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INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN KOSOVO

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ABSTRACT

Managing a company or organization in today's market is a challenge that each leader has to face. Companies have to adapt and embrace challenges, or they will be left behind by the competitors in the market. The leadership of a company has to be creative in order to fulfill the needs of the customers, the market, and its employees.

The same rules apply for language teaching organizations, which have to follow the rapid changes in the field of education, technology and marketing all the same. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to acquire knowledge of key aspects of instructional leadership in private and public schools, to find the parameters that make an organization successful, and to compare key management decisions taken by organizations over the years. In focus of this paper is a case study with two primary schools in Kosovo, one public and one

private, how they operate, how are they managed and the possible ways of further development. Interviews with the leaders of the schools have been conducted, and the findings have been compared and supported with contemporary literature review.
The paper starts provides an introduction, the literature review, the framework used, an interpretation and critical discussion of the data collected, and it ends with the conclusion on instructional leadership.

Key words: Instructional leadership, private school, public school, mission and vision, organizational behavior, human resource management

INTRODUCTION

"How I walk in each morning defines whether it is summer or winter in the office" is a saying by Mick Kent, CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and leadership coach for over 30 years. The quote as such grasps into itself a powerful message related to leadership. In a nutshell, in order to be a successful leader of an enterprise, be it educational or of other kinds, the focus has to be on trying to develop the business. They have to ensure that the process of working runs smoothly, they have to breed the habit of working by displaying that kind of behavior themselves; they have to lead their staff along with them in order to succeed. According to Leary-Joyce (2010) a company can be successful only if it follows a seven-step procedure which includes: building relationships, embracing change, inviting opportunity, being passionate, being conscious, getting focused, and taking responsibility. Once a business achieves these steps then it will be easier for them to confront the global market.

Consequently, globalization plays an important role in business development. With the development of technology, and communication, with the changes in the political and economic aspects around the world many businesses are influenced and have to strive for survival, or to avoid bankruptcy (Ristovska and Ristovska, 2014). This globalization of markets, which refers to companies operating worldwide, has motivated businesses to pay more attention to their internal progress as well, as they attempt to keep pace of the changes aforementioned and to offer innovative services to their clients.

Inevitably, this also affects language teaching organizations as well. They have to go through the same processes and follow the same steps in order to be considered as competitors in the market. They need to have clear objectives: mission and vision, a strategy on how to approach costumers and to also manage and solve administrative issues. These objectives are

also the core elements of Instructional Leadership, which will be discussed in this paper. We will be discussing the objectives in line with Hallinger and Murphy's framework of Instructional Leadership. The literature review that follows this report focuses on three main concerns: General Corporate Issues, and Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management (HRM) Issues, and the theoretical framework of Hallinger and Murphy (1986).

LITERATURE REVIEW

General Corporate Issues

Sustainability is an important factor into developing a successful enterprise, however few educational institutions take it into consideration (Ben-Eli, 2000). According to Mirvis, Googins and Kinnicutt (2010), one reason behind this is that schools do not have a shared and concrete strategic managerial process that they follow. In other words, they do not have a mission and a vision that they aim to achieve. A company must plan and prepare to have the answer to "What is the purpose of establishing your company?", which denotes the company's mission. This answer should also be coordinated with the principles of the company and concrete objectives (Moghal, 2012; Mirvis et al., 2010; Brabet and Klemm, 1994). An example of a vision for a school could be:

"Our school wishes to be parents and students' first and only choice."

Thus, a vision statement is a plan or a strategy that a school should follow, remember, and aim at achieving it and it is more future oriented. It is as a motivator to schools to try to do better and progress in the market. Grusenmeyer (2009) states two criteria that a school should take into consideration when creating a vision statement: it should correspond with individual and general staff values, and it should be shared and accepted by everyone in the company. These two elements should be fulfilled in order for the employees to help leaders and the business in general to be considered as a competitor and leader. It should be a precise and clear statement which appeals to the personnel, and it attracts costumers.

On the other hand, a mission is the answer to the question "Why do we do what we do and who do we serve?" (Millard, 2013), the core goals that they want to achieve in order to fulfill the vision of their business. Hence, in order to have a mission one should first develop a vision that they need to accomplish. In addition, Bartkus et al. (2004) argues that the main function that the mission statement plays is to communicate to the stakeholders a company's strategy. Through this bridge of the company and the stakeholders linked by the mission

statement, the business will ensure a clear-cut target and cooperation will assist into developing and fulfilling it. Some of the benefits of having a mission statement are that it sets clear objectives for both the employee and the customer. A mission statement helps the employee identify whether the decision-taking process is appropriate, and it fits their needs or not, whereas it is helpful for the costumer as it assists them into realizing whether the company offers the expected service and it fits the four P: principle, pride, politeness, and professionalism (Tankovic, 2013). An instance of a precise mission statement would be:

"Our mission is to offer unique service to our clients."

