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EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

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Abstract

The challenges facing educational leaders include constantly skills building, ensuring consistently good teaching and learning, integrating a sound grasp of basic knowledge and skills within a broad and balanced curriculum, managing behavior and attendance, strategically managing resources and the environment, building the school as a professional learning community and developing partnerships beyond the school to encourage parental support for learning and new learning opportunities. Educational leadership skills are developed in a way to provide vision, to lean on the emotional intelligence, to be master of self-leadership, to embrace change and innovation, welcome and value diversity, develop a Mindset, focus on leader- learner, connect and take actions.

Keywords: education, leadership, teaching

Introduction

Educational leadership is a collaborate process that unites the talents and forces of teachers, students and parents. The goal of educational leadership is to improve the quality of education and the education system itself. The primary purpose of educational leadership is to ensure academic success through process, material and training improvements. This is mainly accomplished through collaboration with different individuals, such as educators, parents, students, public policy makers and the public. From a business perspective, educational leadership is a form of academic management and quality control. Educational leadership is centered on certain key principles. Educational leadership creates a vision of academic success for all students, strives to maintain a safe and receptive learning environment, delegates responsibility to others, instructional methods and curriculum content must be continually improved and the field of education must borrow and adapt modern management tools, processes and techniques.

Educational leadership

Various definitions of educational leadership have been developed that including a wide spectrum of knowledge, characteristics, dispositions, and skills containing competing perspectives and understandings with little agreement of what is or should be included in the discipline (Bush, 2007). Beaudoin (2003), argued that leadership speaks to a ubiquitous, identifiable set of human activities that support and assist, particularly in relation to change. Characterized as a notoriously perplexing and enigmatic phenomenon (Allix & Gronn, 2005), educational leadership is a construct that means different things to different people (Yukl,

2002). As Timperley (2005) noted, definitions of the term are fraught with arbitrariness and subjectivity, a point succinctly summarized by Allix and Gronn (2005), who remarked that:

Despite a long history of interest and fascination, and a relatively shorter history of systematic investigation, the phenomenon that is referred to as leadership remains in large part a theoretical enigma and paradox. In recent years, doubts concerning the integrity of the concept have raised the question of whether leadership refers to anything real at all, and whether it is even fruitful to entertain such a notion.

Overall, as Stack et al. (2006) stated, despite much promotional activity, there is no widely accepted definition of leadership and no consensus on how to best develop it or foster it noting disagreement about what leadership means and how it is related to management or administration.

Generally, different definitions of leadership abound and one central feature that scholars agree upon is that leadership involves the exercise of influence over others. Unlike management, it can take place outside as well as inside of formal organizations (Christie & Lingard, 2001). Although the concept of educational leadership varies across societies and cultures, there is a lack of research exploring the definition of educational leadership and the terminology used to define this concept.

Educational leadership research identifies a number of themes and in doing so suggest potentially directions for research on educational leadership. Three of these themes—leadership for teaching and learning, distributed leadership and systemic leadership—suggest interesting lines of inquiry.

Leadership for Teaching and Learning

These articles are grounded in a concern with leadership for improving teaching and learning. The main responsibility of school leaders should be the improvement of teaching and student learning (Murphy, 2002). Moreover, shifts in the policy environment over the past couple of decades that have attempted to forge wide-ranging changes in classroom instruction are likely to afford classroom teaching and student learning a central role in educational leadership research.

A number of the articles in this special issue provide rich illustrations of ways in which scholarship on education leadership can put teaching and learning front and center in studies of educational leadership. A critical issue here, suggested by Stein and Nelson, is that it is not simply instruction but instruction in particular school subjects that needs to feature more prominently in research on educational leadership. Teachers don't just teach—they teach mathematics, reading, and science and how they enact their roles depends in part on the school subject. As one might expect, then, leadership for instruction is subject matter sensitive and research on educational leadership must take this into account (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003).

Investigations of leadership expertise need to be subject matter specific because it is inadequate for administrators to generalize from what they know about instruction in one subject area to another subject area. Research on leadership content knowledge suggests one line of inquiry. Other aspects of educational leadership might also be studied in ways that are sensitive to the subject matter such as the distribution of leadership functions across positions in schools and school districts by subject area. (Spillane, 2003)

Distributed Leadership

Another theme addressed in many of these articles is distributed leadership including everything from the distribution of leadership functions across positions to attempts to unpack the complexities involved when the work of leadership is "stretched over" (Rogoff,1990) two or more leaders. These articles makes a contribution to addressing what Bennett, Wise, Woods, and Harvey (2003) correctly identify as a limited empirical knowledge base on distributed leadership and, equally important, suggest numerous avenues for future research. For example, Goldstein suggests two models of distributed leadership, divided responsibility and shared responsibility for leadership tasks, pointing us to one area where the knowledge base is thin on distributed leadership; that is, understanding how leaders practices relate to one another when leadership is distributed.

