

HISTORIGRAPHICAL STAKES IN THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: *Today, the concept of school management is related to the training of educators in the implementation of strategies and styles of efficient transformational and transactional managerial approach. Into this concept, from the epistemological point of view, we identify transversal composite competencies that we can find in the historiography of organizational management. Therefore, we found it useful to take over some relevant aspects of the schools of managerial thinking. These features can nuance our managerial thinking in terms of efficiency and the evolution of management science. The epistemological map is completed by operational concepts used in current management: school development strategy; self-assessment based on performance indicators and standards; public responsibility in the planning field and personal public responsibility. Starting from the historiographical stakes of the schools' management thinking, which we review in this article, the management report can become an important perennial and public methodological document for the beneficiaries.*

Keywords: *managerial historiography, school management, operational concepts, managerial report.*

Introduction

The concept of *school management* is related to the training of educators in the implementation and styles strategies to the effective transformational and transactional managerial approach. In the case of managers, we are talking about transversal composite competencies that we find in the historiography of organizational management. Therefore, we found it could be useful to take over the relevant aspects of the schools of managerial thinking. They can nuance managerial thinking in terms of the efficiency and evolution of science.

Historiographical stakes

Empirical management appeared with the labour division and human life into organized groups. Before crystallizing as a science, the implicit management is related to the establishment of the first human communities in the primitive commune. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Henry Fayol and Frederich Taylor analyze the management process and management system, developing a set of rules, principles and methods for scientific leadership. Management schools are grouped according to the principles and nature of the used dominant concepts. In the opinion of Romanian specialists, there are five main managerial thinking schools: classical (traditional), sociological (behaviorist), quantitative, systemic and contextual thinking schools.

A. The classical (traditional) school is represented by F.W. Taylor, who, through his book *The Principles of Scientific Management*, published in 1911, shows that the system of scientific management is a revolution in the workers mood of workers and the mood of those in charge. F.W. Taylor defines the following fundamental principles of management:

- Exploring the traditional knowledge of the organization, classifying and transforming them into scientific laws;
- Scientific selection of employees, improving their quality and knowledge;

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- Application of the work study by the scientifically qualified employees;
- Equitable distribution of work between employees and managers;
- Achieving cooperation between people, instead of chaotic individualism.

Henry Fayol, one of the founders of this field of training, defines the functions of management and organization, a set of management principles and also the manager attributes, as follows:

Management functions: *to predict* (to evaluate the future and prepare it); *to organize* (to undertake, to endow an enterprise with materials, equipment, capital and human resources in order to be able to function); *to manage* (to take benefit from those who form the unit in the enterprise interest); *to coordinate* (to achieve harmony between all components of the enterprise, in order to guarantee the process and success); *to control* (verify the functioning of the adopted program and principles);

Organization functions: *technical, financial, commercial, accounting, security and managerial*;

Managers' attributes: *physical qualities* (health, energy), *mental abilities* (ability to understand and learn, judgment, mental vigor and adaptability), *moral abilities* (firmness, responsibility, initiative, loyalty, tact and dignity), *educational abilities* (self-improvement) and *experience* (seniority in work, performance).

Management principles:

- *Labour division* based on specialization and necessary to increase efficiency;
- *Authority and responsibility*: a combination between the competence given by the manager's position and that given by his personality traits (intelligence, experience, moral traits);
- *Discipline, order, fairness, initiative, stability, balance, team spirit*;
- *Command unit*: each employee receives orders from a single superior;
- *Management unit*: all decisions start from the hierarchy top;
- *Subordination of individual interests to general ones*;
- *Remuneration*: maximum satisfaction for executors and managers;
- *Chaining hierarchical levels*: short circuits between the upper and lower level of management.

The classical school contributes to the shaping of the management science, to the delimitation of the managerial functions and functions of the organization, as well as to the elaboration of some scientific principles of management. The emphasis is on researching the organization and production functions, neglecting the elements of human resources and company's relations with the environment.