A simple and comprehensible objective is crucial for the staff as it acts as a motivator to them, and it assures implementation and a natural flow in the working process.

Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management (HRM) Issues

As part of strategic management, one should also consider the organizational behavior and HRM issues, which are both influenced by the vision and mission statement. Organizational behavior deals with the attitude and the actions of the employees, and studies human behavior within the organizational environment (George et al., 2002). In order for the leader to design an organizational strategic management plan then they should first follow a model which serves as an identifier of a company's staff. One framework that could be utilized is the MARS model of individual behavior, designed by McShane and Von Glinow (2013). This model focuses on four different factors which influence an employee's behavior: Motivation, Ability, Role perceptions and Situational factors. Motivation may be intrinsic (cognitive, emotional behavior) and extrinsic (environment, staff, and leader behavior) and can affect one's performance, whereas ability has to do with how capable is one to perform a task successfully. On the other hand, role perception deals with the employee's ability to understand the task they are assigned to deliver, and the duties they have to complete. Last but not least, situational factors may be setting factors such as the appropriate equipment to finish a task, time, economic factors, and so forth. All these elements are needed if the leader plans to compile a leadership plan (McShane et al., 2009).

Additionally, to decide upon the importance of all these concerns then a school is required to have an HR department. The HR department creates "competitive advantage", innovative ideas and tries to solve internal problems (Ulrich et al., 1995). Having an HR department is useful to the school as it recruits people, discovers concerns that exist amongst the personnel, provides solution, manages conflicts that may arise, predicts future changes,

plans trainings and seminars for further staff development, and so forth (Sartorius et al., 2001; Schuler and MacMillan, 1984).

Instructional Leadership Theory (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986)

Several theories have been dedicated to instructional leadership during the years, however for the purpose of our study we will be using the framework of Hallinger and Murphy (1986). This theory was chosen because it involves the main elements of our findings and fits the community of leaders which we have chosen to compile our study with.

According to the authors, there are three main categories that a school has to involve in their plan in order to have successful instructional leadership. These include the category of defining the mission, managing instructional program, and promoting school climate (Figure 1).

Defines the Mission	Manages Instructional Program	Promotes School Climate
Framing school goals Communicating school goals	Supervising and evaluating instruction Coordinating curriculum Monitoring student progress	Protecting instructional time Promoting professional development Maintaining high visibility Providing incentives for teachers Enforcing academic standards Providing incentives for students

Figure 1: Categories for successful instructional leadership

Defining the mission is grasped in two major steps by the authors, framing school goals and communicating them. In order to obtain effective management of the instructional program, one must have the skills to oversee, assess instruction, manage curriculum, and analyze the progress of students. Whereas, promoting school climate means you protect instructional time, promote professional development, provide incentives for staff and students.

In general, the framework as such gathers in it three important communities: leadership, teachers, and students and according to them, a clear instructional leadership program has to be developed to see progress and success in an educational institution (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986).

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this paper, we have used a qualitative method of research. More specifically, we have used the instrument of interviews. The interviews were conducted with two leaders of two schools in Kosovo, a private and a public one. The private school is a language school in Kosovo with eight branches around the country, whereas the public school is an elementary school with around fifty teachers.

The interviews were conducted via email in December 2021, and because of the pandemic and the winter break holidays the participants answered the questions and sent their responses through email. There were fourteen open-ended questions related to leadership, which also had sub-questions integrated, in order to get as much information as possible related to leadership and general leadership issues. The answers of the participants were then transcribed and will be analyzed in this paper.

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

Even though the institutions differ in terms of status (public and private), we can argue that there were similarities found in their answers. This will also be portrayed in the discussion below.

When asked about their mission, both leaders of the schools stated that they try to set a mission in the beginning of the school year. While the public-school leader stated quite generally that the mission of his school is to improve the school as much as possible, the private school leader went in more details by arguing that their mission is to expand their school with new branches every year, but before doing so they do special analysis to avoid potential risks. He continues by stating that they focus on developing the skills of the administrative and academic staff by organizing trainings.

Private school mission	**Public school mission**
Specific – 1. Expanding with new branches every year. 2. Developing the skills of the administrative and academic staff by organizing training.	General - Improve the school.

Table 1: The mission of the private and public school

The leader of the public school declared that due to the importance of the mission, he tries to communicate it carefully to the staff. One method he uses is called the "elevator message" which is a procedure by which a 20-30 second speech is given to the employees. This is usually done during meetings, either monthly or annually, where they discuss together about their achievements or what they need to change in the future. Similarly, the leader of the private school indicated that the mission of the organization is introduced to the staff mostly during annual meetings, but since they are open to new ideas and opportunities, ideas may flow and something new may always come up. Therefore, weekly meetings or monthly meetings are to be considered as well. Therefore, both the private and the public schools try to frame and to communicate the goals of their schools, which are a confirmation of the first category of Hallinger and Murphy's framework of defining the mission.

