CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF ROMANIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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***Abstract:** This article presents the main aspects of organizational school culture. The climate of the school organization is an extremely important aspect of the functioning of the school as it includes many variables related to all levels of the school hierarchy, from managers to students and pupils. The psychosocial climate is defined as the mental and emotional-attitude state that exists among the members of an organization and that is acting on people.*
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1. Introduction

"Management is the profession of conducting, in a certain context, a group of exponents, with the purpose of jointly achieving the objectives appropriate to the goals of the organization to which they belong. Management is a profession, meaning an activity, a practice that involves a set of techniques, skills and a system of relationships. It's not just an abstract process, not just a theory. In other words, in an inherently simplified formulation, managerial activity means to lead a group of individuals." (Popescu, 2005, p.12)

In the last years, the literature available in the Romanian language that approaches the optimization of didactic activities has gained a quantitative and qualitative increase either in the form of school / educational management works containing chapters on this topic (Iucu, 2006, Niculescu, 2004 or David,

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2012), as well as works devoted to more specific aspects, such as practical principles of pedagogy (Pânişoară, 2009) or learning through cooperation (Ulrich, 2000).

2. Management of the school organization

Organizational culture is a complex system of symbols, heroes, rituals and ceremonies, norms and attitudes, game rules, philosophy and values, shared, more or less, by all members of the organization, influencing their behavior (Deaconu, Podgoreanu, Rasca, 2004).

According to the same authors, the components of organizational culture are:

Symbols are words in jargon, gestures, photos or other physical objects that have a particular meaning within the firm. For example, at McDonald's, the phrase "Ketch-up flowing through veins". This phrase is a symbol of attachment to the organization.

Heroes are living or deceased people who have characteristics that are highly appreciated by the culture of the organization. For example, Spiru Haret is a hero for Romanian education, as he organized modern education in our country.

Ceremonies are meetings after a particular ritual, which have an important cultural meaning for the organization. For example, some institutions are organizing ceremonies for the celebration of highly educated teachers.

Rules and attitudes. Norms are rules established by law or use, which are principles of conduct. Attitude is the position that an individual adopts toward another person, group, or certain events. Norms and attitudes, as a component of organizational culture, are widely shared by members of the organization.

The rules of the game express ways to solve the problems, including the "ins and outs", meaning the hidden part of these ways. For example: I cover you, you cover me!

The philosophy of the organization expresses the attitude of the organization towards employees and beneficiaries, which is a guide for policy formulation. For example: The student is the supreme value for school!

Values are the essence of the organization's culture, which consists of beliefs, vocations, views and collective assumptions about what is good, bad, normal, rational, and valuable about the processes, phenomena and behaviors

within the organization. None of these components, viewed separately, is the culture of the organization, but taken together they reflect and give meaning to the concept and content of organizational culture.

The psychosocial climate is defined as the mental and emotional-attitude state that exists among the members of an organization and which exerts its action on the people (Tudorică, 2007). The climate of the school organization is an extremely important aspect of school functioning as it includes many variables related to all levels of the school hierarchy, from managers to pupils. The defining factors for the climate of the school organization are: the management style and competence of the school principal, the degree of socio-emotional integration, the objective conditions in which the didactic activity takes place, the structure and the composition of the school's human resources, the motivational climate, the communication and the interpersonal knowledge. (Andronic, 2016)

The determinants of the climate of the school organization are (Tudorică, 2007):
  – degree of socio-emotional integration,
  – management style and competence of the school principal,
  – objective conditions in which the didactic activity is conducted,
  – configuration and human structure of the school,
  – perspective of the organization and its members,
  – motivational climate, communication
  – interpersonal cognition.

The morale of a group is a state of mind expressed through trust, optimism and the courage to face the hardships. Rather, however, the term climate is used as a phenomenon specific to the group, and the term morale as an individual phenomenon. The climate better expresses the fact that it is a relationship among members of a group.

School ethos tends to replace the concept of school climate, but brings new meanings – it expresses the attachment of members to their school, an attachment based on certain desirable values.

As *basic elements of the managerial culture* are mentioned in the specialized publications (Tudorică, 2007):
  – capacity to organize specific activities. We can recall the ability of principals to coordinate and manage the administrative activity of the school, to control educational activities, to plan educational objectives

and strategies, to make strategic planning and development projects etc.;

- ability to approach human relations through communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, etc.

Other *features of organizational school culture* in the specialty literature are mentioned:

- uniformity, present both in the general aspect of the schools and in the mentalities of the representatives of interest groups (there are very few elements of differentiating one school from the other) – the arrangement of schools and classrooms; parents and teachers militate for uniforms for various reasons;
- lack of initiative manifested through: the tendency to imitate (teaching styles, evaluation, methods and teaching methods) – waiting for the indications and fear of taking initiatives.

Models of organizational school culture. Tudorică (2007) proposes a synthesis of three committed models. The first model, by Charles Handy, which analyzes four types of organizational culture, defined on the basis of the analysis of UK school units, namely:

- club culture or of power, built around and as an extension of a central personality, promoting its values and beliefs – it is the case for small-scale schools run by talented principals and that can be identified with the person thereof;
- cluster culture, characteristic of bureaucratic organizations;
- task culture, specific to organizations with a matrix structure, where the authority to carry out concrete projects is delegated to some working teams; characterized as friendly, is preferred by highly professionalized and dynamic environments; it can be found in some high schools and university education;
- the culture of people, where individuals are the most important, managers only having the role of facilitating and coordinating their activity, it can be found only in university, in research, as well as in many famous high schools.

