TEACHERS AS LEADERS - A THEORETICAL APPROACH

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Abstract: *The importance of teachers in our societies is, no doubt, very high. The changes in education makes repeated demands on teachers and school leaders to develop new competences, and to work together in different ways to those accepted historically. Over recent years, big attention of many researches was dedicated to matters of policy in respect of teachers and school leaders. It is important to understand what makes a teacher as a leader and what are his roles in this matter.Why are we asking that ? Because developing school leaders requires clearly defining their responsibilities, providing access to appropriate professional development throughout their careers, and acknowledging their pivotal role in improving school and student performance. The aim of the paper is to present the bibliographical researches and the different roles and responsibilities of 21st century school leaders. The next question will be how can we succeeded in developing effective school leaders? The paper is the result of an Erasmus project named "Teachers Teachers-Leaders-Teachers as Leaders and Trendsetters of Changing".*
Keywords: *teachers role; leaders; education; changes.*

1. Introduction

Nowadays one of the bigest challenges facing education systems is implementing the changes that make schools, and therefore, nations, competitive in international and global market. But without the participation of teachers, for education changes are impossible. Therefore the knowledge, skills and attitudes of each of Europe's 6 million teachers are of great importance, because the quality of their teaching has a direct effect upon learners' attainment (Education in the EU, 2019)

The demands made on teachers, school leaders, and teacher educators are increasing and changing. They are called on to play a key role in modernising education. To do that, they need to develop their own competences. Today more than ever, a number of interconnected factors argue / show for the necessity of teacher leadership in schools.

As teachers, we often ask ourselves if we are leaders in the student's group we lead, but also in our workplace - the school organization. We all know that teacher is considered the classroom manager, but does that mean that he is also the

leader? In fact, what does it mean to be a leader? Can we suppose a leader is in the same manager?

1.1. Management – Leadership - Administration

Regarding the meaning and differentiation of the manager-leader-administrator terms, there are different points of view in the literature according to the field in which they develop, but also by the geographical area to which belong (Coleman, M.&Earley P., 2005). As example, in the USA the term "administration" is placed at the highest level and is often synonymous with "leadership". On the other hand, the "educational leadership" in the USA can have, in different contexts, the same meaning as "educational administration"

"Leadership" and "management" terms can be found in different versions. Gronn (1999) considers "Leadership is differentiated qualitatively by management and administration". Leadership is presented as a quality that does not necessarily come from status, or from the job, but it is something special. On the other hand, management is considered as a formal leadership, while leadership can be regarded as an informal group, led by a leader, the head of this group. Leadership can be identified at the top of an organization, but others can as well do it at different levels of the organization.

Another approach completely differentiates the two notions. Zaleznic is the first author to make a distinction between the two categories of leaders in 1977 by the article in Harward Business Revue "Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?" (Table 1).

Tabel 1. Leaders vs. managers

Criteria	Types	
	Leaders	Managers
The goal	*Manifesting of personal and active attitudes*	Manifest impersonal, passive attitudes
Work concept	Stimulates work offers and creates possibilities for choosing it	Coordinates, balances work. Accept values compromises
Relations with others	Manifests empathy, gives meaning to actions and events	Poor emotional involvement in relationships with the others
Self-perception	Manifests a low self-identity, focusing on change	Manifesting an acute need to maintain the present order, a pronounced conservatism

John P. Kotter (1988) emphasized that management is different from leadership in that it is "more formal, more scientific, and therefore universal." In this way, management is based on a set of explicit tools and techniques, determined by analytical testing and analysis, which can be used as such in different situations, both in the business world and in the public sector.

Kotter argues that leadership is a process that aims to develop a vision for the organization; align people with that vision, and motivate people to action through the basic need fulfilment. Kotter stated that leadership is different from management, but not for the reason most people think. Leadership is not mystical or mysterious. It has nothing to do with having the charisma or other exotic personality traits. It`s not the province of a chosen few. Nor is leadership necessarily better than management or a replacement for it: rather, leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment (Kotter, 1990a).

Other opinions (Bennis and Nanus, 2012) regarding the two notions are:
•managers manage, while leaders innovate;
•the manager is a copy, the leader is the original;
•the manager maintains, the leader develops;
•the manager is based on control, the leader inspires confidence;
•the manager has short-term visions, the leader privileges long-term visions;
•the manager asks "how?" and "when?", the leader asks "what?" and "why?"

Lunenburg (2011) concluded that it is not essential that leaders are good managers and vice versa but a combination of effective leadership and management can contribute effectively in an organisation's success.

For John Kotter (1990a) leadership goes beyond routine tasks to cope with change, whereas management is a regular formal responsibility to cope with routine complexity. He argues that leadership is a process that aims to develop a vision for the organization, align people with that vision; and motivate people to action through the basic need fulfilment. Kotter stated: leadership is different from management, but not for the reason most people think. Leadership isn`t mystical or mysterious. It has nothing to do with having the charisma or other exotic personality traits. Leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment (Kotter, 1990a).

