



Challenges Facing School Administration

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Abstract:

The failure or success of the school is largely due to the administrative style adopted, the more the administration is a participatory democracy, the more it is able to achieve the goals with quality and effectiveness, and because the quality of outputs has become the obsession of everyone, administrators, educators and parents, so it was necessary for the school administration to abandon the old management patterns that have proven ineffective and bear to a large extent the failures of the school, and the consequent negative repercussions on society such as deviations and violence, which imposes the adoption of modern management patterns such as quality management Comprehensive to improve the outputs - students - to quality, excellence and effectiveness.

Keywords: School administration, Administrative style, Participatory democracy, Quality management Student outcomes.

Introduction

The efficacy of educational endeavors within a school hinge on the harmonious integration of three pivotal aspects: educational, pedagogical, and administrative. Among these, the administrative component emerges as a critical factor in the educational process's success, achieved through strategic planning, organization, coordination of efforts among all stakeholders (including administrators, educators, and support staff), and diligent oversight aimed at realizing predefined objectives.

Acknowledging the pivotal role of administration in the educational landscape, this chapter delves into a comprehensive examination of school administration's varied concepts, characteristics, and additional pertinent elements. This exploration is conducted from two distinct perspectives: the traditional general management approach to institutional governance and the specific legislative framework governing Algerian schools.

2. Définition of school Administration:

The concept of school administration is subject to diverse interpretations and emphasis, reflecting the breadth of its scope. Koontz and Donnell, as referenced by Ismail Mohamed Diab (2001, p.95), conceive it as the art of accomplishing tasks through others. Ralph Davis views it as encompassing the leadership activities of planning, organizing, and supervising to achieve the overarching goals of the organization.

Mohamed Ezz El-Din Abdel Hadi, as mentioned by Magdy Abdel Karim Habib (2000, p.24), articulates administration as the judicious and systematic application of both material and human resources to realize the predetermined objectives of a specific organization.

Furthermore, Ahsen Labssir (2002, p.27) posits that school administration is intricately linked to the myriad tasks and activities undertaken by the school to fulfill its educational mandate. In essence, the operational sphere of school administration is exclusively within the school's domain.

Consequently, school administration can be delineated as an orchestrated ensemble of coordinated processes aimed at optimizing the educational endeavor. This optimization is achieved through meticulous planning, organization, motivation, coordination, and supervision of educational activities, all directed towards the attainment of well-defined objectives. These objectives are fundamentally geared towards creating an environment conducive to student learning, thereby advancing the overarching aims of the educational framework.

3. Emergence and Development of School Administration

Abdul Samad Al-Aghbari (2000, p.67) posits that the evolution of administration was initially more person-centric than grounded in universal principles until the advent of the scientific management movement. Pioneered by luminaries such as Frederick Taylor from America and Henri Fayol from France, followed by the British Lyndall Urwick in 1938, and furthered by figures like Mooney, Reiley, and Chester Barnard in the early twentieth century, this movement laid the groundwork for what is known today as business administration. Aimed primarily at profit generation, these management methodologies significantly contributed to the underpinnings of the modern industrial revolution, particularly within large-scale corporations and institutions employing vast numbers of personnel across various levels.

The principles of scientific management, having demonstrated their efficacy within the private sector's commercial and industrial entities, were subsequently adapted to public sector administration. This adaptation marks the inception of public administration as a distinct field. The scientific movement's influence, emerging in the late 19th century, extended far beyond its initial scope, impacting diverse domains, including that of school administration. This influence marked a paradigm shift from a traditional management model, reliant on improvisation and personal experience, to a scientifically oriented approach. This new approach sought to address administrative challenges through a methodical process characterized by analytical and inductive reasoning, utilizing analysis, measurement, and objectivity as its core tools. Consequently, the principles of management transitioned from the private sector's industrial and business realms to the educational sphere, drawing parallels between the school as an entity and the machinery in a factory, with the educational process mirroring a production system and its outputs represented by the institution's graduates.

As school administration evolved, it began to embrace and integrate concepts and principles tailored to meet the contemporary school's needs and characteristics. The emergence of the human relations school and subsequent administrative philosophies played a pivotal role in enhancing school effectiveness and achieving educational aims. School leaders are now tasked with applying these principles, fostering a culture of human connectivity among staff members, and leading with a blend of wisdom and prudence, moving away from authoritarian and directive leadership styles.

