This is the **accepted version** of the journal article:

Díaz Vicario, Anna; Gairín Sallán, Joaquín. «A comprehensive approach to managing school safety : case studies in Catalonia, Spain». Educational Research, Vol. 59, Núm. 1 (2017), p. 89-106. DOI https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2016.1272430

This version is available at https://ddd.uab.cat/record/319624

A comprehensive approach to managing school safety: case studies in Catalonia, Spain[1]

Anna Díaz-Vicario (corresponding author)

Department of Applied Pedagogy. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Barcelona (Spain)

Plaça de les Oliveres (Edifici GL – 212). Campus de la UAB · 08193 Bellaterra, Spain

E-mail: anna.diaz@uab.cat; phone: (+34) 935 86 82 27

Joaquín Gairín Sallán

Department of Applied Pedagogy. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Barcelona (Spain)

Plaça del Coneixement (Edifici G6 – 247). Campus de la UAB · 08193 Bellaterra, Spain

E-mail: joaquin.gairin@uab.cat; phone: (+34) 935 81 16 19

A comprehensive approach to managing school safety: case studies in Catalonia, Spain

Background: Schools should be safe spaces for students, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. For the concept of 'safety' to be meaningful, it must be interpreted broadly to encompass wellbeing in its widest sense. A common challenge for schools and educational authorities is, therefore, to manage school safety appropriately not only to prevent physical accidents and incidents, but also with the purpose of creating an environment that promotes physical, emotional and social wellbeing, both individually and collectively.

Purpose: The aim of this research paper is twofold: (a) to explore the concept of safety as it is interpreted by schools and analyse the extent to which schools are committed to the goal of creating safe and healthy school environments; and (b) to identify organisational and management practices that promote the safety of school staff and users.

Design, sample and methods: The research was carried out from a qualitative perspective, based on a study of multiple cases carried out in Catalonia, Spain. The case studies (N = 9 schools) were selected by means of a purposive sampling process in order to obtain a selection of schools covering different education stages and under different types of ownership. The data collection process involved carrying out semistructured interviews (N = 39) with school principals, health and safety officers, teaching staff and non-teaching staff; focus groups with families (N = 2) and a review of general documentation and specific safety documents (N = 58). The data collected were completed and verified by means of interviews with experts (N = 3). The interviews, focus groups and notes arising from the document review were transcribed literally and analysed thematically, following a cross-case analysis structure.

Results: The data analysis indicated that creating safe and healthy environments was not always an explicitly endorsed principle or goal for schools. However, all members of the educational community were involved in ensuring adequate levels of school safety; and diverse management and organisational actions and measures were implemented to ensure physical, emotional and social safety.

Conclusions: We conclude that according to a broad interpretation of safety, which encompasses wellbeing in its widest sense, a comprehensive school safety management approach had not been fully adopted by schools in the studied sample. Whilst involvement in safety practices was evident, many actions appeared to be carried out without full consideration of the wider promotion of school safety. The study suggests the importance of training and awareness activities for education professionals in order

to build and promote safety culture and to facilitate the introduction of a comprehensive school safety approach in the day-to-day management of schools.

Introduction

Safety in schools, from a physical, emotional and social point of view, is a constant concern for society and for education management in particular. Discussion not only focuses on student accidents, cases of school violence or the risks of the teaching profession but also on other broader issues, such as promoting safer and healthier school environments (Schools for Health in Europe [SHE] 2009; Skevington, Birdthistle, and Jones 2003; World Health Organisation [WHO] 2004).

Organisations and professionals highlight the importance of educational establishments promoting safe and healthy work environments successfully, both for teaching staff and students (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, and Central American Educational and Cultural Coordination 2008; Saint Leger, Young, Blanchard, and Perry 2010; WHO 2004, 2010). From this perspective, teaching-learning processes, as well as any other school activity, only make sense when students and teachers feel safe and protected (Côté-Lussier and Fitzpatrick 2016; Devine and Cohen 2007; Gairín and Castro 2011; Sarková et al. 2014).

The concept of 'safety' and 'comprehensive school safety'

'Safety' can be a controversial concept, as it takes on different values depending on people's ideas, culture and perceptions. Overall, safety may be defined as the feeling of protection that people experience when they are in a place that is free of danger. It is neither a static condition nor an objective parameter but, instead, depends equally on contextual conditions

and a person's individual competencies, and may increase or diminish according to the individual and collective actions implemented (Hundeloh and Hess 2003).

In the educational context, we found several definitions of safety that focus on different issues, although generally authors refer to physical, social and emotional aspects. In terms of physical safety, authors emphasise architectural regulations, the physical conditions of the school building, maintenance and cleanliness, and the school building's capacity to resist disaster events (Dwyer, Osher, and Warger 1998; Tilló 1992). Most recently, the concept of school safety has been evolving, and several authors stress the socioemotional environment provided by the school, referring to the creation of a welcoming environment that is free of intimidation, violence or fear; that provides a climate of openness and freedom; that pays attention to personal needs; and so forth (Cornell and Sheras 2006; Osher and Kendziora 2010; Robers, Kemp, Truman, and Snyder 2013). Devine and Cohen (2007) argue that physical safety is fundamental because, if we feel physically unsafe, it is more difficult to consider social and emotional dimensions, which become less relevant. Overall, we suggest that it is necessary to pay attention to the three dimensions, as a whole, in order to guarantee school safety as far as possible.

