# THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS ON THE ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

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**Abstract**:
*The social dimension of the school organisation, the quality-related expectations of the education beneficiaries and the contradictory changes in the pre-university system are factors which underline the imperative of the educational leadership.*

*In operational terms, the research is relevant by the analysis of the impact of cognitive leadership elements on the process of organisational change.*

*The sample includes 446 active persons who take the role of formal/informal leader within 156 school organisations that hold legal personality in Dâmboviţa County.*

*The results conclude that the set of leadership skills formulate a positive response to the multiple expectations of the school organisation members. Therefore, educational leadership, seen as the teachers' competence to function as part of a learning organisation, represents a vital element in building the future.*

**Key words:** *leadership, skills, values, organizational change*

**JEL Classification:** *I20, M15*

## 1. Introduction

Based on skills (self-knowledge, self-control, social conscience and relationship management), leadership is present, in terms of change, in the following sectors: education, health, politics, army and religion.

The vast issues of leadership are broadly reflected in the scientific environment; the studies highlight the resonant impact of the leadership on both organisational changes (by understanding the roles assumed and the complexity of the interactions among the members of the organisation) and the quality of the organisation's performances (by sharing the same vision).

As a generically human action, leadership initiates and triggers the activities of an organisation, laying emphasis on the volitional context of the human mind.

## 2. Research relevance

Over the last two decades, the researchers throughout the world have studied and defined the concept of leadership from a broad psychological perspective, with strong social tones.

The definitions have a common point: *leadership is a process of building relationships which involve the dynamics of the organisation members; the challenge is launched when the change starts and the relational interpersonal values are implemented.*

In humanistic terms, the process of leadership is important, as human nature in its essence needs direction. People's activities carried out within organisation require a leading function, thus leadership.

In pragmatic terms, the various representations of people in relation to their roles and functions, refer to the notions of the leader and the follower.

Leadership falls under the scope of the phenomenon of social influence; its main axis is power and influence (Stegăroiu, I., Pahome, D., 2017).

As a promoter of change, the leader "influences other people towards achievement of organisational goals" (Peretti, J.M., 2011). He/she has a crucial role in the development of collective skills by building the group identity around some organisational values and aspirations, implementing collaborative work instruments and constantly exercising the vision co-building approach.

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Following the evolution of social organisations, the educational leadership is exercised by co-built vision, values and skills (Pahome, D., 2015).

In school organisations, the vision shared provides direction, meaning, and formulates collective aspirations.

The theoretical inventory of higher-order values in relation to which the organisation members have a specific orientation, is represented on polar axes: openness to change/ conservation/ achievement/ benevolence (figure 1):

Figure 1. Theoretical model of relations among motivational values
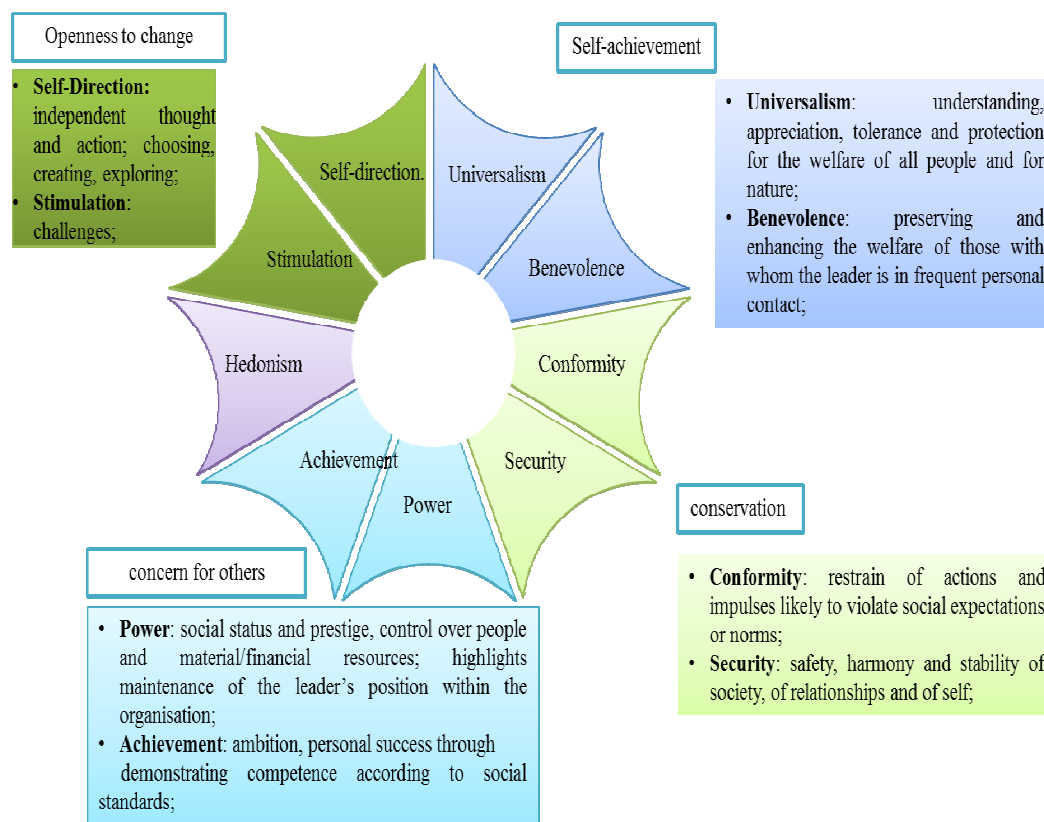


