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THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: FROM PERFORMANCE AND COMPETENCE TO IMAGES AND COMMUNITY PERCEPTION

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Abstract

Reconfigurarea educației din România a readus în discuție întrebări precum: *de ce avem educație, pentru cine facem educație, rămânem la educația tradițională sau o acceptăm pe cea din mediul online, cine decide și ce decide, cât de bune sunt aceste decizii și cât de rapid trebuie să fie implementate*. Așteptările în privința actului educativ desfășurat în școli și tipului de management s-au multiplicat, școala devenind un spațiu de educație permanentă atât pentru elevi, cât și pentru adulți, cu un act educativ ce se întâmplă nu doar în spațiul școlii, ci și în exteriorul lui, tipul de educație oferit trebuie să îmbine formalul cu non-formalul, metodele clasice cu metode participative, de tip experiential.

„Performanța” a fost dintodeauna un concept controversat și o realitate dorită. În ciuda dificultăților legate de exactitatea definirii, performanța este un criteriu extrem de important care se relaționează cu rezultatele organizaționale și cu succesul organizației în toate domeniile, căci toate organizațiile și persoanele vizează un nivel ridicat al performanței. Experiența pozitivă acumulată pe parcursul ultimilor ani în formarea managerilor școlari a confirmat nevoia accentuării dezvoltării de abilități necesare pentru sporirea eficacității, sporirea eficienței pentru realizarea obiectivelor organizației și corelarea conceptelor de performanță – competență – imagine instituțională.

Cuvinte-cheie: educație permanentă, performanță, mediu online, eficacitate, abilități.

0. Introduction

Education in Romania has gone through a process of reconfiguration. The classical foundations that once relied on change, the core questions that dictate the direction are called

into question: why we have education, for whom we do education, we stay at traditional education or we accept the one in the online environment, who decides and what decides, how good these decisions are and how quickly they have to be implemented. The new language in the field of education at the global level, which we find in public policy documents in Romania and in many countries of the European Union, the new direction of education tells us: motivational management in the teaching career, performance at school/college/university level, student-centred education, student involvement in several projects, lifelong learning, development of basic skills, quality and inclusive education or strengthening of the school-family-community partnership.

In parallel with the decentralisation process started three decades ago and, implicitly, local accountability, expectations regarding the educational act carried out in schools and the type of management have multiplied, the school becoming a permanent education space for both pupils and adults with an educational act happens not only in the school space, but also outside it (through community volunteering projects or as an integrated community centre), the type of education offered must combine the formal with the non-formal, the classical methods with participatory methods, experiential type.

In an attempt to capture the most important contextual elements that configure the role of today's school manager/director, it is the professionalization of the position of principal. As a result of the decentralisation process and seen as a pressing requirement in the idea of increasing the quality of pre-university education, a more alert process of professionalization of the occupation "school principal" begins with the emergence of the obligation of professional training in educational management of directors, the establishment of the National Body of Experts in Educational Management (Government regulation no. 5549/2011), the elaboration of the procedures for organizing and conducting the competition for the positions of director (Government regulation no. 3969/2017) or evaluation and performance of the managerial activity (Government regulation no. 3623/2017).

1. Defining *performance*

"Performance" has always been a controversial concept and a desired reality. The term performance is broad, due to the meanings it can have, depending on the level at which it is viewed: enterprise, management system, team, person, etc. [1, p. 257]. Although the concept of performance in work is commonly used, from a definition point of view it is still considered to have shortcomings. The most commonly used common acceptance refers to "how well a person does in a specific job". Despite the difficulties related to the accuracy of the definition, performance is an extremely important criterion that relates to the organizational results and the success of the organization in all fields, because all organizations and individuals aim at a high level of performance.

The word *performance* is of Latin origin, but its meaning comes from English. In Latin, the word "performance" consists of completing a proposed task. "To perform" involves achieving something that requires skill or a certain skill. "Performance" translates the way in which an organization achieves its objectives.

