

Effective School Management

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Abstract

The main reason for this work was the interest of the educational districts but also of the entire society about school, to learn and understand how to manage it effectively in our days. This study aims to find out how many school directors use contemporary methods for an effective management. On the other hand, I believe that many things need to change. In order to clearly represent my ideals, doubts and my hypothesis regarding the effective school management, I decided to apply this study in some of Tirana's schools. I decided that the principals, teachers, parents and students could help by showing me the reality and its real impact. I believe that the results, conclusions and recommendations that come out of this study will serve as a great starting point, to stimulate the school principals to improve the quality of school management, and at the same time to try to motivate them on becoming successful leaders. The information revealed from this study will greatly benefit the Management Institutions like DAR (Area Department of Education) to increase the management quality. The school principal is the main supporter in fulfilling all school objectives, attaining them together with the leading staff and the teachers. The primary role of the school Principal includes a wide range of duties inside and outside the school, as an educator, in charge of education, responsible for the achievement of the school curriculum, etc. Given the outcome of my study, now I am even more convinced that the change will come only if the school managers will use the contemporary methods. The school manager will be more successful and therefore the school itself will be more competitive.

Keywords: *School Principal, effective management, school management, educational legislation, management styles.*

Introduction

At the focus of this study is the method of leading and managing the school. This study intends to reveal and answer to some basic questions about leading.

-How important is this process and how is reflected directly in the quality of the school management? – Do the school managers really know and apply the contemporary methods in order to be successful?

-How effective are the school leaders to organize, plan, coordinate and collaborate in an effective way with all structures involved in the process of education.

In order to have an effective and successful management in our schools, we need to clearly define which are the methods that bring a positive change in our schools. It is important to know the paths a principal must follow to embrace these methods. The main role in this case is played by the organization, cooperation and decision-making. Communication is another important element. Communication is the key to success, everything else starts here.

Methodology

Population

Population I used to conclude this study is made of:

- School managers 40 (20 of them are school principals and the other 20 are vice-directors (in 20 different schools))
- Teachers 60 (in four selected schools)
- Parents 20 (in four selected schools)
- Students 80 (in four selected schools)
- Total 200

Patterns

I casually choosed four schools to deepen my study

1-High School “SADIK STAVILECI”

2-United High School of Iba “MERSIN DUQI”

3-Elementary School “KATUND I RI”

4- Elementary School “KASEM SHIMA”

The sample teachers are prechosen from all 20 schools that I choose for this study, while the teachers, students and parents are focused only in the four schools mentioned before.

The Instruments

1- Leader's Questionnaire

Made of a list of opened and closed questions, which gather the information on demographic and psychological variables.

2- Teacher's Questionnaire about leader-teacher relationship

This questionnaire is made of a list of opened and closed questions, which gather the information on the psychological variables of the teacher-school leaders' relationship dynamics.

3. Studying the annual curriculum of these sample schools

This study evaluates the formal aspect of the school documentation for the positive performance of the Educational Curriculum.

4- Parent's interview

This interview consists in opened questions which measure the level of the information parents have on the school, their children's education or their attitude toward the school leaders.

5- Student's Interview

This interview consists in opened questions which measure student's attitude toward their teachers, school principal and school in general.

Hypothesis

The utilization of the contemporary methods by the school leaders produces effective management.

Our Goal

This work aims to find out if the school directors are using contemporary methods for an effective management.

Our Objectives

- 1-**To determine the methods that produce effective management and a successful school
- 2-**To touch the reality and clearly understand the school management method
- 3-**To demonstrate individual management patterns

Literature Study

Changing the management concept – a necessity

It is difficult to change the management concept because it is related to the form, content, method, means, materials, etc.

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The change of the management concepts is determined by objective and subjective factors like: Determination of the goals and objectives of the educational system.

- *Contemporary Democratic Legislation as support to the educational development.*
- *Providing the needed materials as an important factor in implementation of the reform.*
- *The selection of the managing staff is necessary to the effectiveness of the reform in education.*

In the range of activities, I will emphasize three structures that function as a whole unit in the decentralized decision-making through the years inside the school as an institution.

1-Pedagogic Staff

It is not easy to manage the pedagogic staff of a school; It means:¹

- To find out the right competency in each situation.
- To delegate the competencies without compromising them.
- To communicate clearly and effectively.

In our school tradition the pedagogic staff is accepted as an important part of school life. Although in different periods of time its importance has been different, essentially it has been a great support to the school managers. "If you want to see how much intelligent is the leader, look around him". (The staff)²

2-Curricular boards

Subject committee has been the core of the teacher's qualifications. "*Educational team must renew and fulfill its general and professional reports, in the school's interest, by reading pedagogic magazines and making special studies. Periodical trainings are held in order to improve the teachers' knowledge.*"³

Later, the teacher's qualification was based in methodical work from the centre to the base. Subject committees were formed, as educational units, with a positive input compared to the previous one, at district level.

