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PEDAGOGICAL MANAGEMENT IN THE FUNCTION OF FAMILY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP[1]

Summary: *The authors in this paper are dealing with the issue of pedagogical management development which would be in the function of pedagogical organization development as well as in the function of adopting the philosophy of partnership as a basis for building efficient relations of pedagogical-educational institutions with broader developmental environments. In that sense and starting from the importance of interdependent activity of family and school as micro-system developmental environments, besides the pedagogical management functions and presuppositions of development of pedagogical organization culture, in this paper the emphasis is also placed on consideration of key presuppositions of development of a partnership relation between family and school. It is concluded that the concept of pedagogical management positioning team leadership as an ontic attribute of successfulness and efficiency of pedagogical organization development, represents a basis for partnership development of pedagogical organization with other developmental environments. Thereat, it is emphasized that the philosophy of partnership relation between family and school should be characterized by an approach in which parents are viewed as the experts and thus should be actively included in the realization of vital activities and decision-making with regards to pedagogical organization development.*

Keywords: *family and school partnership, pedagogical management, pedagogical organization culture, team leadership.*

1. Introduction

In countries undergoing transition, and even broader, in the focus of vision of education for the new millennium, there is an expectation that education can provide a significant contribution to development of knowledge society and not just by nurturing ideas such as life-long learning but also by developing and improving educational capacities and human potentials in the field of pedagogics and education. Thereby, the international standards would be met, primarily those related to teaching and learning, education and professional development of pedagogical workers and the promotion of pedagogical practice. Thus, if we take into account the tendencies or movements that will characterize the education in the next decades, such as: more efficient leadership, increasing number of specialized pedagogical organizations, increasingly demanding young people requiring flexible models of teaching, the need for more and more challenging programs for learning and researching, a closer integration on regional and local levels with international networking – then, the necessity of iterant, fundamentally different consideration and action in the general approach to the change or transformation of pedagogical and education systems on the whole is evident. The approach implies a developed pedagogical management that would be in the function of pedagogical organization development as well as in the function of adopting the philosophy of partnership as the basis of building efficient relations of pedagogical-educational institutions with broader developmental environments. In the sense and starting from the significance of interdependence of family and school as micro-system developmental environments, this paper, besides the pedagogical management functions and the presuppositions of development of pedagogical organization culture, puts the emphasis on considering key presuppositions of development of partnership relation between family and school.

2. Pedagogical management: the concept and functions

Management is generally accepted term for harmonization and rational guiding of human and material potentials in order to realize concrete developmental goals of an organization. Management is also apprehended as forming of, guiding and development of a social system (Andevski, 2007.), whereas nowadays it is more and more apprehended as the skill implementing human knowledge since it is based on fundamental knowledge, wisdom and leadership and primarily on self-knowledge and constant self-development. Managerial competencies or skills are based on theoretical and concrete practical knowledge necessary for successful realization of the process of managing. The basic skills imply vocational skills in a particular area of activity, whereas the skills relate

to the social competence skills directed at the knowledge of communication, motivation and leadership as well as the strategic skills directed at creation of vision and realization of a mission (accomplishment) of an organization or social system development.

Analogously, since pedagogics and education are manageable and leadable processes they also become the subject of management study, more precisely, of pedagogical management study (Kostović et al., 2009.). Accordingly, pedagogical management can be comprehended as the process of harmonizing and developing of human and material potentials in the field of pedagogics and education in order to realize pedagogical-developmental goals and also the goals of educational-pedagogical policy. If it is known that fundamental functions of general management are planning, organizing, leading and control of a social system (organization), then it can be said that the basic sense of implementation of management functions on the pedagogical process is that the process is modeled, functionalized, actualized, adapted and created as an adequate and distinctive.

