Management through Decentralization
during the Online School Period

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Abstract

The need to adopt management in the field of education is based on the idea that the school is a social body that repeats the structure and functioning of a community. The transfer and assimilation of the management concept in the educational field must simultaneously take into account the capitalization of the notions of efficiency, global system, methodology, management of human behaviors. Educational management cannot be understood without a leadership practice accumulated within the education system, at all levels. Educational management must be carried out effectively at the level of all decision-makers. They must have the appropriate management experience, knowledge and skills. In the unusual conditions we live in, educational management must function on the basis of new principles, adapted to the current context in which education takes place. The aim of the paper is to highlight the need to adapt management to the current situation, by promoting a clear and coherent policy and strategy, in accordance with the general aims of education and the goals of each organization.

Key words*:* management, school, pandemic
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1. Introduction

This article reflects and capitalizes on various studies in the field of educational management. The main theme is the understanding of management issues in the current conditions of distance learning. The specialized literature I went through offers some leadership models inspired by the realities of the Romanian school. These studied models are the result of intra and multidisciplinary relationships.

Online education requires an adaptation of leadership and instruction through technology to the needs of students and teachers.

2. Theoretical background

The concepts presented in this article have been debated in the literature by various authors. Educational management was achieved through an adaptation of the general theory of leadership to the particularities of the educational system. The management of the school organization was defined by a series of authors as a process and relations manifested within the educational institutions in order to ensure the increase of the efficiency of this process (Ţoca, 2008). Other authors have analyzed the principles of educational management in terms of optimal, strategic, efficient, superior and complex global leadership (Cristea, 1996). In the literature this concept has been analyzed in terms of the following functions recognized by specialists in this field: planning, decision, organization, coordination, motivation, control and evaluation.

The concept of decentralization of the Romanian educational system was analyzed from the perspective of its modernization and adaptation to current realities. Most authors consider it a necessary and long-awaited approach, discussed since the early 1990s (Niculescu, 1992). Through decentralization, school organizations become more flexible, able to adapt more easily to change.

Organizational autonomy can provide in practice examples of good practice for the generation of educational policies. Various authors emphasize the role of personal and local initiative in increasing the quality of the educational act. These initiatives presuppose the existence of an educational policy crystallized around the concept of "leadership" and "managerial competence" (Csorba, 2012).

3. Research methodology

The research carried out in the article was done from a theoretical and practical perspective. From a theoretical point of view, he used concepts promoted in the literature that we presented in the synthesis. Among the existing research methods, we used as a methodological option a qualitative approach to the data through the objective presentation of reality, through the use of general logical reasoning, through subjective interpretation, in accordance with the data provided by direct observation.

4. Adapting school management to current needs

Educational management was simultaneously defined as science and art. As a science, it has its own field of research, with precise aims and measurable results. As art, it is a fact of culture that reflects a certain social or group mentality. Educational management is more than an administrative activity of resource management. It is the art of successfully adapting, in a creative, flexible and practical way, the science of leading to concrete situations, existing at all levels. Under the current conditions, the management activity in school organizations must be adapted to the current situation. Communication through technology, in the online environment, involves certain specific skills. The most important of these is the ability to coordinate, doubled by the ability to communicate effectively and on time. The manager's behavior must be predominantly proactive, to remove shortcomings in time and overcome obstacles.

The managerial process at the level of the school organization reflects the involvement of all members, whether it is the teaching staff, the non-teaching staff or the students. This activity can be analyzed in action, operational, practical, tactical, procedural, theoretical, global, general, strategic, scientific, at the level of the lesson and extracurricular activities, etc. Educational management can be achieved from a strategic point of view (strategic management, exercised at national level), tactical (tactical management, exercised at territorial level and in universities) or operative (operative management, characteristic of all educational institutions: kindergartens, schools, high schools , colleges, faculties). The general principles of educational management have been defined by the Romanian Institute of Educational Management in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Educational effectiveness is the extent to which the proposed goals have been achieved. The educational efficiency is measured in the obtained results, in the conditions of a reduced consumption of resources. To these general principles, others were added: the principle of economy (the extent to which physical, mental, material, financial resources were used), of effectiveness (as an assessment according to meeting the needs of school, social or professional integration). of the beneficiaries of the system) and of the "added value" (the results obtained by the students, in relation to the results offered by the students of other schools, which have the same general purposes).

Human personality modeling is the ultimate goal of school organization management. He is of special importance, because mul is not an object, but a being endowed with feelings and reason. In education, failures in the training of students have irreversible social consequences, such as incompetence, professional and social maladaptation, delinquency, etc.

