Innovative Perspectives in Educational Management

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Abstract

In this study the author aims at analyzing the convergence and divergence points between the economic and educational management striving at the same time to identify a few interdisciplinary study directions and working towards the opening of educational sciences. On the other hand, this paper emphasizes that educational management is not reduced (does not rely only upon) only to the leader's decisions but it also implies a constant debate in which should participate not only teachers and psychologists but also the experts in educational sciences.

This study points out and defines a series of managerial activity models which can be put into practice in schools and universities. The dynamics of school and university live implies specific roles and activities whose understanding favors their proper functioning as well as the crystallization of a managerial team and finding some good quality solutions to the complex issues of training and assessment. Key words:

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We are contemporaneous with a dramatic socio-cultural and scientific period, representing a transition from the descriptive and normative educational sciences structured around the classical concepts of pedagogy and didactics to new constructive and innovative educational sciences which explicitly intend to reform school activities by emphasizing issues such as: the quality, efficiency and especially the utility of educational activities. This immense innovative potential in the field of educational activities and school organization can be analyzed according to a conceptual, methodological and epistemological plan comprising the tangent points and the interference states between the socio-economical management on one hand, and the educational management on the other hand, pointing out and displaying as much as possible interdisciplinary aspects not only of the methodological and conceptual type but also practical, functional and institutional aspects.

The term of "management" correlates with that of social leadership and reflects a constant concern of the human genius, as Xenofon enlarged upon more than three thousand years ago. He was the one who noticed the implications of Socrates and Plato's philosophy on the social level. He wrote a book about leadership named at the time "Kiropaidaia". The epistemological

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assertion of the term "management" produced itself in the 19th century in the USA when the economical issues of profitability and effectiveness imposed themselves in a clear way within the field of industrial activities. Paradoxically, Frederick Taylor and Henry Fayol have defined management and revealed its distinctiveness by turning to social sciences, firstly to psychology and sociology. In our opinion, "although management emerged among the small and middle companies, where the landowner was at the same time also manager, the large and very large companies allowed the distinction between the landowners and organizers and among the latter category the position of manager imposed itself even more." (Florica Orţan, 2003, page 13)

In the point of view mentioned above the spectacular evolution of management has at least two phases or directions: the first one is an impressive diversification; from the management of production there has been a crossing towards the management of commerce and from these two types to the financial management, from the strategic management there has been a movement towards the comparative management, and from the last one to the management of quality. The second direction of management development is characterized by interdisciplinarity, this conceptual nucleus focused on decision and control has enclosed extremely different fields of activity which are remote from the economic activity such as the educational management.

Beginning with the first years of the new millennium, Florea and Elisabeta Voiculescu have bounded quite precisely a strategic educational management, marked by the concepts of the need of education (derived with the economic needs, educational resources and correlated with financial and material resources as a constituent part of the market economy). According to Florea and Elisabeta Voiculescu, educational management has the role of taking into consideration "some of the concepts which can be applied in the field of education by trying at the same time to "to reveal the change of paradigm which is induced by the economic approach of pedagogy. (it imposes it in the study of education)." (F. Voiculescu, E. Voiculescu, 2005, page 153)

If we review or thoroughly analyze important treaties of educational management, we will easily identify classical conceptual structures adapted to the features of the educational phenomenon such as the strategic management or the management of quality (see for example V. Guţu, M. Sefciuc: "Strategic and Operational Management within General Education";, E. Muraru " The Management of Quality within the General Management")

One of the main directions of conceptual and strategic innovation related to education is represented by the prominence of the managerial nature of the teaching activity. In order to argue the thesis of the managerial nature of teaching, Romiţă B. Iucu brings to the forefront the basic characteristics of teaching. The educationalist from Bucharest axiomatically notices that "teaching defines itself as a pedagogical intervention which is also multi-purpose and deliberately directed towards promoting and obtaining the expected

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behavioral changes, or changes wanted explicitly." (Romiţă B. Iucu, 2008, page 103)

