ROLES OF THE SCHOOL MANAGER FROM THE LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT. School management analysis has emphasized a series of characteristics both similar to and different from other organizations. It has been proved that the specific of school management comes from the particularities of the school activity especially from the existence of two main activity fields – educational and administrative – which have led to other school particularities such as the unique relationship between certain personnel members (teacher and pupils), the variety of school cultures and subcultures, the school climate based on an environment totally dedicated to education etc.

Starting from the analysis of some management models, we emphasize the acute need of implementing several changes in school management. They are required both by the latest advances in theoretical analysis of the school organization and everyday management practice which has highlighted a number of specific solutions to real problems identified in education.

Keywords: management, "facilitator" and "transformational" leaders, principal/ headteacher, formal and informal leader

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG. Die Analyse der Schulenführung hat eine Serie von Eigenschaften nachgewiesen, die sowohl ähnlich als auch verschieden von jenen anderer Unternehmen sind. Man hat bewiesen, dass das Spezifikum des Schulenmanagements in den Partikularitäten der Schulentätigkeit besteht, besonders hinsichtlich der zwei Haupttätigkeitsbereiche - erzieherisch und verwaltend – und diese haben zu anderen spezifischen Eigenschaften geführt, wie z.B. die einzige Beziehung zwischen dem Lehrer und den Schülern, die Vielfältigkeit der Kultur und Unterkultur der Schule, das Ausbildungsumfeld etc.

Von der Analyse einiger Managementsmodelle abgehend, kann man die Notwendigkeit einiger Veränderungen im Schulmanagement bemerken. Die Forschung in der Organisationstheorie als auch das praktische Management verlangen eine Reihe von Lösungen für die wirklichen Probleme des Erziehungswesens.

Stichwort: Management, "Vermittler" und "transformierende" Leiter, Schuldirektor/ Schulleiter, formelle und informelle Leiter

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Classical Organizations and Managers

There are various challenges and risks an organization may face in order to become competitive. There are many aspects which make the difference between organizations, in terms of success or failure. Some of them refer to the manager's view on focusing the human potential or the particular abilities of the employees in order to reach the organization's goals, despite the power policy or private interests – phenomena which appear in every organizational environment. Research in the management field has revealed the idea that an organisation can be successful if based on mutual agreement and commitment of several persons who wilfully accept to be led by one person. From this perspective, it is interesting to study the organization-individual relationship that gives us answers regarding loialty, trust, feelings like "being part of a group".

Literature on management has identified two classic types of managers developed within the North American organizations and taken over by the Japonese ones in the second half of the last century.[1] The first type was practiced in the American companies and successfully copied by the Japonese until 1990.

These organizations recruit people after their graduation, invest in the employees' training and manage to transform them into their own specialists. The disadvantage is that they become an economic value only for the company they work in, and not for the others on the economic market. In this case, the staff is not known outside their own organization, it is appreciated only within the company. The great risk is that, at a possible collapse of the firm, the employees would not immediately find a place to work on the labor market, as they are too specialized only for their mother-organization. This happens because the organization does its best for its own personnel: invests in training programs to improve the knowledge of employees; remuneration is established according to the scope and position in the hierarchy etc. Therefore in time the employees become bonded through commitment and loyalty to the firm. A reliable relationship between the company and the employees is developed in this particular case: the company makes use of its employees' skills, knowledge, professional experience, which represent a competitive advantage when dealing with other companies; in turn, the employees are sure they could stay for a long time in that company.

Gradually, the great North American businesses have abandoned this model as another type of managers has emerged: it consists in recruiting specialist managers, with great experience in the management field, who have worked in other companies and have proved a real potential in leadership, managers who have had successful performances in other previous workplaces.

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[1] In Allaire Y., Fîrșirotu M. (1998), *Management strategic*, Editura economică, București

They are targeted by other organizations which want them in turn of huge wages, as they are seen as professionals who can perform in any organization irrespective of its activity field.

The development of this new kind of social contract makes the employees understand that the company no longer offers a high degree of stability, therefore, as "*good managers of their own careers*" [Putnam & Pacanowski (1983), *Communication and Organizations: an Interpretative Approach*, Newburry Park, California], they try to make themselves known both inside and outside the organization, through short term initiatives and spectacular results.

