

39

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ANALYSIS

OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP AND COACHING SKILLS IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

ANÁLISIS DEL DESARROLLO DE HABILIDADES DE LIDERAZGO Y COACHING EN EL ENTORNO ESCOLAR

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ABSTRACT

Despite the vast literature on leadership, there is little consensus regarding the characteristics of exceptional leaders and leadership. The definitions which delineate various dimensions of leadership, often fail to provide a definitive statement even when exhibiting similarities. The primary rationale behind this lies in the fact that leadership necessitates the manifestation of distinct traits in varying situations and circumstances. The type of leadership required within different organizations and even within the same organization can fluctuate across diverse contexts. Consequently, the interpretation of leadership varies depending on the position, group dynamics, and the process of the leader. Considering this, the objective of this work is to briefly analyze some important points when talking about leadership, and specifically when it is focused to education. Although researchers have proposed numerous alternatives to conceptualize leadership, for us it is imperative to emphasize two core components at the heart of the concept. First, leadership constitutes a process; it is not a linear and one-way event but rather an occurrence instigated by a series of interactions. Secondly, leadership is enacted within groups.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, leadership, process, group organizations.

RESUMEN

A pesar de la vasta literatura sobre liderazgo, existe poco consenso sobre las características de los líderes y el liderazgo excepcionales. Las definiciones que delinean varias dimensiones del liderazgo a menudo no logran proporcionar una declaración definitiva, incluso cuando presentan similitudes. La razón principal detrás de esto radica en el hecho de que el liderazgo requiere la manifestación de rasgos distintos en diferentes situaciones y circunstancias. El tipo de liderazgo requerido dentro de diferentes organizaciones e incluso dentro de la misma organización puede fluctuar en diversos contextos. En consecuencia, la interpretación del liderazgo varía según el puesto, la dinámica del grupo y el proceso del líder. Considerando esto, el objetivo de este trabajo es analizar brevemente algunos puntos importantes cuando se habla de liderazgo, y específicamente cuando se enfoca a la educación. Aunque los investigadores han propuesto numerosas alternativas para conceptualizar el liderazgo, para nosotros es imperativo enfatizar dos componentes centrales en el corazón del concepto. Primero, el liderazgo constituye un proceso; no es un evento lineal y unidireccional sino más bien un suceso instigado por una serie de interacciones. En segundo lugar, el liderazgo se ejerce dentro de los grupos.

Palabras clave: Azerbaiyán, liderazgo, proceso, organizaciones grupales.

INTRODUCTION

To give an exact definition of leadership is quite difficult, but generally speaking, it involves the capability to steer and impact others toward a shared vision or objective, it encompasses the art of instilling inspiration and motivation within a team, fostering a collaborative environment, making judicious choices, and providing guidance and assistance to team members (Samimi et al., 2022). Crucially, leadership is not contingent upon seniority or one's position within the hierarchical structure of an organization and it is not synonymous with management, although effective management plays a pivotal role in successful leadership (Kumar, 2023). Essentially, leadership revolves around the act of influencing and guiding others, irrespective of one's formal authority or title. It is a proficiency that can be honed and refined with time, not confined to specific roles or positions, but open to anyone possessing inherent leadership attributes. Leadership entails taking calculated risks, questioning the existing norms, and pursuing innovation. This way accomplished leaders assess their success based on the accomplishments and development of their teams (Le & Lei, 2019; Liu et al., 2022; Y. Liu et al., 2021).

Leadership entails the adept handling of challenges through informed decision-making, it constitutes a pivotal aspect of any endeavor and involves the adept navigation between maintaining discipline and displaying a compassionate approach towards subordinates. The decision-making process is a cognitive operation that involves the evaluation and selection of viable options aimed at resolving current issues. Within educational leadership programs, the use of case studies is prevalent as a method to equip aspiring leaders with the necessary skills to effectively manage the evolving dynamics of their respective organizations (Gumus et al., 2018; Y. Liu et al., 2021). This way, efforts are continuously being made to develop more robust, dynamic, and genuine methodologies to train leaders, with a focus on bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

In contemporary business environments, ethics have gained increasing significance, and the presence of ethical leadership is imperative to comprehend, foster, and acknowledge within the corporate realm. Ethical leadership denotes the adherence to a set of principles and values widely acknowledged as sound by the majority. This kind of leadership necessitates appropriate behavior in line with established principles and values, both within and outside the confines of the workplace (Dhar, 2016; Lemoine et al., 2019). Several compelling reasons underscore the significance of ethics in leadership: the cultivation of trust, the establishment of a positive work culture, the enhancement

of reputation, the improvement of decision-making, and the facilitation of long-term success. The hallmark of ethical leadership lies in consistently upholding what is morally right, even when faced with challenging circumstances, thereby constituting an integral aspect of a leader's conduct (Chen & Hou, 2016; Men et al., 2020).