It is often said that creating a school environment that protects children and young people from danger, and at the same time promotes conscious attitudes towards personal and collective safety, is primarily the responsibility of school principals and teaching staff (Eklund, Bosworth, and Bauman 2015; Shmeleva, Kislyakov, Maltseva, and Luneva 2015). In addition, beyond a general duty of care, the cooperation of all members of the educational community is necessary in order to create safe school environments (Shaw 2004), paying attention to a set of aspects encompassing socioemotional as well as physical aspects.

Returning to the main elements that some authors (Chamarro, E. Longás, J. Longás, and Capell 2009; Devine and Cohen 2007; Gavidia 2001) believe the educational community

must consider in order to guarantee school safety, allows us to identify core aspects. Specifically, in the physical dimension, schools must look after school grounds, the school building and facilities, school furniture and materials, and lighting, ventilation and heating conditions; in the emotional dimension, schools must look after the school and classroom environment, and take care of the emotional wellbeing of the whole community, especially the students; and in the social dimension, schools must deal with interpersonal relationships, participation, communication, and health and safety issues.

The range of aspects that must be considered in order to maintain an appropriate level of safety in educational institutions may, in part, explain why approaches that focus exclusively on accident prevention or on prevention training have gradually fallen out of use, in order to advance towards more comprehensive approaches to promoting school safety (Boychuk 2014; Duke 2002; Shaw 2004). A more recent kind of approach considers, in an interrelated manner, all the characteristics that help create an efficient work and learning environment, including the promotion of safety as part of the school's planning and development processes (Xaba 2014): identifying dangers, evaluating risks and planning how to promote safety, as well as educating others about risk management and safety culture.

The European Network Education and Training in Occupational Safety and Health [ENETOSH] (2014) defines a comprehensive approach to school safety as a management approach that must encompass the whole school: school management, the work and learning environment and learning contents. Boychuk (2014) adds that this approach implies consciously considering the health and safety of each person and of the school community as a whole in each and every action and decision that is made within the school. Thus, safety is understood as an inherent factor in school activity, seeking to protect students, teaching staff and visitors (Dunlap 2013).

Adopting a comprehensive safety approach, therefore, has important consequences for the way school safety management is understood: not only as a case of complying with health and safety regulations but aiming to integrate safety into every school activity. Managing school safety will concern, equally, the objectives a school seeks to achieve and the structure and organisation of the school itself, involving a series of actions and measures that concern all levels and stakeholders in the school. This approach is in line with the organisational safety perspective defined by Duke (2002), the ideas of Chamarro et al. (2009) and Fierro (2013) and with the research carried out by the EDURISC research group (http://edo.uab.cat/en/content/edurisc-team) (Gairín et al., 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012).

Taking the above into account, in this research we defined school safety as being safety related to the school context that involves looking at the physical, emotional and social dimensions of safety, ensuring the welfare of students, teachers, non-teaching staff, and any other member of the educational community. Moreover, we conceptualised school safety from a comprehensive perspective, in line with Boychuk (2014), Duke (2002), Hundeloh and Hess (2002), Shaw (2004) and Syrjäläinen, Jukarainen, Värri, and Kaupinmäki (2015), because school safety must also take into account the need to prevent and educate. Likewise, it is not enough to deal with physical school conditions: we also need to consider the emotional and social dimensions of safety. Thus, a comprehensive school safety approach underpinned our analysis of school safety as part of day-to-day school management processes.

Research aims and purpose

Whilst school safety has been discussed and theorised extensively, rather less attention has been paid to studying the specific management and organisational practices implemented by schools to promote staff and users' safety: that is, analysing to what extent a comprehensive safety approach has been adopted as a management approach in school organisations. This

paper seeks to contribute to increasing knowledge regarding this dimension. It focuses on two questions: To what extent are schools committed to safety? What kind of organisational and management practices do schools develop to promote school safety?

By investigating these questions, we wanted, in the context of Catalonia, Spain, to: (a) explore the concept of safety as it is interpreted by schools and analyse the extent to which schools are committed to the goal of creating safe and healthy school environments; and (b) identify organisational and management practices that promote the safety of school staff and users.

Based on the research carried out, some proposals have been made for the constant improvement of comprehensive school safety management processes in the context in which the research was carried out. It is hoped that the findings of this study may be of interest to education managers working in other settings.

Methodology

Research was carried out following an interpretive paradigm, adopting a qualitative approach and seeking an in-depth understanding of the research subject. The study of multiple cases, based on systematic comparison (Coller 2000), has been selected as a research strategy. It allowed us to build an in-depth understanding of the complexity of school safety management via the views of the stakeholders involved, comparing the situations at different schools.

The study had two stages: (a) an exploratory stage, in which case studies were carried out; and (b) a verification stage, which involved interviews with experts. For the case studies, a preliminary list was drawn up of schools eligible to be part of the study sample. Their principals were subsequently contacted until the final sample of nine schools (case studies) that met the established sample criteria outlined in the study design was completed. Data were collected simultaneously in several schools, with consecutive visits to hold interviews, focus groups and document review. The first interview was always with the school principal

or health and safety officer, by which means access was gained to the rest of the participants and consent was obtained to review the school's documents.

Research ethics

We sent a letter of invitation to all the schools, informing them of the purpose of the study and assuring them the information they provided, both written and oral, would be used in accordance with confidentiality. In addition, during the interviews, we informed the participants of the measures adopted to guarantee their anonymity. For this reason, all information that could identify people and specific data about schools and participants have been removed from the text.

