THE EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND FOSTERING EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOL: A BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDY

MANAGEMENTUL EDUCAȚIONAL PENTRU ȘANSE EGALE ȘI PROMOVAREA EXCELENȚEI ÎN ȘCOALĂ: UN STUDIU DE CAZ DE BUNE PRACTICI

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*   **Annotation**: The present study examines the organizational structure of educational management and its main components: the pedagogical component, the organizational component, team promotion and the community component. In accordance with this structure, we present a model that caused of changing another educational paradigm of equal opportunities and social leadership, and the development and theoretical understanding of the educational act. The research conclusions indicate that the recognition of diversity is the starting point for the process and the main challenge. This approach stands in contrast to an almost instinctive longing for the homogeneity of disaster management (also in the field of education) which always strives to reach standardization.*

*   **Adnotare**:Prezentul studiu examinează structura organizatorică a managementului educațional și componentele sale principale: componenta pedagogică, componenta organizațională, promovarea echipei și componenta comunitară. În conformitate cu această structură, prezentăm un model care a determinat schimbarea unei alte paradigme educaționale de șanse egale și leadership social, precum și dezvoltarea și înțelegerea teoretică a actului educațional.*

*   Concluziile cercetării indică faptul că recunoașterea diversității este punctul de plecare al procesului și este principala provocare. Această abordare este în contrast cu o dorință aproape instinctivă de omogenitate a managementului dezastrelor (și în domeniul educației) care se străduiește întotdeauna să ajungă la standardizare.*

*   **Keywords**: management in quality schools, equal opportunities and social leadership, promoting/excellence*
*   **Cuvinte-cheie**: management în școli de calitate, egalitate de șanse și leadership social, promovare/excelență*

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Introduction

Management patterns determine and influence the efficiency and functioning of the organization, the promotion of equal opportunity processes and lead to good results, employee motivation and successes in the field of work. The subject of equal opportunities is still being developed in the field of management, especially in educational systems, and there is a search for different strategies for the implementation of equal opportunities within educational organizations.

In the education system, diversity is seen as a major challenge, and is sometimes linked to the issue of inequality in education. Dealing with the various aspects of diversity presents educators with complex professional dilemmas and challenges. The article describes strategies and prioritizing goals to achieve this goal.

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Materials and methods of research

Research Objective

The purpose of the article is to present a research study in which management practices and methods were examined that led to the promotion of equal opportunity processes and lead to good results, employee motivation and successes in the field of work. The subject of equal opportunities is still being developed in the field of management, especially in educational systems, and there is a search for different strategies for the implementation of equal opportunities within educational organizations. The assumption is that learning from successful experience in management can help understand how a pedagogical management process is created that leads to high results of student achievements and organizational achievements at the national level and the promotion of equal opportunities for disadvantaged populations.

Research Methods and Research Instruments

Qualitative research methods were used in the current study. The qualitative methodology focuses on one source and examines it in-depth for a long period of time and deploys in it many instruments in order to see an in-depth picture rich in details However, it should be noted that as appropriate for a case study this is a research of one specific school (which is a pilot for a broader study). The study includes an anonymous questionnaire, a very great number of documents, protocols of meetings, reports of teachers, results of national tests and surveys, interviews with teachers, and documents on the school in the Ministry of Education and especially in the Research and Development Department.

Results and considerations

With the development of theories, concepts, and tools for educational management, research studies addressing with the qualities of schools have begun to be published. Quality schools are called in the literature "effective schools" or "successful schools" [10;14].

Educators and researchers have focused on the topic of school success for a long time, but this issue has acquired greater import under the international benchmarking and global accountability regime in which school success is primarily evaluated according to student academic achievements. Although this is a narrow criterion, research has frequently indicated that schools

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presenting high achievements also present other indicators of effectiveness, such as coherent instructional guidance, a student-centered learning climate, professional faculties, positive school-community relationships, and leadership that pushes for change [3, p.721].