B. The sociological (behaviorist) school is represented by D.Mc. Gregor, E. Mayo, Ch. Arghiris, O. G linier, H. Maslow and is characterized by placing the company's human resources at the forefront of the management process, establishing a set of principles, rules and methods to ensure superior capitalization of human potential. The dominant feature of behavioural studies is the use of concepts, sociological and psychological methods, such as: value system, individual and organizational behaviour, skills, personality, character, temperament, leadership, organizational culture, sociogram, group study, group dynamics and so on. If the classical school approaches, especially, the organizational structure, by considering only the formal relations arising from its formalization documents, the sociological school explores the informal aspects of management based on the informal group and informal authority. In order to identify new ways to increase the efficiency of economic activity, the sociological school develops theories on the motivation and stimulation of human resources, the motivational system, types of managers and management styles, participatory management. A special contribution was made by Douglas Mc Gregor, who, starting from the idea that, in the exercise of management functions, managers start from certain premises on the nature and behaviour of the human factor, issued the well-known theories X and Y:

Theory X:

- The average human being is naturally prone to neglect at work;
- People must be coerced, controlled, threatened or punished to make them work;
- The average person prefers to be led, avoids responsibility, wants to be quiet;
- The average person is selfish and indifferent to the needs of the organization he belongs to;
- The average person wants only material benefits, neglecting psychosocial needs.

Theory Y:

- Consumption of physical and intellectual effort at work is necessary as well as rest and fun;
- The average person learns not only to accept, to perform tasks and to assume responsibilities, but also to assume them;
- The average person wants economic advantages, but also those of a psychosocial nature;
- External control and threat are not the only means of attracting employees to achieve goals.

Managers who start from the stakes of theory X develop an authoritarian management style, while adherents of theory Y develop a democratic management style, using participatory leadership methods. Starting from the two theories, Octav G elinier developed the Z theory as a combination of the two.

The sociological school is characterized by:

- The location of the human factor in the main research plan;
- The importance of psychosocial stimulation to increase the organization performance;
- Promoting a participatory management style;
- The importance of informal components, informal groups and informal organization.

C. The quantitative school, represented by A. Kauffman, J. Starr, C. Afanisiev, F. Goronzy, is characterized by the rigorous approach to phenomena and management processes, by substantiating decisions using mathematical and statistical tools. The quantitative school focuses on production activities, forecasting and organizing functions. The contribution of the quantitative school consists in adapting the statistical-mathematical tools to the requirements of the micro- and macro-economic practice, to the accomplishment of the managerial analyzes and of the strategic solutions.

D. The systemic school is a conceptual synthesis of the previous schools, being a result of the increasing degree of complexity of the economic, managerial, sociocultural and political phenomena. At the base of the ideas of this school is the concept of *system* which is an organized set of interconditioned elements whose operation allows to achieve certain objectives. The economic type organization is seen as a complex system (productive, social, economic), in close interdependence with the environment. Representatives of this school: P. Drucker, H. Mintzberg, M. Porter, J. Child, H.A. Simon, C. Barnard etc. The contribution of the systemic school: approaching the company in a systemic, multidisciplinary vision and identifying ways to increase economic efficiency through structuring, adaptation to the environment by emphasizing the relationships between the basic elements of the system.

E. Contextual school

The contextual school is based on the premise that there is no recipe for success in management, rejecting the idea of formulating universally valid principles, methods and techniques. The contextual school postulates that each manager to identify the context in which the organization evolves, to choose the appropriate methods and tools, to respect the principles and rules compatible with the specifics of the context. In other words, to choose the right solution at the right time, without being dependent on strict rules that management science recommends. In a certain context, an authoritarian management style can be effective, for example, in an organization in which

employees do not assume responsibilities, do not have initiative, are only materially motivated. But the same management style, practiced in different contexts, can have different consequences.

Today challenges for the school organization

The option of European integration has direct consequences in the harmonization process of structures and programs, in professional mobility and in the mutual recognition of diplomas and study certificates, in mutual access to information on the organization, and also in development of education systems in European countries. This implies the harmonization of the analysis systems used by the Romanian institutions with the European institutions through indicators and reference criteria. The post-Lisbon indicators, proposed to the institutions interested in experimentation, change and training - the result of the European methodology - are aggregated and applicable for the European space up to the national level. Also, the proposals of sustainability indicators in local profile are aggregated and applicable for the local space to the national, regional, European and global level.

Quality is a term frequently used in educational policy documents, in normative texts and in everyday pedagogical language. The meaning of this term is often implicit and refers either to the description of affairs' state (performance indicators, standards), or relative to a normative meaning (desirable level), or relative to a value judgment (excellence, added values, superior performance). International quality regulators, as *the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)* and *the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)*, recommend two main criteria for defining quality: (1) customer (user) focus and (2) product orientation. As a result, quality refers to the extent to which the products meet the standards set by the customer. As this market orientation has notable limitations in education, the ISO-EFQM definition needs to be accordingly adapted. In the context of our society, quality expresses the extent to which learning outcomes correspond to the expectations and social demand for education: quality expresses the degree of achievement of performance standards, established and assumed by organizational objectives. Quality is not necessarily the opposite of quantity and has no value in itself, but varies with increasing or decreasing scale of performance standards. Educational policies and management always aim to increase quality through higher standards and better products.

