

*Organizational Culture in Social Institution
Организационна култура в социални организации*

MANAGING A TEAM OF TEACHERS AND A SCHOOL'S QUALITATIVE DEVELOPMENT. SCHOOL HEADMASTER AS THE LEADER

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Abstract. In the present article, I focus on the headmaster-leader, responsible for a qualitative development of a school. Putting a headmaster in a leader's position, in the first place I clarify the underrating of educational and school oriented towards qualitative development in the context of XXI century changes. Then I present the attributes of a headmaster leader, in the context of managing a team of teachers and the opportunity to motivate them to actions for the benefit of a qualitative development of a school.

Keywords: teacher, headmaster, leader, qualitative development of a school

A new term, "knowledge based economy", has surfaced in recent years, which is closely related with the economic development of a given country. It may be applied to changes occurring in an economy, which are made possible as they are based on wealth, which is not only sustainable, but also self-propagating. This wealth is knowledge (cf. Naisbitt, J., 1997). We may therefore consider that we live in a knowledge based society, within which knowledge constitutes a superior value, and where the learning process is life-long. It may thus be said, that the ability to learn - understood not only as the passing on of knowledge but first and foremost its creation - is, today a condition of success both for individuals as well as organisation. Undoubtedly a school, as an institution, is responsible for teaching, motivating pupils to co-create knowledge, strive for success. In school it is the teacher and the headmaster who are directly responsible for teaching. However, it is the headmaster's management style applied to the institution in the guise of a school, which affects the efficiency of the teacher's and pupil's work.

In this article, I will concentrate on the headmaster as a leader, indicating the positive aspects of effective leadership in the context of a school's qualitative development. My deliberations are based on the assumption that as we live in a society the development of which is based on its knowledge then entities responsible for the its creation and conveyance are the ones which are decisive the society's positive development. One of the entities the actions of which are particularly

geared towards a qualitative development of an educational institution - a school - is the headmaster. It is his leadership skills and predispositions, ability to lead the development, that determine the work of teachers, their motivation to take action, to take responsibility for the passing on and creation of knowledge, to strive for development and raise the quality of education.

Quality in the work of a school

The use of the term “quality” always assumes that there is some template, a standard by which all requirements are measured, constituting a point of reference for some characteristics possessed by an entity, phenomenon, effect or the course of action (Daszykowska 2010, p. 16). Adopting such an understanding of quality, it may be said, that the quality of education depends on the quality of actions undertaken by the school’s staff members. Inetta Nowosad considers that that term “quality of education” has to be connected with the development of a school aimed at the development of a pupil and a teacher’s professional development. Understood in this manner, quality is identified with quantitative or qualitative changes in the spheres of the schools’ work, being conditions on which a high level of educational services is based. A school of quality, is such, which satisfies the expectations of all interested parties, is a self learning and self improving organisation, geared towards attaining standards and delaminating new elements leading to systematic improvements for itself on an on-going basis (Nowosad, 2003, p. 130-131). In practice this means a school which ensures, for all its members, comprehensive development depending on the abilities, predispositions and interests, in the contexts of the challenges posed by reality and everyday life. Zbigniew Kwieciński emphasises, that it is a school preparing its entities for critical and creative thinking and actions, to establish their course in life which they planned and control (Kwieciński, 2004, p.207).

In the opinion of I. Nowosad, a school oriented towards qualitative development has constructive characteristics, which it describes using adjectival and substantival attributes. Based on those it is possible to consider whether a school is oriented towards qualitative development or otherwise. The author - creating a unique alphabet of attributes for a school of quality - lists amongst its characteristics: “Activating its pupils, Authentic, Close to the child and environment, with Character, Charisma, based on Dialogue and Democratic. Flexible - somewhere between the present and the future. Family - in the event of a family breakup. Globally teaching to think, Holistic and based on Humanism, Interactive, Interdisciplinary, International, improving the Quality of its work, Cooperative, creating Culture of work. Liked by pupils and teachers, Linking content with life, Motivating to work. Supervised but also Open and instilling Responsibility, Friendly and freeing the Self. Diverse, full of opportunities, Self governing, Creative, Transgressive - permitting for exceeding oneself. Continually

self improving, school of Choice - accepting the multiplicity of correct ways, Oriented towards the child, providing Satisfaction (Nowosad 2003, p. 179-180).