Thereat, the pedagogical management characteristics and functions, according to their structure and conception, do not differ from the already mentioned ones (Kostović et al., 2009.). *Planning* is a process in which relevant goals and patterns of pedagogical organization activity are identified and chosen. The aim of the planning function is perceiving the desired state endeavored to be achieved as well as the strategy by which the desired state will be achieved. *Organizing* is the process in which the structure of relations and interactions among the associates is created in order to provide the necessary cooperation for achieving the desired state or aim of a pedagogical organization. The established relations among the pedagogical workers generate a specific work and living climate which, depending on the character can have a high motivating potential for achieving the planned desired state. Through *leading* the state is reviewed, vision is created and the direction of development of life and work of pedagogical organization is determined. The process of leading implies the application of professional authority, personal charisma, influences, capability of persuasion and communication skills. The positive outcome of the leading process results in high motivation of the associates, their understanding of the mission and dedication to the pedagogical organization. *Control* estimates whether the activities – in the process of achieving the desired goal (or the goals accomplishment) in the pedagogical institution – develop in the planned direction. It means that the function of control implies the implementation of corrective measures but also of the sanctioning ones if it ultimately proves necessary.

3. Pedagogical management and pedagogical organization culture

It is certain that any change in the system of pedagogics and education, whether structural or organizational or only in the form of innovation diffusion, represents the subject of numerous analyses in the world. Such analyses in developed European countries have been focused on the discourse of cultural realities, leadership and making decisions in the field of pedagogics and education. Although it seems that these countries have solved all their problems in the field of pedagogics and education, the fact is that they are still trying to respond to new social challenges, but with the thesis of the necessity of building a culture of pedagogical organization that would be based precisely on the discourse of the three mentioned aspects. Namely, although there is a cognition that the operation of almost every pedagogical organization is managed by external factors, especially government with multitude of decrees and regulations, it is considered that there are sound reasons for orientation towards building and managing the culture of pedagogical organization as a basic lever for further development and promotion of pedagogical process and work. In that sense, "a healthy" culture of pedagogical organization should promote identification (who are we), legitimacy (why should we work), communication (whom should we talk to), coordination (whom should we work with) and development (what are our dominant perspectives and tasks) (Coleman and Earley, 2005).

Translated into the language of pedagogical management, within every pedagogical organization four cultures which are in the process of constant interaction should converge: the pedagogical, managerial, developmental and negotiable. Unified, they generate a positive culture of pedagogical organization which by itself represents a culture of social opinion and the relation of the pedagogical process' subjects towards the pedagogical organization and the environment. It is, among other, "...a powerful socializer of opinions and programmer of behavior" (Coleman and Earley, 2005: 51), encouraging achievement, enthusiasm and establishing the positive interaction and communication in the whole architecture of pedagogical organization and the environment.

Pedagogical change is the result of both external and internal pressures and requirements; however, those making decision on the change rarely consider the conditions in which the change will occur, possible ways of durability of the process as well as the reasons why in general the tempo of pedagogical-educational reforms has always been slow during the history. In all educational systems, a typical response or reaction to an external requirement for a change (or the request from top to down "up-down") is moving through the change by the line of less resistance in the sense that the current pedagogical practice is merely

modified and at some however certain pedagogical models are 'imported' and adjusted to local conditions. In order to win through the new realities they are facing with, pedagogical organizations will have to learn not only how to survive but also how to gradually develop in the "learning organizations" (Senge, 1990.), so that, by the manner of "generative learning" they would increase the capacities of pedagogical organization and the potentials of individuals for the purpose of creating new solutions for the forthcoming complex problems. The experience in pedagogical practice has shown that every new idea, innovation, thus a change in general, can have a very different meaning for individuals. That is why, for the purpose of pedagogical change efficiency, its interpretation should be first provided by those belonging to the environment that should realize the change, that is interpreting it in the context of their mutual professional experience and co-existence and in the context of dominant culture of pedagogical organization they belong to.

4. Team leadership as the basis of pedagogical organization development

In an attempt of consideration of human potentials optimization in the field of pedagogics and education, attention is directed to "a team as culture" and to leadership in the function of revealing the meanings already existing in the cognizance of the team members in the way that it will assist them in distinguishing what they already know, what they believe in and what they already respect. That, of course, implies constant encouragement of the members to accept new meanings as well (Kim, 2011; Senge, 1990). Perhaps, precisely the emphasize on personal construction of meaning and dismissal of individualism, hierarchical relations, bureaucratic rationalities and abstract moral principles within the organizational structure of pedagogical organization, is the basis of model for realization of successful change in the pedagogical practice and also the change that must parallelly evolve within the initial education and professional development of the pedagogical workers.

