



Manufacturing Science and Education 2025

ACTA TECHNICA NAPOCENSIS

Series: Applied Mathematics, Mechanics, and Engineering

Vol. 68, Issue Special III, August, 2025

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF A TECHNOLOGICAL HIGH SCHOOL

Ana Maria DOBRANICI, Silvia AVASILCĂI, Adriana BUJOR, Florentina BÎRLĂDEANU

Abstract: *The aim of this study is to explore the organisational environment in an educational institution, focusing on organisational issues, leadership approaches and problems managers face, having as a unit of analysis a technological high school. A survey conducted among the employees revealed some important aspects, such as lack of communication, anxiety about being open and low motivation. The results show that getting input from everyone when making decisions, good leadership, and staff development initiatives are key for the well being of the high school as an educational institution. This study points out how important shared values are to building the organisational culture and offers ideas for improvement in an educational environment. Although the study is focused on one unit of analysis, the research gives useful insights for further research of the topic on a larger sample of this type of educational institutions.*

Keywords: *educational management, organizational structure, leadership, values.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The educational system is an administrative organization that integrates various factors and forces. As part of this system, the school can be analyzed and managed as a bureaucratic organization [1]. Thus, beyond being a physical space where students receive education, the school is also a social institution—an organization where individuals come together to achieve specific goals. Like other organizations, the school has a defined structure, continuously incorporating new members (students and teachers) while carrying out educational and training activities in an organized and systematic manner [2]. The school, as a social organization, can be managed in relation to its internal dynamics and its broader role in society. In this context, the roles of teachers and students, as well as authority and disciplinary relationships, are significant [3]. The dynamic process of education encompasses all aspects of society and plays a fundamental role in shaping individuals [4]. Just as individuals have their own set of values, educational systems are built upon values that guide instructional and learning activities, ensuring that knowledge aligns with societal principles. [5] argue that there is a

growing need for values in today's world, which has led to increased interest in their role in education. Several scholars have explored the concept of values. According to [6], values are a set of principles that shape behavior, influence decision-making, guide judgments on beliefs and actions, and contribute to integrity and personal identity. [7] describe values as deeply ingrained beliefs that define what is worth striving for. [8] defines values as the elements deemed important by an organization and the process of monitoring these elements, as stated by [9]. As seen from the definitions above, values are increasingly important for all types of organizations, particularly those in the education sector. Establishing an effective managerial behavior policy is recognized as essential for the smooth operation of pre-university educational institutions [10]. Educational experts, psychologists, and researchers hold diverse opinions on creating suitable environments for both students and teachers. Some advocate for traditional, structured methods as the most effective approach [11], while others support replacing or revolutionizing these methods with relationship-based approaches [12]. Empowerment is the process of enabling others to take action. "Principle-centered leadership"

suggests that personal contribution is a strong motivator [13]. Individuals want to feel valued, and empowerment contributes to their sense of self-worth. Managers can foster empowerment by involving employees in problem-solving processes. Another key aspect of empowerment is delegation. The way a manager delegates tasks is crucial in establishing leadership and trust among subordinates. According to [14], when a manager delegates responsibilities, employees assess "to whom" tasks are delegated, "what" types of tasks are assigned, "how often" delegation occurs, and "why" the task is assigned. Effective delegation can enhance managerial respect, while poor delegation can quickly undermine authority. Rosabeth Moss Kanter introduced the "Organizational Empowerment Theory" in the 1970s, proposing that when employees are given empowerment opportunities, their attitudes improve, leading to greater organizational efficiency and goal achievement [15]. Kanter emphasized that certain organizational structures are essential for increasing employee potential. Effective management should provide employees not only with necessary information and resources but also with strong support systems and opportunities for growth. When these elements are in place, employees experience greater autonomy and self-worth, leading to improved efficiency and organizational commitment [16].

