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Teacher's asserting premises and possibilities of efficient managerial styles

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Abstract

The issue of teacher's managerial styles is unitary approached along with educational styles issue and institutional management styles issue, and is part of the class' managerial dimension. Comparative, educational and managerial styles (of the school manager) have a theoretical history and benefit from validated techniques and tools, whereas teacher's managerial styles issue are about to gain consistency as part of the pedagogical literature, and present researches emphasize their roles in efficientizing didactic activity. The article *Teacher's asserting premises and possibilities of efficient managerial styles* is based on multiple specific sub-themes: a) analysis of the key-concepts outlining theme's theoretical framework; b) teacher's managerial styles typology; c) conditions and modalities in order to efficientize managerial styles. Premises of the topic speech consist in: situationally approach the educational process, the relation between teacher's educational and managerial styles, references to a personal research regarding the outline of the constructive teacher's managerial styles. Based on these key-concepts and in accordance with the multidimensional approach (conditions, factors, modalities in order to outline and assert styles), possibilities and modalities are being analyzed in order to efficientize teacher's managerial styles.

Keywords: style, professional behavior, educational and managerial styles, class management, leadership, constructive teacher's managerial styles.

1 Preliminaries

By making references to class management, as an approach perspective of teachers' styles issue, we find that as part of the field, indicative studies are relatively few in comparison with the institutional management; this fact makes specific problems to derive and adjust from those of the organizational management or to develop out of the classic literature approaching class management, educational styles for that matter, pedagogical research data. Nevertheless, it is necessary to carry out an in-depth approach of the manager-teacher style, if we take into consideration a series of findings of teacher's educational and managerial practice, which become grounds for a fundamental and applicative research in the field:

- educational practice has revealed the idea that a strictly technical approach of the pedagogical constructions is not efficient as part of the actual educational field, where the situational approach (of training, interaction relations, development actions of an optimal psycho-social climate) is much more productive;
- situational approach of the educational and instructive process dictates teacher's personality assertion, through particular behaviors in order to conceive and apply situations and tasks, in accordance with class characteristics, teaching discipline, school's cultural level;
- pedagogical researches of teachers' competences have emphasized there are different results of teachers having a relatively equal level regarding the pedagogical and managerial culture, the difference between their professional performances is caused by features of personality and styles.

2 Conceptual delimitations

The first stage of any theoretical and praxiological approach regarding teacher's style issue is represented by the comparative conceptual analysis of some specific or correlative terms, which have generated some interpretative dilemmas, of which the most representative are as follows:

- *the professional style/behavior;*
- *the educational style/managerial style;*

The interpretative difficulties referred by the issue literature justify D. P. Ausubel's assertion (1981), according to which teacher's style term has many meanings, which implies more possibilities in order to conceptualize teacher's

individual characteristics, advanced as part of the educational activity.

a) The professional style/behavior

The two concepts have been differently related as part of the fundamental orientations of the issue literature. Among these, the most important are the behaviourist orientation and those based on situational models (of contingency).

As far as the behaviourist orientation is concerned, style represents "a set of constants associated to behavior, which find themselves at the contact point with teacher's psycho-pedagogical belief and which are directly perceptible, without and internal meditation" (apud Iucu, 2000). The situational theories analyze categories of teacher's behaviors and the relations between them, established in accordance with specific variables of some situations. Thus, it has been promoted the concept of *leadership*, which is part of the managerial style, used as part of the operational management and expressed through combinations of variables, modalities in order to train pupils.

A famous representative of the situational theories – Freud Fiedler – clearly defines behavior and style terms. Applied to educational field, in the domain of education, Fiedler's theory approaches *behavior* as an ensemble of specific acts, which involve the teacher in pupils' guiding activity, whereas the *style* represents teacher's fundamental needs, which motivate pupils' behavior (apud Iucu, 2008). Fiedler develops a contingency model, which applied to the level of class management, explains teacher's managerial success, by balancing style (educational and managerial) with three situational variables (teacher-pupils relation, tasks' structure and teacher's authority). The situation arising from the combination of task's nature with interpersonal relations and leader type determine the efficiency degree in accomplishing curricular objectives and those referring to class' psycho-social component.

