Chapter 16

Educational Institutions: Politics and Power Games Types, Educational Change, and Enhancing Organizational Culture

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ABSTRACT

Through the use of different political games, power items of the typology of French and Raven, and leadership style, the leader has to make the right educational decision. When the school is shaken by internal and external conflicts, the school leader is the manager, and he will give constructive solutions to these conflicts to emerge as valuable sources of ideas that will enrich school life. This chapter aims to present both the various political games, as mentioned mainly by Mintzberg, and the entry types in the typology of French and Raven present in educational institutions and the meaning of educational change and conditions for success. Also mentioned is the organizational culture and strengthening through the holistic model of leadership of Pashiardis and Brauckmann emphasizing the concept of “mentorship.”

The significance of the work lies in the fact that the undermentioned issues are relevant to educational institutions and require attention from both the leader-director and the teachers of each school unit.

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational leaders are very important as they act as co-ordinators, provide guidelines in times of change, and are responsible for the effectiveness of organizations (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Leaders exercise authority and influence on other members of the organization, using political and political tactics to structure the activities of a group and direct them towards their own ends (French & Raven, 1968). Change and success depend on both the leader, the information, the culture of the organization and the different cocktail mix leadership styles adopted by the educational leaders (Pashiardis, 2012).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-4050-2.ch016
The present paper aims to present both the various political games, as mentioned mainly by Mintzberg (1983) and the types of power in the typology of French and Raven (1968) existing in educational institutions as well as the concept of educational change and the conditions for its success. Also, reference is made to organizational culture and its reinforcement through the holistic model of leadership of Pashiardis and Brauckmann (2008). The importance of the work lies in the fact that the subjects mentioned above are relevant to the educational organizations and need attention from both the leader-manager and the teachers of the respective school unit.

Each chapter of the work has been divided into a theoretical and practical part. Initially, the concept of political games and types of power is “decoded”. Then reference is made to educational change as a necessary condition for an educational organization, the reasons for its success and the reasons for its failure. The next chapter is devoted to the holistic Pashiardis and Brauckmann Leadership Model, which presents the concept of “cocktail mix” of leadership styles, and that they reinforce the organizational culture on occasion. Finally, the main conclusions are presented.

2. POLITICAL GAMES AND POWER TYPES BASED ON THE FRENCH AND RAVEN TYPOLOGY (1968)

2.1. Theoretical Approaches

Each organization, in order to fulfill the required competences, exercises a kind of power towards its own (Pashiardis, 2004). In principle, Weber (1947) defines power as the ability of some people to impose their will on others, regardless of any resistance. Of course, the ways of enforcing power vary and depend on the person who exercises it, but also on the position it occupies in the organization (Pashiardis, 2014). During exercise of power, various political games are applied to each organization (Beatriz, Deborah & Hunter, 2008; Pashiardis, 2014; Sykes, 1979). Typically, political games are developed by individuals or groups who negotiate with each other for the acquisition of power or the satisfaction of various requests (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

Mintzberg (1983) argues that political “toys” are illegal and silent because they are designed to benefit a person or a group of people and are usually at the expense of the organization. According to research, the most common negative effects of political games are the division and conflict of the members of the educational organization (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006; Mintzberg, 1983). Of course, political games also have a positive aspect by ensuring that the strongest member of the organization takes leadership positions and facilitates the implementation of decisions (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

Also, according to Bolman and Deal (1997), effective policy presupposes that the members of the organization will engage in many political games and tactics (flattery, networking, impressing, victimizing) to influence its goals and decisions of organization. The main political games, according to Mintzberg (1983), include rebellion or downturn in power, power-building, competition and change. By rebellion is meant a coalition between individuals to resist the official authority and presupposes sabotage and rebellion (Pashiardis, 2004). Power building, on the other hand, is based on the creation of a base of power through alliances and the number of people who form those (Pashiardis, 2014). As far as the competition games are concerned, they are made to neutralize those opponents. In an educational organization, rivalries and antagonisms arise between teacher and leader-manager, educators and more specialized staff (Mintzberg, 1983).
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