*Source: Schwartz, S. H. 2006*

Created by knowledge, *the values* have educational dimensions. Their framing in school organisations leads to the formation of the leader's desirable skills.

Under the circumstances of globalisation, the characteristics of the society continue to determine, to a great extent, the value orientations of the organisation members, namely: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, gender equality and orientation (Hofstede, G., 2001).

Starting from the premise that leadership pursues change at organisational level, the leader will identify the level to act upon, both in the field of knowledge and in the field of organisational behaviour (National Group for Quality Assurance, 2015).

## 2. Materials and methods

The paper "The impact of leadership skills on the organisational change" aims to identify the challenges of the educational space which may find answers in leadership. The approach of the scientific research focuses on the causality between leadership skills and the process of change.

The objective of the research approach is: *the analysis of the impact of the leadership skills on the process of change occurred within school organisations.*

The unit of observation was represented by 156 educational establishments holding legal personality in Dâmboviţa county. The survey unit consists of 446 respondents.

In percentage terms, 67% of the respondents were primary and secondary teachers, 15.7% leaders, other categories (school inspectors, methodologists within Teaching Staff Resource Centers), with weights ranging from 1.6 to 7.2%. The respondents involved in this study have university degrees (56.7%) and master's degress (36.8%) and are mainly between 40 and 49 (51.8%).

## 3. Results

The variables of leadership skills are measured on an ordinal scale.

With regard to the role taken by the leader within the organisation, we analysed the variance of the statements made in this respect (table 1):

Table no. 1. Analysis of the variance of statements on taking the position of leader within the organisation

| | | The leader clarifies the role by formulating answers to current difficulties within the organisation | The leader inspires confidence to collocutors | The leader manages (personal and collective) emotions and directs them to accomplishment of goals | Proactive individual in relation to superiors, the leaders refuses certain requests |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 446 | 446 | 446 | 446 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | | 4.76 | 4.78 | 4.76 | 4.61 |
| Median | | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Std. Deviation | | .474 | .430 | .472 | .712 |
| Variance | | .224 | .185 | .223 | .508 |

*Source: processed by author*

*Taking the leader role* involves a high level of proximity to the organisation members, and the legitimacy should not be mistaken for influence or statutory authority. By taking this position, the leader captures the set of skills underlying his/her legitimacy within the organisation (positive self image, encouraging members' autonomy, assuming risks) and secures alert and internal monitoring functions. The respondents feel that the leader manages (personal and collective) emotions and ensures coherence between the objectives set by the organisation and its actual actions, because the leader is able to create a vision and to innovate.

Sharing a common vision within the organisation represents another relevant aspect relating to leadership skills.