3-School management styles

According to Goleman, a scholar, there are six leading styles:⁴

- *Compelling:* Demands execution of his orders, or "Do as I say".
- *Authoritative.* Mobilizes people toward a vision, or "Follow me".
- *Co-operative:* Builds unity and emotional connection, or "The person above all".
- *Democratic:* Strengthens the unity through involvement, or "What do you think?"
- *Determines the pace:* Determines high working standards, or "From this moment, do as I do".

¹ Education administration & managing Number 5,2003 fq 92

² Machiavelli Quotation

³ Organic Law of Education Decree 1934

⁴ According to Goleman

- Coaching. Prepares people for the future, or "Try this".

The two styles that influence negatively at the school environment are the compelling and determining the pace.

The principal who owns the authoritative, democratic, cooperative, or coaching style creates a positive climate at school and the effect of the group work is evident; every one feel respected and responsible. The influence that the leaders have upon the results of their students it is not direct and is caused by the influence of the school directors upon the school and the schools educational staff culture upon the attitude and behavior which affect the quality of the teaching and learning process.

Managing role model sustained at eight components⁵

1. *Highlighting the achievements, problems, evaluating the situation.*
2. *Determining the objectives*
3. *Determining the activities*
4. *Determining the measurable indicators*
5. *Identification of human and material resources*
6. *Developing an implementation plan.*
7. *Executing the activities according to the planning.*
8. *Evaluation.*

The managing role is the final component in the methodical work of the leader. It is one of the most important, because after all it might give you the satisfaction of a whole year's hard work.

- *Informative evaluation*, or in other words, monitoring the situation.
- *Summarizing evaluation* made to compare indicators and results achieved with the objectives.
- *Final evaluation*, where I determine the effects, the impulses the staff has received, in other words the conclusion on the objective execution.

Strategic elements of management and growth of the school's autonomy

Contemporary Concept

- Mission
- Strategy
- Standards
- Evaluation
- Relationship

⁵ Effective School Managing, Tirana 2002

The management philosophy is made also of decision-making, strategies and relationships. So, the school autonomy and its management are closely related to each-other; the management helping increase the autonomy, autonomy helping management perfection. After all, autonomy is part of management philosophy.

If we are trying to reach the european standarts in effective school management system, it is obvious that we must change:

- The method of centralized management into a group management, sharing decision-making and responsibilities.
- The method of centralized financing.
- The method of managing the human resources.
- The method of evaluation and self evaluation of the students' learning achievements.
- Partnership with local district and the community.
- Delegation of decision-making concerning the curriculum, etc.

To achieve these standarts we definitely need to measure the coherence of the system at national level from the center to the base, but through passing the responsibilities from the center to the base without corrupting the linearity of the educational system.

The most favored model in our country would be to decentralize in vertical line the competencies to the local district and the school, as a public service institution and the other part to remain centralized at the central government. The reasons are: The decentralization policies demand that the local district structures have the decision-making authority in their territory, since the public education implicates a public service towards taxpayers, electorate in general.

The school, as an institution, will increase its responsibilities through the establishment of the role of school principal, teachers, parents and students. The school will be responsible about the quality of the service offered to the community, and the community will have the right to be informed and be part of decision-making in order to achive positive changes. The evaluation of the school will be transparent.

The state remains the guarantor of social justice and equality of rights, in delegating the decision-making to the local district and to the school as an institution.

In our schools we usually followed the model of the Scottish school.

School development plan should be an important mechanism which will make possible the positive change.

Results

- The methods that bring effective management are the contemporary methods.

