

The Personal Development of the Education Manager for the Achievement of Higher Performance in Managerial Communication

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Abstract

The present work aims to approach the education manager's need for personal development, in order to achieve higher performance in the managerial communication, and, implicitly, in the activities conducted.

In a constantly evolving society, people develop a natural need for permanent learning, in order to define their own roles within the society. According to the development strategy elaborated by the National Education System in Romania-2035, both the employers and the employees are expected to creatively collaborate for the development of the society, for the personal improvement of the individuals and for the constant update of their skills, in order to conduct high quality educational activities.

It is of utter importance, therefore, to ensure the instruction of the education managers throughout the entire career, along with their professional development, the improvement of their abilities and emotional intelligence skills, in order to make sure that they successfully cope with the challenges of a constantly changing world.

Key words: education manager, personal development, emotional intelligence, managerial communication

J.E.L. classification: M12, M54, I20

1. Introduction

In our present society, marked by constant change and transformation, people develop a need for lifelong learning, which is a natural need that helps them find their own role within the community. This is actually a collaborative task: both the employers and the employees need to work together for their personal development, for the continuous update of their skills, and for wellbeing and welfare in the workplace. If they fail to do so, they might also fail to provide high quality educational activities.

The formation and instruction of the education managers throughout the entire career is thus of the essence, as are their professional development, the enhancement of their abilities and emotional intelligence skills, so that they prove successful when tackling the challenges of a constantly evolving society.

2. Theoretical background

Generally speaking, *development* represents an important philosophical category, which defines the complex of the positive transformations produced in nature, society and in the mental life.

The personal development refers to the transformations produced in the human psychic system, which, in time, lead to new behaviours, acquired through learning and self-learning, thus proving the birth of some „new functional structures” reflecting the existence of certain cognitive skills (logical, rational and intellectual skills) and non-cognitive skills (affective-motivational and volitive-characterial). According to the sociocultural Constructivist perspective (Vygotski, Bruner), qualitative learning, reflected in a curriculum (focused on certain objectives/ general and specific

skills) and perfected at a managerial level (in terms of managing and managerial communication), anticipates and accelerates the development, through the creation of a favourable environment, designed by the education manager, parents, tutors and so on (Popescu-Neveanu, 1978, pp. 195-197).

The managerial leadership ensures the optimal valorization of the existent resources within the educational institution that is located at the very basis of the educational system: informational resources (programmes, text books, auxiliary didactic materials etc), human resources (students, certified and specialised teachers, auxiliary teaching staff, parents, as well as other members of the local and territorial educational community), didactic and material resources (the time and space devoted to the educational and instructional activities) and, of course, financial resources too (national and local budgets).

The managerial leadership based on the emotional intelligence emphasizes the valorization of the social-affective and motivational resources of the personal development. At this level, the education manager „awakes passions and encourages what is good within the human being”. The manager’s discourse is able to „generate adherence”, is based on a „strategy” and a „vision” built on „powerful ideas”. The education manager „positively influences everybody’s emotions”, thus encouraging the personal development of all the members of the organization (Goleman *et al.*, pp. 23-29).

The managerial communication within the school institution takes into consideration all the elements regarding the planning and the achievement of a curriculum, with an emphasis on the objectives/ general and specific skills, which in turn determine the contents, types and methods of assessment, applied within each Department or methodology committee and within each branch or agency involved in completing the mission of the institution. As for the instructional activities, the managerial communication is realized especially during the teaching activities, that is during the transmission of the didactic message to the class, directed towards the achievement of learning, perfectible in the context of a continuous evaluation.

The managerial communication based on the emotional intelligence emphasizes the discovery of an „efficient way of understanding and improving the management of one’s own emotions and of the others”. An efficient education manager (who can be the principal, a certified teacher or a methodologist) is the one who understands the important role of the emotions at the workplace, which, in the present context, refers to the school institution, the class, the department or the methodology committee, the lesson, the contact with the parents, the partnership with the local educational community etc.

The school institution is an entity located at the basis of the educational system, which is in permanent contact with the intermediate managerial structures (the territorial school inspectorates) as well as with the top ones (the Ministry of National Education through its education policies).

3. Research methodology

The present study is the first step of a more complex research that I am conducting in the field of management and education. It is a bibliographical synthesis of the main scientific perspectives on the education management and of the educational system from a perspective focused on the idea of change and the importance of personal development in the career of the teacher-manager. The paper also discusses the framework promoted by the European Union in documents regarding management in connection with the education system.

This study is, therefore, to be continued by an on-the-field analysis regarding welfare and wellbeing in the workplace as a result of successful management, focused on personal growth and fulfilment.

4. The need for change

The need for change is a key-concept promoted by the *Romania’s Sustainable Development Strategy over the next 20 years*, as one of the typical values of the contemporary, postmodern society. As far as the educational system is concerned, the concepts refers to the idea of excellence, as follows: a) excellence in learning, in order to achieve the optimal valorization of the potential of

the individual; b) excellence in teaching, in order to train and certify specialists in career management; c) excellence in the institutional management, which is performant through added value; d) excellence in the democratic approach to all the educational actors (fairness, equalization of the opportunities of success in education, career and development). Excellence thus achieves a broader sense. It does not refer only to elitism and superior performances, it also involves the wish of self-overcoming, of reaching well-being and full belonging to the values of the family, of the school, and of the social, educational, professional, spiritual and community environment.