Considerable research has been carried out on this topic and proposes factors and models to explain these high-performing schools. This research literature, however, poses a number of challenges.

First, the research literature reflects the system–agent divide: some studies focus on the "actors", particularly the leaders of the schools, while other studies focus on the school structure. Only a few studies have tried to integrate both the school leaders and the school structure [1]. Second, research works on school success have yielded a long and extensive list of factors that have influence on student achievements, including professional development, teacher collaboration, distributed leadership, instructional vision, midlevel management, student support systems, and resource allocation.

Tubin [15, p.664] presents different research models of studies on school success. One approach studies the effect of school structure on school outcomes. Research works have found, for example, that school structure influences student outcomes by the flow of resources from the district [6, p.629], by alignment of the informal and formal organizational routines [11, p.63], and by organizational routines that expose the school's technical core to environmental pressures [13, p.592].

Hoy and Sweetland [8] as part of the structural approach explored enabling school structures. In this approach, an enabling structure consists of an enabling hierarchy (leadership) and formalization (rule) that encourage trusting relations, facilitate telling the truth, and limit the degree of role conflict, thus positively influencing student learning and achievement.

A second body of research refers to agents, particularly the school manager, and endeavors to understand the connection between school manager actions and student achievements [3;14]. Some researchers study the direct effect, namely the case of one-on-one discussions between the school manager and the students. Another research line refers to case studies carried out under the International Successful Schools Principals Project [10], which intends to reveal the relationships between leadership and school effectiveness and improvement.

Equality of opportunity, the educational concept of the school

Dilemmas of equality and inequality in education and dealing with social and economic disparities expressed in the lack of equal opportunities in education are issues that are frequently at the core of public and political discourse in Israel and around the world. Studies show a close relationship between socioeconomic status and the quality of achievements in the education system.

Facing the challenge of providing equal opportunities requires, in our view, the cultivation of diversity and the encouragement of excellence. Such a pedagogical approach has the ability to address the issue of equal opportunities for students with different cultural, religious, economic and linguistic backgrounds.

In Israel, the issue came up for discussion in the Knesset, a document was written in accordance with the request of the Committee for the Rights of the Child, and data on equal opportunities in the education system in Israel from kindergarten to university was brought into it. It was found that in each of eight categories: early childhood, achievements in primary and secondary education, dropout rates, eligibility for matriculation, achievements in matriculation exams, higher education, teacher training and resource allocation. In each of the categories, data indicating gaps and inequality in the main axes that cross Israeli society will be presented. Ethnic origin - parents born in Europe and America or born in Asia and Africa; Sector - Jewish, Arab, Druze or Bedouin; Settlement - established and non-established settlements, development towns and peripheral settlements compared to central settlements; Gender - male and female students.

Also, the results of international tests will be presented, indicating Israel's situation in the field of education and the gaps in education compared to other countries.

The education systems around the world and in Israel act to broaden the equality of opportunities and to reduce gaps in education, and under them a wide range of possible solutions have accumulated. However, it becomes clear that only a few of them are effective and succeed in implementing in actuality a meaningful change. The range of attempts to reduce gaps, both in Israel and around the world, is broad: government reforms, task forces, special committees, curricula and learning programs, and establishment of associations. These programs, and many others, have failed when they went to change the course of reality.

Empowering excellence

Empowering the students is not only recognizing their differences, their uniqueness and giving respect to the background they come from, but also encouraging the students to exhaust their abilities and develop areas of interest in them so that they can strive for excellence in the fields they choose. The school's education concept of the concept of 'excellence' contradicts the accepted concept of the concept in public discourse, where 'excellence' usually refers to two characteristics of students - gifted or talented. The basis for identifying them and defining them as such is their abilities in relation to the abilities of the rest of their peers. On the other hand, the approaches that see excellence and distinction as additional aspects beyond the comparison of the learner with his peers are becoming more and more widespread. For example, an approach that measures excellence not only according to the product or achievement, but also according to the path chosen and the process by which the person reached his destination or an approach that defines excellence as the set of behaviors and actions that strive for constant improvement and enable the realization of personal potential in all its aspects. Excellence, according to this concept that we have adopted, constitutes a kind of outline or a way (for an individual, for a group and even for an organization) to develop and strive to achieve the goals they set for themselves. The school model that we represent stands on the two aforementioned pillars: the adoption of a pedagogy that responds to cultural, social, economic, class and linguistic diversity and the encouragement of students to excellence that strives to realize and maximize the strengths of each student.