This approach of the relationship between the individual and organization generates the inception of two management concepts. The first one was influenced by those leadership theories which explain how the leadership is born, and if the leaders have genetical leading features or the circumstances make them become leaders. To this regard, the management of an enterprise is based on exceptional people-managers, innovators and entrepreneurs - heroes by birth, motivated by a strong need of success. Still they are not the product of an organizational culture. The disadvantage of this system is that it deepens the management gap between leaders and performers. The value of the hero-manager consists of "*good results in passing from one firm to another, but they have a lasting effect, because an organization is considered to be successful when it succeeds in making ordinary people do their best*" [Allaire Y., Fîrşirotu M. (1998), *Management strategic*, Editura economică, Bucureşti] for the company, in other words, no matter how good the managers are, they can't lead the organization alone. It is necessary to concentrate all human energies and nurture an organizational culture in order to bring all the members of the organization together and work for the benefit of the company and themselves.

The second concept assumes management as a profession[2]. This means that managers, as any other people with a profession for which they have been trained like doctors, lawyers etc. make a profession from leading the others regardless of the activity field and act in accordance with their professional ethics.

This manager offers his services to various companies, as the doctor cares for the sick and he gradually feels bound by the profession rather than the organisation. The disadvantage of this type of relationship is derived from the erroneous idea that the organization is a tool that serves to the manager's personal practices. To become truly professional in practicing his managerial abilities, the manager must undergo specialized training courses, develop the ability to make judgements and take decisions, based on a great managerial experience. This managerial training system must provide the qualification for a profession and a certificate to be recognized in this profession as a result of a specialized university or post-university training in management.

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[2] In Allaire Y., Fîrşirotu M. (1998), *Management strategic*, Editura economică, Bucureşti

We shouldn't forget the fact that "to lead" means to build organizations and the manager, in addition to his administrative role arising from the formal aspects of the activities, must exert influence on the scope of the informal level of the organization, becoming its principal architect by exploiting the human resources and relationships between the members of the group. He should be responsible for an open climate which can lead to a healthy organization. Otherwise, he is likely to be a simple servant, devoted to his profession rather than to his organization.

School Management Particularities

From a complex organizational perspective, the school analysis has emphasized a series of school characteristics which have determined its specific type of management. The specific of the school management comes from the particularities of the school activity especially from the existence of the two main activity fields – educational and administrative – which have led to the appearance of three categories of personnel – teachers, administrative staff and pupils. In comparison with other types of organizations which develop only two main categories of personnel (management and executive staff), there is a third category of personnel in schools – pupils – who makes the difference in terms of school specificity referring to mission, objectives, culture, climate etc.

The role of the school manager is difficult as he permanently has to ensure and maintain a perfect balance between the two levels of activity and at the same time to build the school organizational and cultural structure by placing the pupil in the centre of the whole activity. This also means that the school manager should become a very good communicator in order to involve all the educational and administrative school resources in pupils' training.

In one of his books, Emil Păun[3] focuses on the particularities of the school management due to the existence of the two "logics" – pedagogical and organizational – suggesting that the school manager should become that person able to effectively manage both educational and administrative school aspects. This mixture of the principal's tasks is carried out in accordance with the "organizational logic" that aims at the organizational structures which standardized the teaching activity. These rules act within a "formal" frame which cannot be applied to the teaching activity which involves a higher level of freedom of thinking, initiative and openess to informal aspects. The class activity has its own norms coming from the nature of the teaching process itself which refers to the teaching methodology while the administrative level refers only to setting up the institutional framework for accomplishing the teaching tasks.

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[3] Păun, Emil (1999), *Şcoala, o abordare sociopedagogică*, Editura Polirom, Iaşi

A very interesting question arises from this situation: In order to effectively fulfill the school tasks, should the school manager have a previous training in the education field or not?

From a historical perspective, we can say that the Romanian education system is not ready for the promotion of the type of school managers others than teachers. The tradition of our country has always promoted the example of a principal who is also a teacher, considering his psychological and pedagogical training as absolutely necessary to solve educational issues. The teaching training may also help the him to properly interact with other members of the school staff. It may be the starting point in considering the school director as being "one of them" in the joint effort to create the regulatory school framework and an appropriate learning climate.

