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**THE ROLE OF THE MANAGER IN THE SUCCES OF SCHOOL
ORGANIZATIONS**

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Abstract

What is a manager? What does the management activity of a school organization involve? What does an effective manager mean? What qualities should a successful manager possess, what skills define a successful manager? In this paper I tried to find the answers to all these questions and portray the image of the democratic headmaster as opposed to the authoritarian headmaster. A democratic participative leadership style is more effective, people work with pleasure, fulfil more tasks, are motivated in the work they perform, they feel respected, appreciated, have a high self-esteem, which can only bring benefits to the school organization and to the educational act. What defines a successful manager are the specialized training, organizational skills and the ability to communicate, motivate and mobilize people. I tried to point out that good leaders, high achievers, are the ones who love people, not their job title. This paper emphasizes the importance of management style, the characteristics of the manager, their personality and its role in the proper functioning of the organization.

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Keywords: Management; manager; managerial functions; school organization.



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1. Introduction

The activity of a manager involves “reaching organizational goals through effective and efficient leadership as a result of planning, organization, coordination and control of the organization's resources” (Neagu, & Udrescu, 2008, p.46). At the same time, a leader’s talent is extremely important in the effective management of an institution, because, as part of their work they interact with people not machines. To reach their objectives, managers use people, and through them, achieve goals and reach predetermined results.

Leadership, in order to be performing, cannot be exercised at random and without a set of well-established principles. The path from amateurism to professionalism passes necessarily through knowledge - technical, professional, as well as ethical and moral.

School management differs from traditional leadership by the very fact that any decision is (or must be) based on efficiency: didactic efficiency, extra-teaching efficiency, educational efficiency, etc. Any assessment of the educational process, which is done in terms other than efficiency, can have any meaning, but is not representative of school management (Cerchez, & Mateescu, 1995).

In this paper I attempt to address both aspects of leadership - the art and the science, to outline the main elements that define them and to demonstrate that technical, organizational and methodological abilities are ineffective without a series of moral goals and positive mental attitudes. At the same time, I tried to point out that good leaders, high achievers, are the ones who love people, not their job title.

This paper emphasizes the importance of the management style, the human traits of the manager, their personality and their role in the proper functioning of the organization. When manifesting an authoritarian style of leadership, displaying superiority and infallibility, a manager can only harm the school; team members would work under pressure and constant threat of conflict and the motivation and desire to work for the good of the institution would be lacking.

On the other hand, a democratic participative leadership style is more effective, people work with pleasure, fulfil more tasks, are motivated in the work they perform, they feel respected, appreciated, have a high self-esteem, which can only bring benefits to the school organization and to the educational act.

However, adopting a democratic style of leadership should not be misunderstood; it does not mean overshadowing the manager; they will not disappear from the organizational environment. On the contrary, they must be present at all times; they must know what takes place in the organization, but does so more as a colleague, mentor, counsellor, and not in a controlling, overly critical manner.

This choice of subject is intended as an alarm signal for those who covet managerial positions; a successful manager must realize that being a manager means, firstly, being human, not robot; that in order for the act of leadership to be effective and successful in the organization, the manager must lead first with the heart and then with the mind.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Objectives

- Identifying predominant leadership styles at the level of various school organizations throughout Prahova County.
- Identifying the main flaws of the leadership act.
- Identifying the main strengths of the leadership act.

2.2. Research Hypotheses

If the manager adopts a democratic-participative style of leadership then the school organization will successfully reach its objectives.

If a manager adopts an authoritarian style of leadership then the smooth running of the institution and its mission can be compromised.

2.3. Description of the Research Sample

The subjects participating in this research are from 5 schools in Prahova (Corlătești- Berceni Middle School, “Architect T. N. Socolescu” Gymnasium Păulești, “Elie Radu” Technological High School Ploiesti, “Grigore Moisil” Gymnasium Ploiesti, Tăricești Middle School). I had a sample of 30 participants who completed a questionnaire on identifying leadership styles in their school of origin.

2.4. Variables

Selection variables used in the research sample are the following: position (5 kindergarten teachers, 8 primary school teachers, 14 middle school/ high school teachers, 3 principals); gender (24 women, 6 men); age (8 teachers with 24-30 years of expertise in education, 13 teachers between 30-40 years of expertise in education, 9 teachers aged over 50); speciality (5 kindergarten teachers, 8 primary school teachers, 3 Romanian teachers, 4 English teachers, 3 Maths teachers, 2 Physics –Chemistry teachers, 2 PE teachers, 1 History teacher, 1 technological education teacher, 1 Music teacher); teaching qualification (2 junior teachers, 7 teachers with permanent teacher certification, 12 teachers with Level II teacher certification, 9 teachers with Level I teacher certification).

2.5. Research Tools

The research tool used to investigate the proposed theme was the questionnaire. Through this I aimed to identify the leadership style of the educational managers in the 5 schools surveyed and the way in which the two management styles - authoritarian and democratic, influences the smooth running of the school organization and teacher satisfaction.

3. Results

Following research carried out on a group of 30 teachers, we identified the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership act in all five schools involved. The fact that this questionnaire has been applied in a limited number of schools stands for the limits of this research. However, I managed to draw some

reasonable conclusions and hope that this study would be an alarm signal for those who already hold, or covet a managerial position.

