

THE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS AND THE PRESTIGE

PhD Student Gabriela-Daniela BULACU, PhD Student Florin-Valentin ANDREI

Valahia University of Târgoviște, bugsbunny_4me@yahoo.com

Abstract: *As a leader, the teacher represents one of the key elements of a school, his role being the most important in raising educational standards and promoting the image of an effective school. The educational leaders play a key role in influencing the organizational climate of the school they run, its reputation and the attitudes of teachers, students and other beneficiaries. In the educational environment, the leader is the one who holds the key to success. Nowadays, the major changes in the educational system are being discussed more and more often, starting with the organization and management of schools. A good collaboration between the school leader and the teachers only contributes to building a more favourable image of the respective school.*

Key words: *Teacher, Educational Leader, Prestige.*

JEL Classification Codes: I20, I21, I22, I25, D40.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a leader, the teacher is one of the key elements of a school, his role being the most important in raising educational standards and promoting the image of an effective school. The educational leaders have a key role to play in influencing the organizational climate of the school they run, its reputation and the attitudes of teachers, students and other beneficiaries.

In the educational environment, the leader is the one who holds the key to success. Nowadays, the major changes in the educational system are being discussed more and more often, starting with the organization and management of schools. A good collaboration between the school leader and the teachers only contributes to building a more favorable image of the respective school.

The educational leader is the one who motivates the employees, especially in situations where teachers are no longer financially motivated to provide high quality educational acts. He must instill in them confidence, hope and moral support in order to be able to fulfill the major goals of the school (Bush, 2003).

In this regard, T. Bush (2003) states that "the art of driving is learned every day, not in one day." Therefore the leader needs some qualities such as perseverance, determination, the spirit of cooperation, to be able to build in time a true leader personality.

Other essential characteristics of the educational leader, absolutely necessary to manage a school, are empathy, the development of a more adequate communication with those around him and persuasion. The leader must also be understanding with the employees, listen to them when they have something to say, encourage them to express themselves as freely as possible, stimulate them and recognize their performance (Beltran&Ruffat, 1991).



This is an open-access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Balance in the managerial activity is the key to a successful management act. The leader has the power, right, ability and authority to impose and influence the organization. His ability to influence is determined by certain characteristics and skills, such as temperament, intelligence, character, knowledge. The leader is a central person, with the greatest influence, realistic and adaptable, who must have a clear and realistic thinking, who is able to motivate employees.

An effective leader must prove his responsibility in three major areas of interest: task, team and individuality. He must not have an excessive attitude of authority, he must be compliant and attract the loyalty of his employees. The motto of an effective leader could be: to know how to lead means not to dominate, but to know how to convince people to work towards a common goal. Effective leadership primarily involves the leader's ability to convey enthusiasm to others, the best possible communication and a positive relationship with the members of the school organization.

Modern leaders are not authoritarian, they are people who respect people and their rights, who encourage them to develop and contribute to the progress of the institution. "Supporters of teamwork, the modern educational leaders reveal certain qualities that others (colleagues, students, parents) cannot see" (Bush, 2003).

The didactic approach of these principles stimulate teachers to become the leaders of their own activities that they carry out with responsibility and human and professional dignity, to have initiative and openness to new and change, to have a greater decision-making power in the society and the community to which they belong.

The general term "professional" is very common in the present society and refers to the occupations that are characterized by certain attributes, among which we can mention a set of specialized knowledge and a code of ethics that prescribes the attitude they should have towards all educational actors, and especially to students. An authentic professional, beyond the theoretical knowledge he has, also has enough personal skills to face and successfully deal with unique, singular, problematic situations, which are not suitable for an algorithmic morality of action, taken from the other colleagues.

In the activity he carries out, the teacher fulfills a series of functions, of which the most important are (Bulach, Boothe&Pickett, 2006):

- the function of organizing the learning process, in the sense that the teacher applies the didactic principles and the theory of instruction, but also the psychological implications that the teaching-learning-evaluation activity has;
- the function of educator, which materializes in fulfilling the status-role of a model, a partner, an advisor; through this function, the teacher creates an atmosphere of security and trust in the classroom, encourages the students' performance and develops mutual sympathy between the teacher and the student. The teacher transmits not only cognitive values, but also moral values and also assists students in their internalization.
- the function of partner in the educational act, which refers to the existing relations between the teacher and other educational factors (especially between the teacher and the parents), as well as to the conception that the students form a school community;
- the function of member of the teaching staff, position resulting from the interdependence of teachers with other colleagues, with principals, etc.

The role of teacher involves arguing in a multitude of contexts, which impose different requirements. Thus the teacher is both representative of the state, public authority, and the transmitter of information and educator, evaluator, partner for parents, colleague, member of the teaching staff and so on.