School oriented towards a qualitative development functions based on the paradigm of constant learning (thus it satisfies the objective adopted by the economy which sees development in the development of knowledge). J.J. Bonstingl deems that it is comprised of four principal elements, which he named "The Four Pillars of Schools of Quality" (Bonstingl 1995, s. 58-59). These are:

1. Understanding the relation between "suppliers" and "customers".
2. Continual personal commitment to constant improvement.
3. Geared towards systems and processes.
4. Strong and consistent leadership geared for total quality.

Adopting the education quality understanding as outlined at the beginning of this article, it may be said, that it is exactly that which determines the directions for work and the undertaken institution's (school's) team efforts, which consequently transfers the responsibility for its effectiveness to the individuals creating it (headmaster, teachers, pupils, parents). This leads to a change in the school system management paradigm, to the so called management geared towards "output" as well as the introduction of a monitoring system and ensuring quality, at the expense of a reduction in state control and an increase in the school's responsibility (and in particular by the headmaster-leader) for the performance of its tasks expressed in the development categories (Nowosad, 2010, p. 134).

Therefore it can be said that the quality of education offered by an educational institution depends "on many aspects of its functioning to satisfy real or assumed needs" (Kruszwicki, Symela, 1999, p. 25). AN improvement in the quality of a school's work is dependent thus on the actions leading to development at the level of the school, teaching team and entities (including teachers and pupils) within the scope of defining goals, planning, culture and climate, managing and organising, teaching and learning processes (ibidem).

To summarise the deliberation regarding a school oriented towards qualitative development, it may be said that its characteristic is that high standards, pertaining to competence apply not only to pupils but also to "teachers, management and all other individuals comprising [its -J.L.-] makeup. The aim of individual excellence is the attain partnership and cooperation in group work and then to a development of the entire organisation" (Dobijański 2004, p. 76). In a learning school, development and change are not one off events but a constant process, where "change becomes an inseparable element of the organisational culture which comprises of trust, understanding of goals and processes, awareness of goals and results, ability to resolve conflicts, being open to change and constant self improvement (ibidem, p. 58). A school's qualitative development and change understood in such way, require positive and charismatic leadership, effective management - or other words a good headmaster.

The classical take on the role of a school headmaster

The requirement pertaining to professional qualifications within the sphere of managing an educational institution is undoubtedly linked to the ever broader and more difficult tasks and professional roles, which a headmaster managing a modern school has to cope with.

In literature treating management of educational institutions one may read that a headmaster of a school has to fulfil a number of fundamental roles stemming from various tasks (regulated by, *inter alia*, legislation) which he has to accomplish and for which he is responsible (Pielachowski, J., 2000, p.115). The roles are:

- *Manager of a counselling institution.* In this role the headmaster has to ensure the development of pupils and charges, has to programme and implement the school's (establishment's) development, ensure pupil safety.

- *Leader and advocate of changes dictated by the educational system's reform.* This role requires the headmaster to act in support of the school's functioning and infrastructure transformation in such way as to ensure optimal conditions for achieving the reform objectives.

- *School educational supervisory body.* Undertaking this role obligates the headmaster so that well organised school performance metering then corrective and development measures resulting from this metering lead to comprehensive student development and professional teacher development. A well fulfilled role ensures quality education and care.

- *Employer.* This role guarantees compliance with labour law, safe and healthy working environment, execution of a HR policy aimed at acquiring the best quality staff, motivates a teacher's professional advancement, includes all teachers into co-managing the establishment.

- *Workplace manager (host).* This implies that the headmaster ensures at least decent material and technical teachers' and pupils' working conditions, has access to budgetary funds designated for the establishment, collects special funds for improving the school's working conditions, looks after the technical standard of the school buildings as well as the infrastructure for counselling processes, ensures the school's efficient administration and operation.

- *Educational authority body.* The headmasters supervise execution of compulsory education and the compulsory learning by pupils (their parents and legal guardians) and makes decisions in connection with compulsory education.

- *Teacher (if he is a teacher).* In this role the teachers' duties are executed earnestly within the scope defined by the provision of law (Lukasik 2008).