According to Geert Hofstede (the second model), a culture differentiates itself from the point of view of four dimensions, distance from power, individualism/ collectivism, masculinity/femininity, avoidance of uncertainty (or tolerance of ambiguity).

➢ *The distance from power* is the degree of social inequality that is manifested by the dependence of the subordinates on the leaders (long distance to the power, e.g. American management) or the interdependence between the chiefs and subordinates (the small distance to power, e.g. the Japanese management). We can identify optimal and fastest ways to implement change as: through authority acts (in the case of identifying a large distance to power) or through consultation and participation (in case of a small distance).

➢ *Individualism/collectivism* indicates the dominance of the interests of individuals vs. group/teams (in individualist cultures, e.g. American management) or collective (in collectivist cultures, e.g. Japanese management). Knowing the orientation on this dimension can help educators in choosing the best ways to approach the education with different interest groups: by satisfying individual interests (if individualist cultures are identified) or by considering group interests (social and / or professional – if cultures identified are predominantly collectivist).

➢ *Masculinity / femininity* indicates the higher social value given to *arrogance* (in male cultures, e.g. Japanese management) or, on the contrary, to sensitivity and modesty (in feminine cultures, e.g. American management). Knowing these aspects can provide clues for balancing the roles of different reformers – experts, trainers, managers, opinion leaders, etc. – when addressing different interest groups.

➢ Degree of avoidance of uncertainty Indicates how otherness and differences are culturally accepted or not. In cultures with a high degree of uncertainty, the dominant idea becomes: *what is different is dangerous*, and in those with a small degree of avoidance of uncertainty the slogan may be: *what is different is curious*. Knowing this feature seems essential in determining the rate and pace of change: if the school cultures there is a dominant level of uncertainty, the changes should be inserted slowly and little by little: instead, if there is a low level of uncertainty, the amplitude and the pace of introducing change can increase.

Finally, the third model is proposed by Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones, which classifies organizational cultures according to two dimensions: solidarity – defined as common thought and common goals and sociability – defined as the mode of inter-human relations. The two authors identify four dominant types of culture, depending on these two dimensions (each type having a positive and a negative side):

- fragmented culture – with a low level of both solidarity and sociability;
- network culture – with a low level of solidarity but great sociability;
- mercenary culture – with a high level of social solidarity but low sociability;
- communal culture – with high level on both dimensions.

The two authors also identified a pattern of cultural evolution: communal – network – mercenaries – fragmented, identifying ways to stop the movement of the organization from one type of culture to another.

All authors warn that there is, practically, no pure organizational culture, but just the predominance of one or the other. As a rule, we can find, in each school organization, a cultural diversity that includes elements of all types. Also, the recorded works suggest some lines of cultural evolution, which can be anticipated and even provoked. (Dragomir, 2013).

3. Strategic management of the institution

Strategic planning is designed to describe how an organization wants to grow in the future by focusing on what it wants to do and not how it wants to act. The strategy contributes to establishing a certain unitary direction for the organization in terms of its operational objectives, providing the basis for allocating the resources needed to guide the organization towards these goals.

Key Features of Strategic Planning (Ghergut, 2007):
- aims to harmonize resources and abilities existing in the organization with the opportunities and risks in the external environment;
- provides the basis for detail planning and day-to-day decisions;
- includes a longer (long-term) horizon and it is defined in terms of a higher degree of generality;
- is done by top-management managers because they have the necessary information and because their commitment motivates the subordinates responsible for the implementation.

Strategic planning is a rational process that can (and should) be used and modified by managers of all types of organizations.

The components of the strategic management process:
➤ Axis organization's mission to differentiate from other organizations in the same field of activity; defines the philosophy of activity from the perspective of decision makers and specifies the purpose of the organization's

activities, trying to harmonize the interests of all the factors involved in these activities.

➢ The organization profile describes the quality and quantity of the available resources; consists of the internal analysis of the organization, which leads to the setting up its competencies, based on existing or accessible resources.

➢ The internal environment and the external environment consist of all variables, conditions, and forces that influence strategic options. Strategic analysis is the spontaneous evaluation of the external environment and its profile, which allows to identifying possible opportunities. Based on this analysis, the long-term objectives combined with the overall strategy are formulated. In the strategic decision-making process, a series of criteria are emerging: the volatility of the external environment, the structure of the organization, the access to the necessary resources, the competitive advantage.

➢ Long-term objectives reflect the anticipation of the organization results at the end of a specified period of time (three to five years) and focuses on one or more fields. Each objective must be specific, achievable, quantitatively and comprehensibly expressed. The goal is actually what you expect from a set of activities.

➢ Global strategy is the comprehensive plan of the main actions by which the organization intends to meet its long-term objectives in a dynamic environment. The global strategy also has several components, including missions, long-term fundamental objectives, the resources needed for strategic modalities, deadlines and competitive edge.

➢ Control and evaluation focuse on the fact that an implemented strategy should be monitored and evaluated to determine the extent to which the objectives are being met.

Conclusions

The management process is dynamic because the organization's issues, the leadership relationships, the management methods, etc. are constantly changing. At the same time, it is also stable because it aims to use known structures in taking information and making decisions. It is, also, permanent, taking into account the continuity of production, maintenance, exchange and consumption activities. At the same time, the management process is

characterized by consistency, in the sense that every stage of the process is also mandatory, and by cyclicality because following a decision, it is possible that the goal reached should become the new situation against which new objectives are set and thus, the resumption of the management process.

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