LEADERSHIP IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Farhan HBOS, Israel,
PHD student, **Tiraspol State University**

For many decades, an extensive research has been conducted on the question of leadership in various organizations, including schools. However, the nature of leadership and its effect upon schools has remained vague. Most of the definitions of leadership tend to see in it a process of influence directed at an individual or a group. For example, Hoy & Miskel, leading researchers in the field on educational administration in the US, have chosen to define educational leadership as: "a social process in which a member or several

members in a group or an organization affect the rendition of external and internal events, the choice of desired purposes or outputs, the organization of work activities, the abilities and motivation of an individual, the balance of power and the groups' mutual orientation" [4, p.58].

A leader in an organization is conceived as someone who mediates between the abilities and desires of his subordinates and the purposes and requirements of the organization. In this spirit, there are approaches that direct the spotlight on the characteristics of leadership and of those being led. Thus, for example, Fidler maintains that the ability to deliver senses of purpose and security to the subordinates is a key attribute of a leader.

Leadership is presented as an opposite pole of "management"[3, p.73]. Leadership as opposed to "management", designs, initiates, and solves moral problems, has a vision and focuses on the creation of change and innovation; it drives people to perform tasks that they are not inclined to perform. If we would examine these characteristics in relation to the educational system, an educational leader is busy with the formulation of school purposes and their fulfillment, in developing new similes of the educational reality and redefining of school experience from a perspective of a comprehensive educational vision. School principals in the early history of Jewish education that has been documented in a historic study – Isaac Epstein, Yehuda Antebi, Rosa Yaffe and others – matched this leadership model to some degree [1, p.125]. They maintained a clear educational vision and acted on its realization amongst pupils out of a profound commitment to the molding of the young generation in the Land of Israel. Education and pedagogy have been everything for them, on a level of inner sanctum of the People of Israel that has returned to Zion after two thousand years of axial. Despite the vast knowledge gained since then in the field of leadership in general and educational leadership in particular, the leaders of Jewish education in its outset have portrayed the essence of educational leadership.

The extensive involvement in educational leadership of a school principal has begotten a variety of perspectives on this phenomenon in a school. Due to this paper shortage, I shall briefly introduce here the main models. Those readers who are interested in a more profound understanding of these models are welcomed to turn to the extensive literature that exists on educational administration.

The first model and the most famous one, the pedagogical leadership model, considers the teaching and learning processes that take place in a school to be the very center of educational leadership. A school principal is the one responsible for a pedagogical vision of his school, for stressing study achievements and to make sure teachers, parents and pupils understand the educational purposes of the school. A principal who is a pedagogical leader deals in development of study programs, promotion of the quality of teaching, supervision and monitoring of teachers' work, defending the teaching time and constant monitoring pupils' progress in studies. Planning studies, managing teaching and learning processes are the main managerial duty in a school and they are what make it different than managers of other organizations. The interesting

point is that many principals declare that pedagogical leadership is on the top on their priority list, however, many of them especially in the era of standards and responsibility in education, devote most of their time to handling of administrative matters and less to the handling of pedagogical matters [5, p.92].

Another model, also a renowned one - the moral leadership model, presupposes that values are the most basic factor in the awareness and behavior of an educational leader. The focus of a school principal who is a moral leader is on matters of values and morals. He assigns great importance to various ethical aspects of the educational work and places issues of social justice, discrimination, status, gender etc., at the center of school discourse and conduct, issues that unfortunately, many principals and class teachers in state-education have avoided for many years, in order to "maintain neutrality". This model criticizes the inclination to train neutral principals, in terms of values, as if the school produces goods instead of cultivating people who have values as the foundation of their being. In the last decades, critical philosophers have urged school principals to realize their contribution to the preservation of the class structure of the society and the inequality that characterizes it.

A principal who is a moral leader, nurtures social awareness and sensitivity to the socio-economic variance of pupils, amongst his teachers.

Two other models which have penetrated the discourse of educational administration field in the last decade, which could be due to a request to conceive the school principal as a CEO who functions as his CEO colleagues in the world of industry, relate to the relations between a principal and his teachers and the level of their inclusion in processes of decision making in a school.

The first model, *Participative Leadership*, has grown in light of the realization that the many tasks required in our times from school principals, cannot be performed unless teachers and different position holders are participated. Philosophers, who support the concept of participation, stress the importance of collegial decision making. The participation is manifested in the principal's waiving of some of his authorities and transferring them over to other colleagues in the school. There are even those who call for a creation of democratic communities in school, a model which apparently is compatible with the American spirit of democracy.

The second model, *Distributed Leadership*, deepens school democratization and suggests the considering of each teacher as a leader in his field, who enjoys extensive authorities and is independent in his decisions; however, also responsible for their outcomes. Integration of different leadership models revealed that successful school principals are characterized by self-commitment to resolving problems, high visibility on the premises, development of an executive team, creation of a culture of high expectations for performance, emphasizing the professional development of staff, adjusting the school to a central educational ethos, searching for additional resources for their school and key involvement in pedagogical issues in the school. Successful leaders are those who adopt pedagogical, moral, participative and transformational leadership.

However, due to current aggrandizing of educational leadership, we are committed to several reservations: first, educational leadership, and be it the most effective and successful one, is not capable of solving all the problems of the educational system and cannot lead to magical solutions where many powerful factors prevent resolution. Second, a leader cannot be effective when he neglects "management"; a school needs a leader who sets a vision and inspires the staff with his spirit and experience; however, it also needs a leader with an ability to manage employees, coordinate, plan and "get down" to the smallest details. We know that organizations that are being only "led", in a very short time loose the necessary order required for an effective organizational functioning. And oppositely, organizations that are being led by "managers" only, are absent of vision and future mission and might freeze.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the academic involvement in the essence of leadership has increased, including organizational leadership, and various theory-dependent models have been created in an attempt to explain it. I chose to discuss the principal models which have been created, as we all are influenced by the premises concealed in them.