4. Characteristics of School Administration

As delineated by Ahsen Labssir (2002, p.28), administration shares universal traits akin to cultural elements, characterized by both global commonalities and specifics unique to certain groups. Within the realm of school administration, these characteristics manifest as follows:

A - Collective Responsibility in School Administration:

Central to school administration is the premise that teaching, led by educators who are pivotal to the educational process, administrative staff who anchor operational functions, and support personnel who facilitate conducive learning environments, collectively bear responsibility. This ensemble, complemented by essential tools and educational resources, forms the backbone of school management. The educational philosophy adopted by a society, together with its legislative framework, underscores the organizational structures within education, highlighting the profound responsibility shouldered by school administrators. Achieving educational objectives, aimed at societal upliftment, necessitates a unified and coordinated effort, recognizing the national significance of these endeavors.

B - The Social Imperative of School Administration:

School administration transcends supervisory functions to encompass a broader level of social engagement that involves a wide spectrum of social actors. It emerges from societal needs, aims at communal benefits and operates within a social framework that necessitates both vertical and horizontal interactions. Students, as the linchpin of social progress, are the primary focus, rendering administration a comprehensive task that involves planning, organizing, coordinating, and supervising a broad segment of the community, thereby classifying it as a fundamentally social undertaking.

C - The Technological Dimension of School Administration:

Technological in the classical Greek sense refers to a systematic approach, encompassing the organized application of scientific skills and methods for problem-solving. Administrative technology, therefore, involves applying scientific knowledge and systematic methodologies to address practical managerial challenges, extending beyond mere mechanistic applications.

D - Leadership as the Essence of School Administration:

School administration assumes a pivotal role in guiding society and directing the educational landscape by implicating all community members either directly or indirectly in the process. It aims to realize objectives through the implementation of strategic policies, providing the necessary conditions and resources for achieving these goals. The interplay between leadership and administration constitutes the core of this administration, necessitating that every administrator embodies leadership qualities, fostering an environment of active participation, comprehensive understanding, and effective guidance.

E - The Humanistic Approach to School Administration:

School administration operates on both material and, crucially, moral dimensions, with the latter assuming particular significance in the educational context. The human aspects are paramount, given the administration's interaction with diverse societal segments. Failures in administration often stem from deficiencies in human skills rather than technical competencies, highlighting the intrinsic human factor in addressing administrative challenges.

5. Types of School Administration

The evolution and change within the field of administration have propelled stakeholders to seek the most effective administrative methods and leadership styles for implementing administrative tasks. According to Abdullah Balqasim Al-Arfi and Abbas Abd Mahdi (1996, p.74), research and studies aimed at uncovering prevalent administrative styles in educational management have identified three main types:

- Autocratic Administration.
- Democratic (Consultative) Administration.
- Laissez-faire (Permissive) Administration.

a) Autocratic Administration:

This style is characterized by several features reflecting the administrator's approach to daily work situations. An autocratic administrator centralizes all authority and decision-making powers, issuing orders for their execution without consulting subordinates. This leader personally directs employees according to their whims and convictions, demanding obedience to all commands.

The autocratic leader bears the sole responsibility for the success or failure of any task within the institution, relying on their personal opinions, perceptions, and administrative experience. They view administration merely as decision-making, instruction issuance, and execution monitoring, focusing primarily on work and exerting maximum effort to ensure smooth institutional operations. This approach includes meticulous supervision and inspection of every detail within the institution. Key traits of an autocratic administrator include:

- Rigidity.
- Frequent issuance of ambiguous instructions and orders.
- Adherence to the letter of instructions without deviation.
- Interference in subordinates' work and restricting their autonomy.
- Reliance predominantly on verbal commands.

These traits elucidate the prevailing autocratic organizational climate, influencing the nature of organizational and personal relationships between the manager and employees. Severity becomes the sole method adopted by the manager in addressing various situations. These perceptions among autocratic leaders result from a long-standing educational philosophy based on certain principles, including:

Hierarchical authority structure from the top of the administrative pyramid to its base.

A clear separation between planning and execution, with specialists developing educational plans and policies removed from operational realities and challenges, while operational staff implement these without input or discussion, adhering strictly to the plans as laid out.

Unidirectional loyalty, with subordinates owing allegiance to their superiors but not vice versa. Disregard for the individuality of teachers and students, with teachers expected to follow prescribed methods and students to work according to set rules and guidelines.

Emphasis on students mastering academic content without consideration for other developmental aspects (physical, cognitive, moral, and spiritual) or individual differences in abilities, predispositions, and interests.

