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THE COMPETENCIES OF HEADMASTERS IN STUDENTS´ PRACTICE REFLECTION AT THE DEPARTMENTAL SCHOOLS IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Abstract:

Aim of papers based on summarizing the results of the authors' survey on the analyses of headmasters' competencies and theirs reflection by students of the study programme Educational management. The goal of the paper is to define and discuss headmasters' competencies reflections of professional practice by educational management students in terms of their theoretical knowledge, practical skills, management and human resources management development potential. From the perspective of future management of the students, authors' research results support the assumption that educational management students gained experience by this professional praxis in the time of study. The research questions is: What headmasters'competencies are more important for students´ educational management practice?

Keywords:

headmaster, competency, management, education, higher education, departmental school

JEL Classification: I20, J24, I29

1   Introduction

The role of a school's headmaster, resp. school directors or principals (the position is differently called in different countries), is often underestimated, although the implications of his/her decision-making influence a wide range of educational activities on a daily basis. In the context of a rapidly evolving and changing society, there is demand for demonstrable use of learning outcomes in practice. There was great interest in educational leadership in the early 21st century because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes (Lorencova, 2017). There is also increasing recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners (i.e.Tulowitzki, 2017). Schools need trained and committed teachers, but they, in turn, need the leadership of highly effective school headmaster's director and support from other senior and middle managers (Tureckiova, Veteška, 2008). While the need for effective leaders is widely acknowledged, there is much less certainty about which leadership behaviours are most likely to produce favourable outcomes (Veteška, 2013). Bush examined the theoretical underpinnings for the field of educational leadership and management, assessed different leadership models, and discussed the evidence of their relative effectiveness in developing successful schools (Bush, 2004).

In the Czech Republic as well as abroad, emphasis is on the professional preparation of school headmasters, their lifelong learning and the development and cultivation of their competences. (Šafránková, Šikýř, 2018). Schools are open systems, which is why they include much heavier duties for managers; it can be concluded that school managers, the head teacher and his deputies have to cope with many different problems and even crises. (Dos, Sagir, Cetin, 2015). Considering that some university-based school headmaster preparation programmes may not be properly training school headmasters for leadership roles, "grow your own" leadership development programmes have become more popular across the US (Tingle, Corrales, Peters, 2017).

The education of directors and other senior staff must necessarily reflect the ongoing changes in the education sector and society as a whole (Lapina, & Stuken, 2018). The headmasters must be comprehensively educated in many areas with sectoral overlaps, be an expert in school management, and manage the quality of teaching with the ability to reflect on external influences on education. However, since there is no obligation for prior systematic training in the field of school management, leadership, law or economics, the system has long been in the position of experienced and certified teachers who are, however, not ready for the school headmaster's job. The image of a democratic school headmaster with a participative leadership style is more effective, people work with pleasure, fulfil more tasks, are motivated to perform their work, they feel respected, appreciated and have high self-esteem, which can only benefit the school organization and the educational act (Iurea, 2017, Bolam, 2014).

There are many studies about the specific components of a district leadership development programme incorporated into the curriculum in order to positively influence the effectiveness of school headmasters as school leaders (Dorczak, 2017, Harrogate 2015). The author argues that what is missing is thinking about professional development of leadership/managerial competencies as a developmental process that has to be planned and organized as a long process of development in different roles played in school/s, and that formal courses and training can only support this process (Dorczak, 2017). The professional work, identity and

recruitment of headmasters is analysed in Wales too. There the headmaster directors role towards organisational professionalism was reoriented, and the professional framework for educational leadership in Wales was revised (Connolly, Milton, Davies, Barrance, 2018). Campos-García, Zúñiga-Vicente, describe Spanish educational organizations (secondary schools) and employee motivation of two sets of characteristics related to leaders: demographic (gender and age), and professional development (tenure, prior career experience in the organization and training). (Campos-García, Zúñiga-Vicente, 2019). The importance of the school headmaster's role in New Zealand aspiring school headmasters for secondary school headmastership in improving student learning outcomes has been acknowledged; however, there is global concern about the availability of appropriate professional education for school headmasters (Service, Dalgic, Thornton, 2018). The shadowing/mentoring component of the programme allowed aspiring school headmasters to gain an understanding of the complexity of a school headmaster's role by shadowing and being mentored by experienced school headmasters in a range of New Zealand schools. In addition to providing them with a network of effective school headmasters, the experience led the aspiring school headmasters to reflect on the development of their leadership (Service, Dalgic, Thornton, 2017).