The simplistic definitions of this concept describe performance as an exceptional result, a particular success achieved by a person in a particular field of activity [12, p. 362]. This concept is also regarded as a qualitative index of the operation or efficiency of an equipment. Of course, in this situation we will refer to the performance of an individual and, above all, how performance helps in the specialization of work.

The Macmillan Dictionary refers to the standards that an individual must meet or exceed when performing performance. Standards therefore function as instruments for measuring the individual's performance [13, p. 214]. According to the same source, performance is also correlated with the temporal aspect. A performance has, therefore, as the main axes measuring

standards (how an individual does a thing or the level at which an individual does a thing) and the temporal duration (the time during which an individual does a thing at a certain level). In order to facilitate the understanding of the concept, we can refer to athletes who perform by reaching a time record (a record achieved because of the way the athlete behaves in a challenge and his way of practicing that sport). We can therefore draw a first conclusion: in some areas performance depends on the temporal aspect, not only on the standards achieved.

Peter Drucker, a contemporary personality in the field of management, showed that the performance achieved by management is characterized in reality and achieved practically by the two dimensions: effectiveness and efficiency. In essence, organizations must present the existence of both dimensions, namely effectiveness (achieving the right things) and efficiency (achieving things right, correct) in order to be good performers [9].

Efficiency expresses the measure of the results of an activity in relation to the efforts made in this regard. An effective activity is that which requires a certain action, technical, procedural, a certain mastery of execution.

The effectiveness of the knowledge-based enterprise refers to the "achievement of the objectives and the conduct of the work processes within the organization under the predetermined temporal and qualitative conditions".

The positive experience gained over the years in the training of school managers confirms the need to increase the development of skills needed to increase effectiveness, which involves doing the right things to achieve the objectives of the organization and increasing the efficiency that involves doing things right (as it should).

Over time, the concept of performance has undergone a remarkable evolution, thus, while, until the 1950s, all definitions and references led us to think of financial measures of performance, this being assessed in particular by the couple costs/benefits, and other measures such as the quality offered to customers (until the period of the 1990s), the concept of performance has now evolved towards a global approach including financial and non-financial aspects, which relate in particular to the elements of social responsibility.

2. Evolution and theories of performance

Performance is an ambiguous term and it is impossible to be assigned a single definition [1, p. 257]. This inconsistency in the definition of performance also applies in the field of performance management, a fact suggested by Meyer and Gupta [5, pp. 309-369] namely, there is a massive disagreement as to what performance means, and the proliferation of performance measurement indicators has led to the paradox of performance, namely: organizational control is maintained by not knowing exactly the meaning of performance.

The most widespread and recognition in this field is the theory of Campbell (1990) [2, pp. 638-732]. John P. Campbell and his collaborators formulated one of the most accepted theories about performance in the workplace. His psychological theory describes performance in work as individual-level variable. In other words, performance is what makes one person. This differs from much more comprehensive and much higher-level constructs, which are organisational performance or national performance. Campbell and his collaborators (Campbell, 1990; Campbell, Gasser and Oswald, 1996; Campbell, McCloy, Opple and Sager, 1993) [3, pp. 35-70] proposed a performance taxonomy consisting of eight relevant factors, in different proportions, for all jobs. Borman and Brush (1993) derived 18 factors of managerial performance after asking psychologists with significant industrial and organizational experience to sort out a number of performance dimensions, generated using critical incident technique [11, p. 53].

We see an evolution over time of the criteria against which performance has been reported, in the sense that they are more and more numerous: the results obtained (financial result, turnover, cost), the competitors of the entity, the environment in which the entity carried out its activity, various environmental values or social values, the value created through the activity carried out, the quality of the products and services offered. are just a few possible

answers to the previous question. The richness of the definition criteria demonstrates that performance is a subjective acceptance, for which other concepts are used, but there is no concept that can define performance in an absolute manner.