Through adaptation processes, educational management can contribute to the optimization of the current educational process. The management modernization can be done with the help of flexible management methods and strategies, which will help to achieve the performances and the success of the students. The managerial methods used in the online school must lead to the achievement of the proposed goal, that of helping students to develop the curricular skills they need in life or the exams that await them.

5. The manager-the most important factor of change

The combination of theoretical tools with methodology, technology and managerial practice provides the manager with a global understanding of the system. It is reflected in the thorough knowledge of organizational culture, in the vision of the organization, openness to new and change, to lifelong learning.

The manager is the person who performs the functions of management. He has a number of objectives, tasks, competencies and responsibilities specific to the position he holds. The manager has a well-defined social and legal status, a series of rights and obligations that distinguish him from all other categories of professionals.

The manager is the key factor that moves all the resources of an organization. For subordinates, he is the boss with hierarchical and decisional power; for external partners, he is the representative of the organization. Globally, the manager is the person who exercises a triple responsibility (ceremonial, social and legal) through the command actions that define him.

The managerial functions and roles in the educational field are identical to those of the general management. This fact means a specialized training in the field of management, but also a managerial training specific to the educational field. The double professionalism, the exemplary behavior, the ability to give transparency to the decision-making process, the superiority of the objectives, the assumption of responsibility, all these aspects turn the manager into a true factor of progress and coherence at the level of the school organization. During this difficult period, a successful manager must clearly demonstrate all these strengths and qualities.

The manager of the school organization must make interactions with various categories of beneficiaries and respond to certain defining imperatives: to anticipate risks, trends and opportunities; decide or choose appropriate strategies and tactics; to organize resources, projects, priorities, norms (procedures); to coordinate human resources (to recruit them, to train them, to train them, to evaluate them, to make them collaborate); to communicate (to listen, to write, to speak, to present, to use feedback); to solve problems, tensions, conflicts, slips, etc .; to perform or create a certain dynamic, through certain levers; to pilot or control - is its most important role, understood in three directions: to supervise (to check if the "screws" are tight), to control (like the pilot the plane's handle), to direct (to open the way). These actions, activities and responsibilities must really be the main elements of the job description they hold.

At this point, the school manager is required, first and foremost, to be able to make quick and efficient decisions. He must give up resignation and routine through a new approach to leadership. Its main task is to make everyone responsible, to achieve consensus at the level of the entire school organization. This means promoting clarity, moral balance, willingness to respond to all problems and suggestions.

6. Decentralization in the context of online schooling

As a basic unit of the education system, the school organization tends to become a miniature society. Decentralization translates the need for identity by adapting external influences in terms of one's own ethos. More than ever, in these pandemic conditions, the school needs autonomy.

Decentralization "consists in the transfer of authority, responsibility and resources to educational institutions and the local community, in order to allow the development of general and financial management, as well as decision-making at the level of each school." (Gherguț, 2007, p.27).

Through decentralization, the school takes over from educational policies only what suits it best. Decentralization means not only a school decision based on the real needs of students, a careful and rigorous selection of staff, a much higher degree of financial autonomy, but also the need to make decisions based on the real situation of the area in which they live. find out the school, according to the requirements of the community to which it belongs.

More than ever, management is not compatible with a centralized educational policy, which limits the decision-making sphere of the principal or teacher. In the current context, decentralization will allow members of the school community to become, from actors who play

various roles, according to managerial scenarios that do not belong to them, authors with a direct and recognized contribution to the development and implementation of these scenarios.

Sustainable development and the globalization of education through decentralization depend on the adoption of uniform European regulations to ensure quality in education. The objectives of the decentralization process (Cucoş, 2009, p.701) are:

1. streamlining the activity and increasing the performances of the educational institutions by consolidating the autonomy and the capacity to manage the financial and human resources;

2. the democratization of the educational system through the consultation and involvement of the community and of the beneficiaries in the decision-making, through the organizational development based on self-evaluation, external evaluation and public responsibility;

3. ensuring transparency in decision making and in the management of public funds;

4. ensuring access to education by rethinking the allocation of funds based on costs per student and by financing programs aimed at meeting the different educational requirements of students; the new funding system must allow equal allocations for students with the same needs, regardless of the geographical area or the financial capacity of the localities where they study;

5. increasing the relevance of the offer of educational services for all categories of children and students, by correlating education with the local needs of the communities and with the individual interests of the students;

6. stimulating innovation, professional responsibility and public responsibility, at the level of teachers, managers and students.

