
Summary

School protagonists

Managerial predispositions and competences

School is a kind of place where various aspects of human activity crisscross, starting from the purely educational, through those related to childrens' development and upbringing, and, finally, managerial activity, i.e. planning, organisation, control, guidance. In order to be able to discuss the professional preparedness of people working within the educational system, it is useful to assign to the functions listed above the relevant predispositions and skills, the possession of which enhances an individual's effectiveness at work.

This publication was written with an underlying belief that research, by virtue of linking theory with practice, should be capable of acting as a bridge between educational policy and school reality, and in this way create the foundations for a professional approach to education management.

This book focuses on head teachers' responsibility and professional approach, which, as a consequence, also shifts the perspective from the strictly organisational context and the school's particular features, to the figure of the manager as educational leader. As such, she or he not only determines the general atmosphere in their organisation but also the efficiency of the institution, as well as the satisfaction level of all the parties involved. It is the head teacher of a contemporary school, seen as the eponymous protagonist, "the leader, the most outstanding performer in the team" that is the focal point of the scholarly discussion here.

The main aim of this publication, apart from presenting the state of the art of research on leadership, the role and function of a managerial position as well as qualification requirements and basic activities related to the post, is an empirical diagnosis on what the psychological predispositions and managerial skills are of teachers as potential headmasters. The starting point of this piece of research was a critical overview of the situation at hand related to the existing procedures of open competitions for the post of head teacher. They are frequently coupled up with a lack of a clear vision on managerial skills and the required personality profile of school 'leaders' and, as a consequence, also feature a lack of tools for professional verification of such competences. The latter very often boils down to the insufficient competence of the members of the committee tasked with evaluating the candidates in the competition.

The present analysis starts off with classic concepts with a look at the present state of managerial work, leadership functions, and the competences and predispositions of head teachers.

Chapter One presents the basic managerial concepts, defines the essence of organisation management, focuses on managerial roles and functions and provides a review of theory in terms of leadership effectiveness. The concept of leadership competences is also presented. Chapter Two contains a discussion of relatively universal psychological factors in the work of managers. The focus here is on organisational behaviourism, selected predispositions and skills required to perform day-to-day managerial tasks. These first two chapters show a wider perspective on the tradition of research into management and its determinants, which has its basis outside the educational sphere, and this becomes a point of reference for later discussions. Chapter Three takes up the issue of educational leadership and seeks to present the challenges and specificity of the position of school head. The formal requirements demanded of candidates are analysed, and there is a critique of issues related to the system for open competitions in recruiting head teachers. This chapter also includes a discussion of legal requirements, as well as wider reflections on selected elements of managerial activities performed on a daily basis. The final chapter is devoted to the author's own research. It is important to note that in the empirical part, predispositions were understood mainly as a set of selected and relatively stable external traits which are only subject to internal shaping to a limited extent, and which constitute an outline of the individual's character in the psychological dimension (personality, intellectual). On the other hand, managerial competences are reduced to basic dimensions connected with effectiveness and flexibility in management styles, and the approach of the boss to the employees' needs and motivation, which constitutes the basis of the management philosophy assumed. It is worth noting that the narrow field of interpretation adopted for these factors is something of a simplification, as in terms of defining competence and the issue of fundamentals, these are often dimensions that overlap, determine each other or merge.

This scientific research attempted to contrast the complex model of the school protagonist with the profile produced of prospective heads. Based on the assumption that school is not a place for 'management experiments', which may or may not succeed, the analysis focuses on potential candidates for head teacher posts, and not on teachers currently holding these posts. It is assumed as rational that professional vetting of candidates' competences starts at the open competition stage. The studies conducted and their findings might serve further analyses in the wider framework of structural functionalism and taking a systemic view of education.

This research allowed group potential to be identified, and as a consequence, a relatively positive picture of future educational leaders to be presented. However, it is important to remember that this model theoretical set of properties should be applied to educational practice, in which the standard will be case-by-case verification of candidates' predispositions and competences related to the post of head teacher.

The content of this article is not merely a lecture in the field of the history of psychology or the theory of organisation and management rooted in Polish school life. Attention is paid to the practical use of achievements in both these disciplines, with the aim being to predict management potential in education and the possibility of it being utilised.

The basic content of this article might prompt reflections on the source of management success and be a starting point for analysis and discussion on the preferred model of school leadership. The article may also serve as a source of inspiration for theoretical and practical research, serving the development of training programmes and also procedures and methods for verifying the potential of current and future schools heads. Good education, well thought-out procedures and solutions for identifying school heads create an opportunity to build up professional educational management resources, thus giving hope for better quality managers today and in the future.

Translated by Rob Pagett