In supporting the idea of the teaching-director, one can also start from the very essence of the leadership act, seen as an act of teaching, which makes him take the advantage of the pedagogical training. This is reflected in those school contexts that require teacher's abilities, for instance, pupils's assessment or teaching staff evaluation, staff motivation, stimulation to achieve academic and professional performance for improving the quality of the educational process and school organization climate.

Another characteristic of the school management refers to the variety of staff categories led by the school director. The most representative of those mentioned above are the teachers and pupils who are practically involved in the educational process. But if we also think of the auxiliary, administrative and managerial staff as well as the pupils' parents, we may display the complete picture of the different school members.

The variety of staff within the school determines a specific set of formal relations, which are not the common type of leader-subordinate relations existing in any other organization outside the education system. In schools, this type of interactions is reflected mainly by the relations between the principal and the administrative staff. Towards teachers, he develops a set of collaborative relations based on the same teaching values and concerns. The principal's role as a manager reflects particularly on the school administrative level and organizational aspects, such as organizing the educational process, dividing students into classes, schedule development, financial and accounting issues etc. In relation with the teachers, pupils, parents he must develop relationships based on his previous training as a teacher.

In order to create an appropriate school climate, the principal, like any manager in other field of activity, should be a very good communicator in order to inspire trust and make the others actively participate in the school organization's life. A good communication between the manager and subordinates, a relaxed working atmosphere, accuracy in the evaluation of the school personnel by

appreciating and rewarding the good results contribute to the development of the manager's profile. Personal example, the manager's personality, his professional experience, together with managerial acts such as setting clear goals, justifying own actions, taking decisions in collaboration with the managerial team make the difference between a good and a bad school director.

Roles of School Managers

Within the organizational structure of the school, the principal holds the position of the formal leader in relation with other categories of staff. But, as we all know, not always the same person is also the real leader of the organization, the person who is really wanted by the others to lead and represent them in relation with the authority. It is therefore important that the headteacher should distinguish between the leader and manager's abilities and identify ways of action in accordance with both qualities.

Since the 80's, the American literature has promoted the new concept of "instructional leader" to define the personality of the principal in terms of new roles. It does not necessarily refer to the fact that the he has to spend several hours in the classroom, but the student's learning should be at the heart of the manager activity.

Between 1983 and 1986, Richard Andrews investigated the relationship of an organization's clear and focused mission and the role of the principal as a strong instructional leader to the academic achievement of students. This leading role is characterized by a set of "*interactions or behaviors that can be divided into four areas: resource provider, identifying educational resources, effective communication and visibility in school*" [In McNamara, P., (1993), *What can educators learn from school climate*, Department of Education, Stockholm University].

It is difficult to determine the role of the principal as an educational leader, but in short, according to this role, he must act in order to optimize the educational process. It is the pedagogical training which helps the director to understand the essence of education and its impact on students and teachers' professional development. My personal belief is that the principal's model in our country ist hat one with a previous pedagogical training in order to better understand and respond to the educational matters in his school. Of course, we can also take into account the alternative of the professional manager, without pedagogical training and teaching expertise. But despite his very good managerial skills, it is possible he may not understand the dynamics of the educational process and find the best solutions to the educational problems.

Copeland[4] believes that the headteacher is a pedagogical leader who promotes success among students by building and supporting the school culture, teachers' professional development, educational programmes in accordance with the students performance. Being aware of this role he has to act in such a way as to understand the students' needs, put learning theories into practice and motivating students accordingly, implement an advanced curriculum, assess the teaching strategies used in the educational process, promote various educational programmes, provide models and facilitate access to training programmes for the staff.

The leading abilities of the headteacher may also be highlighted when dealing with change management within the school organization which shoul refer to constantly adapting strategies to the curriculum changes that may occur, the dynamics of the school population flow, the teachers and students efficiency, the school climate or budget sizing. Sooner or later, all the school aspects can be affected in a pozitive or negative way by the change implementation. But change doesn't mean only meeting new requirements, there is also another form of change, an innovative one, that can be created and promoted in certain situations to facilitate the accomplishment of the organisation's goals. As the educational environment undergoes a continuous state of changes, the manager must turn himself in a real change agent who is responsible for the change implementation in his school.

It is known that the school manager can't reach success if acting alone. Without the support of the staff it is not possible to be successful. In order to make the other school members to be of his side he must prove a set of skills such as: efficiency, open communication, staff motivation, focus on strategic human resources, determination in making the others take part in running the organization, coherence and expertise.