Participants

A total of nine schools (cases) in Catalonia, Spain, both state-owned and privately owned, were selected. The schools covered different education levels (primary, secondary and vocational training) (see Table 1). In order to guide the selection and better encompass the diversity of the population, a set of criteria was defined, considering the variables of 'education level' and 'ownership', with the intention of introducing certain combinations that allow us to analyse similarities and differences in some of the relevant areas. Thus, the sample contained both private and state schools, a spread of schools at different educational levels, and a higher proportion of state schools compared with private schools.

Table 1. Numbers of participating schools, grouped by educational level.

In each educational establishment, participants with a variety of profiles were consulted (principals, health and safety officers, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and parents) and general institutional documents as well as specific safety management documents were analysed. The research includes the views of 61 participants (see Table 2),

and 58 institutional documents were reviewed (23 general documents, 10 specific safety management documents 25 other documents not initially considered in the study design).

Table 2. Numbers of participants in the study, grouped by profile.

In addition, three active professional experts with diverse profiles were selected to participate in the verification stage. These were one education administrator, one health and safety specialist working in the field of education and one expert in risks and school safety management. A preliminary report was discussed with them in order to confirm the findings, search for explanations, and gather their opinions about how to advance the field of school safety management.

Data collection methods

The data collection methods employed in the study were interviews, focus groups and document reviews. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in Spanish.

Interviews were used during two different research stages for different purposes. During the initial exploratory stage, individual and group semi-structured interviews were carried out with school principals, health and safety officers, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and families in order to investigate school practices relating to comprehensive school safety organisation and management. During the verification stage, interviews were carried out with experts in order to verify, complete and confirm the findings. Based on the theoretical review, we developed interview schedules for all the participant profiles.

Focus groups were held in those schools where it was possible to gather, in the same place and at the same time, parents linked to the schools analysed. The goal was to generate discussion among attendees, gathering their comments and points of view on comprehensive school safety. In those cases where it was not possible to apply this technique, semistructured

interviews were carried out. We developed focus group and semistructured interview schedules that covered the same research topics.

The document review served a twofold purpose: (a) to enrich, complement and verify the information obtained by other means of collecting data; and (b) to verify aspects relating to school safety that were detailed in the schools' institutional documents. We reviewed: educational projects, the schools' organisational and operational regulations, yearly plans, annual reports, emergency plans, and other documents, including safety and security recommendations. For every type of document, we designed a form with the list of topics to review.

Transcription

All audio recordings of the interviews and focus groups were transcribed using a word processor. In addition, handwritten notes about institutional documents were typed later, using a word processor. This intermediate step enabled the use of software to support the qualitative data analysis process.

Data analysis

The qualitative data analysis was carried out following the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), as revised by Saldaña (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014). This is a model for developing thematic analysis processes that provides the opportunity to code and categorise data into themes. The model distinguishes between three main activity flows: data reduction, data display and transformation, and formulation and verification of conclusions.

Starting with a preliminary list of codes (deductive coding), arising from a theoretical review, intensive reading and rereading of the transcripts was started in order to identify units of meaning. During the process, new codes were created, while others were reviewed (inductive codification). As a result of this process, 71 codes, 25 categories, 17 secondary

themes and 6 themes emerged, making up 1,462 units of meaning. Given the scope of this paper, we present the results of only three of the six themes.

MAXQDA 11 qualitative data analysis software was used to organise the coding, categorising and data analysis process. Its use facilitated the cross-checking of data according to the following variables: 'level', 'ownership' and 'participant profile'.

We based the data analysis process on a comparative analysis technique (Coller 2000), adding examples from the different cases (Stake 1999) and creating cross-syntheses (Yin 2009), with the purpose of increasing the value of the case studies (Bazeley 2013).

Results

The results are presented under three large thematic areas: (a) the promotion of school safety as a principle and goal in schools; (b) the organisation supporting school safety; and (c) organisational and management dynamics that promote school safety. In the presentation of the results, where quotation is included, it has been translated into English from Spanish.

The promotion of school safety as a principle and goal in schools

The data analyses suggested that safety, health and prevention, or the promotion of safe and healthy environments, were not explicitly stated as values, principles or goals in the educational projects of the schools analysed. However, it was possible to establish, indirectly, an association between certain principles stated by the schools and school safety, as well as risk prevention and health education. Figure 1 sets out some principles of the educational projects analysed associated with the promotion of safe school environments.

Figure 1. Principles associated with the promotion of safe school environments.

We observed that the principles associated with the social and emotional dimensions were the most recurrent. Schools, especially primary schools, appeared to attach great

importance to creating a welcoming school environment, where staff, students and families feel welcome and part of the community. Communication, dialogue and participation were aspects included in the schools' education projects and were pointed out by participants as actions that foster sufficient levels of emotional and social safety. This is illustrated by a statement about one particular educational project:

> We consider ourselves a welcoming school. We attach great importance to the welcome we give, both to the families and to the new children who arrive. We seek to ensure that all new teachers who join our teaching team get a good reception at the school and feel welcome, informed and integrated.

The analyses of goals related to the administrative, human and educational spheres, as set out in each school's organizational and operational regulations, outlined specific goals linked with the promotion of physical, emotional and social safety. We found that the goals in the administrative sphere were associated mainly with the physical dimension of safety, such as: (a) taking care of the school building and materials; (b) overseeing the maintenance, improvement and development of facilities; (c) encouraging the whole school community to collaborate in maintaining the school in the best condition. In the human sphere, the goals were associated mainly with the social and emotional dimensions of safety, such as: (a) encouraging respect and an appropriate interpersonal relationship environment; (b) conflict resolution, seeking to promote mediation and assertiveness; (c) guaranteeing students' socioemotional wellbeing; (d) guaranteeing workplace health and safety and promoting healthy habits. Finally, the goals in the educational sphere were associated mainly with the emotional dimension, such as: (a) encouraging the use of strategies that enable students to achieve the appropriate degree of emotional safety for their level of maturity; (b) working on emotional education; (c) promoting respect and the basic values of citizenship and

democracy; (d) developing healthy habits among the students regarding food, hygiene, rest, physical activity and leisure time.