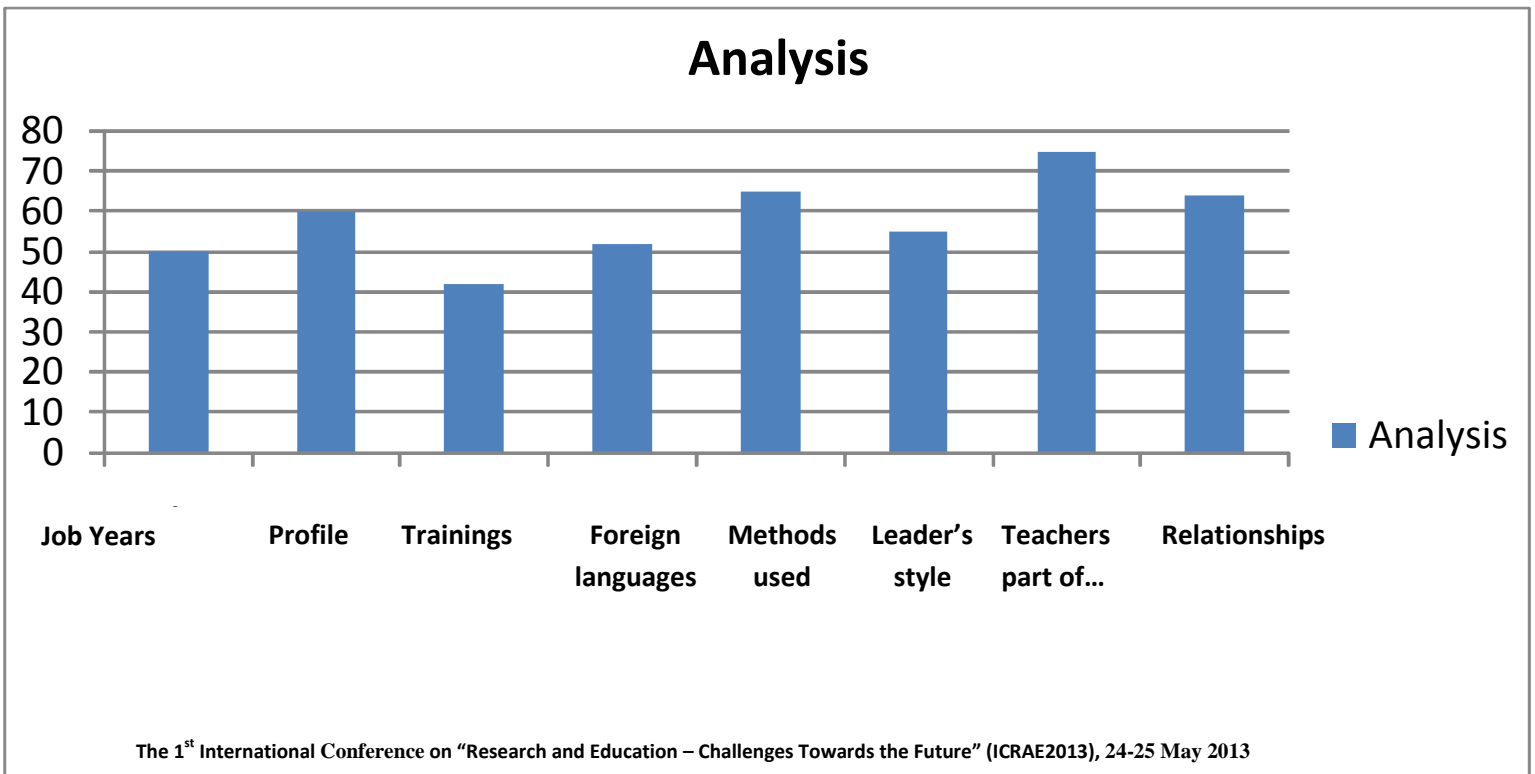
- Contemporary democratic legislation is supporting the development of the education.
- Providing material conditions is necessary for the implementation of reforms in education.
- The selection of the school leadership is essential to the progression of the reforms in education.

The contemporary methods were implemented into the schools I used for this study and as a result these schools were successful and with an effective management. The methods used helped achieving the objectives and the school pays attention to the importance of the civic education of the students.

At these schools:

- The directors used the democratic style of management.
- There was cooperation between leaders, teachers, parents and students.
- The parents were systematically informed about their children’s progress.
- There was a warm climate in communication.
- There is all-inclusive decision-making on important issues
- The students’ government has done an admirable job in establishing the cooperation between teachers and parents, and helping to the students’ in difficulty in the learning process.
- There is cooperation with the local district.
- Planning and execution of projects.

Data Analysis



Management: priority in conservation and improvement of the school quality

Principal's experience

According to the surveys, 50% of the principals have been in this position for over 5 years. This means that the most favorite principals are those with the longest experience. This could also mean that the leaders with longer experience are successful.

Leader's profile

60% of the leaders belong to the social sciences, Albanian language and literature, history or foreign languages. As a result I can conclude that the most favorite principals are from the social sciences. This fact can be justified by the greater opportunities these leaders offer in the aspect of communication.

Principal's qualifications

School management is one of the main areas and demands qualifications, that's why it is always growing. This is clearly reflected in our schools, where there is the use of effective methods of management, tightly related to the improvements and changes demanded by our schools today.

Knowledge of foreign languages

A significant part of the leaders in the schools involved in this study have foreign language certification. Principals are continually interested in learning and getting certification of one or more foreign languages. This comes from the desire of the principals to read and learn more literature in a foreign language, concerning successful school management.