Competence of management staff in education must include the following areas:
• Leadership (strategic thinking) - creating and fulfilling the vision, setting priorities, presenting and promoting the school, motivating employees
• managerial (development of organization) - determination of strategy, personnel activities, provision of resources, running of the system
• professional (in terms of function) - knowledge of legal and economic regulations, knowledge of the school context, communication skills, language skills,
• personality - time management, self-development, self-reflection, decision-making, work with stress
• social - team building, problem and conflict resolution, resistance management, cooperation with partners, acceptance of conditions,
• management and evaluation of the educational process - curriculum planning and creation, process evaluation, implementation of new knowledge into the educational process, use of feedback for process improvement (Lhotková, Trojan, Kitzberger, 2012).

The prerequisites for the performance of the activities of the headmaster are set out in Czech Republic in Act No. 563/2004 Coll., On Educational Staff and on Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended. In addition to fulfilling the prerequisites for teaching staff (legal capacity, professional qualifications for direct teaching, integrity, medical fitness and knowledge of the Czech language), in accordance with Section 5 (2), the school may be established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports , a region, municipality or voluntary association of municipalities whose tasks include tasks in the field of education, only those who, in addition to the prerequisites referred to in paragraph 1, have at least two years from the date on which they started to work as a school head for headmasters in the framework of further education of pedagogical staff pursuant to § 24 par. and). Pursuant to Section 5 (3) of this Act, the obligation to study for a school head established by the Ministry, a region, a municipality and a union of municipalities does not apply to the headteacher who has acquired a degree in education management from an accredited program of school management or education. lifelong learning by a school focused on the organization and management of education.

The quality of school leaders is one of the key factors that significantly influence the quality of teaching and learning at all levels of the education system. It is important to optimize the training

of school leaders and to identify the importance of each of the headteacher's competency profile items and the needs and requirements of management based on their day-to-day practice. School management leadership competence is divided into four spheres - strategy development, pedagogical process management, school development and management as an institution, human resource management and development. Particular attention should be paid to vocational education and training to improve and develop appropriate key competences to characterize a good school leader (Bitter, Hašková, & Pisoňová, 2014). Technological developments and changes that have taken place in recent decades have significantly affected the management of organizations. Especially the issue of knowledge management has played a key role in ensuring the competitive advantages of organizations. Therefore, schools must also develop their knowledge management strategies to achieve effective learning. The school headmaster role is played by the school head and, in particular, the level of his / her competence (Ozmen & Muratoglu, 2010).

2   Goal and Method

The aim of papers based on summarizing the results of the authors' survey on the analyses of headmasters' competencies and their reflection of managerial competencies by students of the study programme Educational management. The goal of the paper is to define and discuss headmasters' competencies reflections of professional practice by educational management students in terms of their theoretical knowledge, practical skills, management and human resources management development potential. From the perspective of future management of the students, authors' research results support the assumption that educational management students gained experience by this professional praxis in the time of study. The research questions is: What headmasters 'competencies are more important for students´ educational management practice?

Methodology for analyses of professional practice is based on 30 semi structured interviews on students managerial practice reflection and results of five questions from quantitative research by using questionnaire with 15 questions with Likert scale, 15 open questions and 10 identification of respondents. The survey was realised at the end of the winter semester of the academic year of 2018/2019, a research survey was conducted among 90 students of the 1st - 2rd year of the School Management program (47 + 43) aimed at evaluating managerial practices. After completing the practice in the given semester, the students completed their assessment focused on the content, organization and lecturing skills of the school headmaster where the practice took place, and at the end they made a self-reflection.

3   Results and Discussion

During the bachelor study program of the School Management program at the Faculty of Education of the Charles University*,* students of the given program will receive a practical part of the training at schools cooperating with the department, which creates conditions for the verification of acquired knowledge in practice and helps the process of converting knowledge into skills. It is a specific form of teaching (managerial practice) that allows connecting the theoretical part of teaching, distance activities, various forms of discussions and practical demonstrations directly in a school environment, and it is always focused on specific subjects of study (Information and Communication Technologies, Theory and Practice, School Management, People Management, Law, Economics and Financial Management and

Educational Process Management) in accordance with the curriculum, thus helping management staff on their way to professionalization.