The fundamental idea of this administrative style is based on leadership dominance, with policies grounded in a "closed-door" philosophy, leading to a predominance of formality in human relations. Interactions between the manager and employees are governed by laws, regulations, and instructions, typically characterized by a dictatorial approach.

b) Democratic (Consultative) Administration:

The cornerstone of democratic administration is the principle of collective participation in decision-making and its execution, rooted in the belief that multiple sound minds can generate better ideas than a single one. This management style aligns with the principles set forth in Islam, as reflected in the Quranic verses advocating consultation among people. Another fundamental tenet of democratic administration is "delegation," which involves the manager entrusting certain powers to others, embracing "administrative decentralization." According to this principle, the manager does not micromanage or oversee employees closely but rather inspires enthusiasm, encourages initiative and opinion-sharing, thereby guiding and supporting staff towards achieving educational goals.

Participation in decision-making is central to democratic practices. Individuals who partake in this process are more committed to the implementation of decisions, as they are contributors to their formulation. Moreover, this participation fosters cooperation among employees, boosts morale, and facilitates the achievement of both the institution's general objectives and the personal goals of its members.

In a democratic framework, educational administration is not the sole responsibility of the top administrator but a collective task involving all employees, with the senior administrator playing a leading role in its execution. The relationships this leader fosters with employees should be positive, promoting effective collaboration, initiative, enthusiasm, and fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect. The democratic administration is founded on several principles, including:

- Coordinating the efforts of employees by encouraging them to work as a cohesive and cooperative group rather than as isolated individuals.
- Broad and active participation in defining and implementing educational policies and programs, involving all employees in establishing the guidelines and strategies pursued by the institution.
- Balancing authority with responsibility, where power is not concentrated in the hands of the manager alone but is partly delegated to other employees.
- Recognizing the unique abilities and predispositions of employees.
- Clearly defining tasks and distributing them among employees to avoid overlap.
- Ensuring employees are guided by general objectives and methods rather than a set of imposed instructions.

c) Laissez-faire (Permissive) Administration:

This administrative style is predicated on the principle of granting complete freedom to employees to execute tasks as they see fit, often resulting in a lack of structure and potential disorganization due to the absence of teamwork and the diminished role of the manager. In a laissez-faire environment, doors are wide open for employees to freely discuss any matters concerning the institution's operations. The followed policies lack firmness and clear leadership, often missing the necessary controls to achieve institutional goals.

Despite the noted drawbacks of laissez-faire administration, its application can be beneficial and yield significant outcomes, particularly in environments where employees are highly mature, aware, experienced, and capable of achieving goals, making decisions, and solving problems independently.

Reviewing the aforementioned administrative styles highlights that the managerial behavior predominantly practiced by a manager reflects the administrative style employed in managing institutional affairs. Generally, a manager does not adhere to a single administrative style consistently; there is no purely autocratic (authoritarian) educational administration in perpetual practice, no entirely consultative (democratic) administration, and no continuous laissez-faire (permissive) administration in the strict sense described. Therefore, a successful manager is well-versed in all administrative styles and adept at adapting their managerial and leadership approach based on the specific situation and surrounding circumstances. This adaptability is crucial because a manager's practices and behaviors often represent one style more prominently than others. The review of the three administrative styles suggests that the democratic style is preferred in administrative work, as it fosters the unleashing of employee potential and the development of their capabilities and talents.

Consequently, leveraging the strengths of these administrative styles leads to the discussion of a modern administrative model:

d) Total Quality Management (TQM) in Education:

Total Quality Management (TQM) encompasses a range of concepts as interpreted by various scholars, particularly within the educational sector. Salah El-Din Ahmed Johar (2002, p.27) defines quality in education as the extent to which educational program objectives are achieved in graduates, satisfying societal expectations as the primary beneficiary of educational institutions. Atef Badr Abu Zeina and Mohammed Abdel Hamid Mohammed (1999, p.77) provide several definitions of TQM, highlighting it as a "management strategy focusing on harnessing the intellectual capabilities and talents of employees at all organizational levels in a creative manner to foster continuous improvement." It is also seen as a "strategic concept in business aimed at enhancing and continually improving an institution's competitive edge through participatory leadership at all levels, equipping employees with the necessary skills to enhance their performance and achieve desired quality outcomes." Crosby emphasizes quality from the perspective of output optimization to minimize performance defects, based on standards that measure discrepancies in time and total quality costs. Ishikawa expands the concept to include work and service quality, information and operation quality, department and system quality, and goal quality. Juran insists that quality hinges on defect elimination, suggesting that error rates are minimal and services meet or exceed customer expectations. Deming advocates for quality as a pursuit of continuous loss reduction and ongoing improvement in all activities.