A. Planning and public accountability

The main purpose of education reforms is to continuously improve quality through a set of measures:

- supplementing financial resources, especially, those for investment for development;
- increasing the motivation and professional status of the teaching staff;
- increasing the capacity and motivation of students to learn by raising the degree of learning attractiveness;
- increasing the potential of leadership, management and education organization;
- development of professional skills of education staff through vocational training: initial, continuous, upon request;
- encouraging personal development;
- raising learning standards;
- reliability and efficiency of teaching-learning-assessment-integration strategies (teaching methods and means);
- increasing the degree of adaptation of structures, supply chains and training programs to the needs of society and labour market.

The increasing quality is achieved both through measures at the level of the education system, and through interventions at the school level. The movement to encourage change at school level is a today step for all societies, as it offers unique opportunities for continuous quality improvement. The conditions for managing resources and achieving higher standards of educational

services in educational institutions are based on: transfer of decision, delegation of authority and responsibilities, administrative autonomy enjoyed by schools in the context of decentralization. These tendencies, predominant in EU countries, start from the stakes that schools are directly interested in adapting their educational offer to the needs of beneficiaries (students, parents, employers), so as to achieve a higher level of excellence, performance standards, quality. Through decentralization, schools gain more freedom in resource management and become directly responsible for meeting the social demand expressed through higher standards of education. To meet these demands, various projects and change strategies have been initiated at the school level that promote a new system of self-development of educational institutions, known as quality assurance (Hargreaves and Ellison, 1999; ESSE, 2002; OFSTED, 2000; OECD, 2004). This system predominates in European countries and is compatible with the new objectives of educational reforms in Europe: decentralization, competence-based and good governance.

As mentioned earlier, after Deming (1993), quality assurance involves a paradigm shift in the definition of criteria and in quality management. These are no longer established by the service provider who is the school, but by the beneficiary of these services - the labour market and social demand, through the expected competencies. In the context of general decentralization measures, the educational unit receives:

- clearly defined social order: objectives and products to be achieved at certain performance standards;
- adequate resources;
- responsibility for using these resources for the purpose for which they were committed.

The superior public authority no longer intervenes punctually during the realization of this social order, through external control, but focuses on the final products and on their realization at the agreed standards. The logic of this new relationship is contractual, in the sense that the school is considered, at the same time, as a service provider, a self-development center and a financial management unit. Unlike quality control, where the relationship is administrative (higher courts have the resources and control subordinate institutions in terms of use), quality assurance gives more autonomy, but also the responsibility of schools in the use of resources (according to the principle of decentralization according to which resources supports the student). However, autonomy means more responsibility and the exercise of powers in the efficient use of public resources. The control is by public responsibility, but it is exercised in relation to certain standards and quality criteria, evaluated after the realization of a development project.

The quality improvement system is based on three managerial tools:

- school development strategy;
- self-evaluation based on performance indicators and standards;
- public liability.

B. The school development strategy is a form of collective agreement through which the educational unit undertakes to achieve the social demand at the level of certain quality standards. This contractual commitment (*charter schools* in the USA, *core statement* in Ireland, *institutional development plan* in France, Spain and the Netherlands) comprises two elements:

- the purpose or basis of operation of the school;
- development plan or strategy.

(1) The purpose or operational basis the school:

The mission expresses the role of the school as a type of institution, for example, a public institution. The role of the school is defined as follows:

- Who is the school for?
- What types of services does it offer?
- How are these services performed?

- What values does the school promote?

The vision refers to the development perspective of the school; unlike the mission, which defines the institutional profile of the school at the time of launching the plan, the vision considers the institutional policy over the reference period of the school development strategy, for example, in the short, medium and long term. The vision is the common result of the reflection of the local authorities, management teaching staff, parents and students. It expresses the main aspects of the organizational culture of the school and how it is processed through the school development plan. For example: School X will contribute to the ennobling of the natural and traditional environment, to the cultural, social and economic development of the community through quality services and to the schooling of as many students as possible. The priority will be the participation and attendance of the courses, especially, through measures to attract children from disadvantaged families. These measures will be integrated in the strategy for the development of the commune, elaborated and implemented by the local council.