2. EXPERIMENTAL PART

The Technological O.S. High School employs a total of 30 teachers, 10 auxiliary staff members, and 5 non-pedagogical staff members. This study was conducted using a questionnaire-based investigative method. A total of 26 respondents participated, representing approximately 58% of the total employees. Among them, there were 16 teachers (53.33% of all teachers), 6 auxiliary staff members (60% of auxiliary employees), 3 non-pedagogical staff members (60% of non-pedagogical employees), and 1 manager. All respondents were fully aware of the educational purpose of the research and participated voluntarily (Fig. 1).

15 women and 11 men have answered the questions, which precisely fits the gender distribution of the staff (Fig.2).

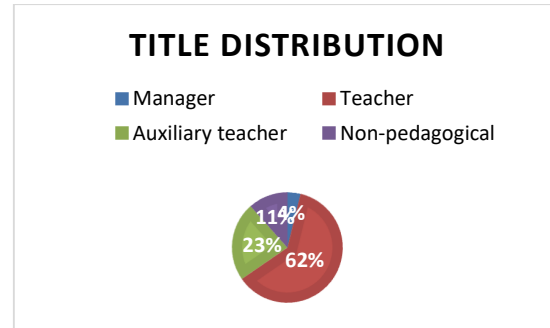


Fig. 1. Respondents' title distribution

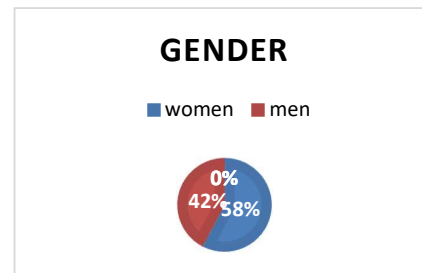


Fig. 2. Respondents' gender distribution

About the age, out of 26 respondents, 8 fit within the 25-40 age bracket (30.8%), 9 are aged 41-50 (34.6%), and 9 are more than 51.

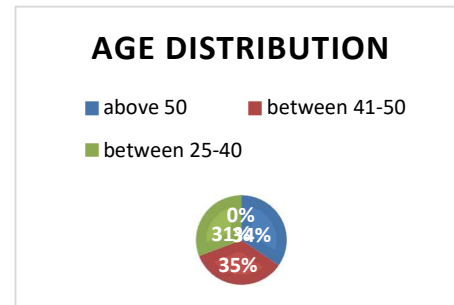


Fig. 3. Respondents' age distribution

When it comes to work experience at the institution, 14 respondents have been working here for more than 10 years (53.8%), 7 respondents for 2 to 5 years (26.9%), 4 more than 5 years but less than 10, and one person is new employee and has been working in this organization for less than 2 years.



Fig. 4. Respondents' organization experience

The members of the institution provided, through their responses, details related to the type of institutional organization. Thus, the questions targeted the way how decisions are made at the institution level, the way or extent to which the organization pays attention and responds to the needs of its members, the way in which information flows within the institution, the way in which the high school is chasing the satisfaction of the education beneficiaries, the behavior and attitude of the employees at work. At the same time, it was intended to identify the behavior of the manager, the main sources of information used, and the important events organized by the institution. Regarding the method of adopting decisions, more than half of the respondents are of the opinion that "decisions are made by those authorized by the statute and regulations, according to established procedures" (16 responses, 61.5%). Regarding the way decisions are made, more than half of the respondents believe that "decisions are made by those authorized by the statute and regulations, according to established procedures" (16 responses, 61.5%), a quarter of the members believe that "decisions are made by those in charge, influenced by those close to them" (7 responses, 26.9%). Only two of the members participating in this study believed that "decisions are made by those involved and interested: everyone's voice is heard" and only one person selected the answer "decisions are made by those with the necessary experience and knowledge in the subject." When asked how the institution responds to the needs of its employees, almost half of the participants selected the answer "in a domineering, paternal way, with the idea that "we know better what is good for you" (12 answers, 46.2%). The answers "in a uniform, equidistant manner, according to the established rules and procedures" and "depending on the needs of the organization, according to the dedication and involvement of each" were selected by 6 and, respectively, 7 people (in a proportion of 23.1% and 26.9%). Only one member of the organization considered that the institution responds to the needs of its members "in a personalized way: each person's needs are unique and respected". Regarding the way in which information circulates within the