Therefore, in the preparation of future leaders of teaching staff, especially school headmasters, it is necessary to look for possibilities of linking their theoretical training with practice in an authentic school environment that is able to pass on management competencies that are in line with the professional profile of a graduate of the School Management program at the Faculty of Education of the Charles University.

In these practices, the students realized the demandingness of school management, the lack of appreciation by the state, the public and the insufficient staff and material support that headmasters receive. Many things that are not clear from lectures are explained in managerial practice.

The purpose of management practices particularly:

- To address current issues in school management in an authentic school environment, link the acquired theoretical knowledge with practice and create student's competence in a particular area of school management.
- To create conditions for gaining new impulses and inspiration for students' own management work.
- To convince students of the need for insight and comparison of different conditions at different workplaces.
- To teach students how to use these inspirations in their day-to-day management work, thereby strengthening their competence.
- To analyse the needs of managers and convince them of the need to ask questions and find answers to possible alternative solutions.
- Through managerial practice, it is possible to look at schools where students would not normally look.
- Managerial practice will be appreciated by people working in education as well as others, as they can gain interesting knowledge from the world of management that can be applied in other fields.
- Friendliness, readiness, willingness to share sometimes negative situations and their subsequent solution by school headmasters.

The results of the research clearly show that the practical preparation of students of the School Management study program in the form of managerial practice at schools is a beneficial and important part of the study. The main reason for this is that many students aspire to the post of school headmaster, and through this practical training they become familiar with the reality of school institution management, including all its pros and cons. A great benefit of practice is the school headmaster as a presenter who is ready and willing to share his or her experiences, calmly and negatively, and to give students practical advice on the issues of managing various types of schools (kindergartens, elementary schools, secondary schools, high schools). Main part of practice is feedback on managerial competencies. In survey was analysed five managerial competencies.

Table 1: Students opinions of managerial competence

Students opinions of managerial competence	1st. - 2nd year of study	Percentage
1. Friendliness, readiness, willingness to share with negative situations and their subsequent solution by school heads.	71	79 %
2. Practices help shape the image of the school that students would like to lead, to which they would like to send their children and where they would like to work as educators. In practice, the mentality of education, the mentality of directors, sees the direction in which education is heading.	69	77 %
3. Managerial practice will be appreciated not only by people working in education but also outside, as they can gain interesting knowledge from the world of management, which can be applied in other fields as well.	50	56 %
4. Knowledge is passed on by people who know very well the school and its management.	48	53%
5. Many things that are not clear from the lectures are explained in managerial practice. Through practice, students will gain many new experiences and advice on their work.	43	48 %

Source: Authors´ research

Some of the theoretical things that they learn are easier to understand if they see them in practice and they know it really works or doesn't work. Practice helps shape the school image that students would like to lead, where they would like to send their children, and where they would like to work as educators. In practice, the mentality of education and headmasters sees the direction in which education is heading. Hearing how they solve the same problems in different types of organizations (not just schools) is priceless.

The results of the research show that the students do not only take good managerial examples from the managerial practice, when the verification of the acquired knowledge helps the process of their transformation into skills, but also the negative experience of school heads who do not hesitate to share them with them (79%). A positive finding in the research is that the practice helps students to shape the school image they would like to lead, to which they would like to send their children and where they would like to work as teachers. In practice, the mentality of education and the educational environment (77%) are the direction of education. Students greatly appreciate their mutual acquaintance with their colleagues, as well as the school heads in practice, the exchange of experiences, advice and new ideas in the field of school management. Although some students do not work in education, management practices are appreciated by them because they can gain interesting insights from the world of management that can be applied in other fields (56%). It is definitely positive that students evaluate school

heads as people who know the school very well and how to manage it, which should be commonplace in all areas (53%). The practice is linked to theoretical preparation based on lectures at the faculty with practice in an authentic school environment. Many things that are not clear from the lectures are explained in managerial practice. Through practice, students will gain many new experiences and advice on their work (48%).

