

Aspects of change management in the case of 9-year schools in Durrës district

Anila Bratja

University "Aleksander Moisiu", Durrës, Albania

Petrit Dollani

Faculty of Economics, University of Tirana, Albania

"The future of a nation begins from his education!"

Abstract

Throughout history man / people / nations are systematically trying to survive. Desire to learn is one of the strongest human incentives, and it is precisely education that gives humanity not only survival, but over all manner of survival, culture, behavior and performance, the perception of oneself and beyond self-existence. Educational institutions "die" / fade / lose, when it loses the relationship within the school / organization of learning. About this relationship is written and spoken much; even before the 90 ` it has been at the epicenter of research and requirements of schools of that time. The issue relates not only to the word "what" but "how to" realize virtually this cooperative relationship and interactive education in our institutions. Field of study in this paper relates to aspects of change management in 9-year schools in the district of Durrës. Of course, this paper represents a modest effort on our part, focusing mostly on aspects of the management, analyzing at the same time forces of change, and their management in these institutions. Throughout this paper we have tried to analyze not only aspects of management, but also behaviors and characteristics of school administrators, in order to always done at any time not just promoters of change, but his adjustment to the culture and values of the organization / academic institution. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the process of management and

organizational behavior, along the last years 9-year schools of the Durres district, focusing on managing change, and to identify factors affecting quality and productivity.

Key words: education in the 9-year cycle, organizational behavior, change management.

Introduction

Since the early 90` our educational system has gone through reformation. The reforms have followed each other, bringing some improvement of the system, but in some cases back return. So, it looks as if our educational system “dances with the sound of change”; sometimes it might sound cheerful, and sometimes or piping. At the center of this “vibrant context” are our schools, with their form and content. Reform should not be seen in isolation only within the education system, but as a broader reform of the whole social life, combining all influencing factors, so that each student might be a beneficiary from the reform. Only this way programs would be successful, causing real reforming, as a promise of the future.

Changes in education and its resources, coping with the changing factors and issues have been handled by several foreign scholars, where we would highlight Fullan, with two of his works "The forces of change" (2003) and "Meaning of educational change" (2010), in which reforms and the concept of "change" are treated in a wide spectrum.

Modest efforts, mainly in the theoretical field, are made by pedagogical journals "Administration and management education", during 2002-2005 time frame, as well as "pedagogical magazines" published by the Albanian Institute of Curriculum and Standards. Contribution in this regard has given an NGO Save the Children "with ancillary publications, such as" Inspection Manual" (2004) and" Manual of school self-evaluation "(2007). These documents are of high interest in terms of their scope conveyed to recipients (schools staff and their leaders), which consists in a new relationship between self-evaluation and school improvement.

One other literature, which has served a guide, assisting and simultaneously facilitating a successful direction of Albanian educational institutions is the publication of

ICT "School management, guide for school leaders" (2008). Another interesting document in the area of reforms is "School reform, process and strategy" Memushi (2003), continuing with strategies, drawn from the Ministry of Education and Science, ie, "National strategy of development of undergraduate education 2004-2015" and "National Undergraduate Education Strategy 2009-2013".

In this context, approaches which affect directly and indirectly issues of organizational behavior management and somewhat educational institutions in general and university education in particular, we think that there is still space to conduct analyses in terms of reforms, their expectations, and above all, how are they implemented in educational institutions, focusing in the region of Durres. Seeing from that standpoint, we think that this paper might be of interest not only to 9-year school administrators in Durres, or the Department of Education of this district, but on a broader plane, which extends the range of applicability of the reforms. Therefore, through this paper, we are interested in a somewhat more practical context of the process. This is because the ideas, be they even good and can not be implemented by itself, as "reform does not mean, simply put in the most recent policy implementation, reform means to change the culture of classrooms, schools, districts, universities, and so on" (Fullan, 2010).

1. Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the process of management and organizational behavior in 9-year schools in the district of Durres, focusing on managing change, and to identify main factors affecting quality and productivity of educational process.

The overall objective of the paper is to identify structural and functional changes that have undergone in undergraduate education, focusing on the 9-year schools in the district of Durres along the recent years. This objective is attached to some more specific objectives:

– To identify the government policy on undergraduate education, determining their impact on educational institutions

- To describe the nature and the placement of Management System in educational institutions
- To identify new management practices, which converge in achievements and productivity
- Extraction of findings about key issues and formulation of respective recommendations.