institution, the 26 responses were distributed, almost evenly, between the 4 predefined responses: centralized, from top to bottom instructions, orders; from bottom to top reports; formal, functional, according to a well-defined structure of internal regulations and task-centered, in free flow within the working group that performs the task and interpersonal, informal, spontaneous, from the need of keeping each other informed. Employees indicated that the most common sources of information were the institution's regulations and employee meetings. The least used sources of information were posters and brochures.

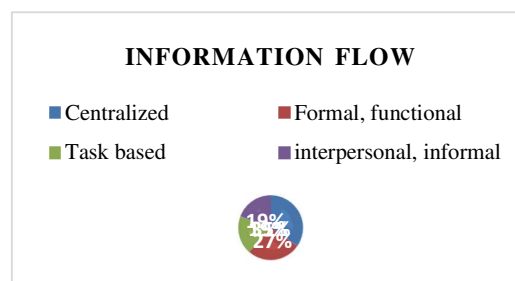


Fig. 5. Information flow type

About the organization's concern for beneficiaries' satisfaction, all respondents believe that the institution constantly considers, at least partially, the satisfaction of education beneficiaries. Half of the respondents believe that this concern is total, the other half believe that the concern is rather partial, no respondent believes that the institution does not pursue beneficiaries' satisfaction. When it comes to the way in which members of the organization respond to the request to help each other between groups, departments, projects, over half of the respondents believe that cooperation occurs when they have a common task or an obstacle at work, 6 respondents believe that interest groups collaborate in situations prescribed by rules and procedures, 5 believe that people help each other if they need to, even if they have to stay overtime, only one respondent believes that groups are in competition and help each other only if they have an advantage from it. Most of the study participants (17) believe that the most important thing for members is to perform their tasks in accordance with established rules and procedures. Almost 1 from 5 respondents believes that pleasing the boss or influential people

in the administration is what matters most to employees. The other answers - To take care of each other, to maintain a climate in which they feel good and to compete in finding effective solutions, in setting new goals were selected by only 3 and, respectively, 1 member. From the employees' perspective, the efficiency of the institution depends on the elements listed in Tabel 1.

Table 1

**Factors Influencing Institutional Efficiency
(Employees' Perspective)**

Factors	Key Elements
1. Communication	Clear messaging, active listening, feedback culture
2. Adaptability to Change	Flexibility, learning mindset, embracing innovation
3. Team Effort	Collaboration, mutual support, conflict resolution
4. Human Values	Respect & ethics, inclusivity, work-life balance
5. Organizational Transparency	Open decision-making, access to information, trust
6. Members' Behavior at Work	Professionalism, motivation, policy adherence
7. Internet Communication	Digital collaboration tools, cybersecurity awareness, efficiency

The open questions aimed to identify the problems the institution is currently facing as well as suggestions for improving the institution's activity. The problems or difficulties identified by employees are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Identified Problems in the Institution (Employees' Perspective)

Category	Problems
1. Management Issues	Lack of transparency in decision-making, pursuing personal interests by the director, lack of a unified goal and clear vision, outdated and inefficient management style, weak authority over some employees, unequal task distribution and lack of expertise in certain areas.
2. Organizational Issues	General disorganization, failure to comply with job descriptions, inefficient operational processes, limited financial resources.
3. Organizational Culture Issues	Lack of trust between employees and superiors, "Cliques" and workplace gossip, lack of motivation and employee engagement, employees work out of fear rather than dedication, lack of empathy and mutual respect, individualism and reluctance to collaborate.