Regarding the periodic evaluations, the autonomy means a lower dependence on the county inspectorates which, through thematic or other inspections, verify the implementation of the managerial or curricular objectives achieved at the school level. This thematic inspection is more difficult to do in the conditions of online learning.

In order to increase the efficiency of these evaluations, models experienced in states with a democratic tradition can be borrowed, where they are achieved through a system of periodic accreditation, at the request of the school, at certain intervals, by teams of experts in educational management. national. This is partially done in our country, through the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP), whose competencies overlap with those coming directly from the Ministry, which overloads the system, making it cumbersome and reluctant to change.

From a managerial perspective, the advantages and disadvantages of decentralization, in the conditions of the online school, derive from the need to create a decision-making and control autonomy. Comparing the two aspects, balancing them, we notice that the efficiency of decentralization depends on the concrete, honest and professional way in which it can be put into practice.

Table no.1 Advantages and disadvantages of decentralization in the context of online schooling

Centralization		Decentralization	
Benefits	-ensures uniformity in the functioning of the organization; -management exerts a more efficient coordination and a more direct control; -decisions are uniform and eliminate the risk of overlapping of different activities.	**Benefits**	-distributes responsibility and accountability to all organizational departments; -disperses power and authority at the group level; -encourages the involvement and participation of several people in decision making; -has positive effects on motivation; -facilitates the communication process.
Disadvantages	-responsibility belongs to a small number of leaders; power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of people, which limits the participation of the majority in decision-making;	**Disadvantages**	-allows a low degree of uniformity regarding the functioning standards of the organization; -forces the responsibility of decision-making by people who are not interested and do not want

	- top leaders have too many tasks to perform because they need to have a global perspective on the organization		to get involved; -can create problems related to the coordination of different organizational levels; -can lead to rivalry and competition, with negative effects on the rationality and general efficiency of the organization; -requires training programs, time and money consuming.

Source: Vlăsceanu, apud. Enache, 2019, pp.33-34

Decentralization, as a reform process, presupposes a change carefully thought out and thoroughly prepared by setting up pilot centers to help the correct application of this process at the level of all educational units. The basis of this reform must be a more thorough managerial training of staff, simplification of working procedures, closer rapprochement between local institutions and the school, design of a coherent strategy. This modernization process must go through certain specific stages and benefit from mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and regulating the problems that have arisen, so that there is transparency at the level of society.

There is a major risk that decentralization will become anarchy due to the deep politicization of the system, due to the haste and confusion existing in some school organizations at this moment, completely unforeseen. The fears are justified: decentralization depends not only on procedures, but also on the moral profile of the people involved in implementing change.

In the current context it is very difficult to achieve the general functions of management through platforms and IT applications. Although there are several channels of communication, stress and exhaustion are obstacles to achieving the goals and objectives proposed. Each teacher or principal must take appropriate measures to create enjoyable and engaging activities. Everyone's initiative and the way they want to get involved in their own improvement are aspects that make the difference between efficiency and inefficiency. Equally, decentralization means even fewer unnecessary tasks to be able to focus on the really important aspects of the business.

Online teaching and learning are atypical activities that need to be managed with a lot of professionalism, a lot of involvement and enthusiasm. Blasphemy, superficiality, monotony, routine are the aspects that negatively influence distance learning. The lack of a permanent and direct control from the manager can affect the quality of the didactic act. Therefore, the manager must find his own strategies to motivate subordinate staff, and the teacher must more creatively assert his autonomy, independence and initiative. The current situation is difficult, but it can serve as a lesson for everyone. Being a crisis solution, it brought to light the problems in the system, the most important of which can be considered decentralization.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, decentralization could be a lifeline for the school organization at this time. It could create from the Romanian school, even in the current format, a type of modern organization, focused on competition, quality and performance. However, change implies "the recourse to value, to overcoming prejudices, stereotypes, misrepresentations or fears of any kind" (Anghelache, 2012, p.9).

The oscillation between the idea of centralization and decentralization highlights the inertia and difficulty of moving from bureaucratic organization, based on hierarchy, control and sanction, to democratic, formative, flexible organization based on cooperation, stimulation, responsibility and open climate. In the conditions of the online school, decentralization, decision-making autonomy are closely linked to the efficiency of the management process. This autonomy increases the degree of responsibility and initiative at the level of each member of the organization, which means conditions for creating a real solidarity around a common social interest.

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