

Contemporary Management and the Benefits of Its Implementation in Educational Organizations in the Republic of Macedonia

Aneta Barakoska

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Macedonia

Vera Stojanovska

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Macedonia

Elena Rizova

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Macedonia

Current development and progress of management is not just a trend, but an actual need. New times are demanding new types of schools which demand principals with new competences – management competences, true leadership skills, who will be capable of pursuing the school mission and have a vision for its future development. The question is: What are the internal relations and concordances between education and management? Which is their alternate bond which is specific for their mutuality? In this paper are presented theoretical and empirical notions from one research about advantages of establishing the contemporary concept of management in primary education in the Republic of Macedonia. For that purpose, teachers and principals from ten schools in Skopje were asked to give their opinions and attitudes regarding this issue. Through descriptive analyses from the posed questions we got information for positive or negative influence of establishing management in primary education. The conclusions are pointing out that management is not realized fully, but still has its influence and significance and is in function with improving the school work. There are a lot of advantages that are affecting successful functioning of educational institutions, which were pointed out by the principals and teachers in the sample of this research.

Keywords: contemporary management, education, benefits, principals, teachers

Introduction

The beginning of 21th century is marked by deep changes, characteristic for the creation of a new civilization. Facing the present, and especially the challenges that future brings, is people's pri-

ority. Globalization process is actualizing the question of balance between the two basic tendencies in societal life: the effort to keep what once has been created on one side, and the inevitable need for creating something new on the other.

Creating 'knowledge based society' according to the author Peter Draker is one of the biggest changes that intellectual history of mankind has ever faced. He thinks that the change in the dynamics of knowledge can be called revolution of management spread worldwide, and knowledge is one of the most important resources.

The question is raised: What is keeping education and management in interrelation and concordance? What are their common strands and their specifics of togetherness? Education itself as a societal phenomenon and process is influencing people's development and creativity, and management is focused on pleasing people's needs by producing material and spiritual goods.

The last decade of the 20th century was filled with a series of events that will leave a mark on the economic and social relations in general in our country. In the framework of overall changes that have appeared after the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia as an autonomous and sovereign country, special importance has been given to the change of model of the economic system and establishing a new one in accordance with the principles of free market and labor economy. This change imposed adequate reforms on the educational and scientific research area in our country.

From the problem treatment point of view, that means inevitability and necessity of establishing management as a contemporary process in educational, as well as in the scientific research areas.

The aim of this paper is through theoretical and empirical research to gather notions for the benefit of establishing the concept of management in primary education in the Republic of Macedonia. Besides the analyses of the theoretical aspects of the subject of research, we conducted empirical research by questioning opinions and attitudes of teachers and principals for positive and negative gaining from establishing management in primary education. Actually, we wanted to find out how principals and teachers look at establishing management and how they interpret the changes and the innovations of this aspect.

Defining Educational Management

The term management has its origin in the word *manage*, which means: govern, supervise, handle, succeed, makes decisions for

satisfying some needs (Petkovski and Aleksova 2004, 78) Contemporary theory and practice are treating management from three aspects: as a process, as an institution and as a hierarchy (p. 80).

When discussing about management, we should have in mind some important issues. First of all we think that management should be treated as an activity or a process, and less than a notion or event. One of the most significant barriers for a successful acceptance of the concept of management and managerial behavior in educational institutions is the traditional accessibility to the notion that management refers only to governing structures and not the whole personnel or staff. In that way, management is usually associated with power and high status. Management or governance refers to accomplishing some assignments or making things happen, and that is usually connected with the way or culture of living in some organizations. In other words, management belongs to every organization. Having this in mind, we can say that the process of management or governance can be met in every situation where individuals gather together with one mutual goal of achieving agreed results.

For successful functioning of educational institutions it is crucial to rely on contemporary management and building managers and manager teams in their work, for facing problems in market conditions of working. Managers should be capable for modeling the work of educational institutions, to coordinate the work and relations with the surroundings, to initiate changes that will keep the stability of the institution, to know how to motivate employees for accomplishing better results in educational work, to be able to collect and circulate information, to be capable of playing the role of head of the house, to be capable of negotiating in and out of the company with external partners who are linked with the educational institution, etc. (Gocevski 2003, 301).