The first model that has sprung the systematic academic involvement in leadership is termed "the great man approach", and it is mentioned in various writings as early as at the beginning of the 20th century. In those days, various philosophers have attempted at understanding not leadership itself but the leaders. The principal questions have been – who are those great men who have influenced human history to such an extent? What are their unique attributes? Are those attributes congenital or acquired? For several decades researchers have tried in vain to identify the attributes of leadership. It has been conducted a synthesis of leadership attributes studies and it has been showed that leadership is characterized by six clusters of attributes: ability, competitiveness, responsibility, inter-personal ability, power and understanding of a situation. However, he couldn't identify even a single attribute which characterizes leaders alone. Moreover, many attributes ascribed to leaders have been in contradiction with one another and many behaviors of leaders have not matched these attributes. Later studies, which examined leadership characteristics (and not the attributes of a leader), that have as well found characteristics such as a strong aspiration for a completion of a task, determination for the achievement of purposes, originality, initiative and self-confidence, have not found unique characteristics of leadership; many of the led have also leadership characteristics.

A disappointment from the attempt to identify unique leadership attributes has led researchers to focus on the work environment and the organizational context as a possible solution of the riddle of leadership. The premise that people are being born leaders has been rejected. Instead, a hypothesis has been proposed, that various characteristics in the work environment affect the behavior of a leader in a group and the level of his performance. Amongst those characteristics, the size of an organization, the level of its formality, the type of mission a group had to perform, power structures in the organization as well as the characteristics of those being themselves led, have been examined. Despite the difficulties in the research examination of these premises, this

approach might explain, in part, the behavior of an educational leader in light of the unique characteristics of a school as an organization of experts with dim purposes. The absence of a clear definition of good teaching and a teacher's work being done "behind the classroom door", for instance, might explain the need for a school-democratic-inclusive leadership that involves the staff in decision making. Such a leadership style, that fits the school organization, might recruit teachers for the principal's vision and motivate them towards the realization of the vision in classes [2, p.254].

Another approach which has grown out of a difficulty to identify unique leadership characteristics and a difficulty to relate between situations and leadership behaviors, has focused on a leader's behavior and the extent of the effect of his behavior upon the satisfaction and productivity of his subordinates at work. In the spirit of this approach, several "classic" studies have been conducted in the US in the 30's and 40's. These, have identified two dimensions of leadership: people-oriented leadership – a leadership behavior that is aimed at the creation of fellowship, trust, warmth, interest and respect in the relationships in a group; and task-oriented leadership – a leadership behavior that creates definite patterns of organization of work, communication channels and work methods [4]. Later studies have shown that a leader who combines these two dimensions is more effective. Moreover, in case of dim tasks, a task-oriented leadership is especially effective. New teachers need a school principal who sets clear rules of performance in their work and guides them in the details of the pedagogical tasks, as indicated in various studies of teachers in the outset of their career. However, the more veteran is a teacher in a school, the more he expects a people-oriented leadership that supplies emotional support and creates a positive climate in the school and the teachers' room.

Following these approaches, a realization has been consolidated that an effective behavior of a leader school principle depends upon an interaction of his attributes, behavior and factors in his environment. This insight, formulated in the conditioning approach, presupposes that it is impossible to explain effective leadership by a single factor and therefore, different leadership styles, fitting different conditions, have to be suggested. Different models formulated according to this approach show that a certain type of leader could be effective in a certain situation but not in another and that attributes of a leader, the situation and leadership behavior have to be adjusted in a way that it could lead to an effective functioning. The level of subordinates' maturity, meaning their desire to achieve high goals and assume responsibility is tied, with the desired leadership style in an organization. When the subordinates' maturity level is low, the most effective leadership style is one that structures their activity (giving direct instructions, tight supervision); when it is high, the most effective leadership style is one that diminishes both people-orientation and task-orientation. This is similar to a teacher who changes his teaching style in different classes according to their level.

From approaches presented thus far, the most influential over leadership thinking in the field of education is termed Transformational Leadership. Transformational leaders, according to this approach, encourage their subordinates to higher performance than the initial expectations of the subordinates and the environment. They do so by raising the

awareness of subordinates regarding the importance of the desired purposes and their value and by stressing the relation between the need of subordinates for self-realization and the realization of organizational purposes. These leaders are characterized by charisma, ability to induce vision upon others, being considerate of them and by stimulation of their intellectual. Many studies which have examined transformational leadership in schools, have reached the conclusion that the component of charisma is less relevant to schools, as people employed in it are professionals in their field [5, p.65]. On the other hand, the element of being considerate with an individual has a particularly high significance in schools, as it is based on informal relationships amongst the staff and on a flat hierarchical structure. Moreover, transformational leadership has been identified as the most contributive to pupils' education and teachers' development in a school and to their commitment raising to what goes on in it. Teachers in a school, where a principal acts as a transformational leader, express higher levels of satisfaction in their work and tend to remain in it.

  In conclusion, I should emphasize that leadership is just like love; it is difficult to describe, but nonetheless, everyone feels it when it appears in his life. It is no wonder, then, that the number of definitions for leadership is as the number of those who define it. And the more problematic is the phenomenon of leadership – social, cultural, political, organizational – the more challenging it is.

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