Beyond the general goals outlined in the educational projects, schools defined operational and strategic goals for each school year in their yearly plans. Some were also linked to the physical safety sphere (for example, to improve the management of the school facilities and carry out maintenance to ensure they comply with health and safety regulations), and the social safety sphere.

The organisation supporting school safety
Stakeholders

The analysis of the interviews, focus groups and institutional documents provided evidence that all members of the educational community help to promote school safety. Regarding the organisation, the principal had overall responsibility for guaranteeing school safety, but he or she would delegate to other staff specific functions and tasks: in particular, putting the occupational health and safety officer in charge of the management of occupational safety and health [OSH]. The data analysed indicated there were seven stakeholders involved in promoting comprehensive school safety and that everyone had a duty (see Figure 2):

Figure 2. Stakeholders involved in promoting comprehensive school safety.

The occupational health and safety experts suggested that, given the position they occupy and their leadership, it would be a priority for school principals to be committed to promoting school safety: their beliefs, actions and the importance they grant these matters may facilitate or hinder safety management and the establishment of a safety-aware culture in schools. As one expert commented:

When you say that management must be involved and make people take responsibility, you guarantee the continuity of the project. You have to find

people who believe in [school safety]... Working with a management team that creates and generates [a safety culture] among the teaching staff is the only way to progress.

Analysis suggested that school principals had received limited training on safety matters because the training courses for accessing management positions included little content regarding safety awareness and because they had rarely participated in training aimed specifically at this area. Experts considered this to be a weak point that must be addressed if a more safety-aware culture was to be achieved. One of the experts explained:

> In the initial management course, there was a module that talked about safety and risk prevention. It was the only module that did not require classroom attendance… [Safety training] was one of the last modules and this means the principal will not consider it important either.

For their part, occupational health and safety officers were responsible for risk management, acting as the point of contact between the safety services and the school. Every school had someone fulfilling this role. While, in state schools, this role was held by an appointed teacher, in private schools an administrative officer fulfilled this function and was responsible for coordinating prevention and health and safety matters affecting staff primarily. As one observed:

> As the person in charge of coordinating safety, I am responsible for the maintenance of evacuation routes; for checking fire extinction, fire alarm and loudspeaker equipment and signage, as well as implementing any improvements; for keeping teaching staff informed so that they are aware and can pass on information to students; and for checking compliance with and improving the fire drill.

Not all staff who take on the role of occupational health and safety officer in state schools had completed the initial and/or continuing training courses offered by the

Department of Education, unlike in private schools, which advised that those in the role had completed basic training and attended one or two refresher courses every year. All occupational health and safety officers advised that the content covered in the courses was often far removed from how the schools really operated. One teacher explained:

> When they asked me, I did the training… I am still well aware of the fact that, when we went to the meetings, which we held once or twice a year, we started by saying: 'Because this has to be like this, it has to be done differently' and then it bore no relationship with the reality in schools.

The interviews with staff suggested that teaching staff took general responsibility for ensuring physically and socioemotionally safe school environments, from an individual and collective point of view, and sought to ensure the safety of the students in their charge. In addition, non-teaching staff also contributed to creating safe school environments. From caretakers to those in charge of workroom or laboratories and other activity coordinators, all staff took on tasks that promoted a safe and healthy school environment. Staff duties were detailed in the school's organisational and operational regulations. For example, one school's organisational and operational regulations pointed out:

> [Staff] must participate actively in all specific tasks that enable the good daily operation of a secondary school (avoiding damage to the building and teaching materials, seeking to ensure the general cleanliness of the school, avoiding disorder in school corridors, communicating with difficult students, etc.).

The preparation of both teaching staff and non-teaching staff on these matters depended on the information provided by the occupational health and safety officer regarding occupational risk prevention and whether they participated in continuous training on more specific issues (for example, first aid or mediation). Staff themselves admitted that they rarely

attended this kind of training, if at all, and sought training only when they perceived a real need. One teacher commented:

> When you come across a situation, everyone does it [training]. When you realise you are hoarse at the begining of the school year, you take care of yourself in the future. If I had back pain I am sure I would do it [training] but as prevention we never do it… When you come across a problem you look for a solution.

In general, teachers themselves, as well as principals and safety officers, indicated that teaching staff had received little training on safety and prevention. Staff involved in workrooms and laboratories appeared better prepared, since they had participated in health and safety training, as were physical education teachers, as they had done first aid training. Experts considered that all teaching staff should have, as one expert phrased it, 'minimum generic training' and that, depending on their role, they could undergo more in-depth training in certain aspects.

As for students, school staff stated that they collaborated to the extent that they complied with the school's organisational and operational regulations and participated in collective activities, such as drills and health and safety training, or activities promoting healthy living habits. Staff considered that student involvement could be greater, which would improve their level of awareness. One principal suggested that students could be involved in safety activities:

> The subject could be approached in art class or physical education or other disciplines, producing posters or stories, so that the subject is talked about and as a result people gain greater awareness.

Finally, family participation in safety matters was channelled via the parents' associations. They were involved in so far as they participated in school committees and collective activities or helped out with the maintenance and upkeep of the school. Their

participation decreased as the student age increased and was only nominal at the stage of vocational training. One parent explained:

> When a new building was under construction, a parents' association representative was a member of the building renovation committee. The parents' association also participated in the creation of a good relations committee.