Analyzing data obtained from the questionnaire, we concluded that across the five institutions involved the authoritarian style is predominant, which causes dissatisfaction and lack of motivation among teachers. 100% of subjects surveyed said they are not consulted by principals in the decision making process; managers require tasks to be performed, disregarding the opinions of team members.

In terms of the attitude and leadership style of the manager, 76% of respondents (including principals) answered that the manager maintains an attitude which is reserved, cold, hostile and sometimes even haughty. 26 subjects (including 2 principals) said they do not offer / do not receive praise and the two principals surveyed considered fulfilling managerial functions more important than the human dimension.

48% of the target group declared that the atmosphere is glacial in their school; members are individualistic and selfish, not cultivating team spirit; each member works for him/herself and for their own assertion, and not for the success of the entire organization. Regarding the school atmosphere, the percentage of those who said they work in a relaxed and relaxing environment was quite small.

In terms of communicating with the manager, 23 subjects (including principals) answered that this is done only formally, which gives away an authoritarian leadership style. Lack of communication between manager and subordinates signifies a lack of closeness and comradeship, as well as the formalism and unfriendliness of the manager. Communication is closely related to the question about teachers' motivation. Here, the answers were very suggestive, only 6 subjects stating that they feel motivated to carry out work in their institution, which confirms that an authoritarian leadership style and atmosphere affects the smooth running of the organization.

Among the reasons for lack of motivation, the interviewed subjects mentioned: haughtiness of managers, lack of communication, managers' constant dissatisfaction, the tense atmosphere, unjustified criticism, manager's refusal to provide assistance when asked, excessive control, under appreciation. It is noted that the list of grievances is not related to the educational process itself, but are caused by the manager's attitude.

Regarding the strengths of institutions whose members were surveyed, we identified only the presence of team-building activities and the relatively small number of complaints.

In conclusion, in the institutions we researched, the authoritarian management style is prevailing, affecting relations between managers and staff, which leads to lack of motivation and tensions; one cannot speak of a homogeneous team as each is concerned with their own assertion, and, ultimately, all these affect the educational process to a lesser or greater extent.

4. Discussions

An effective manager must take into account that they lead people, not things, so they must lead psychologically, not just administratively. In this paper we showed how much influence a charismatic principal can have over the smooth running of the organization, and highlighted the capital importance of their personality and leadership style. The literature and our research confirmed my hypothesis: tough, authoritarian principals lose their popularity; this management style will not only attract adversity from

subordinates, will lead to loss of motivation, avoiding responsibilities, low yield and, ultimately, it will affect the educational process.

An effective manager must learn to handle their own pride, to accept that they do not have an answer to all questions and that it is extremely important to take into account the opinions of their subordinates and to give them confidence.

An efficient leadership style is focused on quality, and quality of education will lead to performance and success. In an organization where conflicts and tensions are placed higher than the educational process, success cannot occur. Only a united team, under the leadership of a democratic manager will achieve its objectives successfully. Here, the manager has a key role in forming the best team. Motivation, communication, integration of subordinates' needs, with the needs of the organization, confidence, respect are all keys to success in the management process.

To lead effectively, the principal must first know how to communicate. To have an impact upon their subordinates, the manager must know how to make him/herself understood, to combine information with emotional content. At the same time, to be credible, the manager must be honest, they must believe in what they say, or else others will not listen and will not follow. It is very important for the principal to listen to others; the principal who wants to make their own voice heard; despising others opinions; considering they alone hold the ultimate truth, are making a big mistake, to the detriment of their effectiveness.

Motivating subordinates is extremely important, and the presence or lack thereof has a decisive effect on the quality of education. The manager will know that a motivated subordinate will work harder; adequate motivation gives them a sense of purpose, it helps them become self-activated. The duty of a manager is to create a motivational environment, to encourage at all times, to praise and work on strengthening the self-esteem of his subordinates. Fear, uncertainty, distrust undermines performance and efficiency. In the leadership process of an effective principal praise will prevail, not unjustified criticism. At the same time, subordinates need to be involved in activities that enable them to assert their potential. Managers will encourage them, give them confidence, and will take into account their views. An employee who feels motivated will assume greater responsibility in fulfilling tasks.

One of the thorniest issues that a good manager must take into account is the way they use criticism. Effective criticism provides feedback and solutions. At the same time, the manager must show empathy when being critical, must use calm and diplomacy. Unfounded criticism produces distrust, lack of motivation, and avoiding responsibility. Criticism should therefore be imparted with great skill by a manager; it is the only way we can use criticism to stimulate and not stifle. Constructive criticism focuses on what the person concerned has made and not on the flaws of the work they performed, and an effective critique always comes with a solution.

5. Conclusions

In this paper we tried to point out that being a good manager means, above all, the ability of the manager to train people, to mobilize and motivate them, to indicate the direction and the way ahead, to make them listen and respect him. Lastly, this paper emphasizes the leader's personal example; they must prove their performance and excellence in everything they undertake. A leader cannot influence others to

follow suit if they personally have no confidence in themselves and would not be capable of making what they are asking their employees to do. The authority of a leader stems from what they actually do and less from the principles and values they utter. In short, what defines a successful manager are the specialized training, organizational skills and the ability to communicate, motivate and mobilize people.

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