Education in the society has become very important. All the analyses imply to the fact that management of the school and managers are successful when they succeed in improving the overall conditions in the school: working conditions, quality of teaching, supply of materials [...] Interesting are the notions of the famous theoretic of organizations Isaac Adizes for the key of success in management. It cannot be accomplished by elimination of all the problems in the organization, but by focusing on the most significant moments vital to the life cycle of the institution. To live means to constantly solve problems. One organization has no problems only when there are no changes, and that happens only when the organization is dead.

Implementation of Educational Management in the Republic of Macedonia

A number of steps have been taken in the Republic of Macedonia so far, that have led to contemporariness of the governing system of educational institutions, a process that has had slow but visible orientation towards contemporary management. This process of establishing management has gone through several phases the most significant of which were: the change of awareness for inevitability of educational management, change of legal and other regulative that provided certain conditions for promoting managers to the position of a key chain in the governance process, educating profiles from this profession, evaluating and stimulating manager's efforts, accepting management as a profession with great importance for the success of educational institutions.

After the year 1991, educational management in the Republic of Macedonia has started to develop through different shapes and contents: projects, programs, schools. Some of them have been thematically directly connected with management while others through different titles included management contents and activities.

Management in the Macedonian society has entered the scientific, vocational and popular literature of foreign authors. Part of this literature has been translated in Macedonian language. Today, this problematic has become immanent for some domestic authors, although their number is very low. It should be appointed that some higher educational institutions have implemented this problematic in their study programs and educational management is studied as an educational subject at graduate and postgraduate level. All of that has created a baseline for producing educated staff trough different institutional and non institutional forms and contents. On a general scale, management has started its implementation through foreign capital and by taking over some capacities from people outside our country. Some foreign experts' visits to the Republic of Macedonia have also influenced management development (Jankoski 1998, 49).

In May 1993, in Ohrid (Macedonia) 'School for Modern Management' was held. This school was realized in the framework of the First Macedonian-American forum, organized by the Institute for Social and Political-Legal Research from Skopje and the Lincoln University from Nebraska, USA (Jankoski 1998, 52). The project 'Transforming the Principals' has been conducted through a donation from the Soros Foundation. Before the start of the 1994/1995

school year a work meeting of the principals of the primary and secondary schools in Macedonia was held in Ohrid. This project had a goal to improve the governing staff from primary and secondary education and prepare them to work in changed social conditions. This project involved around one hundred principals from primary and secondary schools in Macedonia.

These were some of the trainings, seminars, and discussions which served as a starting point for implementing educational management in educational institutions, the benefits, positive sides, meaning and significance of management as a process.

Educational Management Program for Educational Staff

In order to improve professional competences of principals from the schools throughout the Republic of Macedonia, a particular Program was initiated for certification of the educational management programs for professional development of principals in order to upgrade their competences in management with human resources, finances, guidance, organizational and communication skills as well as skills for strategic planning and visioning. Through a transparent procedure run by the Ministry of Education and Science and the SEA Project, a group of 13 educators were selected that went through certain selection criteria in close cooperation with the Ministry. This group of educators had an assignment to provide a National Program for Certification of Principals in concordance with the Memorandum for Cooperation signed in the year 2004. The making of the Program for Certification of Principals started in August, 2004 by defining 6 modules of the program. A group of educators defined every module and its contents. Members from the group divided the contents and worked in pairs. SEA was facilitating the whole process of writing the Program by organizing sessions for working in small groups for every module. The final version of the Program for Certification of Principals was composed of 6 modules and its contents are listed below:

1. *Introduction module* – In this module the following contents were studied: Learning styles; School quality; Teams and team work; Management and governance; Governing changes.
2. *Theory of organization* – with the following contents: Theory of organization; Climate and culture; Guidance.

3. *Communications in educational organizations* – In the third module the following contents were studied: People in organization; Communication; Meetings; Handling conflicts.
4. *Principal as a pedagogical executive* – In this module the following contents were envisaged: Principal as a pedagogical executive, Professional development of employees, Professionalization of teachers; Motivating employees.
5. *Planning and finances* – In this module the following contents were studied: Vision and mission; Planning; Decision making; Finances.
6. *Legislation* – In the last module the contents that were studied were connected to: Law and legislatives; Principals' responsibilities; Pedagogical records and documentation; Evaluation and progress of students; Law for labor relations and Law on Public Procurement.