On the other hand, it has been seen that the impact of school leadership on the success of educational institutions is a critical determinant in fostering an environment conducive to academic achievement. Extensive research has revealed a strong correlation between effective school leadership and enhanced student performance (Deng et al., 2020; Li & Liu, 2022). An essential facet of effective school leadership lies in its ability to elevate staff engagement, thereby fostering a conducive atmosphere for student involvement and subsequently bolstering student achievement. Skillful educational leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the overall culture and mission of a school, thereby contributing to a better academic climate for both students and faculty. They actively cultivate measurable outcomes that underscore the continuous progress and advancement of the educational institution (Balwant et al., 2019).

The topic of leadership is highly debated in academic literature, including in Azerbaijan (Isaeva & Aliyev, 2023; Sindhvad et al., 2022), but there are important elements that are either not sufficiently clarified, or are even overlooked. Due to this, the objective of this work is to briefly analyze some important points when talking about leadership, and specifically when it is focused to education.

DEVELOPMENT

Groups provide the context in which leadership occurs. Therefore, it is necessary to see leadership as having an important function for the survival of the group and the achievement of its goals. Some of the definitions related to leadership are given below: Leadership is a process of influencing a group of people to achieve a common goal. In this influencing process, the leader must have certain values, knowledge and skills. From this point of view, leadership is not an inactive state or just a matter of having certain characteristics. It appears to be a working relationship between members of a group, where the leader stands out through active participation and gains status by demonstrating his capacity (Yirci, R. & Demir, 2019, p. 168).

The team consists of employees who come together with common interests and values to achieve certain goals and achieve certain jobs. Teamwork includes the effort and

related processes to create a culture of working together by creating an atmosphere that values and supports the participation of team members in the work. Teams are made up of individuals, so each member of the team has strengths and weaknesses. Being a team member means completing the missing piece of the team with your own strengths as a whole. This can be achieved by integrating within the team and acting in cooperation. At this point, effective leadership skills come into play. The key is to develop partnerships by helping others help themselves (Yirci, R. & Demir, 2019, p. 170).

Organizational development as a basic function of the directive administration implies an effective management of a series of techniques and tools that in many cases are inefficient to achieve institutional goals. Thus, very specific characteristics such as little participation initiative, inadequate communication channel when designating roles and functions, inadequate working conditions, lack of tolerance to resolve situations specific to the organization, lack of synergy and empathy to promote the sense of change, a quality inherent in today's fast-paced world. In addition, we must consider that today the pedagogical factor is relevant, since it is worth highlighting the management of planning in the management instruments that establish the vision, mission, strategic objectives. However, the deficiencies in the management of elaboration, conduction, execution and evaluation turn out to be very noticeable due to the lack of functional advice (Gonzaga, 2016, p. 20).

We would like to highlight that it is very important to consider social criteria in the development of every concept of education. Thus, the existing legislation, development strategy and action plan in considering all criteria. In the conditions of the formation of the post-industrial stage of the development of the society, the repeated social production in the world is carried out on the basis of the innovative development of the national economy. This challenge poses new tasks, such as the formation of a new type of modern human resource with a wide range of integrated, competence-based knowledge and a high share of the intellectual component in human potential (Ahmadov, 2022, p. 334).

In 2008, the first observations and analyzes of functional chains based on Dörner's psi model were presented and discussed. Early hypotheses from deliberations suggest that dealing intensively with unsafe classroom situations reduces insecurity. It is possible that by participating in a wide range of situations and observing them from different angles, vague ideas about what uncertainty might mean in the classroom and what changes in behavior are present may arise. Dörner (1999) assumes that schemata consist

of different experiences, which can then be applied to different situations. The emergence of ambiguous ideas may also play a decisive role in finding solutions in creative processes. These ideas have a trend-setting effect and can therefore control the forecast of future options for action. In this respect, they can reduce insecurity and positively influence self-efficacy expectations.