Research Findings

The findings of the research study will be presented The model of Educational Management for equal opportunities and fostering excellence
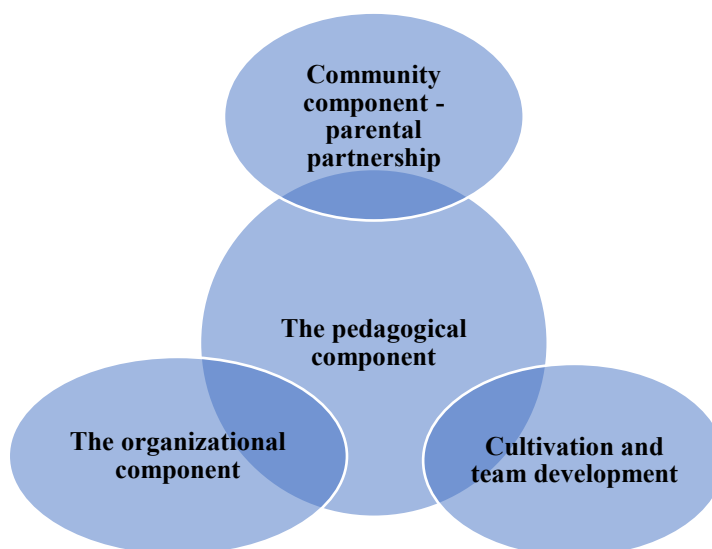

Figure 1. The school model for equal opportunities and fostering excellence
[developed by the authors]

The main core component is the pedagogical component, which affects the other three components which are the organizational component, the team development component and the parents' partnership. The pedagogical principle in the model claims that the pursuit of excellence is a central value that increases motivation, ability and leads to self-improvement. The model includes four components. These elements are intertwined and together promote the school's educational concept. Below is a concise description of the model's components.

The pedagogical component

The prevailing pedagogical discourse in the school incorporates reference and examination of the definitions of the concept of excellence and emphasizing the values of excellence. The school currently has about 26 excellent groups, which are divided into four clusters: academic, artistic, social and sports and athletics.

The discourse of education for excellence has developed into a special school language, in which all members of the school community participate: the teaching staff, students and parents. Among the actions taken to implement the educational concept: constant identification of students' strengths, education classes for excellence and the activation of excellence groups that respond to a variety of talents and interests.

This approach is based on identifying the child's strengths and using them for personal growth - emotional and cognitive [12, p.417].

The organizational component

The school operates the system of classes required by law in the Ministry of Education, but in addition there is an additional and branched system of classes of excellence, some during the school day and some at the end. Each student has a personal system of lessons and thus each student receives reinforcement of his interests according to his personal preference. The school also has a number of teams of teachers who meet on a regular basis for reporting, reflection and feedback as well as planning. The unique teams operate in the following areas: an organizational academic consulting team that is responsible for the strategic planning and development of the school that works in collaboration with an organizational and academic consultant; R&D team - the R&D team of the writing school and develops a unique pedagogy and trust in its implementation; management team working to promote school leadership and empower intermediate leadership; the team of teachers of the excellence groups that deals with the teaching activity itself in the excellence groups, the dilemmas, issues and challenges that the teachers face; And the assessment and measurement team works on methods of assessment for the unique pedagogical process of the school and is also engaged in imparting skills of an independent learner to the students.