The literature describes some of the most important managerial roles the teacher has (Bulach, Boothe&Pickett, 2006):

- planning the instructive-educational activities, by establishing the objectives and tasks on various levels, structuring the learning contents and making the class schedule;
- organizing the class activities, the instructive-educational program and its structures and forms of organization;
- communicating scientific information, establishing at the same time the communication channels and a common repertoire with the students;
- leading the teaching activity in the classroom;
- coordinating the instructive-educational activity and the permanent follow-up of the way in which the synchronization between the class and the individual objectives of the students is achieved;
- guiding students in the field of knowledge, offering specific advice and recommendations to each student;
- motivating students, through positive and negative reinforcements, through verbal appreciations and nonverbal language, in order to reinforce positive behaviors and the extinction of negative ones;
- counseling students on various issues, both school and extracurricular;
- supervising students, in order to identify the stage of the proposed pedagogical objectives and of the performance levels.

The teacher appears briefly in several ways:

- as an expert in the educational act;
- a student motivating agent;
- a leader of the group of students;
- a student and parent counselor;
- a model for students, parents and other teachers.

The concept of ideal teacher has undergone various meanings over time, depending on the educational ideal of the time. For example, in the past, the ideal teacher was considered the teacher who managed to impose himself in front of students, through knowledge and prestige, through a strong presence in society. At present, the ideal teacher is the one who manages to get closer to the students, to build a relationship with them, to earn their respect. In this context, the teacher's role is to build "personalities", not to instruct obedient students.

In the Western countries, the educational leadership is particularly interested in the profile of the leader teacher, who has the skills described above, who is able to induce enthusiasm both to his students and his colleagues in the department. Therefore, the modern educational leadership goes in the direction of approaching the teacher as a manager of his own activity, as a leader of the class of students, as a leader of the process of personal and organizational development, without focusing on the formal hierarchies of positions. This type of response is a challenge for the contemporary society, which is constantly changing and focused on change.

Among all the strategies he uses, the teacher promotes a seen learning, not so much as an accumulation of information, but rather as a preparation for the student's life. A more detailed analysis of the teacher's roles (presented above) facilitated the shaping of the leader teacher profile that aims, in particular, to his leadership activity. Therefore, three elements of educational leadership were highlighted (Bulach, Boothe&Pickett, 2006):

- a leadership exercised among students and / or other teachers: coach, facilitator, trainer, mentor, specialist in curriculum development, promoter of new approaches and leader of study groups;
- a leadership in terms of accomplishing the operational tasks: promoting and achieving the goals of the school, ensuring internal rules at school level, exercising the roles of researcher, head of department, member of initiative teams;

- a leadership focused on decision making and establishing partnership relations: member of teams for improving / optimizing the school activity, member of various commissions, initiator of partnerships with other educational, social and economic agents (Bass&Bass, 2008).

Other functions performed by a leader teacher were also identified (Maxwell, 2005):

- continuous improving the class activity;
- transmitting and promoting the knowledge regarding the elaboration of the curriculum;
- organizing and carrying out the practical activity;
- participating in the decision-making acts in the school;
- providing services regarding the continuous training of colleagues;
- participating in the process of evaluating the performances of other teachers.

Four distinct dimensions of the leader teacher role have been described. The first one refers to the way in which teachers translate the principles that govern the optimal functioning of the school in the department activity. This ensures connections at the level of educational institutions, maximizing the opportunities for personal and professional development of teachers. The second dimension of the leader teacher role is the participatory leadership; thus, the leader teacher can assist his/her colleagues in the professional development activities, encouraging collaboration and cooperation. The third dimension refers to his role as a mediator, to the measures to improve the functioning of the schools he initiates and implements. Finally, the last dimension, probably the most important of them, is the one related to the consolidation of the interpersonal relationships with the colleagues, the mutual learning.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Through their quality of leaders, the teachers contribute significantly to optimizing the school functioning, being mentors for the less experienced colleagues or for the younger specialists.

As an actor of educational change, the teacher is "forced" to abandon the traditional role and adopt the leader role, having vision and strategic thinking, facilitating the interaction between students, a mentor credible for colleagues, a partner with equal rights in the administrative team. Therefore, only such a leader teacher (who has vision and inspiration, who creates resonance and promotes organizational change, who induces enthusiasm) can be a real ally of students and a central figure in current reforms of the education system.

REFERENCES

1. Bass, B.M., Bass, R., *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*, 4th Edition, New York: Free Press, pp. 141, 2008.
2. Beltran A., Ruffat M., *Culture d'entreprise et histoire, Les edition d'organisation*, Universite Paris, pp. 25, 1991.
3. Bulach C., Boothe D., Pickett W., *Analyzing the Leadership Behaviors of the School Principals*, International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, pp. 33-67, 2006.
4. Bush T., *Theories of Educational leadership and Management*, Sage Publication Ltd., pp. 43-57, 2003.
5. Maxwell J., *Totul despre lideri, atitudine, echipă, relații [Everything about leaders, attitude, team, relationships]*, Bucharest: Amaltea, pp. 37, 2005.