

School Management and Leadership in Education

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Abstract

The history of educational management in our schools is traditionally operated by unqualified personnel. Our model of management has been created through practice and experience-based systems. But this form of management is neither effective nor satisfactory. It creates additional stress and work for the teaching staff and does not provide an educationally conducive environment. The new theories of educational management and leadership styles applied today in The United Kingdom are very important for school improvement and student performance. Approximately twenty-five percent of our population is enrolled in school, and these students require support and management in a modern way. As educational autonomy increases, so do the responsibilities of school directors and principals. This calls for qualified managers to fulfill tasks, empower teachers, and provide support to the evolving educational system. For this reason, universities should provide graduate studies for educational administration and management and should receive governmental support for the institutions designated with the task of training new educational managers.

Keywords: school management, stress, style of leadership, autonomy, human rights.

1. Development of education and the need for qualified directors

He who opens a school door, closes a prison.
Victor Hugo

The development of education in Albania occurred in a short period of time, but with a high intensity either in the quantitative side or in the qualitative one. There have passed 126 years since the opening of the first Albanian school in 1887 till now in 2013.

At that time the person who would achieve to finish a grade in the school, or learn to read and write, was considered a lucky one. Nowadays it is believed that 100% of the children finish the secondary school, 90% finish the high school and the same amount finish university. So 20% of the population is at school.² It is an impressive mass.

There are not only qualitative changes in number and quantity, but even the quality and the structure of education has changed a lot, adapting it to the conditions of the market and to those of the society.

Together with the changes of the 90-s, there were huge changes even in education, which occurred either from the need or from the political pressure to change. The autonomy of school was increasing each year, the responsibility of school was growing, but the capacity to confront these needs didn't change, but they even got worse from the political actions of the government in power.

The mass education couldn't be directed without the capacity and the contemporaneous knowledge of their directors like in the Western countries, especially England and The United States. An important role in the development of education is played by the school management. The total centralization of competences has weakened the role of the school management. It was sufficient for the director of the school to be a good, experienced teacher, and it was fair to put him/her as a director of a school.

During 1980-1990 a special valuation was done to the didactic side of these directors, which was taken through 2-week courses done once a year for these directors, who were considered to be prospective after they were given this position.

After the 90-s school directors began to be politically substituted and due to the tradition the only criteria was to be a teacher and a political party investor. Only in 2012 the Law for the Para university Education evidently determined the autonomy of school and that the school director needed to have capability, quality and a good professional education for which the society and the academic world should invest.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Educational Management is an academic discipline

It hasn't been written at all in Albania or having been translated in Albanian about the transforming Leadership in Education. It was mentioned as an approximate discipline in political or social sciences, in the aspect of political and social leadership. The transforming Leadership in Education, in the aspect of political and social leadership, hasn't been treated yet as a discipline or a theory. In the Western world, especially USA and UK it has been treated for years as a theory, and it has also been developed and applied as a scientific discipline in the academic world.

The history of Educational Management in UK is described like this:

“Educational Management is a new academic discipline in UK. The first special courses were offered in the University of London in the Institution of Education in 1960. The leaders of these courses were established in the open universities and that of Birmingham in 1970. George Byron, Ron Glatter, and Meredith Hughes who shortly led the courses at the same time at the end of 1970, must be honestly related to the invention of the subject in the UK. The first courses of the Educational Management were characterized by the belief on the concepts and practices which came from industrial subjects from USA, where the programs on Education Administration were strongly developed in 1950 and 1960. This approach is more than a new subject justifies its place in the academic world. Educational management is a practical field, and the studying which flows from the principals of management applied in the industry and trade mainly in the USA as we early mentioned. (Tony Bush, Les Bell....1999 p.3)”.

Many master programs on the Leadership and Management of Education were opened in many universities. These programs continued studies of Bachelor graduation in the teaching field or after 3-5 years experience in teaching. In these master programs the needed capacity is created for the direction and school management and this is the condition to be met if you want to become a school director. There have also been opened some studying programs on doctorates in English and American Universities (for PHD)

Hundreds of scientific research centers were founded for further research in the Education Management and Leadership fields. British and American governments have put a considerable amount of the state budget in disposal to the scientific research and training for the leadership and Education Management. There are also some periodical publications which publish scientific studies in England and USA, and many regular activities are organized including meetings, symposiums and conferences where the latest scientific news and useful studies to help leadership and Education Management are debated.

British and American school is completely decentralized and has a full autonomy in connection with the Management and its direction. National programs are compulsory and based on unified national standards, but the organization and self-organization of schools is decentralized. The most meaningful legislation of this period is the Act of Educational Reform, 1998, which followed the 3rd elections won by Thatcher. It gave a great power to school increasing and the allocation of the resources and presented a prescriptive and detailed national curriculum and a regular evaluation of the students. It is connected to the funds given to the schools based on the number of the students and the prediction for an open management which markets the concurrence (Glater,2012). Scholar leadership is seen as the key to success for an improvement in the quality of the school today. Tony bush says:

There is a big interest in the Education Leadership in the first part of the 21st century. This comes from a general belief that the quality of the Leadership makes a meaningful change to the school and to the students 'results. In many parts of the world including developed countries and those in process of development you can find a growth in the fact that the schools ask for effective directors and managers, if they need to give the best education to their students and learners”. (Bush 2009,p.375).