Cultivating and developing a team as a prevention for burnout

In recent years, there has been an increasing tendency for teachers to leave education systems all over the world. Today, more than ever, the education system is in a personnel crisis. In the last three years, we have witnessed a lively public debate on the topic of teacher burnout, which arose in all its severity following the corona epidemic, which posed new challenges and many changes in the functioning of schools as organizations, in front of both principals and teachers [7, p.35].

The cultivation of a school staff is the central anchor of any groundbreaking program. Teaching in schools with high cultural diversity is very demanding and can frustrate and discourage the teachers. Findings show that the teachers at the home participate in continuous professional development programs in which they explore their practice, create collaborations, support their colleagues and are also supported by them, initiate, dare and above all look for ways to improve and develop. Retaining teachers, preventing their attrition and empowering them are the challenges facing the administration all the time.

Teachers working in such educational settings, characterized by disadvantaged and heterogeneous populations, need to undergo a change of mind in order to respond positively to the

uniqueness of each student and to be willing to walk with him in the learning process, thereby increasing his chances of success.

The Team development component, stimulation and integration of personnel in the activity of the manager- one of the most important. The basis of the unity of the pedagogical team is the recognition of each common goal, motivation of the organization, creation of necessary conditions for work, moral stimulation.

Community component - parental partnership

The educational staff shares with the parents the pedagogical aspects and the integrated educational concept in every arena at the school. The parents who did not dare to dream about their children's future due to the harsh reality in which they live, go through the process together with them. They are involved in every aspect of the educational process. They are proud of their children's achievements and of the school whose achievements bring pride to the community.

The significance of a community component brings many results - at the student level, at the teacher-student-family relationship level, and at the ecological level. For this reason, sometimes there is an increase in the improvement of school status. Today, many schools have to invest heavily in marketing themselves, through contact with parents. In addition (in many countries), there is a growing trend that the openness of schools to the community and a stronger partnership with parents results in a higher connection with the environment and the promotion of problem-based learning, which promotes learning and dealing with real-world problems.

Principles for Practical Work

1. The educational model we have presented is fed by educational research, but it is important that the reverse process also takes place where the educational action in action will also feed the research, and thus it will be possible to advance to new practices backed by solid theoretical frameworks.

2. The significant educational process in our school takes place in a space of dialogue between a significant adult (teacher) and the child. The process includes joint observation of strengths, setting goals and how to achieve them, which ensures the student's awareness of his behavior, feelings, and learning habits while engaging in self-criticism and finding ways to improve them. In such a dialogue the teacher should understand what the child's entry points are to the educational process and respond to his various needs and provide him with the necessary anchors and mediation to promote them. This approach of social emotional learning helps the student to better understand his feelings, his behavior that expresses his feelings, and his attitude towards others. Studies have found that the teacher-student dialogue approach has been found to promote both equality and excellence in students [9, p.174].

3. One of the theoretical frameworks that helps to describe the concept of education in our school is called

4. "Culturally Responsive Pedagogy", loosely translated as "Pedagogy that responds to cultural diversity", a teaching approach in which the learner is at the center, in which his cultural uniqueness and strengths are identified and nurtured in order to promote his achievements but also to establish in him a sense of Perfection and excellence in the context of the culture from which he came into the world. Moreover, it was also found that the use of this pedagogy promotes the social-emotional learning (SEL) of the students, and it is therefore suggested to combine the use of a pedagogy that responds to cultural diversity and SEL teaching skills in the training of teachers who teach in schools where there is a high diversity between students [2, p.75]. The notebooks also recommend continuing to explore the relationship between these two teaching approaches.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to try to gain insights into management components in education (and in general) that succeeded in promoting a school as an organization that promotes equal opportunities and leadership. Promote how can the organization to success while revolutionizing the school's overall concept of education and reaching from standardization to uniqueness. The components that emerged in the findings support the theoretical framework of the research in the field of leadership [10] and allow the management methods of school leadership to be analyzed.

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