4. Communication Issues	Poor communication between superiors and employees, the director does not consult employees, secrecy and avoidance of the truth, inappropriate tone of leadership.
5. Ethical Issues	Workplace theft, favoritism, lack of professional ethics, lack of recognition for employee achievements.
6. Motivation Issues	Inability to motivate employees, employees "waste time", lack of performance-based rewards, employees are unaware of the institution's vision and mission.

Table 3

Institution improvement (Employees' Suggestions)

Category	Improvement suggestions
1. Management Improvement	Replacing the director or changing managerial style, efficient and transparent management, correcting harmful behaviors tolerated by leadership, making decisions after consulting experienced employees.
2. Organization and Resources	Proper delegation of tasks, ensuring employee accountability, installing cameras and microphones, creating spaces and acquiring furniture for laboratories.
3. Organizational Culture	Creating an environment based on mutual respect, motivating and appreciating employees, organizing activities to strengthen team cohesion, increasing empathy among colleagues.
4. Communication and Transparency	Improving communication within the institution, respecting employees and listening to their opinions, ensuring decision-making transparency, informing staff about the school's vision.
5. Motivation and Engagement	Motivating staff by recognizing their merits, increasing motivation through incentives and rewards, enhancing employee involvement in school activities, attracting externally funded projects.
6. Professional Development	Organizing training and development courses, improving service quality through training programs, providing opportunities for professional growth.

Many managers today are looking for quick fixes to critical problems and fail to see the long-term consequences of their short-term decisions.

3. CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the complexities of educational institutions as bureaucratic organizations and the vital role of values,

empowerment, and leadership in shaping their effectiveness.

Through the case study of the Technological O.S. High School, it becomes evident that while structural organization and established procedures provide stability, challenges related to communication, management transparency, and motivation persist. Managers of an educational institution must keep in mind that the attitudes, values, and behaviors of an institution begin with its leadership.

This is achieved through modeling and communication at all levels. Managers must not forget the importance of being consistent when expressing these desired attitudes, values, and behaviors. When one or more of these components are missing or weak, the organization will ultimately suffer. The findings suggest that improving institutional efficiency requires a combination of clear communication, adaptable leadership, and a culture of collaboration and trust.

The feedback from employees underscores the need for more participatory decision-making, equitable task distribution, and an emphasis on professional development. Addressing these concerns through strategic managerial reforms, enhanced transparency, and a values-driven approach will help create a more productive and engaging educational environment. This case study adds to the educational management literature by revealing how leadership transparency, communication dynamics, and value-driven decision-making processes influence motivation and operational efficiency in technological high schools—a less-explored institutional type in existing studies.

Ultimately, long-term success in educational institutions depends on balancing administrative efficiency with human-centered leadership, ensuring that both educators and students thrive in a supportive and well-structured system.

4. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS OF RESEARCH

This study has various constraints even if it offers insightful analysis of the organizational dynamics of educational institutions.

While the research is limited to a single institution, the structural and cultural issues identified—such as bureaucratic rigidity, communication breakdowns, and motivation gaps—are not unique. These patterns mirror challenges observed across many Romanian secondary schools, suggesting that similar organizational and leadership conditions may affect institutional performance nationwide. Thus, these findings can serve as a foundation for formulating hypotheses on a national scale, such as: ‘Schools with participatory leadership styles exhibit higher staff motivation and cohesion,’ or ‘Transparent decision-making processes correlate positively with staff engagement across secondary institutions.’ Second, the study mostly depended on self-reported data obtained by means of questionnaires, which can bring prejudices including selective memory or social desirability. In order to have a more complex knowledge of institutional culture and managerial practices, future studies could combine qualitative approaches like in-depth interviews or ethnographic observations.

This study also concentrated on employee viewpoints, but other stakeholders—parents, students, and others—were not included. Future research could test these hypotheses in varied regional contexts and institutional types, using both cross-sectional and longitudinal methods. Comparative studies between urban and rural secondary schools or between technological and theoretical high schools would offer deeper insight into systemic pattern.

