



THE 18TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
**EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES**

**Analysis of the Impact of Leadership
Competences in School's Organizations**

Manuela Panaitescu¹, Gheorghe Chiru²

Abstract: The leader of an organization has constantly faced difficulties and obstacles that bring to the fore plan, in the case of organizational members, doubts regarding the success of the shared vision. Also, the leader must be able to be present in the collective emotional dimension, as according to the nature of the assumed mission, the school organization demands both emotionally and intellectually activities of teaching staff. The survey method was used for the present analysis based on a questionnaire. It was applied to a sample of schools' organizations from Galati and Braila area.

Keywords: Management; Leadership; School Organizations

1. Introduction

Leadership requires an understanding of individual-level, relationship-level, and system-level situations in which they all work together. To optimize change, the leader must anticipate the possible behaviors of organizational members. In fact, their willingness to cooperate is variable: some people are for change, others are waiting, others are still hostile to change.

Added to this characteristic is the variability of the fact that the interlocutors could advance and integrate the change at their own pace, or on the contrary, inhibits change. Organizational members' resistance to change is also expressed over time and in different ways.

Moreover, the leader is constantly facing difficulties and obstacles that bring to the fore, in the case of the members of the organization, doubts regarding the success of the shared vision. If the leader cannot change these situations, he can clarify them in a new way, due to reframing techniques (changing the negative representations of the members in relation to a situation, fact, event, or behavior and imprinting a positive meaning).

Also, the leader must be able to be present in the collective emotional dimension of the change, since by the nature of the assumed mission, the school demands both emotionally and intellectually the activities of the teaching staff.

¹ Senior Lecturer, PhD, Danubius University of Galati, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd., Galati, Romania, Tel.+40372361102, Fax. +40372361290, Corresponding author: manuelapanaitescu@univ-danubius.ro.

² Senior Lecturer, PhD, Danubius University of Galati, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd., Galati, Romania, Tel.+40372361102, Fax. +40372361290, E-mail: gheorghechiru@univ-danubius.ro.

2. Research Method

For the analysis we set out in the present study, we used the survey method based on a questionnaire. The questionnaire was applied to a sample of 178 people from school organizations in the Galati and Braila area. Responses were collected by direct questionnaire and electronic mail. In the view of validation or invalidation hypothesis, the leadership skills influence positively the process of change, contributing to growth effectiveness of school's organization; the analysis survey data has the purpose during questions 1 to 6 to clarify the aspects related to the representations of the respondents regarding the position recognized by the leader in the organizations, sharing of a common vision, the gathering of supporters around the organizational vision proposed by the leader, the change of the frame of reference in the organization, the power of the leader and valuing the contributions of the members of the organization.

3. Results

Assuming the leadership position considers its relationship with himself/others/the organization's environment and the developed actions, all in the service of the organization's vision. The statement according to which "The leader clarifies his role by formulating answers to the current problems of the organization" received total agreement in the proportion of 76.97%, respectively 21.35% partial agreement.

For positioning, the leader identifies the set of competencies that represent the basis of his legitimacy in the organization (positive image towards himself, encouraging the autonomy of members, assumed risks) and ensures alert and internal monitoring functions. Regarding the frequency of responses for the statement "The leader inspires confidence in the interlocutors", from the analysis of the questionnaire data, we find that 79.21% fully agree, respectively 20.22% partial agreement. The analysis of the frequency of responses indicates that organizational relationships built on trust represent a strong point for the leader of the 21st century, trust being accompanied by the distribution of power and the empowerment of the organization's members with a sense of self-determination. Trust is indispensable, in the context in which educational activities are increasingly complex, neuro-psychologically demanding and carried out in an environment where changes are happening faster. Trust determines the motivation of organizational members when circumstances are unfavorable. Due to trust, the leader achieves a change in behavior and belief of the members of the organization. Trust allows the transfer of positive energy, credibility representing the lever that leads to the optimization of organizational change.