One of the implications of these observations is that those responsible for directing the changes in education would be more successful if they would better comprehend the very process of pedagogical change, and especially if they would know that the inevitable tensions occurring during the process can rather be the source of strength and not of weakness. No serious pedagogical-educational reform will be put in practice if it is not followed by the significant increase in the number of people-leaders and other active participants that have started internalizing the cognitions and actively acting on the basis of knowledge on how a successful change is happening. Likewise, no change in the field of

pedagogics and education is more fundamental than the expansion of capacities and potentials of individuals that understand and accept the changes (Kim, 2011). Thus, it is also worth pointing out the observations (Senge, 1990) on how to motivate pedagogical workers in accepting new ideas or changes in general. Besides the difference between the "participating openness" and "reflexive openness" as the important features of social competencies of the workers, it is important to bear in mind their mutual association and conditionality, because the sole behavior of openness does not mean the true openness for changes. Thus, the idea of "reflexive openness" denoting the readiness to question their own opinion, readiness to reassess their own beliefs and constructions is simultaneously the readiness to reassess and respect the opinions of others (Senge, 1990.).

This focus of "openness" in relation to oneself, others and the interaction with the environment can be particularly important for pedagogical workers and pedagogical organizations in the pedagogical-educational systems going through some forms of metamorphosis in redefining their role in society and which have to pass another disturbing process of "reculturing" while learning to pass from the culture of individualism to the culture relying on cooperation based on partnership. Following the discourse of openness, it is possible to deliberate on a generative model for development of pedagogical organization that should, with the openness for further upgrading, rely on the following principles: an initiative that would be the result of interdependency of pedagogical theory, practice and experience; colleague-friendly and cooperative decision-making, whereat emphases are interpersonal relations and associations and not professional status or organizational structures; inclusion of the team of participants cooperating in order to make decisions; a reflexive, generative and transformative activity of the team members, as well as a systematic approach in designing a plan for "conceived journey" through the process of changes (Harvey-Jones, 2003).

The model's implementation would imply abandoning the functionalistic perspective in pedagogical management presupposing that individuals can also manipulate on their way towards the desired goals. The model upholds turning towards "team leadership" as a cultural entity with "...a fluid sequence of beliefs, understanding and differences, with the attention directed at whether and in what way do the team members think and act together and take care on the patterns of participation in the team" (Harvey-Jones, 2003: 63), and this all happens for the purpose of accepting, accomplishing and sustenance of the changes on the grounds of mutual decision-making. This model gets its full meaning in the domain of building a partnership relation between school and family which should be based on the team leadership postulate.

5. School and family partnership as a model of pedagogical change

Building the partnership relation between school and family is a highly complex process which, as pointed out by the experts (Cowan et al., 2004; Price-Mitchell, 2009), has to be nurtured and led by the philosophy supporting the idea of partnership action and the idea of school as an open system. The relation between family and school is a dynamic process evolving between at least one parent (guardian) and at least one individual within the school (teacher, director, expert-associate) having a common interest and shared responsibility in setting the goals and decision-making in relation to learning and advancement of the students (Cowan et al., 2004: 201). Such relationship can evolve on three levels: the system's level (that is, between family and school environments), the classroom level and the level of individual. Further, the concept of partnership is often used to denote the importance of cooperative relation between family, school and community (Barbour et al., 2005; Epstein, 2001; Smit et al., 2007; Wright and Stegelin, 2003). All of the participants in the cooperation import their own resources for the purpose of creating the cooperative relation of interdependence. However, some authors (Kimberly and Christenson, 2000.) emphasize that the partnership approach implies not only the relation of cooperation and coordination but also the relationship of collaboration, which can be explored through five key elements: 1) mutual respect of knowledge and skills, 2) an honest and clear communication, 3) an open and two-way information-sharing, 4) mutual agreement on goals and 5) mutual planning and decision-making (Vosler-Hunter, 1989, according to: Kimberly and Christenson 2000: 478).