Management can be seen as a profession connected to the position of manager, i.e., management work. Early childhood education management work means structuring the mission of early childhood education and building a vision together with the staff. It also involves strategy work and evaluation, which are the basis of development. The management of educational organizations is moving from administrative leadership and coaching towards pedagogical leadership and coaching. Pedagogical leadership and coaching, on the other hand, emphasizes the fact that the leader must know not only general leadership and coaching skills but also the professional content of the activity (Grice et al., 2023; Heikka et al., 2021).

Today, management is conceived as a contextual and shared activity. In addition, management relies on numerous different perspectives. In shared leadership, knowledge is emphasized, in which case it must be shared and visible to everyone. The information includes both pedagogical and practical approaches. In shared leadership, the acquisition of information, learning and the sharing of information openly to all members of the work community are essential. In shared leadership, leadership is distributed to the entire work community, in which case the responsibilities of an individual manager are distributed to several people (Pisto, 2013).

With the new requirements placed on schools in connection with reflecting the economic, political, social and cultural challenges of the 21st century, the demands on the professionalism of school leaders are also increasing. As a result of these expectations, pressures and changes, which affect not only each other education, but also influence the educational policy of a number of countries. That's why it is often discussed whether the current system of professional development and education of managers in education, by which principals create the necessary values and ensure the skills for the performance of their work, does not become obsolete and dysfunctional, and whether these important actors in education receive sufficient training and support throughout their careers to successfully handle the roles of school principals, which are currently more complex.

If we focus on the area outside of education, we will find that the professional development of managers is usually

conceived as a comprehensive system, from the selection of suitable candidates for a management position, their preparation, taking into account the beginnings of their careers, to continuous support throughout their term of office, their ongoing evaluation and corresponding evaluation. In fields outside the field of education, it is difficult for a person without managerial education and who does not respect the trend of lifelong education to manage a company (Adamova, 2012).

Someone may say that a holistic assessment of the proposed educational solutions may be positive because they generally seem to be well thought out, but is this really the case and the theory coincides with school practice? Declaredly, a modern school is expected to improve the quality of education, the usefulness of the knowledge transferred, the development of creative thinking and comprehensive interest in the student, but this is in quite clear opposition to real activities, where knowledge is checked with tests. Some curriculum content is duplicated, others are not addressed in general (although here at the lower levels of education the situation should be improved by the new core curriculum), and the wave of formalities and papers floods teachers' everyday life, obscuring the needs of the student, and the tendency to cut costs in the entire education system is still ongoing.

However, despite the fact that changes have become an immanent part of organizational life, hardly any headteacher of a school can call himself a fully competent specialist in the strategy of effective change implementation. This is a pity, because skillful change management, apart from institutional benefits, changes the attitude of employees, motivates, eliminates fears, overcomes resistance, etc. In order to be able to talk about conscious management of the change process, it is worth taking a closer look at the essence and complexity of this phenomenon. Change, which have already be mentioned many times, is an inseparable element accompanying every modern organization, including an educational institution (Szafran, 2013, p. 81).

CONCLUSIONS

School leadership is critical to the success of a school because it determines the direction, culture, and overall success of the institution. Effective school leadership improves student achievement, increases student attendance, reduces student dropout, improves staff engagement, and improves school culture. School leaders need to set clear directions, establish high expectations, and use data to track progress and performance to ensure that students have the best possible chance for success. Nowadays, adapting to the changing environment

becomes a necessary condition for its survival and development. The forces for change may lie outside or within the organization. External and internal influences as well as areas stimulating and inhibiting organizational changes may intertwine, reflecting e.g., new legal regulations, administrative decisions, technological achievements, or social expectations for organizations, as well as innovative work methods, personal changes, modifications of the management style, new attitudes and expectations of employees and other involved entities. In conclusion, good leadership will always be important because it enhances communication, fosters a better work environment, boosts productivity, increases efficiency, establishes a strong vision and direction for the future, motivates, inspires, guides, and coaches others to improve.

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