From a structural point of view, schools had several committees that dealt with safety-related matters. The usual committees were: emotional education committee (emotional dimension of safety), good relations committee (social dimension) and committee of works (physical dimension). Of the schools analysed, only one primary school had a health and safety committee, although experts and some participants noted the value of this type of structure in seeking to guarantee the implementation and monitoring of actions aimed at improving school safety. One teacher suggested that the health and safety committee 'should comprise the school principal, the health and safety officer, teachers and even students'.

Time and space for discussing and working on school safety

School staff noted that they met to discuss matters relating to managing and promoting school safety when it was necessary to address a specific issue of interest. They noted that the school council, teaching staff, management team and departmental meetings, among others, were usually the forum where information was exchanged and decisions made on certain matters that affected the school's operation. One principal explained:

> At management team meetings and when a particular issue arises, it is possible for us to meet to discuss and decide how we will proceed… It is a response to occasional problems.

The only type of school personnel who had specific time allocated to manage matters relating to school safety was the occupational health and safety officer. Depending on the

school, the officer might have two or three hours per week to perform the role. One committed officer considered the time allocated insufficient:

> Within my weekly schedule I have two hours allocated to occupational health and safety officer tasks. As you can see, it is very little, and I do what I can.

The availability of financial resources to address safety matters

School staff noted that, in general, their school had sufficient funds to guarantee that the school could carry out its activities normally and in safe conditions. They said that the largest part of the budget was spent on operational expenses: maintenance of buildings, facilities and fire-extinguishing equipment, cleaning services, first aid materials, etc., as well as, in the case of private schools, contracting the occupational health and safety service.

State-owned schools were dependent on the Department of Education to carry out certain interventions, noting that at times they had insufficient funds to improve the physical safety conditions of the school. As one principal observed:

> They are sufficient, although it depends on what you consider sufficient. We have so many needs that we do not have the resources to reach an ideal situation but we always carry out some palliative measures. They are sufficient for day-to-day purposes but not to achieve the larger goal of improving the school.

Organisational and management dynamics that promote school safety

Cross-disciplinary analysis of the case studies provided evidence that schools implemented a range of actions that aimed to guarantee comprehensive school safety. In the opinion of one expert, school staff were often unaware that many of the actions they carried out promote comprehensive school safety.

Actions connected to the school's general organisation and management

Schools carried out a range of actions aimed at ensuring the physical and socioemotional safety of students and staff. Safety was a cross-disciplinary issue that went beyond mere compliance with health and safety regulations. One teacher pointed out:

> [Safety] is everything. Everything is connected. The school has life and we should care for all aspects of school life.

Participants noted different organisational and management actions that promoted the safety of school staff and users and that were common practice in all the cases analysed. What seemed the most noticeable among these were actions relating to the physical dimension of safety – aimed at guaranteeing the good condition of the building and its facilities – as well as those relating to the socioemotional dimension, aimed at promoting a positive environment among all members of the educational community. These actions related to several aspects.

First of all, participants noted actions that promoted physical safety: building and facilities maintenance actions, prompt communication of any damage to ensure speedy repair, and actions aimed at maintaining order and cleanliness in all school areas. All these actions were related to the material resources management functions. One expert argued:

> The fact there is good maintenance at a structural level makes the school safer.

Second, organization and human resources management was another important area. According to participants, the creation of a more positive socioemotional safety environment was helped by clearly outlined staff roles, a guaranteed presence of sufficient staff for student numbers, valuing the role of staff and consideration, as far as possible, of their needs. One of the parents said:

The presence of an adult – and the fact students know who to go to – make the student (and consequently their family as well) feel safer.

With regard to interpersonal relationship management, participants believed that promoting positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, and among students, as well as encouraging family involvement, were actions that promoted socioemotional safety. One principal explained:

We seek to ensure there is a positive school dynamic by paying attention to some details that are important for us: organising an end-of-year dinner, a Christmas dinner… This fosters a certain atmosphere in the school.

Moreover, related to time and space management, participants noted the following as being actions needed to guarantee school safety: schedule management in order to avoid a great number of people gathering at the same time and in the same place; studying the most appropriate layout of furniture to prevent collisions and falling objects; managing school entrances; and managing the flow of people within the school grounds. For example:

The fact that the school playground is divided reduces the number of people who are in the playground at the same time and reduces problems, risks, fights, small accidents or collisions. Or the time allocated between classes could be considered a movement-calming measure.

Finally, constant vigilance and supervision to ensure students did not leave the school during school hours, as well as preventing people not associated with the school's activity from accessing the school, together with the installation of mechanical security systems, were other common practices in schools that participants associated with school safety.

Specific safety management measures

All participants, independently of school level and ownership, highlighted the importance of preparing and circulating the emergency plan, as well as carrying out emergency drills, as actions that promoted the creation of safe school environments. Carrying out emergency drills allowed schools to raise awareness of the emergency plan among students and staff, so that they would know what to do in the event of an emergency, and it allowed occupational health and safety officers to identify any safety problems. Both actions were required by law. One principal explained:

> Every year we carry out an emergency drill and a report is always prepared detailing any human error, such as if a teacher has taken his jacket or some child has stayed in the toilets, etc., as well as any infrastructure defects in the school.

> Participants also highlighted the installation and maintenance of fire safety measures as another safety activity. As one principal commented:

> Depending on the location, we have different fire extinguishers… In the computer room we have one type and in other places we have a different type… We recently installed smoke detectors, which are connected to the fire alarm, and the alarm alerts the fire brigade.