As part of the practical training (managerial practice) of the students of the School Management study program at departmental schools, it is possible to show only certain competencies of the directors of these schools. Through structured interviews with students, it was found that the following competencies were manifested in the practice: professional - especially knowledge of legal ("I was most interested in law-oriented practice, where the headmistress gave us specific information about what legal problems the school had to deal with and how well it was solved most of them.") and economic regulations ("Although I usually do not deal with economic or legal issues in their positions, their better understanding of managerial practice allows me to improve my cooperation with my own institution.") and communication skills, leadership - promotion and presentation of school ("The school headmaster's character is truly pivotal and not just a" leading teacher, "but a real leader leaving an indelible mark on "his school.")

Managerial - personnel activities, especially selection of staff ("The director is a good example of how to delegate, distribute competencies, and set up organizational structures as efficiently as possible, even at the expense of wage costs. One of his tasks is to surround himself and find good, loyal, capable people and create a working team and team.")

As well as provision of resources through grants and projects, personality - authority, management style, self-reflection ("Although there is a real professional in the field of legal problems at school, her speech was monotonous and exhausting. In addition, it seemed to be an exaggerated authority, even a "dictatorial" nature. She had a very radical view on most of the things she'd talked about during the meeting. But it was seen that she felt really well in the role of director, and she was recognized at school. But the question is whether natural or forced."), social - working with partners, solving problems and conflicts. ("Since I am the headmaster of the school, it has been possible to discuss various controversial cases (especially in law) and to be inspired by solutions from other collectives- School law disputes are unenviable, but they are not exceptional in this district due to minority groups.")

Other competencies cannot be shown in a short period of managerial practice, as they would require shadowing or longer time at school (eg managing and evaluating the educational process or prioritizing, fulfilling visions and leadership). ("What I lack in practice are illustrative examples of successful leadership. Exactly as we have been told in PR, but in more ways - in the leadership itself and in solving problematic issues, solving problematic employees, successful planning and organizing; communication, setting rules, etc. This could be most beneficial for our practice and life.")

From the competences that can be shown, students were particularly positively evaluated by professional, leadership and managerial, and were examples of good practice. At some meetings, the shortcomings that students pointed out during their reflection (eg misinterpretation of the law or its apparently unconscious violation) have been shown. ("Not all directors' statements fully correspond to the applicable legislation, they have often communicated their own practice rather than a method that would comply with all regulations").

Overall Practice Assessment: Students in the 1st year undergo practical training at departmental schools. Given that managerial competencies are general, students in the 2nd year were mostly in profit-making organizations, where they positively reflected the following competencies: professional - communication skills ("It was interesting to observe and evaluate in particular the differences in expression, performance or dressing style between a common public and a profit organization. Looking into a profitable organization offered many impulses and much inspiration that could be used in a public organization."), leadership - promotion and presentation of the company ("I will certainly be inspired by the fact that there is no need to devise complex strategies and visions, but it is important that all employees are familiar with the vision and identify with it."), managerial - personnel activities and operation of the system ("Building a pleasant working climate is important for an inspiring and pleasant working environment so that every employee and pupil can enjoy success."), social - team building and negatively especially professional competences (eg communication skills). ("Managerial practice in one company showed me the negative, unwillingness, arrogance of a manager who was rather unpleasant and unwilling. I thought, and I see how important is the performance and the first impression".) One of the conclusions was that some approaches by individual workers in profitable organizations are not applicable in school practice or would not be used by the students themselves because they are not good examples of practice by their very nature.

4　Conclusion

This paper summarizes the current results of the authors' research focused on reflection of managerial competencies in students' school management managerial practice. Firstly, the results confirm the main findings of earlier studies cited above and show some interesting tendencies in the students' analyses of managerial practice that should be well analysed and discussed. These tendencies lie in the fact that students are very motivated to learn and study by best practice examples, but in this connection, they complain of theoretical subjects with connections and practical applications. This satisfaction can increase the motivation of students for managerial practice.

Secondly the results show reflection on headmaster's managerial competencies seeing by students on managerial practice. Through structured interviews with students, it was found that the following competencies were manifested in the practice: professional - especially knowledge of legal and economic regulations and communication skills, leadership - promotion and presentation of school. Managerial - personnel activities, especially selection of staff. Provision of resources through grants and projects, personality - authority, management style, self-reflection. social - working with partners, solving problems and conflicts. From the competences that can be shown, students were particularly positively evaluated by professional, leadership and managerial, and were examples of good practice. The scientific value of this paper is in one of first analyses educational management practice in Czech Republic.

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Acknowledgment