The perspective of the Romanian National Educational System (2015-2035) promotes the human need of permanent learning, through the valorization of people's own roles in a continuous development within an open society. The *organizational culture* of the information society equally promotes personal development and the development of the companies, through the creative collaboration of employers and employees, in a process of self-teaching, adapted to the needs of a world in constant change (Vlad, 2015, p. 24).

Within the educational system, *the teacher-as-manager* has a very important role, as he or she is responsible for the efficient management of the instructional process in his/her field of competence and with regard to the educational activities he/she conducts as a class manager or homeroom teacher, engaging the students, their parents and the members of the local community. The managerial behaviour of the teacher (as a specialised instructor and as a homeroom teacher) depends on the quality of his/her initial and continuous training. The teacher-as-manager has to ensure the optimal valorization of the curriculum, of its general and specific objectives, of the basic contents which have to be adapted, in terms of methods and assessment, to the particular characteristics of the class and to the didactic time and space. In an open context, the teacher-as-manager has to provide an efficient valorization of: a) the activity of curriculum design; b) the managerial, didactic and social-emotional style adopted; c) the social and professional commitment; d) the specific working environment, which has to be attractive, based on a good correlation between the educator and the educated; e) the cognitive and non-cognitive behaviour (in terms of affections and motivations, in terms of volitive and characterial traits) of the students, and its reflection in the act of learning.

The Action Plan for Education 2019-2030 mentions, as a general objective, „the quality of the educational system in Romania and its collocation among the first ten systems in Europe”. Some of the defining strategic points refer to: a) a qualitative enhancement of the training process, aiming to instruct efficient teachers and to provide them with management skills in the field of education; b) the updating of their skills; c) the involvement of the school management boards in order to provide qualitative learning experiences, thus enabling each person to fully develop and also to achieve their optimal evolution.

The achievement of these goals ensures the creation of a context for all the education providers and professional trainers to obtain the key skills which enable them to benefit from a qualitative learning experience.

5. Personal development

Personal development is a field which has achieved great popularity in the latest years throughout the world, and in Romania as well. It refers to the training plan of the organization and of every single employee. It expresses the desire of the modern man to achieve a successful career, which is able to valorize: a) their technical and managerial skills, along with the abilities emerging from the social and emotional intelligence; b) the self-assessment of their own performance in relation with the self-development of the skills within the professional activity; c) the self-cultivation of the motivational, affective and characterial attitudes maintaining and developing the professional enthusiasm, the well-being, the wish of self-overcoming and personal improvement.

The success which follows and confirms the personal development is determined by the level of the cognitive and social-emotional skills, specific for the activity conducted and perfectible during the entire life and career, through individual and social effort (like partaking in courses of continuous training, necessary in the context of a competitive labour market).

The strategic objectives of the European Union, in the field of education and professional training, also promote personal development, as they envisage: a) making permanent learning become reality; b) improving quality and efficiency in the fields of education and professional development.

The *strategy regarding lifelong learning* proposes the update of knowledge and skills, „supporting competitiveness in the context of a global economy of knowledge”. It also promotes a positive attitude of the managers in the educational system towards their own process of professional development, adapted to the development model specific for the information society based on knowledge.

Personal development is an integrant part of this process of broad and complex evolution, on a social, economical, cultural, spiritual, educational, political and communitary level. Personal development therefore represents: a) a process which takes place throughout the entire life; b) a way of conducting assessment or self-assessment of the personal skills, in connection with the objectives that envisage the maximization of the potential of the individual.

The *personal development of the manager* is based on: a) The identification of the needs regarding the information, abilities and attitudes which support the achievement and the development of the skills; b) awareness of the strong points and of the limitations regarding the optimal way of performing the activity; c) permanent reassessment of the acquired knowledge, which cultivate the need for self-learning and self-development.

These axiological references of the modern manager can be connected to other models outlined in the history of philosophy (Francis Bacon, for instance), pointing to the idea that „studies perfect nature and are perfected by experience”. This is an essential characteristic of the activity of a modern manager, who: a) clearly defines what he/she wants to do; b) sets some clear deadlines for the tasks to be completed; c) sends clear messages to the employees regarding what they have to do and the deadlines which are to be respected; d) talks to the subordinates about the best manner of achieving the goals, is able to listen and to take the advice into consideration; e) demonstrates perseverance and tenacity in the achievement of the goals; f) sets high standards and expects the same performance from the others; g) performs well under pressure and does his/her best; h) is continuously investigating his/her own performance; i) works enthusiastically and transmits the same feeling to the others; j) is able to communicate efficient alternative courses of action in due time.