So many roles and work related duties require good self organisation skills from the headmaster. As the one managing the work of the entire institutions (school), in relation to those subordinate to him (teachers, pupils, admin and service staff) he fulfils a superior role - manages and inspires changes. The roles fulfilled by the headmaster obligate him to as good a management of the institution as possible

with a view of its development in accordance with the requirements defined by scientific, technical and economic advancement and progress of the XXI century. Therefore the school headmaster who cares for its qualitative development is a leader of a learning institution, who, apart from such basic skills as: organising the work of the school, building appropriate interpersonal and work relations or conceptual development planning for the school (included as part of the classical task as listed above), also has to have skills such as: initiating, implementing and managing change (Dobijański, 2010, p. 130). W. Schöning considers that modern schools need headmasters, who are able to step outside of the traditional framework constituting of management, organisation and representation (Schöning 1989, p. 81). In case of a headmaster who cares for the qualitative school development an essential ability is the release of energy, activating the potential and subsequently motivating teachers to execute a vision, as is required by a leader, school's headmaster purposefully striving for quality in its development.

Headmaster - leader - advocate of change

Before I go onto the conditions required by the headmaster required in the formation of a school oriented towards qualitative development, I shall recall a fragment by A. Sobali – Zbroszczyk (2011). Thus the author in writing about a school as an organisation attempts to compare it to a modern enterprise. She states that in order for an enterprise to function well, it has to have a correctly aligned: goal (expressed by the mission), strategy (or first and foremost clearly defined rules and regulation of operation) and people (whom will perform the operations). “Many problems experienced by companies originate from misalignment of these elements, e.g. an enterprise has a superb strategy but does not execute the main goal of its operation and a company employs people completely not suitable to operate in accordance with the regulations guaranteeing its attainment. What happens in a free market economy to an enterprise which enjoys such a misalignment? If it wants to survive it must restructure (thus fire staff or change strategy, as an example) - otherwise it will fail. And what if an enterprise does not operate on a free market? Well, it is not haunted by bankruptcy and as such has no motivation for the necessary changes” (Abide). Perhaps when it comes to a school the outlook of such a bankruptcy is so ghostly that “nobody believes that anything bad can really happen (until at least it happens, although at that time it is usually too late for any constructive corrective actions)” (ibidem). Apart from that in education there is no and most probably will never be a free market, and the educational system functions, without ever seeming threatened by its phantoms (every year thousands of pupils graduate from schools, with subsequent generations following in their footsteps), so the education machine is always active. Therefore it is no surprise that a temptation appears, which has many supporters, to not make any changes as this mechanism works - as we've had many changes already” (ibidem). This

fact means that a school (and here primarily the headmaster and teachers) do not necessarily have to be motivated to introduce changes (apart from those imposed from above). As the aim of the school is to achieve its qualitative development, stagnation, lack of good atmosphere at work, no camaraderie and no teamwork must radically change. This can be achieved by the headmaster leader, advocate of change, transformational leader, guided by values in his work, focused on people, geared for success and able to deal with pressure and dilemmas. Only a headmaster who understands, that the school's success relies on the entire team of teachers (focusing on people, their potential, resources) "is conducive to the improvement of the quality of education offered to pupils and the achievement of satisfactory professional success" (Michalak 2006: (183) In order for the headmaster to achieve the goal, he must have certain characteristics (also emphasised by Stefan Kwiatkowski, 2006) of a modern leader - advocate of change (changing relations amongst individuals, their mentalities, methods, open to new challenges etc.) Thus in this part I will focus on the possibility of building a school oriented towards qualitative development by using the leader's charisma, whose leadership I relate to function and predisposition.

Leadership defines itself as a process of influencing others in order to mutually achieve prearranged organisational goals (Alston, 2002, p. 2 and J. Michalak 2010, p. 189). In the opinion of Joanna Michalak, leadership understood in this manner requires, *inter alia*, the following from leaders:

- ability to manage change in an organisation;
- awareness of the conditions within which they operate; leaders must be able to read what is going on in the environment within which they operate;
- constant commitment to the process of learning which allows to keep up with the rate of changes, by the use of various sources of information, e.g. learning from people who have better skills and more knowledge;
- recognising the advantages of own actions and the actions of others with whom a leader works and continual usage of them (Michalak 2010, p. 189).

An effective leader should focus on three things simultaneously:

- execution of tasks,
- building and maintaining a team,
- development of individuals (Michalak 2010, p. 189).