The praxeological structure of the objectives-methods and means type allows him to identify characteristic elements, groundwork of teaching. The following features of teaching are mentioned concretely: to prescient (to plan, to project, to programme); "to orientate"; to establish the nature, to present the subject; to direct; to stimulate active engagement; to organize the required facilities; to offer moments of feedback; to provide the terms which are necessary for stabilizing and transferring, to confute; to assess; to investigate" (Romiţa B. Iucu, page 103-104). If we relate the teaching process characteristics identified by Romiţă B. Iucu to the basic functions of management established by H. Fayol (prescience, command, coordination and control) we find out that these features and fundamental elements are interchangeable, that is, an element from the first set can be easily moved in the second set maintaining its sense and purpose. It is even easier to demonstrate by beginning with the nucleus of the managerial paradigm: the decision. In another paper I have pointed out that "the teacher who teaches in a class of students automatically has the role of curriculum manager, since the teacher has to constantly make decisions regarding the adaptation of the teaching programme the to actual receiving possibilities of the students". (Florica Orţan idem, page 160) Actually, the teacher constantly relates during his didactic activity the objectives established by the lesson plan, including elements of conceptual and linguistic nature to the learners' capacity of understanding. Quite often, there is a distance which is difficult to overcome between these two elements. The psychological and gnoseological decisions made by the teacher refer to the attempts of explaining, that is to translate ideas, concepts and new terms in a language which is familiar to the students on one hand, and on the other hand, it refers to stimulating the learners' intelligence by means of psychological techniques which are relatively sophisticated. Actually, when facing difficulties, the teachers' decisions are made according to instrumental and methodological alternatives, that is, various methods and procedures are being tested (these must be known by the teacher who also needs to have the experience of using them) in order to find the right elements. It is important not to forget that the teacher carries on such drills almost at any moment during the lesson and it is implied in a lot of cases the sudden change of the decisional line. Another important aspect which undoubtedly supports the managerial functions of the teacher during the lesson is represented by the numerous interpersonal aspects, emotional reactions of the students which are difficult to predict, elements of contact among students, some of which being very hard or even difficult to be directed. In order to maintain the normal course of the lesson the teacher adjusts his/her decisions based on an authentic managerial control, thus the teaching methodological alternatives are being constantly related to the results achieved by means of quick methods and techniques of assessment which require sui

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generis managerial abilities. All these managerial aspects imply a psychological and gnoseological innovation achieved through methodological and operational means constantly requesting the teacher's full creative potential as well as the need to possess knowledge from various fields of activity, not only from the managerial sciences but mainly from the educational sciences.

Managerial principles and concepts have emerged unexpectedly and massively in the nucleus of educational sciences, in two areas which are relatively remote; on one hand it has been revealed the managerial nature of the teacher's activity while performing in a class, in front of the students, and, on the other hand the managerial coordinates of leading a school have been pointed out. The sociological aspects such as the institutional characteristic of the school can bring up the comparison between school as an educational institution and the other social institutions beginning with the production company and ending with mass-media. The managerial element common to all these institutions is represented in the first place by the elements of organization and coordination. I have pointed out in another work that the management of educational institutions implies sophisticated ways of "socio-educational organization and management, of staff but also an economic and financial management of an educational institution, disregarding whether it is a university, a high school, a middle school or kindergarten." (Florica Orţan coord, 2014, page 286)

In a school as well as in the other institutions, the manager is facing a lot of problems, most of them being educational situations of an increasing complexity which can be solved only through judicial decisions. From our point of view, managing a school is much more complex and more difficult to perform than managing a production company, even if the financial aspects are not that compelling. Indeed, the school manager works out not only financial problems or those regarding the staff and resources but also problems related to the curriculum. As it is known not only in the case of higher education but also in that of general knowledge a larger panel of optional subject matters is revealed more often. Although, unfortunately most of the times the manager's decisions aim more at ensuring the full-time employment of their colleagues, at least theoretically there should be carried out systematic surveys among the learners, the students and their families regarding the identification of their preferences and the deployment of simultaneous counseling activities.

School management implies besides the plan of economic and financial decisions, also the curricular decisions regarding the teaching and assessing strategies. In this managerial area educational sciences intervene not only theoretically but also conceptually, by means of a wide panel of strategies, methodologies, techniques, procedures, means, instruments, teaching and evaluation devices. It is obviously requested that the manager should have a proper training within the field of educational sciences. The instructive-educational activities, not only teaching and assessment but also learning are by

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their nature informational and scientific. In the field of education there is selected, structured and explained knowledge belonging to all scientific domains starting with nature sciences and ending with applied engineering sciences. The scientific information of these subject matters is used in education in a pedagogical and managerial manner, that is, it is selected by means of certain methodological screens and by the instruments which aim at their restructuring and adapting to the learners' possibilities of assimilation. From this perspective, the managerial activity implies a close collaboration between the manager of the schooling institution and present-day scientific works which have a proper level of synthesis.

Another important plan which reflects the synthetic nature of educational management refers to the numerous psycho-emotional, cognitive, gnoseologic, semantic and logical aspects which we have to take into account when we organize the instructive- educational activities. One of the ideals which are difficult to be achieved, which lies before managers and each teacher is that of knowing and acting properly to each learner's reactions having in mind the differences of psychic nature which students may encounter at every step in their education. In the pedagogical theory there has been stated in a sort of mechanical way that the teacher should also be a psychologist similarly to the way educational sciences try to constantly collaborate with the psychological disciplines. Any progress in this direction brings also a benefit related to the quality of the decisions made by the leading agent within a class or school.

Not lastly, schooling management inevitably interferes with the economic management in the sense that the schools' graduates are to be employed in economic institutions with financial management, and also school needs to be financed; furthermore, there is also interference with the community management and with educational policies.

Having in mind the observations and the arguments mentioned above, there should be imposed a better collaboration within the managerial team, a clearer confinement of the role held by each member, stating the responsibilities, identifying and keeping a meticulous record of the problems the institution is facing and a closer collaboration with the leading agents at the level of the community.

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