One of the most complex management issues is the evaluation of its effectiveness. The causes that generate this situation are multiple:

- the economic effects of management are predominantly indirect, being difficult to delineate and assess;
- the results obtained by the organization are influenced by environmental factors, difficult to predict and often impossible to take into account by the management team;
- the level of development of the evaluation elements is still far from the requirements of a rigorous and complete commission of things to be good performers.

In practice, managers need to balance the need for efficiency with the need for effectiveness. At the level of a company, the increase in the efficiency of the management of the company is achieved through different ways and actions that are not only limited to the economic side of the efficiency of the company, but also concerns social efficiency. Among these aspects can be mentioned: the quality of the internal climate, the intensity and content of the motivation of the human resource, the fluidity of hierarchical relations, the feeling of belonging to the organization, etc.

Among the ways of increasing the efficiency of the organization's management can be listed: design and redesign on a scientific basis of the organization's management system, training at a higher level of managers, rationalization of the decision-making process, reshaping the strategies and policies of the organization to ensure the modernization and efficiency of the organization's activity, intensifying the operational component of the management work, completing and modernizing the management tool.

For the managers of the Romanian organization, subject to multiple and increasingly complex contextual and endogenous challenges and prone to informational "claustrophobia" because of the volume of information to be harnessed by decision-making, the effectiveness of their performance is much more important. Effectiveness results in achieving general, and specific managerial performance.

3. Managerial performance in education

Performance in profit-type organizations is associated with the profit achieved, and in non-profit organizations is associated with the degree of satisfaction. In order to determine the performance of a school, it is necessary to analyze its performance on the two elements of performance (effectiveness, efficiency) from two perspectives: administrative and instructional-educational, the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness being complementary. During the 1960s and 1970s, studies attempted to isolate and identify factors that increase school efficiency and student outcomes [6, pp. 53-70].

Defining the concept of *school effectiveness* is considered difficult because it is not neutral, but involves reporting to well-defined criteria in relation to each of the levels at which a school has a function and is nuanced by reporting to each school unit. A relative consensus has been reached on the need for the focus on student outcomes and in particular on the concept of added value by the school (an effective school adds value to the training of its pupils, compared to other schools serving the same general objectives) [4, p. 151].

The criteria that signify the dynamics of the pedagogical processes in the educational institution (considering that the management activity is not an end in itself) represent the changes produced that have a positive influence on the development of each student's personality and materialize in the performance indicators aimed at:

- teaching - learning,
- student support and school culture, and
- student performance.

Educational practices confirm that the indicators of managerial performance within a school mainly concern the management activity of the management team by assessing the quality of the functioning/development of the educational institution, application of managerial functions (informational-analytical, motivational-purpose, forecasting-planning, organization, control-diagnosis, adjustment-correction) and managerial actions by areas: curriculum (elaboration, implementation, development), human resources (recruitment, training/development, evaluation), non-human resources (material, financial, informational, time), organizational development/performance of the organization, management skills, in particular, communication, decision-making, pacting [11, p. 53].

Of particular importance are the forms of manifestation of managerial performance, i.e. performance indicators (criteria) specific to each subsystem of methodological, decision-making, informational and organizational management. We make it clear that managerial performance is generated and achieved at the level of managers, i.e. at the level of those who exercise management processes (forecasts, organizes, coordinates, trains, controls and evaluates), while the performance of the organization is recorded in the field of management, in the application environment, through the effective and active involvement of both managers and other members of the organization.

Since the early 20th century, several studies have tried to identify factors influencing student outcomes (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld et York, 1966; Jencks, Smith, Ackland, Bane, Cohen, Gintis, Heyns and Michelson, 1972). Chevaillier states that "the main factor for the performance of the educational establishment is the competence of the principals". This recognition of the importance of the school manager has awakened from researchers and government organizations the need to define and clarify the role of school leadership in setting standards, expected competences, which are or will be used for the training, recruitment and evaluation of those responsible for school leadership, .

Thus, the management activity of the educational institution is appreciated by a general category of quality, which highlights a useful, necessary, useful activity of the management team, which facilitates productivity, efficiency, complexity/integrity in achieving the goals and objectives envisaged, the development of the school organization, the improvement of the performance of the school, students, teachers.