Methods used by the leader:

65% of the principals in the schools involved in this study use contemporary methods which help the effectiveness of these schools. The principals are making possible this change in our schools by using the contemporary methods.

Principal's communication style with the teachers

About 55% of the teachers think that the principals use the democratic style. According to the teachers this is the style that makes successful the management of the school principal. According to this the other school principals must use the same democratic style. Through this style the principals organize,

cooperate, make group decisions, and communicate about everything related to the performance of the education system in general and the education of the youth in particular.

Teachers, participators in the decision-making process at school

75% of the teachers admit that they are part of the decision-making process and every problem is solved by the decisions taken as a group. This group of teachers believes that when the decisions are taken as a group, they feel appreciated and every problem is solved the best way.

Principal-parents-students relationship

Parents identify the school principal as the official leader of the institution; estimate the principals managing abilities especially in solving the problems of their children, even though most of these parents were selected by the decision making structures. Parents, in higher percentage, appreciate the communication with the principal when they ask for help for the progress of their children and find it. The school principal is the main sustainer in the achievement of all the school objectives, which are executed together with the management staff and the teachers.

Conclusions

According to the principal's role, as administrator and leader of the group, the principal must:

- Aim to transform the school into a learning organization.
- Consider the teacher as a partner.
- Consider the community's contribution.
- Create an environment of well understanding and cooperation inside the school.

Regarding the principal's qualification:

The school's principals must have good knowledge of the legislation, to absorb it, in order that its implementation won't be an obstacle for their initiative.

Communication and organising abilities

One of the most important competencies a principal must have is communication, as the key of building positive relationship with the school staff, parents and community in general. A successful principal makes it a priority building relationships with community and business. Principals, who have worked or are working with education projects, are more successful in their management, organization, and administration of the school.

Decentralisation and decision-making

A school principal must involve his whole staff in the in achieving the objectives and implementation of activities. He must delegate the decision-making competencies from the individual to

the group. The principal must be the leader of the working group and he should make the final decision after consulting and analyzing the staff evaluation. For specific and direct issues, the principal can and must trust the decision making or the problem solving to the department and his staff.

The ability to implement changes

A leader agrees that the change is part of the school life and human beings resist to the change. Leaders understand these truths and create all-including plans in order to make a change. They must consult the staff, teachers, parents, community members before changing programs and policies. This creates an environment of trust. Principals are willing to bring changes to the educational system.

The school principal as administrator and leader of the institution has the task of drafting the annual school plan, which is the most important document of the Educational Curriculum's content.

For the execution of the development strategy of preuniversity education 2003-2015, school is the basic place where the change must take place. It is under the continuing pressure of the surrounding hierarchy, but remains the only structure for the expected changes. In order for the school to be the source of changes, some things are required:

- Decision making opportunity for the human resources.
- Opportunity for financial budgeting.
- Opportunity to change the curriculum.
- Opportunity to choose alternative texts.
- Opportunity to choose extra and crosscurricular subjects.
- Positioning of the school principal as administrator and leader of the group.

In this context, the school principal is no longer a head-teacher, but he is the leader of the group who demands and supports the change. The principal obtains many competencies but also delegates many. From this perspective, but also in the experience of the school quality managers, we must invest in his qualification, but also must be careful to select him through competition.

School, as an institution offering services to community or society, demands an open relationship with the community, with local districts and in this context, the principal is the main personality who must have their support but also manage the relationship between them and the school. The school is responsible to the society for the "product" offered to them, is responsible to the students to give them equal chances in education, and is responsible to the teachers to give them the opportunity for training and qualification.

The principal, as the head of the school, must manage all these responsibilities. There are examples that show that principals are selected through a competition, qualified through trainings and manage effectively when they possess the necessary competencies. The fulfillment of the legal framework

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that is supported by these competencies, the legal and organisative mechanisms are really necessary and indispensable. The competencies that the nowadays principal doesn't have, when he receives them he must share them with the group and then the school will be opened to the change.

The principal's work doesn't damage just one segment of our life, but a whole future, therefore the selection of the school principal with all the necessary ratings is a requirement of our society and time.

Recommendations

- 1- Principals need to use contemporary methods for a more effective management.
- 2- Principals need to use the democratic style of leading, in order to gain the trust and respect of the whole staff.
- 3- Principals need to have good knowledge of foreign languages, because this will help immensely to study foreign literature on effective management.
- 5- Teachers should be considered as partners by the principal, leading to the improvement of teaching quality.
- 6- Must have all-inclusive decision-making about important issues.

Ethical aspects

To carry out this study I had the institutional approval of the schools' directories. This study ensured voluntary participation of the people involved in the study and also their permission. All the information collected by this study is anonymous. All the information of this study is collected and conserved in full responsibility. The results of this study are made known through this publication only for its purposes.

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