> Other noteworthy actions were identifying elements that might be a risk for students and teachers, informing members of the school community about risks and preventative and protective measures they must adopt, recording and investigating staff and student accidents, and regularly checking the contents of first aid kits, among others.

Application of regulations and protocols

Participants considered that drafting regulations regarding organisation, operational matters, behaviour and good relations, to be upheld by the members of the school community, made it possible to organise school life and make school a safer space.

Regulations on good relations and participation were considered preventative measures, given that: (a) they organised school life; (b) they encouraged the adoption of safe and healthy attitudes, behaviours and habits; and (c) they provided guidance on how to act in certain situations, a fact that increased the perception of safety among members of the school community. As one teacher observed:

> The regulations are aimed at promoting good relations, and good relations mean a calmer environment, greater respect for others and greater respect for school materials. If there is respect for people and materials, normally there are fewer problems and fewer dangers.

Writing and applying action protocols, whether this was because they were legally required or because the school was adopting them as its own initiative, was another aspect that, according to participants, contributed to school safety. Thanks to these protocols, staff knew what to do and they reported feeling safer when it came to acting in certain situations. One expert concluded:

> The fact that protocols have been established means that there is a good prevention praxis.

The action protocols designed and applied by schools covered a wide range of aspects relating to safety: emergency situations, accidents, violence, and administering medication, among others. One expert said:

> The starting point is to design a protocol, a procedure, and be able to apply it, but dissemination is also very important… organising a meeting or talk to explain the protocol.

Discussion and conclusions

Safety, health and prevention, as well as the promotion of safe and healthy environments, were not set out as explicit principles or goals in the schools' institutional designs.

International authors and bodies (Burgos 2010; J. Longás 2011, 2012; Roca et al. 2009; SHE 2009; WHO 2004) have suggested that the first step to creating safe and healthy schools is for schools to state their commitment. The institutional documents analysed reflected an uneven reality: although there was interest and implicit commitment, this was not made explicit in writing and was blurred between the identity values and educational goals that schools declared in their documents. As Modzeleski et al. (2012) have noted, it is necessary to include commitments to safety in institutional documents if a comprehensive approach aimed at creating safer and healthier schools is sought.

All members of the educational community had responsibilities, obligations, rights and duties regarding safety matters, although, logically, with greater responsibility there was greater involvement in safety management. The commitment of principals, teaching staff and non-teaching staff ensured a physically and socioemotionally safe school environment, in line with the functions described by De Waal and Grösser (2014), Fortuny (1992) and Hayes (2003). This was not the case with other functions and processes that the authors have identified as being central to comprehensive safety management (Díaz-Vicario 2012; E. Longás 2011; Miller, Plant, and Scaife 2007): schools did not promote risk evaluation processes and there seemed to be limited planning in this regard, probably due to lack of training and information on the subject.

Regarding students and families, their participation was determined by the extent to which principals, teachers and safety officers involved them in safety actions. In general, they continued to be passive subjects with regard to the creation and promotion of safe school environments, seeming to be a long way from the responsibilities listed by Osher, Dwyer and Jackson (2004) or the approaches outlined in the comprehensive safety model (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work 2013).

From an organisational point of view, schools did not appear to have specific structures to implement safety, health and wellbeing management systems, beyond appointing a teacher as occupational health and safety officer or the functions that may be adopted indirectly by several committees. This structural absence contributed to the lack of specific spaces and time allocated to discussing matters relating to school safety management and promotion, except when a specific (and usually difficult) issue must be addressed. This suggested a reactive safety management approach, when optimum and comprehensive safety management required proactive measures to be introduced (Díaz-Cabrera et al. 2008).

As for organisational dynamics, schools carried out several important tasks that promoted the creation and maintenance of safe school spaces and had planned what to do in the event of a contingency. These actions were aimed at both the physical and the emotional and social dimensions of safety, in line with what has been pointed out by authors such as Gavidia (2001), J. Longás (2012) and Saint Leger et al. (2010). Likewise, it was observed that actions associated with improving school safety worked across the whole organisational structure: material resources management, organisational and human resources management, and time and space management, ensuring the school's operation within safety parameters. Nonetheless, many actions were implemented without considering a prevention and school safety promotion element or because they were legally required. Moreover, these actions were isolated, without a common nexus linking these measures having been established.

Taking into account the results of this study, we concluded that the current picture did not resemble a truly comprehensive school safety management approach as outlined by Boychuk (2014) and ENETOSH (2014). Progress in this area was uneven and it has become necessary to continue to insist on safety being an integral part of a school's executive, educational and administrative management. We suggest that several aspects may contribute to progress towards a comprehensive approach to managing school safety. These include: (a)

incorporating a comprehensive school safety approach in legislation; (b) introducing matters relating to safety and prevention in the basic training of future education professionals; and (c) adopting a safety and prevention culture as part of school culture. In summary, we suggest that what is required is a change of understanding promoted by the education authorities and adopted by staff in schools.

Study limitations

Although the issues discussed can be extended to other contexts, they were based on the study of a limited number of schools from a specific context and situation. Studying a larger number of cases would have allowed more data to be obtained for verification purposes, granting greater value to the conclusions and to the proposals generated. It must also be borne in mind that the data analysis was based on participant discussion and the contents of school institutional documents, so there may be differences between declared principles and actual practices. Future research should consider a larger number of cases, as well as the use of data collection tools that may facilitate verification and interpretation.