Differences between the schools become evident when it comes to managing the school program, which revolves around the curriculum, evaluation and monitoring student progress. The public-school leader stated that the curriculum is already prepared by education specialists, and they just have to follow it and its competencies. However, they go under internal evaluation where the leadership tries to observe and evaluate the progress of the academic staff. On the other hand, the private school stated that they develop their personal curriculum, since it is only a language school. The leader declared that they also do evaluations, by following various forms, and they give detailed feedback to the staff after they are finished with the observation phase.

Private school – School program	**Public school – School program**
The curriculum is developed by the school.	The curriculum is ready-made from education specialists.

Table 2: School program of private and public schools

On public schools, student progress is not evaluated by the leadership, only by the academic staff of the institution. On private schools, in contrast, there are cases when the leadership is part of the evaluation process of students by either being part of students' oral exams or they announce a director of studies who is part of the process. Hence, the criteria of managing school program are followed completely by the private institution, but to a lower

extent by the public school due to the restriction and rules of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES).

Private school – Leadership and student evaluation	**Public school – Leadership and student evaluation**
Student progress is occasionally evaluated by the leadership through oral exams.	Leadership is never involved in the student evaluation process.

Table 3: Leadership and student evaluation in private and public schools

When discussing about professional development of the staff, the public school stated that they do not have a Human Resource (HR) department, therefore it is a difficult process of recruitment and staff development. Because of this reason, the leader stated that staff development is planned in accordance with the trainings organized by MES, and sometimes voluntarily by the teachers. Nonetheless, the leader of the school stated that they encourage teachers to participate in trainings and workshops as they are helpful both for their career and their students too. In comparison to the public school, the private school leader stated that their HR department deals with recruitment, and they assess whether the intern is capable of being part of the staff by monitoring their work. Being asked if the organization applies staff development opportunities, the leader stated that they do internal and external trainings for their staff members. This is a great initiative, since this opportunity makes the staff get in touch with new developments and ideas in teaching methodologies and other important issues related to their fields.

Those trainings and other activities get published in LTO's Facebook page as well as their official website, so as to be transparent on what they do and let the customers know that the organization tries to follow the newest trends and this way offer quality in what they do.

Something worth mentioning is the joint project between the language school and orphanage "SOS-Fshati i femijeve". The school provided free English courses to every kid of the orphanage from 2009 until 2011. This initiative is to be highly valuated, because to those children was given an opportunity that could have a great impact on their lives; those kids have been exposed to something new, something they will remember and appreciate. On the other hand, this opportunity could have been of a great benefit to the organization itself, by contributing positively to the marketing of the private institution and the image they build to the customers.

Developing their academic staff is clearly an important aspect of the institutions, however promoting their students' progress is of prime interest as well. When asked about students, both leaders stated that they try to promote their students and their achievements as much as possible. This, because it helps the school reputation but also because it is with great pride that they share such news of progress. This process is developed in almost the same process in both schools: in public schools, they give certificates of acknowledgement to successful students, free books, participation in seminars where they present their work; in private school, they promote successful students by also giving certificates, free tuition for a few months or the whole academic year, and sometimes paid trips to a foreign country for a few days up to a week. Both school leaders state that they do this in order to keep their students motivated but also encourage other students to aim higher for themselves, as well as to share gratitude to the teachers for their work. All in all, the mindset of both schools seems to be very positive, because they never seem to be completely satisfied with what they have already achieved, and always strive for improvement. If you stop improving, other competitors can take advantage of it and beat you in the market.
Also, being open for new ideas means that you are always open for improvements, and the staff can always feel free for suggestions. One of the main challenges for an organization is the ability to stimulate change and innovation (Wilson and Bear 2014). The institutions in question seem to be very open to face this challenge, which is really positive and improves the school climate, in general.

CONCLUSION

Overall, when trying to connect Hallinger and Murphy's framework with the instructional leadership of a private and public school in Kosovo, we can state that both institutions are fairly following the criteria for a successful instructional leadership. The answers we received from the leaders of both schools generated valuable responses and data related to instructional leadership.

Both schools have a defined mission of the institution, supported by the frame and how they communicate it the staff. They strive to develop their schools as much as possible, and they try to be supporters of their academic staff and students. In addition, they provide detailed feedback to their employees on their progress, they have a set curriculum that they follow, and they both follow student progress, even though the public school does not do this directly.

Lastly, the instructional leadership seems to be successful in the criteria of school climate since they tend to promote their students and teachers by developing their professional skills and by presenting awards on the student's progress and success.

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