The mentioned elements are often difficult to be applied in practice, especially when bearing in mind the fact that the efficiency of a partnership relation between family and school depends on education legislation, family characteristics (values, beliefs, expectations, relation towards education), school's characteristics (beliefs, values and expectation of teachers, type of school – private or state, size and organizational structure of school...) as well as on the characteristics and influences of the local community (the set of norms, values and expectations of a broader community) (Cowan et al., 2004). Nevertheless, some experts (Christenson, 2004; Price-Mitchell, 2009) emphasize that the key for building up a partnership relation is trust representing a vital component of efficient family – school relations. Namely, if there is no trust between family and school, the undertaken activities and therewith the outcomes will not be at the expected level. Thus, it should be pointed out that building "the partnership based on trust" implies an approach nurturing, primarily, the optimism in the efficiency of mutual activity. Furthermore, as pointed out in works related to this area, the key characteristics of a partnership relation between family and school are:

a) *students-directed philosophy of partnership approach* – implying cooperation, coordination and collaboration of family and school for the purpose of academic, social, emotional and behavioral development of students

b) *shared responsibility for education and socialization of children* – it is of vital significance that family and school together provide the conditions and resources for learning and progress of children. The approach does not mean prescribing special roles and activities of school and family, but generating possibilities for their mutual participation and activity

c) *emphasizing the quality of family and school association* – creating a constructive relationhip that would enable for parents and teachers to contribute together and in a meaningful way to the academic and social development of children

d) *emphasizing the preventive approach and solution-oriented approach* – tendency to create such conditions that would facilitate and support learning, progress and development of students (Christenson and Sheridan, 2001, according to: Christenson, 2004: 84).

The mentioned characteristics of partner relations imply creation of new conditions in which parents and teachers work together on the improvement of educational system in the manner that will enable the prevention of future problems, meaning that all students should benefit from the partnership. Further, in such conditions individuals learn from each other, unify the knowledge and skills for the purpose of better education for all students. Finally, the partnership approach enables a set-up and a realization of long-term and comprehensive goals and tasks, in the presence of an open and clear communication which to a great extent determines the balanced partnership (Cowan et al., 2004).

In that sense in relevant papers (Christenson, 2004) it is pointed out that for building a constructive partnership relation between family and school the existence of four conditions is necessary (known as "4A"): Approach – adoption of an approach recognizing the significance of family and the role of parents in education; Attitudes – the existence of an attitude that family and school are needed to each other (positive attitude of family and school about the idea of partnership); Atmosphere – an adequate school climate, and Actions – existence of strategies for building the long-term partnership.

The approach – represents a frame for interaction with families. Inclusion of parents in schools is necessary and not just desirable factor for efficient education. This approach should be based on a systemic perspective by which dynamism and interdependence of family and school environment is pointed out. The attitude towards the significance of the role of parents mainly has an implicit character, that is it represents something that is often implied so that the explicit confirmation about it is often missed out in school activities.

The attitudes – the values and comprehensions reflected on the relationship between family and school. It is necessary to develop a positive attitude towards the idea of partnership and for the purpose of creating adequate relations and not mechanical inclusion of parents in order to formally perform certain prescribed activities. The positive attitudes towards the partnership relation are reflected if both teachers and parents do the following: a) listen and respect the point of view of one another, b) see their differences as an advantage, c) focus on mutual interest, d) exchange information, e) respect knowledge and capabilities of each other, f) plan and make decisions together, g) work together on achieving the set goals, h) show readiness for conflict solving and i) share the responsibility for the level of achieved results.

The atmosphere – an adequate school climate providing partnership relations between family and school. It is characterized by trust, effective communication and mutual problem-solving. In order to create such an atmosphere it is necessary that the parents are invited to cooperation, that they are informed and have the sense of inclusion into school life.

The actions – the strategies for building the shared responsibility implying the following: a) administrative support provision; b) implementation of family – school teams; c) mutual problem-solving; d) identifying and managing conflicts, e) providing support to family; f) assisting teachers in improving their communication and relationship with families.

Hence, the actions' aim is building mutual responsibility for the results of educational process. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that the previously mentioned conditions are met: the adopted approach on the importance of family role, positive attitude of both family and school towards the cooperation based on partnership relations and adequate atmosphere in which the interaction will evolve. Further, it is important to emphasize that the concept of "action" should be differentiated from the concept of "activity", because the actions represent a broader activity implying the relation or association of family and school for the purpose of more efficient advancement of students; whereas the activities represent a narrower activity directed at how to include parents into the educational process.