The role and leadership of directors had to adapt to this new reality. Contemporary authors say that directors must – and change their approaches reconsidering the communities (virtual and real), in which they exert their influence (Dufour, 2005; Kimble, Hildreth and Bourdon, 2007), adopting a leadership style that enhances environmental resources, developing collective skills and engaging in improving the school system (Hopkins, 2007; Pont, Nusche and Hopkins, 2008; Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008).

The founder of management principles, Peter Drucker, believes that few things are important to an entity's performance such as measuring performance, which we might say is a vulnerability in management today. Performance management precedes and encapsulates its measurement [9, p. 312].

Personnel evaluation is a cyclical process that requires the implementation of an evaluation system that specifies: the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, what is evaluated, who should evaluate, when the evaluation is made, what method is used for the evaluation, how the results will be communicated, how the adverse situations found will be corrected. The data thus obtained must be objective and provide feedback by communicating the results to the members of the organization in an appropriate manner and time.

Setting challenging but attainable objectives promotes motivation and empowerment of (school) employees. By increasing commitment, managers are given the opportunity to focus on new ideas and innovation that contribute to the development and objectives of (educational) organizations.

4. Evaluation of managerial performance in the education system

The concept of *competence* in the sciences of education is in the middle of individual and collective performance. The complexity of the school's management activity has highlighted a certain specificity of its management, which is reflected in the two dimensions of the school activity: the variety of staff and human relations, the culture and the working climate. All this leads to the formation and development of a set of skills specific to the managerial field and necessary for the director to perform the various roles arising from this activity.

During the 1960s and 1970s, studies attempted to isolate and identify factors that increase the efficiency of the school and the results of the students. This movement has generated a large number of tools aimed at cost-effectively educational systems. Edmonds (1979) identified the following five factors that, in his view, are correlated with the performance of effective schools:

- strong management and attention paid to the quality of education;
- high expectations for the performance of all students;
- safety and order (learning environment);
- emphasis on teaching basic subjects (reading, writing, mathematics);
- evaluations and frequent monitoring of students' progress.

Around the same time, Rutter, Maugham and Mortimore found that staff attitude, behavior and emphasis on academic performance were the factors that influenced learning and that pedagogical monitoring (effective monitoring practices) improved school results. Other factors, such as classroom management, which makes students active in learning, firm discipline and a good system of punishments and rewards have improved students' final school results [10, p. 58].

Since 1980, a new wave of research on effective schools has tried to define their characteristics (Mortimore, Sammons, Stool, Lewis and Ecob, 1988; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993).

In an analysis of thirty years of research on school performance conducted mainly in Anglo-Saxon countries, but also throughout Europe, Sackney distinguishes the characteristics or groups of characteristics identified as factors that contribute positively to the effectiveness of the school:

- Performance management in the teaching field, supporting students, monitoring results, defining a clear orientation;
- Emphasis on student learning, organisation of time, priority given to basic skills;
- School climate, cohesion between teachers, consultation on decisions, pragmatic approach to problems;
- The strong culture of the school organization, the clear vision of the mission, the emphasis on improving the results;
- High expectations and requirements for pupils and teachers, intellectual motivation;
- Rigorous monitoring of school progress and the results of the institution;
- Continuous concern for the training and professional development of staff;
- Partnership with parents, their involvement in school life.

An important tool in ensuring consistency between competence and performance is the practical results obtained. The school is an organization that carries out its activity of education and training in a competitive market of service offering. Its competitiveness lies in the ability and speed of adapting to the needs of its economic and social environment. In the labour market, the products offered by the school are the skills. Services provided by a school can only be considered "quality" to the extent that its products and processes meet the needs, requirements and expectations of customers (students, organizations, firms) and partners (state, parents, community and local public administration).