Mohammed Akram Al-Adlouni (2002, p.109) describes TQM as a comprehensive philosophy or a new theory or work pattern, centered around the idea of continuous improvement in all aspects, including inputs, processes, and outputs.

From the aforementioned, we can deduce that TQM in education represents a modern managerial approach aimed at utilizing all available institutional resources (material and human) to serve the educational process and prioritize student welfare. It emphasizes quality outputs to benefit society, the primary recipient of these outputs. In this context, TQM encompasses the concept of the institutional project, further elucidating its application in education.

6. Factors Influencing School Administration

According to Mahmoud Abdel Qader Ali Qaraqzeh (1993, p.21), the effectiveness of school administration is influenced by several key factors, outlined as follows:

a) Political Ideology of the State:

The administrative approach within educational institutions is profoundly shaped by the governing political philosophy of a state. In regimes where centralized control over societal activities is prevalent, educational administration tends to align with such ideologies, leading to standardized curricula, assessments, and teaching methodologies. These states often justify such uniformity as a means to preserve intellectual and ideological unity among citizens, aiming for a cohesive, interdependent society. In contrast, states that value diversity and pluralism may lean towards decentralized educational policies, encouraging institutions to adapt to local needs and available resources within a cohesive national policy framework. Thus, the political stance of a state directly or indirectly influences its educational and administrative practices.

b) Social Composition and Cultural Norms:

The diverse nature of a society within a given state significantly impacts its policies and interactions with its citizens, influencing economic, administrative, and educational strategies. The educational administration is particularly affected by the societal context, which shapes curriculum content and the implementation of educational and administrative policies. The

community's values, traditions, resources, needs, and aspirations are mirrored in the educational approach, both in content and delivery.

c) **Economic Context:**

The economic environment of a country is a critical determinant of its policy formulation and the breadth and quality of services it offers, including educational services. Economic conditions influence the educational sector, affecting the availability and equitable distribution of resources and services across the population.

Drawing from these insights, it is evident that:

- Effective educational administration requires the ability to navigate and adapt to adversities, strategically leveraging available resources to maximize educational outcomes within the constraints of the given context.
- Successful educational leadership is characterized by a constructive impact on both the educational institution and the broader community, directing available resources and efforts towards achieving meaningful educational benefits in alignment with societal goals.

7. Administrative and Educational Leadership Skills

The realm of educational leadership extends beyond the inherent qualities of leaders, encompassing a broader scope that includes the meticulous management of teaching staff, student discipline, infrastructure maintenance, financial planning, and the organization of essential records. These elements, while crucial, do not fully encapsulate the essence of educational management. It is the amalgamation of specific competencies that truly defines effective leadership within this sector.

Drawing from Hany Abdel Rahman Saleh Al-Touil's work (1999, p.26), it is evident that the efficacy of educational leadership is not solely reliant on the personal attributes of leaders. It necessitates a dynamic engagement with a diverse range of tasks, extending from the granular management of daily operations to the strategic oversight of educational objectives. Robert Katz's framework, as referenced by Al-Touil, posits that an adept educational leader must possess a triad of core competencies to adeptly navigate the complexities of their roles:

Technical Skills: This competency entails a deep-seated understanding and expertise in a specialized domain, such as pedagogical methods and educational processes. It involves a comprehensive grasp of specialized knowledge, coupled with analytical prowess, enabling the application of professional skills, methodologies, and tools pertinent to the educational field. Leaders are often equipped with these technical skills through targeted training programs and academic pursuits designed to enhance their professional capabilities.

Interpersonal Skills: This skill is characterized by the ability of the educational leader to effectively engage within a team setting, fostering a collaborative environment. This involves not only the capacity to work harmoniously within a group but also the ability to galvanize team efforts towards shared objectives. Balancing interpersonal acumen with technical proficiency is a critical aspect of educational administration, as it cultivates a conducive atmosphere for collective achievement and innovation.

Conceptual Skills: This competency involves a holistic perception of the educational institution as an integrated entity, recognizing the intricate web of interrelations among its various functions and components. Conceptual insight allows leaders to anticipate the ripple effects of changes within one segment of the institution on others, as well as to understand the institution's interconnectedness with the broader societal framework. This level of

understanding is pivotal for navigating complex scenarios and steering the institution towards comprehensive progress and success.