It is important to specify the two notions are not mutually exclusive. In practice, it is very likely that leaders and managers are characterized by the same qualities and abilities. But there is a difference, however, is the extent to which they are intertwined. Thus, there is the opinion that leaders are specific conceptual and human abilities, and managers, technical, action, operational. Also, the qualities of a leader are clearly visible in those situations that involve rapid and extensive changes in crises, while the qualities of the manager are visible in day-to-day, banal, current situations. Hence, the idea those managers predict or diminish the risks, while leaders assume these risks.

But no matter of the context in which they are used, the terms "management" and "leadership" are often used in the same sense, especially in the current speech. Even sometimes we find one of the terms used in the literature and the other in brackets as an extension of the first one.

Unlike the terms of management and leadership, the administration term implies the operationalization of everyday issues, of little importance compared to management, which involves solving far-reaching perspectives. Administration, as stated by R. Iucu (2000) means general terms for the formulation of the objective, obtaining success by preventing errors, adopting a small number of decisions for a large number of people, hierarchies and areas of wide accountability, specifying the role of arbitrator of the administrator.

Over time, the management term had over 150 definitions:

•"Provide and Plan, Organize, Lead, and Control" (Fayol),

•"Taking responsibility for deciding, planning and regulating the work of some people working for a common purpose so that the right result is efficient and economical" (Brech),

•"The process of coordinating human, informational, physical and financial resources in order to achieve the primary goal of the organization - obtaining the desired products and services of a particular segment of society" (Reece and O'Grady - USA)

•"Science of administration techniques of the enterprise" (Larousse - France), or

•"Management science deals with laws of general management and its synthetic laws" (Popova and Krasnopoiasa - Russia),

•"Management means to do the right thing, while leadership is doing what you need," says Drucker.

Some definitions define management as an art. Thus, Roy Rowan said about management ''is the art of making decisions with insufficient information." Starting from the idea that the artistic process is generally seen as having three vital aspects: craftsmanship, vision, and communication, he has come to the conclusion that the process of management is a form of art, because it achieves all three aspects: managers must have tools to perform tasks; they must have the vision to implement innovative strategies; they need to have communication skills at work and elsewhere.

1.2. Teachers leaders and leadership in education

For leadership, business dictionary presents two definition:

1. The individuals who are the leaders in an organization, regarded collectively.

2. The activity of leading a group of people or an organization or the ability to do this.

Leadership needs a clear vision, sharing that vision with others so that they will follow willingly, providing the information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision, and coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members and stakeholders.

Another definition of the leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common <u>goal</u>. People who lead have three common attributes:

✓   inspire others to share their vision;
✓   motivate others to act on that vision;
✓   encourage others and help them overcome obstacles in pursuit of that vision.

Leadership requires traits that extend beyond management duties. But leadership also involves communicating, inspiring and supervising. It`s important to say leadership doesn`t mean seniority of one`s position in the top of hierarchy of the organization. Or in another words, not all the top teams are developing leadership. As Warren Bennis say: "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality".

<u>Leadership</u> provides direction for an organization and its employees which need to know the direction in which the organization is headed and who to follow to reach the destination.

Leadership involves showing employees how to effectively perform their responsibilities and regularly supervising the completion of their tasks. Leadership is also about setting a positive example for staff to follow, by being excited about the work, being motivated to learn new things, and helping out as needed in both individual and team activities.

According with Peter Drucker: "The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers. To gain followers requires influence but doesn't exclude the lack of integrity in achieving this". Some theorists believe that leadership is no different from the social influence processes occurring among all members of a group and others believe that leadership is everything someone is doing in order to lead effective.

As a leader of an educational school, it must be find a balance between the leader dependence on teachers and their legal authority (Johnson, 1996). In finding this balance they must, over time, develop competence and co-operation for collectively leading a school and jointly ushering in change (Huffman, 2011). This implies that leaders must clearly understand their roles and those of their teachers. They cannot abdicate their responsibilities nor take over those of teachers.

But we must take care at the people who are in positions of leadership but who are not providing leadership. A leader by its meaning is one who goes first and leads by example, so that others are motivated to follow him. This is a basic requirement.

In educational environment, we can find formal and informal leadership.

Formal Leadership

Formal leadership is when a person is officially designated as the leader of a group. We can find examples as a teacher of the classroom, the head of school, the captain of a sporting team and the head of a department. His job is to organize

the available resources, to work out the logistics, to coordinate and to motivate the members of the team to do their best of the abilities.

Informal Leadership

Appears when the person is not officially appointed as the head of a group. In the group the other members look to him and trust him, he motivates and inspire the informal of formal group. Sometimes, as an informal leader there is colleague who, play this role even if these leaders are not in a formal position of leadership, they are recognized as leaders by their peers.

Formal leaders have authority and certain rights and privileges that informal leaders lack. As a formal leader there is the power over the group and has the authority to discipline and punish the group members. In the same time, a formal leader could give rewards to the group. Not all of these are possible for informal leader. That`s why he has to prove charisma, he must have an open communication, a shared vision, and he must be a team guide. The informal leader led through example, individual behaviour and personality.