Sharing a common vision in the organization is the next aspect considered relevant in terms of leadership skills. The achievement of a vision needs energies generated by motivational and inspirational processes. These processes have energizing effects, by satisfying the needs of the members of the organization related to fulfillment, belonging, raising to the level of their own ideals. The leader makes multiple connections between the vision and the actions of the organization's members. It presents the elaborated vision and the strategy to be implemented in the school organization, it establishes the mission to be fulfilled and ensures the logic and coherence of the established targets. Having the ability to facilitate collaboration, the leader achieves cohesion to accomplish missions, thus giving meaning to actions around clearly formulated and shared objectives. Thus, he proves that he can outline a vision. The main differences on the organizational vision as well as between the promoted values exert a negative impact on the change. The leader synchronizes operational activities with the vision, both in space and time. The fact that the leader must be future-oriented is an indispensable condition. His way of thinking is

decisive: the leader can program himself to succeed or, on the contrary, he can maintain a state of dependence and will fail. The statement “The leader is the craftsman of a concise vision” received full agreement in a majority proportion (75.84%), followed by partial agreement in a proportion of 22.91%. The answers indicate that the elaboration of the vision was carried out within strategic reflections, on basis of sharing and collective representations. Moreover, the vision must be shared, and everyone must receive a stimulating stake that will guide daily actions. Building a future shared by the members of the organization and achieving common goals ensures the effective implementation of actions aimed at optimizing change.

The frequency of responses for the statement “The leader's values are closely related to the organization's values” is like the first statement, 76.41% total agreement was received, respectively 22.47% partial agreement. The results of the analysis show that the values promoted by the leader, closely related to the organization's values, represent an extremely important leadership indicator. The values of the school organization: universalism, benevolence, self-actualization, and conformity complement the role of educational leadership, ensuring the balance between the identity of the organization and the pressure of change. The leader promotes and integrates a complex set of cultural values (universal, national, as well as locally representative values), values specific to democratic behavior and civic values, contributing to the development of the personality of the organization's members. In the absence of internalized values, internal political tensions, avatars, the proximity of globalization, the alertness of informational transformations will be so many factors that will overload the leaders of school organizations.

The statement “The leader adapts his style according to the way of thinking of the members of the organization” received total agreement in a majority percentage of 70.78%, followed by partial agreement in a percentage of 27.53%. The analysis of the leadership style significantly considers the interactive dimension of the processes of information processing, deliberation, and joint decision-making, as well as the collective achievement of action plans. Organizational members, especially those engaged in European projects, often operate in volatile and competitive contexts, where value creation is measured by the ability to combine and articulate individual skills to produce collective results.

The statement “The leader encourages the members of the organization to approach critical thinking” received total agreement in proportion of 71.91%, followed by partial agreement of 25.28%. The interest shown by the respondents in the statement “The leader encourages the members of the organization to approach critical thinking” emphasizes the role of the school, conceptualized as a learning organization. The interpretation of the results highlights the cognitive operations performed collectively by the members of the organization: solving problems, participating in the decision-making process, and evaluating the obtained results. These processes, built on mental maps, allowed the description of the internal organizational environment, the tasks to be performed, but also the behaviors expected to achieve the set objectives.

The factors that guide critical thinking in leadership are the size of the organization, the nature of the objectives pursued, the characteristics of the task to be performed, the norms and routines of operation, the socio-demographic variables and the distribution of responsibilities.

The statement “The leader implements new educational practices, improving the quality of school life” received full agreement in a majority percentage of 75.84%, followed by partial agreement in a percentage of 21.35%.

The degree of awareness of respondents' representations in favor of the school as an education provider in the item “The leader implements new educational practices, improving the quality of school life”

denotes a factor that is not related to goodwill, but to compliance with internal rules. Voluntarily, for each educational objective, the leader coordinates, informs, directs, and controls the management of time to give all members the opportunity to enjoy success.

The analysis of the frequency of responses regarding the statement “The leader acts in a socially responsible manner” also indicates a majority percentage given to partial agreement (74.16%), followed by partial agreement (22.47%). We thus deduce that the educational leader is understanding and empathetic, polite (knows how to address and how to give negative feedback), has self-control, balance, firmness, and constancy in requests, is concerned with solving claims and shows impartiality and objectivity. Imposing himself through fairness and integrity, the leader gives substance to moral goals.