In literature within the scope of human resources management psychology one may read, that leadership, which aims for change, development of potential, defined as transformational, is based on charisma and on communicating a vision, treating an individual as a whole and intellectual stimulation through providing new solutions. Charisma is one of the characteristics of transformational leaders, as well as regard for others and intellectual stimulation. Charisma is responsible for arousing positive feelings such as: group loyalty; personal commitment through solidarity in decisions, problem solving in a new way inspirational to

others (Makin et al. 2000:179). Konger and Kanungo considered, that the most important behaviours, which confirm a leader's charisma are: an idealised image of organisation and its goals which remains in conflict with the current state of things; readiness to undertake personal risk which increases own trustworthiness; use of unconventional methods: however these individuals are aware of the organisational limitations and are only waiting for the right moment such as a looming crisis to implement their vision. His power to lead others stems from:

- ability to make others commit by creating a feeling of a common purpose;
- a characteristic style, comprising of a set of attributes: goal, self confidence, self awareness, emotional intelligence;
- diligence and professional honesty;
- ability to adapt in changing conditions (adapt to the "liquid modernity") (Bennis, 2008, p. 29-31);

- is able to : introduce innovation; create original solutions; care for development; focus on people; build relation based on trust; make decisions with the longer term in mind; focus on goals and ways of achieving them, implementation; step out of the profit category, as the effect of achieved results; be a leader unto oneself; concentrate and select (only the correct activities cf. Bennis 2008, p. 100).

Leadership qualities are put under a spotlight in practice, in leading others, influencing them with a concurrent focus on the task and staff. As an advocate of change, working with teachers, he helps them to identify problems and come up with their own solutions using their predispositions, dominant characteristics.

Many researchers believe, that a central role in the perception of charisma is played by the concept of mission, as formulating it is a characteristic of successful organisations (Peters, Waterman 1982). Thus mission (in order to be effective) must be important for those, to whom it pertains. Whereas a transformational leader's efficiency relies on increasing the group effort by: increasing awareness of the significance of some goals and means for achieving them; impelling followers to put the interest of the organisation in front of their own, stimulating and satisfying superior needs in followers (Makin et al. 2000, p. 179)

For effective group work, the knowledge and clarity of goals towards which it is heading is important. This pertains to personal goals (satisfying the needs of the individual) as well as team goals (pertaining to work goals which the team is to achieve) and organisational goals (with reference to the strategies contained in the plans of a company).

Furthermore a leader has to be aware of the type of problems being solved, undertaken actions, initiatives in the context of recognised resources, roles and group potential. In this aspect a leader should view a team of teachers in two dimensions. The first is associated with substantive quality. It is a guideline for action, when groups are to solve problems or make decisions, the sole method for executing these tasks is relying on the competencies of individuals comprising

the group (each person has an idea, the idea is subject to the influence of the opinions of others which in effect leads to the decision being conditional on two factors: input of competencies and knowledge of every participant and the way of integrating various elements of knowledge and experience). The second dimension refers to organisational quality pertaining to the degree to which, those implementing the decisions and subject to their consequences, are committed. The level of commitment will affect the speed and effectiveness of a given decision being implemented. Uncommitted individuals or with a negative approach to the decision, will certainly not adapt with full conviction to the situation created after implementing it (abide). Therefore in introducing changes, striving for a school's development the headmaster - leader has to, in the first place, recognise the potential of people with whom he works (their needs, abilities, predispositions) remembering at the same time that in working with people, one may come across individuals adopting differently to the new conditions (changes). Usually working with a significantly diversified team of teachers, a professional leader knows, that people's strongest commitments are to the implementation of their own ideas and the weakest commitment is to those which have been imposed on them. If a group is motivated to change (members are committed) then the results will be positive. A headmaster may only achieve success in motivating a team to implement mutual goals within the scope of a qualitative development of a school when the roles fulfilled by the teachers are recognised correctly (see: Łukasik, 2012). Belbin's model may prove helpful in this. It assumes that the essence of a leader's work, is seeing every staff member as an outstanding individual and at the same time appreciation and making use of their potential in building a common mission, common problem solving or initiating and instigating new actions. A headmaster through appropriate modelling the work of a group and appropriate use of roles assumed by the team of teachers, helps them to improve their situation and prestige and at the same time (perhaps most importantly) the self image of every teacher.

Thus a leader should have extraordinary skills, unconditional acceptance and emotional commitment. Whereas his attributes such as: charisma, transformation. vision, communicability, creativity and priorities: vision, change, commitment, additional effort, future (Makin et al. 2000, p. 180) stand to affirm it.

A transformational leader, in order to lead effectively, strive to execute the assumed goals makes use of various actions reinforcing, motivating individuals and a team to work. Effective motivation has a positive effect of the teachers' disposition at work, and thus work brings satisfaction, contentment and a feeling of fulfilment and success. A fulfilled teacher means better quality, better efficiency and also more prestige for the establishment on the educational market.