Personal development refers to the valorization of the emotional intelligence, which positively influences the behaviour of the employees by: a) defining the specific tasks of the job in the light of the emotional skills; b) measuring the level of enthusiasm of the employees; c) motivating them to achieve personal and professional development; d) providing feedback in order to increase performance.

Daniel Goleman proposes a model of self-improvement, which is important from the point of view of the personal development. An efficient manager concentrates on the development of the organization, which also involves his or her own personal development, as well as of the subordinates. Thus he or she becomes an „emotionally intelligent manager”, after a process of self-improvement which comprises „five stages of discovery”: 1. The discovery of the *ideal self*, or what the person wishes to be like; 2. The discovery of the *real self*, or who the person really is, with their strengths and weaknesses; 3. The discovery of a self-improvement agenda, taking into consideration the strengths and attempting to decrease the impact of the weaknesses; 4. The discovery regarding the experience and the practice of the new behaviour, a necessary stage in order to make it become a habit; 5. The discovery based on the building of a solid relationship, which is meant to favour immediate changes as well as in the medium to long term.

The necessary stages in order to achieve personal development are academically confirmed by the **Course Support** elaborated by the *European Social Fund*, the Sectorial Human Resources Development Operational Programme (2007-2013). The following stages are included in the development plan (abbreviated PDP): „a) awareness of the skills already acquired; b) identification of the necessary skills in order to achieve the set goals; c) understanding what one wishes to achieve and how the proposed goal can be obtained; d) elaboration of a personal branding strategy”.

6. Managerial communication

The managerial communication is a method of efficient communication, which is used in the public space in all types of social activities and is based on the optimal valorization of the existent resources, adequately used by the sender and the receiver.

The education manager reflects, in his or her own ways, both professionally and from a social-emotional perspective, the need for change, which is explicitly planned and organized in „Romania’s Sustainable Development Strategy over the next 20 years”. The manager of the school institution has to envisage, at all levels, the development of the organization, his or her own personal growth and also the one of the employees, a process which requires managerial communication skills, which are based on the emotional, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence.

The managerial communication is focused on two types of learning, which are essential for the development of the intelligence. These two types of learning, cognitive and emotional, are briefly outlined in the table below:

Table no. 1 Types of learning

Types of learning	Learning actions
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - remembering the new information; - achieving new perspectives by integrating the new and the already existent information and by creating connections between them; - activating the brain area responsible for the „emotional signature” - replacing existent habits with new and positive ones (e.g. a positive approach to people instead of avoiding them; providing feedback etc.)
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learning through a social and affective experience; - new ways of thinking and acting, in compliance with the faiths, values and attitudes of the individuals

Source: adapted from Dann, J., 2016, p.20

The development of the emotional intelligence brings many benefits, among which personal and professional fulfillment, mental and physical well-being etc. It also plays an essential part in the process of reducing and eliminating negative behaviours.

Table 2 presents the differences of behaviour between managers with a high quotient of emotional intelligence (EQ) and those with a poor level thereof, as well as the negative and positive effects regarding the managerial communication.

Table no. 2 Low vs High EQ in managerial communication

Behaviour of managers with a low EQ	Behaviour of managers with a high EQ
negative-minded, worried, anxious, insecure in action and communication	positive, confident, creative
pessimistic in supporting their own views	optimistic and persuasive in supporting their own views
tired, stressed, aggressive	energetic, relaxed, communicative, open to the free sharing of ideas
difficulties in communication	empathic communication
poor connection to the others	efficient connection to the others
they frequently interrupt the others during the conversation	they carefully listen to the dialogue partner
non-empathic language	empathic verbal and non-verbal language
they complain excessively	they display uprightness and emotional balance
conservative	change-oriented
coercive leadership style, which generates a negative and stressful working climate	flexible leadership style, encouraging team work and generating a positive working climate

bureaucratic communication, deficient, predominantly administrative, with aggressive and stressful tendencies	a clear and non-ambiguous managerial communication, predominantly conceptual, with optimal social and affective tendencies
less accessible language, with unclear terms, lacking logical, methodological and practical arguments	intelligent language, with clear terms and concepts, providing methodological and practical arguments
dissonance in communication	resonance in communication
distraction in communication, loss of concentration	attention and concentration in communication, as the sender (manager) and the receiver (members of the organization) are considered interdependent elements of the process
a negative approach to life events, from a cognitive and social-emotional perspective	a positive approach to life events, from a cognitive and social-emotional perspective
poor results achieved in communication	efficiency in communication
insignificant impact regarding the persuasive communication, due to the lack of motivational and emotional support	a significant impact regarding the persuasive communication, from a social-motivational and emotional perspective
they are close and reluctant regarding interpersonal relationships	they are open and creative, building strong interpersonal relationships

Source: Author's design

7. Conclusions

The personal development of the education manager involves the awareness of the *need for change*, which is objectively essential in the information society. It depends on the quality of the organizational development, but it is particularly focused on the valorization of the resources provided by the emotional intelligence. These resources, which are perfectible in an open context, promote the efficiency of the managerial communication, which is necessary at every level of the educational system.

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