The frequency of responses for the statement “*The leader is solely responsible for the possible failure of the proposed change*” is different from that for previous statements, thus total disagreement was received in the percentage of 75.28%, which agrees with reality, as we consider it true that the failure is determined by numerous other factors independent of the leader's position. In organizational change projects, actors must propose solutions to newly emerging situations, through the development of collective intelligence. This allows for a problem-solving oriented exchange and at the same time, an opportunity for change actors to learn, in co-development workshops. The leader can fail by underestimating the importance of the organization's culture and values, considering the values as a non-evolving element, not integrating the values in the organizational practice or by relating to these values, being incoherent himself.

Analyzing the representations of the respondents, the averages obtained by weighting the answers indicate the huge potential of the power exercised by the leader in school organizations. The items indicate the extent to which the leader manages the activities of the organization's members around the process of optimizing organizational change, by choosing a level of listening adapted to each person. We believe that the leader must exercise these processes permanently, because human problems are too complex to have definitive solutions.

In the traditional school, power was held only by teachers who held formal administrative roles, with teachers being leaders to a limited extent: in charge of committees or educational advisors, with roles lacking in flexibility. Often, the decision to assume leadership tasks was accompanied by centralized decisions, to leave the teaching area and enter the administrative area, without determining changes in the organization.

Currently, the leader is the one who invests positive energy towards the achievement of organizational tasks, the one who follows his mission and sees a possible failure as a normal stage. The analysis of the frequency of responses for the statement “The leader creates conditions for freedom of expression for all members” highlights the obtaining of total agreement in a majority proportion of 76.96%, respectively partial agreement of 20.79%.

4. Conclusions

Leadership, consisting of a series of desirable behaviors, is a complex concept that describes the leader's exercise of the forms of power that legitimize him. The complexity of educational leadership is highlighted by the variety of concepts and theories developed over time. Exercising educational leadership involves the activity of clarifying concrete actions in producing change: determining a vision, formulating objectives, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school organization. Educational leadership models are a response to the changing needs of schools in the context of global educational reforms. Leadership styles vary according to the personality of the leader, the level of education, the difficulty of the tasks and the expectations of the members of the school organization. The theories emphasize the role of the leader: to inspire selflessness and loyalty in the members of the organization, by articulating a clear vision.

Proposing a vision, the educational leader values the resources so that the activities carried out are effective and crowned with professional satisfaction. The educational leader, through his hierarchical position, leadership style and the influence of external and internal factors, acts permanently in a fluctuating environment and makes decisions that will optimize change in educational organizations. The leader impresses through the intensity of the vision and the strength of the personal example. He becomes a leader by taking the steps on the path of change, proving his qualities, and confirming his value through results with long-term beneficial impact on the members of the organization.

Proactive presence of the leader in times of uncertainty and profound change is vital for organizations, as he is sensitive to the impact that change has on the members of the organization. The complex issue of leadership has gained momentum in the educational space, through its integration as a study discipline in the continuous training programs of teaching staff.

In the education system, it is necessary to develop educational policies that favor the development of educational leadership as well as the creation of opportunities for training and professional development of teaching staff, in the role of leader. The quality of leadership determines the evolution or involution of the school organization.

5. Bibliography

Bennis, W. & Nanus, B. (2000). *Liderii. Strategii pentru preluarea conducerii/Leaders. Strategies for taking over management*. Bucharest: Business Tech International Press.

Blanchard, K. & O'Connor, M. (2003). *Managementul si valorile/Management and values*. Bucharest: Ed Curtea Veche.

Lewis, P.H. (1994). *Creating a culture of leadership*. In McDade, S.A. and Lewis, P.H. *Developing Administrative Excellence: Creating a Culture of Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.

Lussier, R.N. & Achua, C.F. (2001). *Leadership: Theory, application, skill development*. Ohio: South-Western College.

Zlate, M. (2004). *Leadership si Management/Leadership and Management*. Iasi: Polirom.