In accordance with the Memorandum for Cooperation signed in April, 2005, the SEA Project in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science organized a cycle of trainings for qualified principals. A total of 268 principals divided into 3 age groups were trained from April 2005 until April 2006. In May 2005, a Rulebook was composed which defined the Program and the principals' final exam.

Also, the Law for primary and secondary education has been changed and supplemented which defined the final principals' exam as one of the criteria for being a principal in educational institutions.

Today, the question that is raised is: Can successful managers (leaders) make our schools more attractive? Science in a wider sense is questioning the forms, the most sophisticated methods of work and the organization of school institutions which can provide effective support in a contemporary society. Are our schools well established, organized for fulfilling this future mission and challenges in the third millennium? Or, are the principals those who initiate changes and plan development of the school with an intention to prepare the children for accomplishing complicated assignments in a knowledge based society.

Research Results

The aim of this paper is through theoretical and empirical research to gather notions for benefits of establishing the concept

of educational management in primary education in the Republic of Macedonia. Besides the analyses of theoretical aspects of the subject of research, we conducted empirical research by asking of teachers' and principals' opinions and attitudes for positive and negative gaining from establishing management in primary education. Actually, we wanted to find out how principals and teachers look at establishing management and how they interpret the changes and the innovations from this aspect.

From the research instruments we used structural interview for the principals of primary education and a questionnaire for the primary education teachers. Research was conducted among 110 subjects from which 10 were principals and 100 were teachers from 10 different schools in Skopje.

Point of View of the Principals in Educational Institutions

The principals' interview was composed of 6 questions, 4 of which were closed type questions (where the answers were divided into 3 categories: I completely agree, I partially agree and I do not agree at all) and 2 open answer questions. We will present the summary of the principals' interview according to the number of questions in the instrument.

The answers to the question for *establishing management is in function of improving quality of education* show that 70% of the principals completely agree that establishing management is in function of improving quality of education. 30% partially agree with this question, and none of them disagree. The results gained for this question imply that establishing management in primary education is providing possibilities for accomplishing higher goals in education, i. e. improving effectiveness and efficiency of educational institutions. We wanted to find out the answer to a frequently posed question, *whether the management team successfully handles the changes in the school*. Analyzing the results we can conclude that most of the principals agree that the management team successfully handles every day changes in the school, including establishing management. Few of them partially agree with this notion and none of them answered negatively, which is leading to conclusion that the principal together with the management team are always prepared to successfully import changes, innovations and novelties in the school.

Regarding the question of whether *passing principal's exam is sufficient for successful school managing*, less than half of inter-

viewed principals said that they completely agree with this question. Most of them partially agree that principals should pass only one exam (principal's exam). No one answered negatively to this question. These results show us that school principals are accepting the contemporary tendency of continuous upgrading, following the innovations and novelties in the society and the education. That is in accordance with the results to the question *whether participation of principals in trainings and seminars is crucial for a successful establishment of management in the school*. Half of the principals answered that they completely agree with the notion that principals should participate more in trainings and seminars which are related to establishing management in schools. The other half claimed that they partially agree with this notion. No one answered negatively.

Positive and Negative Influences of Establishing Management in Educational Institutions (Principals' Point of View)

In the interview designed for the principals there were open questions where principals could present their opinions and attitudes regarding establishment of management – positive and negative influences.

On the question *list some of the gains which are a result of establishing management in your school*, principals from primary education gave the following answers: information is easily transferred, everyone can participate in activities of interest, work is documented; better organizational equipment, control and comprise of human and material resources in activities, establishing team work; organizing educational trainings, seminars and projects; better planning, guiding, controlling, decision making, coordinating, motivating; better cooperation with local community, cooperation and communication with nongovernmental organizations and better access to information; improvement of school climate and solving conflicts among students, teachers and parents; following mutual agendas for human rights in the school and wider community, initiatives coming from the teaching staff for improving educational work; managing changes and intervening once in a while; upgrading communication relations and skills, as well as educational processes; transparency and team work; possibility for every teacher of professional development with their own creative, innovative ideas and goals, developing partnerships and team relations; managers are trained to govern the schools,

but still success of the school is dependent on a person's nature.

From the gained data we can conclude that principals pointed out some of the advantages of establishing management in education which lead to improvement of schools' work. Management is establishing a new way of thinking, behaving and working in educational institutions. Activities addressed towards producing management staff are rising as factors that contribute to a faster consolidation of new structures, stabilizing the current state and trace future educational development.