Leadership didn't start as a quality or characteristic of personality. There have been planned some strategies on the development of the scholar Leadership. Leadership in its highest quality is widely known to be one of the most important requests for successful schools. However, very little is known for the forms of Leadership Development which are more likely to produce effective Leadership. (Bush and Jackson 2002)

2.2 Method of Research

This work is based on a studying case, that it is the case of Albania which is a unique place in the manner the Education

is organized in the region. To learn about this specific case, observing methods are used to observe the behavior of the school directors, organize questionnaires and interviews and study the official and legal documentation to determine the needs of education in Albania compared to the experience and contemporaneous literature which is applied nowadays in England and USA. This way we construct a typology of the needs of education in Albania, especially for the Leadership and Educational management.

2.3 Development of Educational Leadership in Albania

Development levels of the education in Albania have been growing. The first teachers were prepared in the Normal School in Elbasan until 1957, time when the first university was opened in Albania. This university prepared different specialists for the economy and society and also the first specialists with higher education who would serve and direct our schools. Then three Pedagogical High Institutes were opened which prepared specialists, especially for secondary and high schools for all the subjects done in the school. The teachers that can be mentioned here are those of: Language and Literature, Math and Physics, Biology and Chemistry, History and Geography. After 1980 higher education (middle school) had a visible expansion where approximately 55% of the students who finished secondary schools go to high school.

Schools have been completely idealized and centralized where everything was directed from *high* and school directors only had administrative and didactic responsibilities. The directors were carefully chosen to support the programs of the party state and fight for the creation of the new person. The base literature of the plans and programs of the schools were the Leaders' speeches in plenums and congresses and only a little pedagogical and didactic literature.

After 90-s, there has been an essential change in Education, which starts with a withdrawal of the programs and texts from politics. There was an approval for the Law of the Para University Education in which were established the duties and the standards of Education in Albania in correspondence with the programs and the Laws of UE. These programs are in conformity with the Convent of Bologna and can be equivalent with those in Europe and the world.

Our school is decentralized and its autonomy is in continuous growth. Universities have adapted their programs to prepare specialists who are useful in Education. Including all these changes the directors of many Institutions of Education are teachers and their selection is done according to their political investment.

What preparation must a school director have? How must they be selected?

2.4 Legal Situation for the Leadership and School Management

We are seeking for duties and responsibilities which are ratified by Laws and Instructions, to understand the need of the formation and preparation of a school director today.

Studying the instructions of MASH (Ministry of Albanian Education) 2007, it is necessary that the school director must give the annual school plan according to these Instructions

The chapters of this annual plan must be:

1. Analysis of the state.
2. Aims
3. Objectives
4. Chart of activities for each of the objectives of an aim.
5. Chart of observance for each activity timetable.
6. Description of the process to draft the annual plan.
7. Others
8. Contributions

It is the first time that a compulsory Legal Act is approved to follow the instructions for the format of the school annual plan. In 2012, the Law for Para University Education was approved, which consists on the development of the competences and responsibilities for the school directors.

In the Article 54 of the Law 69/2012 it is given the status for the director of an Educational Institution.

The director of an Educational Institution:

1. The director leads the activities in the Educational Institution.
2. The director of the Educational Institution, being it public or private, is responsible for:
 - a. The execution of this Law and the Legal Acts for its execution.
 - b. Improvement of the quality of the Educational Service.

- c. Development and execution of the curricula.
 - d. Management of the staff and creating the conditions for professional development for the workers of this staff.
3. The director of the Public Educational Institution has the duties to:
 - a. Manages the Institution, including the financial management.
 - b. Uses a special annual fund from the budget of the Locative Educational Units, for the reward on professional merits for the teachers, in correspondence with the right decision of the Ministers' Council, after being consulted with social partners and the board of the Institution.
 - c. Employs full -time or part-time teachers, helping teachers with funds which are supplied from the Institution, according to the criteria or procedures given in the Institution of the Minister and the Finance Minister. The amount of the wage and salary is established according to the Legal Act in Power.
 4. The director of the Educational Institution allows the students to use only supportive editions and other learning materials approved from the Minister through his Instructions (education law 69/2012)

Going through these competences and responsibilities, the director should have some abilities, which can only be achieved with qualifications and continuous training. So Universities should be in charge to build curricula and the government should support their training in order to have a qualitative education, equal and all-inclusive.

3. Conclusion

School Management done from unqualified or self-qualified directors, has brought a non-professional management, accompanied by authoritative and non-effective methods.

Staffs are trained in a non-professional way and as a consequence teachers get tired, are stressed, don't enjoy their work and suffer the old-fashioned Leadership styles.

The new Educational Reform, determined by Law, ask for special attention toward school directors who have contemporaneous qualifications and knowledge, which is needed to fulfill standards and grow school effectiveness.

The on growing autonomy of the school and their self-management should be supported with professional curricula for the Scholar Leadership, from the University programs, and from continuous training, with modules for the development of the leadership, as an important aspect in the growth of quality and effectiveness in schools.

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