Through this paper, we aim on one side to emphasize the important role that changes bring in general and those in education field in particular for the social life and development of the country. On the other hand we would argue that unexpected changes, not adopted accordingly to the reality, or sometimes imposed, provoke the opposite of the initial goal, or intent of the changes. We have been tried to study the causal link between the *old model* of leadership with the *new model*. Research in this paper is concrete and empirical, though it begins as a theoretical process, based on generalizations found in literature review.

The scope of the paper is divided into two segments:

- The first one had the objective of assessment of the 9-year schools in the district of Durres, management and organizational behavior of their school administrators.
- The second had the objective of data analysis, interviews with school administrators, and a broader perception through focus groups.

In both segments of the scope were taken into account various factors thought to influence the degree of various forms of quantitative and qualitative aspects of education in general and the school management in particular such as: the situation / infrastructure of schools in district Durres, labor relations, sources of income, the system of rewards, reward efficiency, discrimination, management behavior, group work, expectations, teacher training, indicators of work motivation, satisfaction from work, etc. For the completion of the paper were used assessment instruments such as: documents' research, interviews, survey through questionnaires, focus groups, surveys.

Random sampling

For the purpose of this paper, casual sampling has been used, where representatives were teachers of 9-year schools in the district of Durres. We have questioned teachers of different age groups, including not only teachers of the center area, but from the surroundings as well. In the questionnaire were included both education cycles, within the 9-year system. It has been respected a fair proportion, based on statistics obtained from the DAR Durres, so that sampling could really be casual, in order to gather opinions from different age, gender, and seniority in relation to the work. So, it has been selected a stratified random sampling. The survey, for a period of more than 3-month, was conducted with 60 teachers, from which 40 female-teachers and 20 male-teachers (please note that statistics indicate the number of female teachers is double-size the number of male-teachers). About the relative age of respondents the following index was determined: 12 teachers in the age group of 20-30 years, 17 aged 30-40 years, 16 aged 40-50 years, 10 teacher in the age group of 50-60 years old , and finally, 5 aged 60-65 years.

2. The survey results

Referring to the statistical indicators, available from the Educational Directory of Durres District, we can state that 78 school operate, 54 of them in rural areas and 24 in the city. They employ a total of 1504 teachers, of which 1040 are female, which indicates that this profession is more preferred by women, as a result of the commodities that profession offers to this gender. But with regard to a very significant statistical indicators, in terms of management functions, only 10 women are in executive positions, in relation to total number 78 of the leader-board staff. It is interesting the fact that in rural area we found only one (in Qerret village), compared to 53 men in management posts. From communications made along the filling of questionnaires, it was impressive that the female-teachers themselves had more faith to men-leaders rather than women-leaders.

The average age of management staff resulted over 50 years. Such individuals seem to be evaluated more for their experience, just based on seniority, rather than professional development. Positive is the fact that all school leading staff has university

diplomas, according to the last criteria of MES, requiring more professionalism in terms of top management. We noticed however that none of school directors had a Master degree, and with few exceptions, no one was attending such studies. Age group with the highest number of teachers, about 230, is the age of 50-54 years old. This age group, based on survey data is linking job satisfaction mostly with nature of work itself and good relationships with the students. Only 63 teachers are aged under 25 years old, it is ascertained that this age group is more motivated by salary, and good relationships with school principals. We also noted that there are 551 teachers who have work-experience over 25 years, while 288 others have experience up to five years.

During data processing it was noted that 1 / 3 of respondents are transferred from other cities, mainly after 90' years. It is interesting to note that a considerable part of them sees themselves somewhat distant from the rest of the teachers. But this fact is excluded from school directors, at least those interviewed, who said that the support of all teachers is similar. Perhaps, the gap results from lack of adaptation with the new culture of the organization, and lack of adopting techniques to be used toward this this category of teachers.

Out of the total conducted questionnaires, filled by school teachers in communes and municipalities we found that 62% find working conditions average, while 35% of them consider them good. We found that recreational facilities are almost absent in surveyed schools. About 80% of respondents stated that the school does not have such facilities, 10% say that these facilities operate formally, and only 10% of respondents expressed positive opinion. In surveyed schools is obvious lack of recreational and regenerative conditions of teaching staff, such feedback was identified also from interviews with school administrators. This situation is even worse in rural areas. From interviews with school administrators we noticed various specifics; for city schools ie. more acute problem is the lack of space. As an illustration we would mention "Vasil Ziu" school in the center of Durres, where several classes were teach in neighboring school premises. This has been due to the completion of the school computer lab, a contemporary requirement, which for the school director featured a somewhat delicate decision.