Implications

The results of this study suggest that a school safety perspective should be present in all school management, organisational and operational guidelines and that specific structures should be in place to promote their implementation. School principals, due to their role and the position they occupy, should demonstrate leadership in this area, supporting the development and implementation of initiatives aimed at promoting school safety.

Specifically, a comprehensive school safety approach requires: (a) consideration of the physical, emotional and social dimensions of safety in an integrated way; (b) declaring and defining principles and objectives that make clear the educational community's commitment to creating safe school environments; (c) making safety a mainstream

consideration in all aspects of school management; and (d) involving all stakeholders in the educational community.

Regulations, the level of safety culture, the principles and objectives set out in institutional documents and the actions and initiatives promoted will have an impact on the creation of safe and healthy environments for all members of the school's educational community.

References

Bazeley, Pat. 2013. *Qualitative Data Analysis: Practical Strategies.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Boychuk, Sue. 2014. "'Whole School' Approach to Safety and Health." *ENETOSH Newsletter* 12: 1–2. www.enetosh.net/files/186/NL_12-EN_inlay_final_040814_web.pdf.

Burgos, Antonio. 2010. "La integración de la seguridad y salud en los centros escolares: una visión práctica desde el profesorado." *Revista de Investigación Educativa* 28 (1): 79–98.

Chamarro, Ander, Eduard Longás, Jordi Longás, and Mateu Capell. 2009. *Danys no intencionats a l'escola. Gestió de la seva prevenció.* Barcelona: SAIP – Fundació Blanquerna Assistencial i de Serveis (Ramon Llull University).

Coller, Xavier. 2000. *Estudio de casos.* Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Centre for Sociological Research).

Cornell, Dewey G., and Peter Sheras. 2006. *Guidelines for Responding to Student Threats of Violence.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Côté-Lussier, Carolyn, and Caroline Fitzpatrick. 2016. "Feelings of Safety at School, Socioemotional Functioning, and Classroom Engagement." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 58 (2): 543–550. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.01.003.

De Waal, Elda, and Mary Grösser. 2014. "On Safety and Security in Education: Pedagogical Needs and Fundamental Rights of Learners." *Educar* 50 (2): 339–361.

Devine, John, and Jonathan Cohen. 2007. *Making Your School Safe: Strategies to Protect Children and Promote Learning*. New York: Columbia University and Teachers College Press.

Díaz-Cabrera, Dolores, Rosa Isla-Díaz, Gladys Rolo-González, Oskelys Villegas-Velásquez, Yeray Ramos-Sopena, and Estefanía Hernández-Fernaud. 2008. "La salud y la seguridad organizacional desde una perspectiva integradora." *Papeles del psicólogo* 29 (1): 83–91.

Díaz-Vicario, Anna. 2012. "La gestión de la seguridad integral en centros educativos: el rol del directivo." In *Respuestas emergentes desde la organización de instituciones educativas*, edited by Manuel Lorenzo Delgado and Manuel López Sánchez, 47–84. Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada.

Duke, Daniel L. 2002. *Creating Safe Schools for All Children*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Dunlap, E. Scott, ed. 2013. *The Comprehensive Handbook of School Safety*. Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis Group.

Dwyer, Kevin, David Osher, and Cynthia Warger. 1998. *Early Warning Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Eklund, Katie, Kris Bosworth, and Sheri Bauman. 2015. "Promoting Safe Schools for All Students." In *Prevention Science in School Settings*, edited by Kris Bosworth, 307–333. New York: Springer.

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work [EU-OSHA]. 2013. *Occupational Safety and Health and Education: A Whole-School Approach*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/occupational-safety-and-health-and-education-a-whole-school-approach.

European Network Education and Training in Occupational Safety and Health [ENETOSH]. 2014. *Occupational Safety and Health and Education: Whole School Approach*. https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/documents/OSH-and-education-whole-school-approach.pdf.

Fierro, María Cecilia. 2013. "Convivencia inclusiva y democrática. Una perspectiva para gestionar la seguridad escolar." *Sinéctica* 40: 1–18.

Fortuny, Montserrat. 1992. "Educació per a la seguretat i prevenció d'accidents a les institucions educatives." *Temps d'Educació* 8: 217–228.

Gairín, Joaquín (coordinating editor), Anna Díaz-Vicario, Diego Castro, Jordi Sans, Manuel Martín, Manuel Rosales, Ramón-Jordi Moles, and Xavier Sentinella. 2009. *La seguridad integral en los centros de enseñanza obligatoria de España*. Madrid: Fundación Mapfre.

Gairín, Joaquín (coordinating editor), Diego Castro, Anna Díaz-Vicario, Lluís Mañes, Manuel Martín, Ramón-Jordi Moles, Manuel Rosales, Jordi Sans, Xavier Sentinella, and Olga Vítolo. 2012. *La seguridad integral en los centros de enseñanza obligatoria*. Madrid: Fundación Mapfre.

Gairín, Joaquín (coordinating editor), Diego Castro, Ramón-Jordi Moles, Manuel Rosales, Xavier Sentinella, Olga Vítolo, and Anna Díaz-Vicario. 2010. *Autoavaluació de la seguretat integral en centres educatius: memòria justificativa*. Barcelona: Institut de Seguretat Pública de Catalunya (Public Safety Institute of Catalonia). http://hdl.handle.net/2072/151807.

Gairín, Joaquín (coordinating editor), Ramón-Jordi Moles, Jordi Sans, Manuel Rosales, Diego Castro, Xavier Sentinella, Manel Martín, et al. 2008. *Avaluació de la seguretat*

integral en els Centres Educatius de Catalunya. Barcelona: Departament d'Educació (Department of Education).