However, partnership relation between family and school should be reflected through the effect of increased inclusion of parents in education, producing benefits for students (more positive attitudes towards school, better behavior in school, greater paying attention to school tasks and obligations, increased sense of responsibility for learning and school behavior), parents (increased capability for helping the children in learning, greater satisfaction with school and education in general) and for teachers (better relations with parents, increased parents' support, better understanding of students' needs,

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greater capability for providing support to students in learning and advancement) (Hoover-Dempsey and Walker, 2002). Furthermore, the efficiency of partnership relations, according to some authors (Cowan et al., 2004), is considered through potential benefits perceived at the level of meso-system family-school: better-quality communication between parents and teachers; greater efficiency in solving potential problems; better understanding of characteristics and modes of functioning of family and school environment, enabling also better understanding of the mode of functioning of a child in those environments.

6. Conclusion

Although the attention for efficient change in the field of pedagogics and education is constantly growing, judging by the international papers and references of the practice of change, it seems that there are only a few successful models that could assist in directing the process of efficient change. The reforms, as already explicated, often do not succeed due to implementation of simplified models of change or yet because they rely upon wrong presuppositions on the very process of change. If we would agree with the conclusions on leading the change in education (Senge, 1990) in which the significance of a systematic change is emphasized or, more precisely, if we would agree with the thesis that the reforms have to be directed towards development and interaction of all components of educational system simultaneously, as well as that they have to respond to deeper problems of culture – then a field opens up before us in which the coordinates for identifying models for pedagogical change should be searched for.

One of the key coordinates is related to the concept of pedagogical management positioning team leadership as the ontic attribute of successfulness and efficiency of pedagogical organization development. This approach represents a basis for development of partnership of pedagogical organization with other developmental environments, especially relating to development of partnership relations between family and school as micro-system developmental environments. Thereat, it is important to emphasize that the partnership relation between family and school implies mutual trust and respect, mutual agreement on the goals and strategies, as well as shared rights and responsibilities (Ballen and Moles, 1994). In order to achieve such a relation, schools should be the place in which families will feel welcome and where in adequate ways, family's strengths and potentials will be recognized. Accordingly, the philosophy of partnership relation between family and school should be characterized by the approach in which parents are also perceived as „experts" (Cowan et al., 2004), and thus should be actively included in the realization of all vital activities and decision-making in relation to the pedagogical organization development.

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PEDAGOŠKI MENADŽMENT U FUNKCIJI PARTNERSTVA OBITELJI I ŠKOLE

Sažetak: *Rad se bavi pitanjem razvoja pedagoškog menadžmenta koji bi bio u funkciji razvoja pedagoške organizacije, kao i u funkciji usvajanja filozofije partnerstva kao osnove za građenje efikasnih odnosa odgojno-obrazovnih institucija sa širim razvojnim okruženjima. U tom smislu, a polazeći od značaja međuzavisnog djelovanja obitelji i škole kao mikrosustavskih razvojnih okruženja, u radu je, pored funkcija pedagoškog menadžmenta i pretpostavki razvoja kulture pedagoške ogranizacije, naglasak stavljen na razmatranje ključnih pretpostavki razvoja partnerskog odnosa između obitelji i škole. Zaključuje se da koncept pedagoškog menadžmenta, koji timsko vodstvo pozicionira kao ontički atribut uspješnosti i efikasnosti razvoja pedagoške organizacije, predstavlja temelj za ravoj partnerstva pedagoške organizacije s drugim razvojnim okruženjima. Pritom se naglašava da filozofiju partnerskog odnosa između obitelji i škole treba karakterizirati pristup u kojem se i roditelji promatraju kao eksperti, stoga trebaju biti aktivno uključeni u realizaciju ključnih aktivnosti i donošenje odluka u vezi s razvojem pedagoške organizacije.*

Ključne riječi: *partnerstvo obitelji i škole, kultura pedagoške organizacije, pedagoški menadžment, timsko vodstvo.*

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