Meanwhile for the schools in the village, the situation is somewhat different. In these schools (most of them) not missing spaces, but working conditions need to be assessed. Even if referred to data from questionnaires indicators, these are not so good even in some city schools. Thus 13% of respondents said that schools had not teaching equipment available, while 69% said that these devices operate only formally, while the rest think that the school provides the appropriate tools to conduct the educational process. If we talk about a productive learning process, it is natural and expected that at least schools should be provided with appropriate learning tools. From interviews conducted with school administrators, almost all leaders expressed a lack of options to change the premises of schools, even some "leading and most ambitious" said that in order to change the appearance of internal environment and they are continuously asking for contributions from the parents of students. Teachers in turn said that in most cases the operator shall provide their own teaching aids to achieve productive hours. As related to the use of lab computers, we noted that most schools are somewhat equipped with required laboratories. The data from the respondents show that 85% of schools possess such laboratories, while only 55% internet enabled service, but these data do not go to commensurate with appropriate use of information technology. Based on survey answers, we noticed that 53% of teachers rarely use lab computers, while 25% said they do not use the laboratory. In terms of Internet usage, it results that service is not always possible, only 13% of teachers use Internet, and of course the bulk of respondents belong to those schools where this service is provided on a permanent basis. During interviews with school administrators, they confirm such indicators, arguing that teachers enter the computer labs only when they have any pressing work to realize, as they may use computer and internet service at home. Gathered data show that 48% of teachers do not use the internet at all, while 38% of them from time to time.

In this context, it is worthwhile to claim that the Internet should not just be a "clothing accessory" in our schools. It should be a working tool, and why not a communication tool with other schools inside and outside the country, thus encouraging interaction and cooperation between students and teachers, by changing ie. best practices.

An important indicator is the interest of the school management toward the staff. Based on the data of the respondents, it is shown that 38% of respondents perceive often interest from executives, 24% say that the directors always show interest, while 30% are of the opinion that interest is rather rare, and only 8% say that management is never concerned about them. A more significant indicator that is directly related to behavior management in schools in general, and 9-year schools in particular, is discrimination at work. Furthermore, it is unfortunate that discrimination is still present, because of political convictions, 67% of respondents complain about this. Another index of discrimination is related to age, where 35% of respondents say they are discriminated because of that reason. It should be stressed that age groups qualified as disadvantaged are those between 23-28, and 55-65 years of age. A small percentage of respondents say that they suffered gender discrimination (7%), race-based discrimination (5%), and social status discrimination (8%).

Conclusions and recommendations

In order to correct some crucial aspects of undergraduate education system, we would recommend the following measurers:

- ◆ Asking for greater accountability of school administrators for student achievement through; successful functioning of school system, school goals and objectives.
- ◆ Improving school infrastructure through new building construction, rehabilitation and extension of existing capacity. Equipping schools systematically with proper quantity and quality of equipment and functional teaching materials.
- ◆ School administrators should be the real decision-making instance with regard to selection of teaching staff and support staff, proceeding on the basis of standards, merits and periodically measuring the competence of staff.
- ◆ Obtaining a welcoming atmosphere for new teachers, and exchanging of experiences through the department, using internal training. It would be productive also to cooperate with universities.
- ◆ Involvement in decision-making of all stakeholders, such as students, staff, parents, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, etc. Parents should be perceived as

partners and subject to coordination school activity, not only to achieve the learning outcomes, but also to consolidate the values and virtues to students.

References

Denhardt B Robert dhe Grubbs W Joseph, “*Administrimi Publik*”, UFO PRESS, shtator 2007.

Evers, James. “*Crisis in school management*”, E-Manuscript, 2008.

Fullan M., “The meaning of educational change” Albanian translation, CDE, Tirana 2010.

Fullan, M. “Forces of change”, Albanian translation, ISP, Tirana 2003.

Fullan, Majkëll. “*Springer Science+Business*”, 10 prill 2009.

Gardner, H. “*Disciplined mind*”, Albanian translation, Erik, Tirana, 2003.

Koxhaj, Andri. “*Aftësitë menaxheriale*”, Pegi, Tirana 2006.

Kazimati, M & Manxhari, M. “*Sjellja organizative*”, Tirana, 2002.

Ministria e Arsimit dhe Shkencës, *Strategjia Kombëtare, 2009 – 2013*.