5. The relation between *performance* and *image* in an educational institution

The performance and image of an educational institution are determined by a set of criteria, rules and interpretations that are structured over time and transmitted by tradition, modified and enriched successively with new elements, accepted and assimilated by the community. The image of the school is dependent on the information system in which it is formed, being conditioned by the characteristics of age, sex, religion, level of culture and training, ethnic or political affiliation, etc.

Image promotion in the institutional sector is not as advanced as corporate, but institutions have begun to adopt more sophisticated strategies that set them apart from competition. This is particularly evident in educational institutions, where high competition leads to an increase in the need to differentiate, and thus to make branding. Concern for image has become a priority over the past two decades, with the awareness that brands are one of the most valuable intangible goods a company has.

The image but especially the perception of the community on a school is best promoted by the actions carried out, in the context of the field of activity [7, p. 268]. The quality of the school depends on the human factor, both by teachers, pupils and any other person working in the school, all of which influence the image that the beneficiaries of the school services form about the activities of the school organization. Today schools are forced to compete with each other, based on the identification of their public image by users of their services. The central place in the act of building the image of a school is conferred by the quality of all the educational and educational processes that take place in the school, quality found in the level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries: pupils, parents, community compared to the services offered by the school. The image of the school proposed for the public space and implicitly for the media necessarily includes the fundamental objective of the school -training and educating young people, and the decisive element in this process remains the teacher, including in the context of accelerated technologicalisation of education. The essence of the brand of a school to be promoted is defined by the value, level of training, personality and performance of the teacher in relation to policies and strategies in educational management.

6. Conclusion

For performance prediction the most useful indicator is competence. For intervention in order to improve performance all skills can be used but the most useful indicator is learning competence.

The predictors of managerial success are a constellation, in which some have been better studied, others barely aware and taken into account (moral and emotional intelligence), and some not at all (systemic intelligence). All these predictors can be measured indirectly through managerial skills.

Practice undoubtedly demonstrates that performance, the achievement of the high quality of the objectives of an action, is possible only at a high, appropriate level of competence. It is necessary for the future to decide what is the definition of a school to perform: good and very good school results? Social results (social integration of graduates, percentage of achievement in admissions)? Curricular material, means of learning? Social education programs? Or be extremely visible (by its image) in the community?

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STUDIU PRIVIND COMUNICAREA ÎN CADRUL ORGANIZAȚIEI ȘCOLARE, PE BAZA ANALIZEI SOCIOMETRICE

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Abstract

The article presents a study on communication within the school organization that aimed at analyzing the relations established within the teachers' team in order to provide useful information to the school manager to help motivate the teaching staff, but also to prevent or solve some conflicting situations.

Key-words: informal communication, manager, informal leader, sociometric technique, improving relationships.

Comunicarea informală este „schimbul de informații care are loc în afara canalelor de comunicare oficiale” [2, p. 45]. Se desfășoară pe canale create spontan, dictate de necesitățile zilnice, care nu corespund cu cele ale comunicării formale. Procesul comunicării în spațiul școlar este foarte complex, deoarece implică mai mulți factori: forurile superioare ierarhice, conducerea școlii, cadrele didactice, elevii și părinții. O îmbunătățire a relațiilor dintre aceștia se poate realiza doar dacă se cunosc foarte bine mecanismele și tipurile de comunicare ce se stabilesc între factorii implicați. Pornind de la aceste considerente, scopul acestui studiu a fost acela de a analiza cât mai detaliat relațiile ce se stabilesc în cadrul colectivului de cadre didactice, acest tip de informații fiind deosebit de util în desfășurarea activităților din școală, totodată ajutând managerul să preîntâmpine sau să rezolve eventuale situații de natură conflictuală, să-i reintegreze în grupul de lucru pe profesorii izolați sau marginalizați. Acest scop subsumează următoarele obiective ale cercetării:

- O 1. identificarea liderului informal / subgrupurilor informale;
- O 2. măsurarea gradului de coeziune a echipei de lucru;
- O 3. îmbunătățirea relațiilor ce se stabilesc între cadrele didactice;
- O 4. identificarea sistemului de comunicare social.