8. Challenges Facing School Administration

According to Abdel Samad Al-Aghbari (2000, p. 442), school administration encounters myriad challenges daily, necessitating a departure from conventional routines and methodologies. A proactive approach, combining traditional wisdom with contemporary realities and future projections, is imperative for formulating effective operational strategies.

Contrary to perceptions of school administration as merely routine, its success significantly hinges on the administrative leader's adeptness in implementing regulations and maintaining harmony with supervisory bodies. Particularly in many developing and Arab nations, there's a notable need for well-prepared leadership; a deficit in technical, professional, and educational expertise often hampers the effective execution of their roles. This predicament is exacerbated by the selection of leadership personnel without adherence to objective standards and criteria. Therefore, to catalyze a qualitative shift in educational outcomes, a comprehensive framework for the preparation, qualification, and on-the-job training of school administration leadership is essential. The effectiveness of the educational process largely depends on the caliber of its leadership. These leaders face an array of accelerating challenges and pressures due to the rapid pace of societal changes, posing significant concerns. Among these challenges are:

- The absence of a clear, well-defined philosophy underpinning the entirety of school administration.
- A lack of strategic direction and concrete plans that translate overarching philosophies into tangible actions.
- A shortage of adequately trained and educated educational leaders, including school principals, equipped with the necessary scientific, pedagogical, technical, and professional skills.
- The absence of explicit criteria to evaluate the success and efficiency of administrative practices.
- A deficiency in established standards for assessing the achievement of objectives.
- The burden of routine and paperwork on educational leaders, detracting from creative endeavors.
- Insufficient financial resources to support ambitious plans and aspirations.
- Limited authority and autonomy for educational leaders to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.
- Ambiguity in regulatory frameworks and a lack of clear guidelines for their interpretation.
- A dearth of essential teaching and learning resources and equipment.
- Inadequate material and moral incentives for educational leaders, which would otherwise motivate continued engagement in the profession and deter the pursuit of alternative careers post-working hours.

8.1.2. Comparing Traditional and Modern Administrative Practices

According to Saleh Naas Laaraba (2007, p.12), the similarities and differences between traditional and modern management can be summarized as follows:

Table 1: Comparison between Modern and Traditional Management

| Characteristics of Traditional Management | Characteristics of Modern Management |
|---|--------------------------------------|
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|---|---|
| Dominance of authority and unilateral decision-making in managerial behavior, with the manager acting as the commander and official enforcer of laws, following the lead of the top management. | The manager performs leadership roles in management, acting as a coordinator, motivator, and facilitator, viewing administration as a means to enhance the teaching and learning process, following the behavior of a leader-manager. |
| Reliance on the concept of management | Adoption of the modern concept of management (Management). |
| Engagement in technical tasks and routine procedures, implementing directives from higher management, with a prevailing bureaucratic approach. | Involvement in diverse functions, tasks, and roles including management, leadership, organization, development, and the concept of achieving work success and positive outcomes, utilizing effective methods. |
| Execution of administratively defined tasks without initiative | A constant focus on initiative, development, and innovation. |
| Focus on formal procedures and compliance with instructions | Execution of organized and integrated operations that include planning, organizing, executing, monitoring, evaluating, and following up. |
| Preference for individual work | Utilization of a participatory approach. |
| No requirement for expertise in diverse knowledge areas | Requirement for knowledge in various fields, including management science, branches of psychology, and administrative law. |
| Limited concern for efficiency and effectiveness, evaluating institutions based on adherence to instructions. | Embracing an "entrepreneurial" culture and efficient human resource management through effective communication, motivation, and results-based evaluation, as well as effective use of material and financial resources. |
| Decision-making power concentrated in the hands of a single individual, often at the higher levels of the administrative hierarchy (centralized system dominance) | Allocating a significant portion of decision-making power to the institution itself, often distributed among its components and councils within a decentralized participatory approach. |

Commentary: The table comparison reveals that traditional management closely aligns with school administration characterized by regulation or autocratic and bureaucratic management styles. On the other hand, modern management approaches are more akin to institutional project management or total quality management practices.

-Conclusion

The process of educational reform is imposed by the accelerated pace of scientific and technological development on the one hand, and called for solutions to the new problems that appear in the educational sector (such as low rates of academic achievement, low quality of

graduates, the spread of manifestations of violence) on the other hand, and what is required by the ambition to improve the outputs of our educational institutions to meet the challenges and stakes of the times on the third hand, but this reform requires a set of necessary factors and appropriate conditions for the success of the school administration.

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