Studies in this area have highlighted two types of leadership that have to be proved useful in the change management: *facilitator* and *transformational* leadership.[5]

To promote the optimal process of change, the principal needs to build communication skills at personal, interpersonal, and professional level and create an environment based on cooperation, participation, commitment. The solution is to adopt a facilitator leadership which requires mainly the following abilities: team building skills - not necessarily with people of the same specialty, but who can work well together, conflict management, interpersonal communication, cooperation policies etc. All these characteristics and abilities makes the

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[4] Copeland, D., (2003), *Instructional leadership characteristics of Secondary Ribbon School principals*, Seton Hall University

[5] Katz, Melvin, B., (2004), A *Descriptive study of the skills and attributes of principles who have become effective change agents in their schools*, Selton Hall University

facilitator leader know how to deal with conflicts and tensions, to guide the team towards common goals, to show flexibility, consistency, ability to see opportunities for change.

In contrast, the transformational leader motivates those who do more than they think they can, by raising standards, requirements and tasks, encouraging them to overcome their own interests and be concerned with the interests of the team, organization or community. He is naturally inclined towards action and change, and owns the necessary knowledge and skills to involve the staff in running the organization. He shows also creativity, openness, flexibility, teamwork orientation, sensitivity to the needs of the others, responsibility and recognition, appreciation of the people performance. But we can not refer to this concept and analize it without placing it in the change context as the transformational leader is a real change agent.

Regardless of the two roles the principal might develop in his school nowadays, he should be the change agent for the entire educational environment by: establishing a wide range of expectations for yourself and for others, defining standards of performance, setting a good program of change implementation, identifying priorities and communicating them to the others, placing long-term goals beyond immediate interests, directing change to an effective innovation process, monitoring the implementation of change, identifying personnel with sufficient knowledge and skills to advise others, placing the learner at the center of all activities undertaken.

Therefore, the principal's role should be directed to that of the transformational leader; he is highly motivated and develops a strategical vision for his organization. These qualities are what he needs in order to promote a stimulative educational climate and a high level of motivation and morality.

School Managers' Specific Training

At the moment, in our country the managerial training of the teachers who want to become principals consists of educational management programs/ courses accredited at national level by the Ministry of Education through the National Center of Teacher Training in Pre-university Education. These courses can be delivered by universities (through their Teaching Departments), Teacher's Houses, NGOs which have educational aims etc. There are certain compulsory modules within these courses such as Educational management, Curriculum and Communication & IT.

This form of managerial training is coordinated by the National Center mentioned above based on clear criteria and methodologies. One of the main requirements refers to the compliance with the National Standards of the teaching or managerial positions.

The periodical training of the teaching and managerial staff in pre-university education is compulsory and stipulated in the Education Legislation.

In order to sustain some of the ideas mentioned in the theoretical chapters of this paper, a survey was initiated in 2008 between September 1st and December 15th.[6]

The main goal of the study was to investigate the principals/ teacher's opinions on the current status of the headteacher, especially when referring to principal's mandate limited to 4 years, the 2- year consecutive limitation of the act of school management, the obligation to perform both school management and teaching activities simultaneously.

The study aimed at the analysis of the principal's status at national level, being investigated 570 headteachers and teachers from four geographical areas in our country (Moldavia, Oltenia, Ardeal and Bucharest) in order to identify possible disfunctions and, on the other hand, to notice their response to a potential status change.

In this regard, we established the following objectives:
- identifying the principals/teachers opinions on the present headteacher's status
- identifying the level of satisfaction/content given by the actual status
- identifying the reasons for the above mentioned feelings
- identifying the principals'/teachers's reaction to a potential change of the headteacher's status.

Being asked about what elements are more important for their training in order to become good school managers, the following answers were given:

Components	Percentage
Managerial training	20%
Experience as a principal	20%
Experience as a teacher	18%
Personality features	15%
Life experience	15%
Other components (politics, environment, life standard etc.)	12 %
TOTAL	*100 %*

Managerial training and experience as a school director

The highest percentage is represented by two components which are closely related to the managerial domain: the managerial training and experience as a principal, each of them with 20%. This proves that the principals' perception on the importance of their training in the management field is very high. Owning

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[6] Carmen Chervase (2010), „*Schimbări în managementul şcolii în contextul profesionalizării pentru funcţia managerială*", teza de doctorat, Editura Sitech, Craiova

not only management knowledge but also skills (after years of experience in this school leading position) is of utmost importance for their career as headteachers. The two components reflect the real need of managerial training by them.

