two perspectives: the role of leadership and institutional value-driven strategies, and the preparedness of teachers' values and competencies to educate children with diverse needs. A mixed-methods approach was employed, including document analysis, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews with leaders and teachers. This enabled the identification of interactions between leadership, values and inclusive education at both institutional and individual levels. The findings reveal that leadership grounded in trust and collaboration enhances staff and teacher engagement, encourages reflection, organisational learning and responsibility for educational quality, and fosters a culture conducive to learning. Teachers demonstrate strong value orientation (empathy, responsibility, inclusion), which supports social justice and a positive educational environment; however, their practical implementation is hindered by limited resources, time constraints and insufficient methodological support. Future research should further explore how the interconnection of leadership, values and teacher preparedness shapes sustainable educational quality, and examine the lasting impact of these factors, changes in teacher competencies, and the outcomes of inclusion from the perspectives of children and parents.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education; Human Resource Management; Inclusive Education; Leadership; Values