On the question *according to you, what are the main disadvantages of establishing management in your school*, principals from primary education gave the following answers: some of the teachers are not in financial position to get additional education although they have great potential of being good managers; we cannot expect being ideal in managing; every extra work that comes as initiative from the manager sometimes encounters resistance from the staff, the principal is left alone to solve all the problems of the school.

From all that was mentioned above, we can conclude that principals don't mention any bigger disadvantages from establishing management in their school. But still, we should keep in mind the fact that every school can face certain barriers in implementing management. It is important to mention that management is important, but more important are the managers who should endeavor towards upgrading and raising the quality of education.

Teachers' Point of View

The questionnaire for teachers was composed of 4 questions 3 of which were closed type questions (where the answers were divided into 3 categories: I completely agree, I partially agree and I do not agree at all) and 1 open answer question. Analyses from gathered results are pointing to the following conditions regarding establishing management in educational institutions.

Answers to the question whether *establishing management is in function of improving quality of education* show that 57 out of 100 inquiries (which is 57%) completely agree with the notion that establishing management is in function of improving quality of education. 39 of the teachers (39%) partially agree with this, and only 4 teachers do not agree at all.

One of the most important things for school success is how the *management team is handling innovations, novelties and changes*

in education and whether they are all implemented. To find out how the management team is handling the school, we asked the teachers this question since their answers are of great significance to the problem of our research.

Results show that 50 teachers (50%) completely agree that the management team successfully handles changes in the school, 46 teachers (46%) partially agree with this and 4 of the teachers (4%) do not agree at all.

Regarding the question *is passing the principal's exam sufficient for successful managing of the school*, 17 of the teachers (17%) completely agree that passing principal's exam is sufficient for successful school managing. Most of the inquiries (56%) partially agree with this notion and 27 teachers (27%) do not agree at all. From all of the above we can conclude that most of the teachers don't consider this one exam as the only precondition for successful managing of the school. Maybe trainings and seminars, continuous improvement, following innovations, novelties and changes will lead to successful managing of schools.

Positive and Negative Influences of Establishing Management in Educational Institutions (Teachers' Point of View)

From the data that was analyzed, we can say that 20% of the teachers gave their positive comments about establishing management in the schools, while 80% of them do not have any answer at all. We assume that this is due to insufficient information about establishing management in the schools, accepting its role and function, as well as lack of appropriate literature on this topic.

After analyzing the attitudes and opinions of the teachers we will list some of the positive comments about establishing management, such as: contemporary methods and techniques are used; lots of novelties are accepted about students' needs; teachers are more organized and more informed about the teaching process; the climate of the school is getting better; the quality of education is improved; communication between principal, employees and local community is better; work conditions are improved, teachers are more active and have greater responsibilities towards work; better solving problems if any; planned, organized and coordinated guidance of the school; school is progressing in all areas of educational process and is in step with the demands of the new age.

Let us list the critics which teachers point out after establishing

management in the schools: not sufficient literature and information about management in education; principals do not see the right role and function of management; teachers do not always get in time information about school work; managers get diplomas and knowledge through short courses; political influence is interfering in choosing principals in schools; certain individuals have freedom for decision making because they are close to the principal (manager) of the school.

Conclusions

General conclusions point to the notion that establishing management in educational organizations in our country, besides all mentioned disadvantages pointed out by principals and teachers, has its influence and significance and is in function of improving schools work. There are lots of advantages that are affecting successful functioning of educational institutions, which were pointed out by the principals and teachers in the sample of this research. Improving conditions in the schools certainly giving us hope that young generations will get solid education and a brighter future. At this moment, we should regard schools in Macedonia as schools in a transition period, which we have to pass. All transitions include some losses, but also a challenge for self-actualization and ascent. Management in education is raising societal responsibility which the schools should have. It is giving them the necessary vitality through flexibility and adaptability to answer the demands of the society and labor market.

References

- Gocevski, T. 2003. *Obrazoven menadzment*. Skopje: Kiro Dandaro-Bitola.
- Jankoski, D. 1998. *Tranzicija, menadzment, obrazovanie*. Skopje: Prosveten rabotnik.
- Petkovski, K., and M. Aleksova. 2004. *Vodenje na dinamicno uciliste*. Skopje: Biro za razvoj na obrazovaniето.