Experience as a teacher

Representing 18%, the teaching experience is one of the most important three training components which help headteachers take quick decisions especially in the following school activities:
- class organization
- activity planning
- relationship with the pupils, parents etc.
- decorating the school
- administrative tasks etc.

We are glad to see how much the principals appreciate their previous training as teachers. This means they have the advantage of knowing very well the school particularities due to their teaching experience and at the moment of taking over the school principal's position they will not waste time to do this. The answers to this question of the survey once again emphasize the idea that principals's activity is helped by their previous experience as teachers in covering the educational and administrative school issues.

To this point, the most important result of the survey shows that the headteachers appreciate the managerial components as very important for their training and put them on the first place. That means they are in need of this type of preparation besides their previous training as teachers.

Being asked if they have participated in management training courses, their answers were the following:

Have you participated in management training courses accredited by the Ministry of Education?	Percentage
- once	23%
- twice	22%
- several times	31%
- no	24%
TOTAL	*100%*

The information in the table shows that 76% of the school directors have participated in management training courses accredited by the Ministry of Education one, twice or several times. This means they need a managerial training in case they are appointed in this leading position because their previous training as teachers is not enough for running a school and consider this managerial position as a different job which requires specific training. It also shows that they

are informed about the teacher/principal training system by means of accredited courses introduced in 2001, which brings new strategies regarding an unique vision upon this type of training and organization at national level, standardization of their activity and training, a wider range of training providers and transferable credits introduced at this level following the example of the university education.

We were then interested in how much the trainees appreciate the training aquisitions and if the management training provided is appropriately proportioned between theoretical and practical aspects:

Do these courses provide you with proper theoretical and practical training?	Percentage
- largely	65%
- little	31%
- no	2%
- don't know	2%
TOTAL	*100%*

The highest percentage (65%) is represented by those who consider they have benefited from a high level of theoretical and practical knowledge during the management training courses. These results make us sure that a great part of the surveyed school directors have attended this type of preparation and know very well the training system for school directors in our country.

The next question of the questionnaire is about the most benefical period of the managerial training delivered:

When do you need more the managerial training?	Percentage
- before the appointment	55%
- after the appointment	45%
TOTAL	*100%*

55% of the total persons investigated consider they need managerial training before being appointed in the school director position in order to be well prepared at the moment when becoming the head of the school and to solve all the issues that may arise in accordance with the management theory and knowledge.

There are also persons who agree with both options, underlying the idea of a lifelong learning in the managerial field.

Irrespective of the moment when the training is attended, it is obvious that the school directors admit they are in need of a proper training in the managerial field in order to deal not only with the issues specific to this managerial position but also with the new aspects of the education arising from the latest changes in society.

Conclusions

Nowadays school directors face new work situations due to the profound changes of the Romanian society, experiencing a constant transition and overtaken by the recent global economic crisis. Accelerated transformations of any kind are reflected in behavioral styles and mentality of individuals, many of them no longer having values that guide them so far. The lack of permanent and wilful attention of the politicians towards education in the last twenty years has led to a deterioration of the main components of the school life: the education process, communication and relationships established between members of the education system, school discipline, the students and parents' attitude towards the education process etc.

Besides the traditional roles of an educator and leader, the director should be a very flexible person, able to develop new components of his personality, for example that of a keen psychologist in relation with all the school beneficiaries and stakeholders, especially parents and students, and also emphasize his role of a mediator, as conflicts in schools are more numerous and complex than ever. If unable to assume these new roles, it is his duty to complete the school management team with a good psychologist (counselor) and develop a closer relationship with the local law enforcement authorities. It is a fact that should we assume, that the school, viewed from the perspective of many representatives of the civil society, is no longer a safe place for children, due to the increase of the number of risks and threats that require quick solutions from school directors. The present teaching process means no longer only providing information to students but also educating students and making them return to traditional school values, create a proper learning environment in school and rediscover the benefits of a good school-parents collaboration.

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