Gronn, develops a two-dimensional taxonomy of distributed leadership structures, differentiating arrangements by the mode of conjoint agency (co-performance or collective performance) and the size of the concretively acting group (Gronn, 2003). Among other things, Gronn unpacks examples of co-performance with intuitive working relations, co-performance with institutionalized practices, collective performance with intuitive working relations, and collective performance with institutionalized practices. This work provides a rich conceptual model for framing investigations of distributed leadership. (Spillane, 2003)

Leadership skills

Mulyono(2018) suggests three kinds of educational leadership skills,: conceptual skills; human skills; and technical skills.

Conceptual Skills

Conceptual skills are skills to understand and operate organizations. According to Wahyudi (2012), they are mental abilities to coordinate, solve problems, make decisions, and make plans. Conceptual skills include: analytical skills, rational thinking skills, proficient in various conceptions, able to analyze various events and trends, able to anticipate orders, and able to recognize various social opportunities and problems (Kusnan, 2017)

Human Skills

Human relations skills are the ability to work with other people, both as individuals and as groups (Wahyudi, 2012). Human relations skills are a person's ability to work together, understand aspirations and motivate members of the organization to obtain optimal participation in order to achieve goals. Human skills are skills to work together, motivate, and lead (Mulyono, 2018). Human relations behavior carried out by the principal includes: establishing cooperative relationships with teachers; establish communication with teachers; provide guidance and assistance in completing teacher assignments; build morale / teacher work morale; give awards to teachers who excel; solve all problems at school; involving teachers in formulating decision making; resolving conflicts at school, the duty of the principal to manage conflict well; respecting school regulations and creating a healthy competitive climate among teachers. Human relations skills include: the ability to understand human behavior and the process of cooperation; the ability to understand the hearts, attitudes and motives of others; the ability to communicate clearly and effectively; the ability to create effective, cooperative, practical and diplomatic cooperation; and able to behave in an acceptable manner (Kusnan, 2017).

Technical Skills

Technical skills are knowledge and proficiency in activities related to methods, processes and procedures, including the ability to teach technical skills to subordinates. They are skills in using knowledge, methods, techniques, and equipment to complete certain tasks Mulyono (2018).

The form of technical activities of the leader are: supervision of teachers in the classroom; evaluate and revise teacher teaching programs; implementing teaching activities by linking the curriculum with existing time, facilities and personnel; coordinate the use of teaching tools; assisting teachers in improving teaching, in diagnosing student learning difficulties.

Apart from the three skills above, there are several leadership skills that an educational leader should possess.

An educational leader must be sociable and good at working together. He must also be proficient and proficient in various things, such as: leadership skills; skills in establishing working relationships with fellow humans; group mastering skills; personnel administration management skills; and assessment skills.

It takes six leadership skills to reach the peak of success, namely: speaking skills; decision-making skills; accountability skills; positive attitude skills; carrying skills; and time management skills. These skills are applied in activities such as: setting the vision and mission of the school; establish policies and objectives to be achieved; carry out program preparation activities; estimating and allocating resources; and modifying policies and planning.

There are reviews that indicate that effective school leadership is important, but not sufficient condition for successful schools. The review draws particular attention to two concepts of leadership institutional/pedagogical and transformational. While there is evidence that institutional/ pedagogical leadership has been promoting better academic outcomes of students, it is concluded that the two forms of leadership are not mutually exclusive. A combination of strategies can be most beneficial in ensuring school success and most leadership effects operate indirectly to promote student outcomes by supporting and enhancing conditions for teaching and learning through direct impacts on teachers and their work. School leaders have a key role to play in setting direction and creating a positive school culture including the proactive school mindset, and supporting and promoting success for schools in challenging circumstances. The challenges facing school leaders include:

- ensuring consistently good teaching and learning
- integrating a sound grasp of basic knowledge and skills within a broad and balanced curriculum
- managing behavior and attendance
- strategically managing resources and the environment
- building the school as a professional learning community
- developing partnerships beyond the school to encourage parental support for learning and new learning opportunities.

The key dimensions of successful leadership are identified as:

- defining the vision, values and direction
- improving conditions for teaching and learning
- redesigning the organisation: aligning roles and responsibilities
- enhancing teaching and learning
- redesigning and enriching the curriculum
- enhancing teacher quality (including succession planning)

- building relationships inside the school community
- building relationships outside the school community
- placing an emphasis on common values

(Day,Sammous,2016)

A more detailed delineation of characteristics which are identified as important in relation to leadership, include:

- providing vision
- developing, consultatively, a common purpose
- facilitating the achievement of educational and organizational goals
- being responsive to diverse needs and situations
- having a future orientation
- providing educational entrepreneurship
- linking resources to outcomes
- supporting the school as a lively educational place
- working creatively with, and empowering, others
- ensuring that the processes and content of the curriculum are contemporary and relevant.