The power and intensity of motivation are affected by: the staff member's expectations as to the influence which their actions will have on the final results of the work and his evaluation by a superior, as well as the value of the results.

Amongst the reinforcing actions most often applied by transformational leaders, A.J. Fazlagić distinguishes:

1. *Recognition of needs.* A good manager should, in the first place, make sure the fulfilment of needs associated with hygiene (remuneration, status, job security, working conditions, benefits, headmaster's management style). Every person has different needs and of different intensities, thus a headmaster has to first determine the needs of his individual staff members in order to manage them properly.

2. *Financial motivation.* Prizes awarded with a defined frequency and regularity have a significant effect on the increase in staff motivation (unfortunately with reference to schools, often financial gratification is limited, but not impossible).

3. *Motivating through showing interest.* Showing interest, or "paying attention" is a more effective and practical motivation than, for example "praising little victories". As "paying attention": does not require from a school headmaster excessive creativity (it is not necessary to continually come up with methods to praise staff); is more justified from the psychological point of view; allows for two way communication, temporary lack of interest from the headmaster will not be as painfully noticeable by the teachers as in a situation when praises dry up; is more universal due to staff personalities.

4. *Delegating authority.* For a school the opportunity to use delegation of authority is limited, as teachers have significant dose of independence and there are certain fixed frameworks and limitations to a teacher's work imposed by provisions. Therefore a particular form of delegating authority may be staff training. More knowledge means better job satisfaction. It also improves their self assessment.

5. *Team work.* Team work increases efficiency of teachers' and school's work, affects the positive relations amongst the team, improves their task based activities.

6. *Use of informal social networks.* Their identification by the headmaster (first and foremost the key persons) may significantly improve school management quality, as people, who are connected with an organisation by more than just a professional affinity, but also an emotional one, are more loyal with respect to it.

7. *Emphasising the strong points of staff members in external contacts.* Promotion of a school, staff within the professional circles, pupils' and school's success is also the teacher's success. Publicising it (e.g. in local press, TV, communal, county or provincial meeting of headmasters etc.) inspires teaching staff to undertake new challenges for the benefit of the school.

8. *Demonstrating one's competencies within the scope of people management.* A competent headmaster, charismatic leader of transformation skilfully managing a team attains authority amongst the subordinate teachers (Fazlagić, 2003, p. 36 – 48).

The feeling of satisfaction and contentment increases work efficiency, which is reflected in better quality of teaching and better school work quality (provision of services).

Peroration

The need for skilful and effective leadership in school is one of the key challenges for the educational system (Kwiatkowski, Michalak 2010). As is highlighted by Joanna Michalak, “implementing into practice the school ideas of education leadership affords opportunities for building a school’s potential to transform the school, anticipate, introduce changes, which may exhibit itself is responsible participation and common action in a changing society” (2010, s.).

Successes flowing from headmasters leadership, from being a leader, advocate of change is attested to by a series of successes described in various reports, such as *Hope for Education: A Study of Nine High-Performing, High-Poverty, Urban Elementary Schools* (1999) or scientific research papers such as *Leadership in the shaping of educational conditions* (Michalak, 2009), *Effective leadership at schools in areas socially neglected* (Michalak, 2012) and other.

A headmaster, excellent leader of change committed to a qualitative development of a school, creating conditions for professional development, is involved in the shaping of schools culture, creating structures, within which teachers are able to work effectively which is reflected in the achievements of pupils. Therefore the reinforcement and development of such spheres of a school’s development as:

- school atmosphere (improving relations among teachers and between teachers and headmaster),
- change in the relation with parents and local community (improvement thereof),
- change: improving teaching and learning,
- organisational change at a school: organisational improvement of school’s structures, better use of personnel resources, improving time management (Michalak, 2010, p. 195), guarantee success - qualitative development of a school.

Transformations in the modern world are a challenge for a XXI century school. A school has to be prepared to understand them, in order to be up to them. Within this scope the bulk of the responsibility lies with the headmaster. It is he who is responsible for the execution and implementation of that which is new, necessary, essential and that which is unknown (preparing teachers and pupils to deal with challenges in an unknown future) in the modern world. Therefore, the role of a headmaster as a leader striving for change to qualitatively develop a school comes to the forefront.

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