Gairín, Joaquín, and Diego Castro. 2011. "Safety in Schools: An Integral Approach." *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 14 (4): 457–474.

Gavidia, Valentín. 2001. "La transversalidad y la escuela promotora de salud." *Revista Española de Salud Pública* 75 (6): 505–516.

Hayes, Denis. 2003. *Planning, Teaching and Class Management in Primary Schools*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Hundeloh, Heinz, and Beat Hess. 2003. "Promoting Safety – A Component in Health Promotion in Primary and Secondary Schools." *Injury Control and Safety Promotion* 10 (3): 165–171.

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction [ISRD], United National International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], and Central American Educational and Cultural Coordination [CECC]. 2008. *Safe Schools in Safe Territories: Reflections on the Role of the Educational Community in Risk Management*. www.eird.org/publicaciones/safe-schools.pdf.

Longás, Eduard. 2011. "Danys no intencionats dels alumnes: anàlisi de la seva incidència i propostes per a la seva prevenció." In *Cap a la prevenció de riscos a l'escola*, edited by Jordi Longás, 87–105. Barcelona: Cossetània.

Longás, Jordi. 2011. "Introducció. Vers una escola segura i saludable." In *Cap a la prevenció de riscos a l'escola*, edited by Jordi Longás, 15–24. Barcelona: Cossetània.

Longás, Jordi. 2012. "Sobre el benestar a l'escola i en el professorat. Estudis i aproximació conceptual." In *El benestar a l'escola i en el professorat. L'estat de l'educació a Catalunya. Anuari 2011*, edited by Jordi Longás and Miquel Martínez, 21–102. Barcelona: Jaume Bofill.

Miles, Matthew B., A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña. 2014. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller, David, John Plant, and Paul Scaife. 2007. *Managing Finance, Premises and Health and Safety*. Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Modzeleski, William, Anne Mathews-Younes, Carmen G. Arroyo, Danyelle Mannix, Michael E. Wells, Gary Hill, Ping Yu, and Stephen Murray. 2012. "An Introduction to the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative." *Evaluation and Program Planning* 35 (2): 269–272.

Osher, David, and Kimberly Kendziora. 2010. "Building Conditions for Learning and Healthy Adolescent Development". In B. Doll, W. Pfohl, and J. Yoon., *Handbook of Youth Prevention Science* (pp. 121-140). New York: Routledge.

Osher, David, Kevin Dwyer, and Stephanie Jackson. 2004. *Safe, Supportive and Successful Schools: Step by Step.* Longmont, CA: Corwin Press.

Robers, Simone, Jana Kemp, Jennifer Truman, and Thomas Snyder. 2013. *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2012.* Washington, DC.: U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Roca, David, Pedro Ferradas, Giovanna Santillán, Armando Martín Barrantes, Jorge Luis Chumpitaz, and Raúl Jaime Marcos. 2009. *Gestión del riesgo en instituciones educativas. Guía para docentes de educación básica regular.* Lima, Peru: Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education).

Saint Leger, Lawrence, Ian Young, Claire Blanchard, and Martha Perry. 2010. *Promoting Health in Schools: From Evidence to Action.* Saint-Denis, France: International Union for Health Promotion and Education [IUHPE].

Sarková, Mária, Mária Bačíková-Slesková, Andrea Madarasová Gecková, Zuzana Katreniaková, Wim van den Heuvel, and Jitse P. van Dijk. 2014. "Adolescents' Psychological Well-Being and Self-Esteem in the Context of Relationships at School." *Educational Research* 56 (4): 367–378.

Schools for Health in Europe [SHE]. 2009. *Better Schools Through Health: The Third European Conference on Health Promoting Schools – 15–17 June 2009, Vilnius, Lithuania*. http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/docs/vilnius_resolution.pdf.

Shaw, Margaret. 2004. "Comprehensive Approaches to School Safety and Security: An International View." In *School Safety and Security: Lessons in Danger*, by Rick Draper et al., 91–107. Paris: OECD.

Shmeleva, Elena A., Pavel A. Kislyakov, Larisa D. Maltseva, and Ludmila F. Luneva. 2015. "Psychological Factors of the Readiness of Teachers to Ensure Social Security in the Educational Environment." *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art* 8 (1): 74–85.

Skevington, Suzanne M., Isolde Birdthistle, and Jack T. Jones. 2003. *Creating an Environment for Emotional and Social Well-Being: An Important Responsibility of a Health-Promoting and Child Friendly School.* Working paper. Geneva: World Health Organisation.

Stake, Robert E. 1999. *Investigación con estudio de casos*. Translation of *The Art of Case Study Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995) by Roc Filella. Madrid: Ediciones Morata.

Syrjäläinen, Eija, Pirjo Jukarainen, Veli-Matti Värri, and Simo Kaupinmäki. 2015. "Safe School Day According to the Young". *Young* 23 (1): 59–75.

Tilló, Teresa 1992. "La seguretat als centres docents". *Temps d'educació*, 8: 197–215.

World Health Organisation [WHO]. 2004. *The Physical School Environment: An Essential Component of a Health-Promoting School.* Information Series on School Health Document 2. Geneva: World Health Organisation.

World Health Organisation [WHO]. 2010. *Entornos laborales saludables: fundamentos y modelo de la OMS: contextualización, prácticas y literatura de apoyo*. Geneva: World Health Organisation.

Xaba, Mgadla Isaac. 2014. "A Holistic Approach to Safety and Security at Schools in South Africa." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5 (20): 1580–1589.

Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.