The important characteristics for management include:

- ensuring that management practices reflect leadership actions
- carrying out restructuring so that the school organisation is more effective and efficient
- collaboration designing and carrying out strategic plans
- meeting accountability requirements
- getting things done
- making sure the organization is running smoothly
- working effectively with people
- providing effective financial management
- marketing and promoting the school. (APAPDC,2000)

These can be combined into a set of four linked skill areas:

- Influencing skills e.g. motivating people, negotiating, public speaking and entrepreneurial
- Learning skills e.g. rapid reading, thinking skills, information processing and anticipation
- Facilitating skills e.g. listening, recognizing potential, team building, building alliances
- Creative skills e.g. envisioning, inspiring, empowering and aligning (Lessem,1991)

Figure, below, illustrates eight key dimensions of effective leadership (Day et al.,2008). The inner circle illustrates the core focus of leaders' attention, the inner ring their core strategies, and the outer ring the actions they take in support of these strategies. The building of trust is an intrinsic part, embedded within each of the core strategies and an essential part of the actions in the outer ring. The eight dimensions are described below.



Figure 1. Dimensions of successful leadership (Day et al., 2008)

According to Day et al.(2010) defining the vision, values and direction-Effective educational leader had a very strong and clear vision and set of values for their school, which heavily influenced their actions and the actions of others, and established a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school. These were shared widely, clearly understood and supported by all staff. They acted as a touch-stone against which all new developments, policies or initiatives were tested. Improving conditions for teaching and learning they identified the need to improve the conditions in which the quality of teaching can be maximized and students’ learning and performance enhanced. They developed strategies to improve the school buildings and facilities. By changing the physical environment of the schools and improving the classrooms, confirmed the important connection between high-quality conditions for teaching and learning and the well-being and achievement of both staff and students.

Restructuring the organization: redesigning roles and responsibilities- educational leader purposefully and progressively redesigned their organizational structures, redesigned and refined roles and distributed leadership at times and in ways that promoted greater staff engagement and ownership which, in turn, provided greater opportunities for student learning. While the exact nature and timing varied from school to school, there was a consistent pattern of broadening participation in decision-making at all levels.

Enhancing teaching and learning- Successful educational leader continually looked for new ways to improve teaching, learning and achievement. They provided a safe environment for teachers to try new models and alternative approaches that might be more effective. Where this was done, staff responded positively to the opportunity. It affected the way they saw themselves as professionals and improved their sense of self-efficacy and job satisfaction. This, in turn, had a positive impact on the way they interacted with students and other members of staff.

Redesigning and enriching the curriculum- educational leader focused on redesigning and enriching the curriculum as a way of deepening and extending engagement and improving

achievement. Academic attainment was not seen to be in competition with personal and social development: rather the two should complement each other. They adapted the curriculum to broaden learning opportunities and improve access for all students, with the emphasis on 'stage, not age' learning. Changes to build students' creativity and self-esteem featured heavily in the curriculum, as did a focus on developing key skills for life, without neglecting the academic. There was recognition that when students enjoy learning, they are more effective learners.

Enhancing teacher quality (including succession planning)- Educational leader provided a rich variety of professional learning and development opportunities for staff as part of their drive to raise standards, sustain motivation and commitment and retain staff. They placed a high premium on internally led professional development and learning, and teachers and support staff were also encouraged to take part in a wide range of in-service training, and were given opportunities to train for external qualifications. This combination of external and internal continuing professional development was used to maximise potential and develop staff in diverse areas.

Building relationships inside the school community- educational leader developed and sustained positive relationships with staff at all levels, making them feel valued and involved. They demonstrated concern for the professional and personal well-being of staff.

Building relationships outside the school community- Building and improving the reputation of the school and engaging with the wider community were seen as essential to achieving long-term success.

Common values- Successful educational leader achieved improved performance, not only through the strategies they used but also through the core values and personal qualities they demonstrated in their daily interactions. As Figure 1 illustrates, they placed student care, learning and achievement at the heart of all their decisions.

Conclusion

The success and achievement of educational goals of an educational institution very dependent on the role of the educational leader, of educational leadership skills. Educational leader is in charge of managing all organizational resources and collaborating with teachers in educating students to achieve educational goals. Educational leadership define vision, values and directions, redesign roles and responsibilities, enhance teacher quality, redesign and enrich the curriculum, build relationships inside and outside of the school.

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