As a conclusion to all theoretical and practical developments as part of the manager-teacher style issue provided by contingency models, Elena Joița considers „the style to be a set of relatively stable features as part of teacher's educational behavior, progressively optimized, consolidated or ameliorated, a particular way of integrating pedagogical values as part of his capacities and competences, a result of personalizing pedagogical norms, a certain way of structuring them in specific actions“ (Joița, 2000).

b) The educational style/managerial style

A major problem arising while conceptualizing terms of *educational style* and *managerial style*, as two fundamental categories of teacher's style, is

represented by defining relations between these aspects. Dan Potolea (1989, 160-186) completely clarifies the problem above mentioned, by assessing the closeness between teacher's fundamental categories (of class training and management) to also dictate the correlation of practised types of styles (educational and managerial). Thus, as far as the quoted author is regarded, pedagogical styles should also be studied in the light of the class, as an expression of the classic thesis that asserts teacher's manager role as part of the educational process, which makes the didactic strategies to be better conceived and applied. Nevertheless, there shouldn't be established equivalences between educational and managerial styles.

The educational style is "result of personalizing principles and norms specific to educational activity" (Potolea, 1989). The managerial style represents an „operational option in order to filter, analyze, structure, make decisions while solving problems by teacher's crystallized personality, and it is valuable when situationally interpreted" (Iucu, 2000); as part of the class management, style „results from combining characteristics of the management dimension: professional capacities, organizational capacities, maintaining a climate favorable to efficiency, motivation modalities, attitudes towards performance, delegation of practical decisional authority, principles and fairness, attitudes towards the superior hierarchical level" (Zamfir, 1980, apud Joița, 2000).

3 Tipology of managerial styles

The tipology of teacher's managerial styles is distributed on multiple dimensions:

- adequating typical categories of the school manager style (on which educational management literature is based) to the specific of teacher's didactic and managerial activity;
- adapting managerial styles to characteristics of pupils as members of the organization, who have a status and role as part of the study formation, just like as part of any other organization.
- analysis levels of the teacher's managerial style, which determines more categories: cognitive level (psycho-pedagogical and managerial representations, competences, convictions and beliefs); strategic decisions level, which concern teacher's managerial activities: managerial prognosis and planning, organization, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and adjustment; operational level, where the managerial style is

adjusted to educational situations' variables;

The categories of the teacher's managerial style resulted from this constructive dimensions, are:

- a) Regarding the adequation degree to situations and members' maturity level- (Hersey, Blanchard, 1977 apud Prodan, 1999):
 - *the directive style*, necessary in case of new learning situations and when pupils' maturity level is low gradul;
 - *the tutorial style*, based on supporting pupils involved in independent and group learning tasks and who do not possess a high level of competences development;
 - *the supportive style*, based on motivating and involving pupils in exercising capacities and abilities, on providing suggestions, consultancy and it is adequate when pupils possess a higher maturity level than the above mentioned case, but still need a careful monitoring and support in accomplishing tasks;
 - *the delegated style*, developed by involving pupils as part of the decisional act regarding training, organization of activities specific to class management, being recommended when pupils' maturity level is high;
- b) Regarding group's involvement degree in making decisions, resulting types ranked in accordance with the directivism/freedom degree granted to pupils as part of the decisional process (Vroom, Yetton, 1973, Prodan, 1999 apud Joița, 2000):
 - *autocratic I* – the manager-teacher makes decisions by himself based on information possessed by that time;
 - *autocratic II* – the manager-teacher makes decisions by himself, by capitalizing some pupils' answers, too;
 - *advisory I* – the manager-teacher describes the situation, involves pupils as part of the debate, evaluates answers and then he makes the decision by himself;
 - *advisory II* – the manager-teacher and the group of pupils analyze the situation, the teacher makes the decision, but its content reveals pupils' interventions, too;
 - *group* – the manager-teacher and the group of pupils analyze the situation, and the decision is made by the group.
- c) Regarding the expression degree of the authority-freedom relation, by accomplishing a „continuum of management styles:

„the manager makes decisions by himself and also makes them public; the manager makes decisions and argues them; the manager presents ideas and asks questions; the manager presents a decision proposal that will be argued; the manager presents the issue, listens to suggestions and then he decides; the manager defines boundaries and asks the group to decide; the manager allows the group to decide, being limited by exterior constraints” (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1958, apud Iosifescu, 2001).

4 Conditions and modalities in order to efficientize the manager-teacher style

The specialty literature indicates multiple conditionings of the efficiency of teacher’s educational and managerial style (Prodan, 1999, Potolea, 1989, Joița, 2000, Păun, 1999):

- *Personality factors;*
- *Influencing teacher’s managerial behavior, by motivating him, as a basic orientation in manifesting the paradigm of „successful management” (Prodan, 1999, Joița, 2000);*
- *Class characteristics, psycho-pedagogical and managerial culture (knowledge, capacities and competences, skills and abilities in applying methodological systems, techniques and procedures, modalities in order to acknowledge pupils’ personality, teacher’s psycho-pedagogical training necessary in order to perceive the context, the psycho-social climate of class and school, of interpersonal relations), whose operationalization efficientize didactic, educational and managerial activity, whose acknowledged level represents a self-evaluation indicator, of self-perfecting the style through reverse connection;*
- *School’s organizational culture, whose basic values (conservative or emerging) or characteristics influence teacher’s style, through role contamination, expectances and pressures, types of behaviors required. Thus, as part of a school where the organizational culture is based on manager’s power, teacher’s style is influenced in order to be a bureaucratic, protective, directive, whereas as part of a school based on a task culture, teacher’s style is guided in order to be a democratic and achieving one, the teacher involving pupils in class’ managerial issues, along with him being involved in solving institutional objectives as part of the project management.*

If favorable factors and conditions are correlated with rigorously

elaborated and applied modalities in order to efficientize the style, established post manager-teacher's evaluation/self-evaluation from this perspective, then outstanding results can be achieved in improving, perfecting/self-perfecting the style. A selective list includes the following strategic directions in order to improve manager-teacher's style:

- Applying some adequate methods in order to acknowledge pupils' expectances and needs and defining/implementing strategies and tools in order to satisfy pupils' interests;
- Developing an ethics code in order to develop as a class manager, as far as one's discipline is regarded (Joița, 2000);
- Developing capacities in order to develop professional experiences through (self)interrogation, reflexive and critical attitude, which are basic in order to perfect the educational and managerial style – the expression of professional development through reflexive practice (Maciuc, 2005);
- Elaborating and applying policies in order to develop the didactic staff, with references as part of teacher's managerial training field.
- Involving teacher in self-management activities of professional development, based on developing transverse competences, as part of the area where educational and managerial styles are situated.

5 Conclusions

Analysis of premises and modalities in order to outline teacher's managerial styles represent a support platform for some empirical and experimental researches in the field. And this area has a great development potential through inter-disciplinary researches, which aim interest fields of the postmodern pedagogy and educational management: a) teacher's professional and transverse competences; b) meta-cognition; c) meta-communication, which emphasizes the educational styles asserted as part of the situations facilitating communication relations (Vlăduțescu, 2012); d) constructivist capitalization of teacher's managerial styles, by adapting them in accordance with constructivist learning's principles and models (Bunăiașu, 2008, Joița, 2008); e) developing the curriculum of teachers' initial and continual training, through trans-diciplinary structures, which aim professional values, attitudes, styles and behaviors.

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