The finalities transcribe, at local level, the general orientations of the educational policies from the central level, to which the school contributes through specialized services; these are taken from the strategic documents of the Ministry of Education or of the local authorities. For example: basic education for all, second chance education, preparation for active life and social inclusion, training life active and responsible citizens, education for life equality (health, environment, citizenship, preparation for family life).

(2) The development strategy is the operational component, developed on seven levels of action (Tadeusz Kotarbinski, 1975):

- Why? - it refers to the motivation, to the justification, to the argumentation of the need to have this strategy. Based on a SWOT or SWOT POWER analysis, the question is answered why the specialized services of the school are needed, the problems and priorities in the field of education in the locality are identified, the needs of education and the social demand for education are defined;
- What? - targets the defined goals and objectives in terms of expected results. These refer to products, expressed in the form of institutional capacities and competences of students (participants in economic, cultural and social life, in the ennobling of the natural environment and heritage, in human values), in certain requirements or quality standards;
- How? - refers to actions and ways to achieve objectives. For example: education activities for sustainable development and non-formal learning, school-enterprise partnerships, curriculum at school decision, participation in school councils, continuous training of teachers, entrepreneurship education programs, introduction of ICT, etc.;
- Who? - concerns the individual or collective actors, their responsibilities and attributions: the board of directors, the Romanian language and literature teacher, the parents' association, the management, the teaching staff, the social partnership, a certain resource person, the local council, the police, the health department, etc.;
- With what? - targets, in quantitative terms, the resources available for the development of the school: human resources (management, staff, students, partnerships), physical resources (buildings, spaces, land, equipment) and financial resources (budgetary and extra-budgetary, by chapters of expenses);
- When? - covers the calendar of the plan, by semesters, school years and multiannual (usually less than 4 years), in relation to other local and county planning documents;
- Where? - refers to the location, the human and social space where the school development plan is implemented, characterized by a certain organizational culture, a geographical and administrative location, certain organizational constraints or circumscriptions (for example, the resources limits of a general school placed in a rural locality, the boundaries of the school district).

C. Self-assessment

Decentralization and quality assurance require a greater degree of confidence in the self-development potential of the team of professionals within the school. Self-assessment is based on the factors of internal mobilization and on the responsibility of the school institution and prevails over the motivation achieved through external administrative control. Self-assessment is integrated in the institutional development and in the process of implementing the school development plan. For this reason, at the school level, there is an operational self-assessment framework developed and applied jointly by management, staff and students.

The operational self-assessment framework at school level includes:

- evaluated areas or aspects;
- analysis criteria;
- indicators or descriptors that express the criteria;
- the standards or performance levels of each indicator.

D. Public accountability

Any public institution must be responsible for the use of resources and the achievement of its objectives. According to *the Education Law*, the Ministry of Education must present, annually, before the Parliament, a report on the education state in Romania. In turn, school inspectorates submit annual reports to the Ministry of Education and local councils, and local authorities are accountable to the Ministry of Interior.

In a decentralized vision, concerned with quality assurance and development at the school level, schools must actively participate in this multipolar system of public accountability. This indispensable function of management and governance becomes important along with hierarchical control, because:

- their decisions and effects are communicated to those entitled to ensure the proper functioning of the respective services: school inspectorates, local councils, general public;
- the results are evaluated based on the criteria and standards agreed upon in advance;
- decisions are transparent and accessible to beneficiaries.

The known public liability systems are: competition in the services market, hierarchical control, reporting based on indicators, sectoral or corporate responsibility, etc. The most effective for education is a reporting focused on precise criteria, previously established in the form of indicators and standards. The results of this form of exercising responsibility are communicated through reports on the realization degree of school development plan. The objectives and results set out in the school development plan are initially translated into success indicators which are then assessed in the institution's development report. This report is public and accessible to all beneficiaries: school staff, parents, students, other schools, local and regional authorities, mass-media, civil society, for example, on the school website or in printed form.

In addition to the periodic reports based on indicators, which remains the most common method, other tools are also used:

- peer review: teams from two comparable schools or interested in jointly analyzing their results;
- inter-institutional analysis: the school report is integrated in the self-assessment made by the institutions with which the school has joint projects (companies, public authorities, civil society);
- internal audit: based on a structured questionnaire aimed at collecting data on the achievement, within the school, of organizational objectives.

Conclusions

Integrating the historiographical and epistemological stakes, above stated, the school management report can become an important perennial and public methodological document, summing up the following main conditions of operationalization:

- it is structured on the criteria defined by the beneficiaries;
- integrates into the global liability system of public institutions;
- uses indicators that provide comparability between different schools;
- has great potential for communication in the public space.

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