Sometime in schools we will find both formal and informal leader. These could be difficult to manage, because they could not share the same vision. The group has different expectations to the two leaders. Team members tend to be loyal to the formal leader because his power and authority and, on the other hand, they tend to be loyal to the informal leader because he is one of them. The informal leader has a greater commitment to the group, while the formal leader's commitment is connected with the organization. In any situation, it is important for the formal and informal leaders to work together to make sure that the group achieves the best results. In educational institutions, it is possible to appear such informal leaders that creates factions that would bid for power over influence towards formal ones. Real conflicts between formal and informal leaders arise when ineffective leadership is the cause of employee disengagement and motivation loss. This is where informal leaders are fighting against formal policies since they are powerful and they have the sympathy of the team members. That`s why is necessary to take care at the informal leaders. Because they, properly motivated, could help in managing and maintain order within the workplace as a partner of the formal organization.

There are some recommendations related to the formal versus informal leader: to use the informal leader influence as an opportunity to find on what should be adjusted in relation to the institutional policy. In the same time, formal leaders could be understood better when informal organizations are being explored by immersed in their culture.

Teacher leadership is an idea which time has come. The unprecedented demands being placed on schools today require leadership at every level. Therefore the role of the teacher leader is not only leadership between teachers but to be the students (pupils) leader, too. School leadership is the process of finding, supporting and guiding the talents and energies of other teachers, students and parents toward

achieving common educational aims. Besides, the teacher leaders are defines as the „agents of changes".

The researchers suggest that teachers should see themselves as creators rather than objects of change. In many societies around the world, teachers are looked upon as the individuals who can help to bring about positive changes in the lives of people.

These change creators (agents) must be entrepreneurs, must be focused on the collaborative development of shared knowledge in learning communities, and must master system thinking in order to transform new knowledge into effecting teaching strategies and to implement them in the school curriculum.

For the 21st century education Charles Fadel (2015) identifies the three dimensions and the related challenges for curricula:

Knowledge (relevant) because it is visible the lack of motivation of the students and also the lack of involvement in the educational process. The author suggests the need to rethink the meaning and applicability of the contents in order to achieve a better balance between the theoretical and the practical part.

Higher **skills** and abilities ("21st century skills"), such as "4 C" of creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration. The author observes already overloaded programs with the contents, which makes them difficult for the students to exercise skills through projects**.** On the other hand, even teachers are not prepared to teach these skills

Character (behaviors, attitudes, values) - which is necessary to cope with an increasingly challenging world and to achieve performance (measured in descriptors such as adaptability, persistence, resilience) and the formation of moral traits (integrity, justice, empathy, ethics).

Meta-Learning (learning to learn, interdisciplinarity, systems thinking, personalization, etc.) - this encompasses the other three dimensions essential for establishing lifelong learning habits, activating the transfer, creating expertise, promoting creativity through analogies, increasing versatility, addressing the individual needs of students.

In order to promote the 21st century education dimension, teachers leaders must play many roles:

- **leader** for the classroom: a teacher who leads a team of teachers focused on the results of the student of the team;

- department/content chair: it is a interface between the school management and the others colleagues, students, parents community etc. It may include as well instructional leadership and managerial tasks ;

- **mentor and/or coach** usually for the novice teachers or for the newcomers in the school ;

- instructional specialist/ coach - which helps colleagues implement effective teaching strategies in a specific subject or for a specific student population ;

- **curriculum and/or assessment specialist and or curriculum creators** : which guides teachers to develop standards and to follow the curriculum and /or to develop standardized assessments. A teacher leader helps other teachers come up with new strategies and interesting course material to better engage students ;

- **master teacher** : which is an advanced role in a teacher's career and could have different responsibilities ;

- **professional learning** facilitator when facilitates staff professional development. They can serve as team leaders for different grade level teams, working closely with teachers and their students to gather and analyze data about teacher practices and student performance to promote the best student learning ;

- **community builders :** it is happening when a teacher leader learns about a new technique or resource and even if it's not in one's discipline, he will immediately share it. In this way, every teacher constantly improves. The idea of paying it forward creates a successful learning environmentand in the same time it creates a community ;

- *catalyst for change. Teachers who are working for a catalyst role feel secure in their own work and have a strong commitment to continual improvement ;*

- **continuing learner** in formal or in informal environment. A teacher who is a learner model and has a continual improvement, demonstrate lifelong learning, and use what they learn to help all students achieve.

All these information where accumulated in a common database, in order to develop a model for training the teachers to become leaders.

1.3. Conclusion

After we understand what is a leader and who is a leader, what are his/her roles and responsabilities, we are ready to desing the high-quality training to develop passionate, effective teachers – leaders. In the same way, we are ready to develop the concept / model of teachers - leaders as "agents of change". The question from which we are starting is: what teacher training programs are needed for the preparation of the teachers to teach according with the 21st century classroom needs ? The answers could be easy understand if we consider the redesign of the curriculum, according with la last trends in education. In the same way, we must redesign the curriculum taking account of creativity and knowledge inspired by science by companies through entrepreneurial development of new products and services, by practitioners like teachers and/orschool managersand last, but not least, by students, parents, communities.

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