In this respect, we analysed the variance of the statements which are important to the research approach (tabelul 2):

Table no. 2. Analysis of the variance of statements on sharing
common vision within the organisation

| | | Liderul creates a concise vision | The leader's values are closely related to organisational values | The leader's vision determines every organisation member to surpass oneself |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 446 | 446 | 446 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | | 4.74 | 4.75 | 4.71 |
| Median | | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Std. Deviation | | .488 | .458 | .515 |
| Variance | | .238 | .210 | .265 |

*Source: processed by author*

The creation of a vision requires energies generated by motivational and inspirational processes. Building a future shared by the organisation members and accomplishing the common goals ensure an efficient conduct of actions intended to optimise the change. Therefore, the leader proves to have the following competencies: stating the will, cross contributions and creation of synergies within the organisation.

The analysis of the variance of statements on the advocates' coming together around the organisational vision proposed by the leader is shown in table 3:

Table no. 3. Analysis variance of statements on the members' coming together around
the organisational vision proposed by the leader

| | | The leader adapts his/her style to the members' thinking | The leader has levers of influence favouring biunivocal relationships | The leader encourages members to approach critical thinking |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 446 | 446 | 446 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | | 4.70 | 4.65 | 4.70 |
| Median | | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Std. Deviation | | .494 | .557 | .513 |
| Variance | | .244 | .310 | .264 |

*Source: processed by author*

The combination of the leader's profile and the members' profiles requires flexibility, which will actually enhance members' coming together around a shared vision and also formalise roles, objectives, expectations, needs and stakes of each and every member of the organisation.The four criteria by which a project of organisational change gets successful are: *certainty regarding the result, permanent innovation, identity levels and complete change of paradigm.*

Therefore, we analysed the variance of the statements on the change of the reference framework within the organisation (table 4):

Table no. 4. Analysis of the variance of statements on the change of the
reference framework of the organisation

| | | The leader defines the dynamics of the change within the organisation | The leader implements new emotional practices | In social terms, the leader acts responsibly | The leader is the only one responsible for the potential failure of the change proposed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 446 | 446 | 446 | 446 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | | 4.76 | 4.74 | 4.72 | 1.68 |
| Median | | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 1.00 |
| Std. Deviation | | .502 | .498 | .516 | 1.286 |
| Variance | | .252 | .248 | .266 | 1.653 |

*Source: processed by author*

The leader analyses the strong signals coming from the organisational environment/interpersonal environment and translates the future-bearing signals into a mobilising vision.

Predominant characteristic of exercising leadership (table 5), the influence was broken down by three statements:

Table no. 5. Analysis of the variance of statements on the leader's influence

| | | The leader creates the conditions for freedom of speech of all members | The leader motivates each member in relation to the activity carried out within the organisation | The leader ensures the conditions for constructive settlement of issues |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | Valid | 446 | 446 | 446 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | | 4.75 | 4.69 | 4.69 |
| Median | | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Std. Deviation | | .476 | .524 | .552 |
| Variance | | .227 | .274 | .305 |

*Source: processed by author*

The items indicate the extent to which the leader manages the activities of the members around the optimisation of the organisational change, by choosing a listening level adapted to each person. The leaders of the school organisations have to diagnose the members' perceptions concerning expectations and valences and therefore favour the cooperation behaviours among the members.

Another characteristic of the leadership skills relating to the process of change was valorisation of the members' contributions (tabelul 6):

Table no. 6. Analysis of the variance of statements on valorisation of members' contributions

|  | The leader recognises each member's individual contribution which led to success within the organisation | The leader's feedback encourages each member's behaviour |
|---|---|---|
| N Valid | 446 | 446 |
| Missing | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | 4.71 | 4.69 |
| Median | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Std. Deviation | .528 | .521 |
| Variance | .279 | .272 |

*Source: processed by author*

Given the respondents' perceptions on valorisation of the members' contributions, one may conclude that the leader encourages the actual participation of and initiatives taken by the members of the organisation, the common activities carrying huge value requirements.

**Conclusions**

Following analysis of the data in school organisations, it is absolutely necessary to use skills in exercising educational leadership.

The educational leadership represents a valuable predictor of change optimisation in school organisations under the pre-university education system.

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