5. REFERENCES

- [1] Kornblum, W., Julian, J., *Social problems*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1992
- [2] Bush, T., *Theories of Educational Leadership and Management*, Sage Publications, 2020
- [3] Al-Harbi, S., Alzahrani, M. *The role of transformational leadership in enhancing school culture and teaching performance in Yemeni public schools*. *Frontiers in Education*, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1413607>
- [4] Krivova, D., Myachin, Y., *Conceptual basics of changes in the system of higher education in the frames of sustainable development paradigm of society (by the example of Russian Federation)*.

- Economics and Management, 16, pp. 785-788, 2011
- [5] Arslan, Z.Ş., Yaşar, F.T., *Yükselen değer kavramı üzerine eleştirel bir yaklaşım*, Değerler Eğitimi Merkezi Dergisi, 1 (1), pp. 8-11, 2007
- [6] Delgado-García, M., Jiménez-Liso, M. (2022). *School Organizational Culture and Leadership: Theoretical Trends and New Analytical Proposals*. Education Sciences, 12(4), 254.
- [7] Yılmaz, M., Merter, F., *Sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının küreselleşme çerçevesinde değerler eğitimi ilişkin görüşleri*, International Journal of Social Science, 5 (3), pp. 299-314, 2012
- [8] Al-Harbi, S., Alzahrani, M. *The role of transformational leadership in enhancing school culture and teaching performance in Yemeni public schools*. Frontiers in Education, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1413607>
- [9] Soltani, I., Joneghani, R.B., *Operational model of cascading values and professional ethics in organization: a context for spiritual development of employees*, International Journal of Business and Management, 7 (18), pp. 130-140, 2012. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v7n18p130>
- [10] Rogers, B., *Behaviour management: A whole-school approach*, UK: Sage, London, 2013
- [11] Bennett, W. J., *Teaching the right stuff*, Phi Delta Kappan, 102(3), pp. 23-27, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1177/031721720970697>
- [12] Dix, P., *After the Adults Change: Achievable Behaviour* Nirvana, ISBN 1781353778, 9781781353776, 2021, Crown House Publishing Ltd., Carmarthen.
- [13] Covey, S. R., *Principle-centered Leadership*, 1991, New York, USA, Simon & Schuster.
- [14] Nawaz, M., Ali, M. *Exploring the factors of learning organization in school education: the role of leadership styles, personal commitment, and organizational culture*. Central European Management Journal, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1108/cemj-12-2023-0457>
- [15] Al-Mahdy, Y.F.H., Al-Harthi, A.S. *Enhancing organizational commitment through shared leadership: insights from Saudi higher education*. Frontiers in Education. 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1476709>
- [16] Laschinger, H., Leiter, M., Day, A., Gilin, D., *Workplace empowerment, incivility, and burnout: Impact on staff nurse recruitment and retention outcomes*, Journal of nursing management, 17, pp. 302-11, 2009. 10.1111/j.1365-2834.2009.00999.x.

Structura organizațională și leadershipul în instituțiile de învățământ: studiu de caz al unui liceu tehnologic

Acest studiu analizează structura organizațională, leadership-ul și provocările manageriale din instituțiile de învățământ, concentrându-se pe Liceul Tehnologic O.S. Printr-un sondaj realizat în rândul angajaților, au fost identificate probleme cheie precum lacunele de comunicare, preocupările legate de transparență și provocările motivaționale. Rezultatele sugerează că luarea deciziilor participativ, leadership-ul eficient și dezvoltarea profesională sunt esențiale pentru eficiența instituțională. Studiul subliniază importanța valorilor organizaționale în conturarea culturii școlare și propune strategii de îmbunătățire. Deși limitată la o singură instituție, cercetarea oferă perspective aplicabile unui cadru educațional mai larg, evidențiind necesitatea unor explorări suplimentare asupra impactului managerial pe termen lung.

Ana Maria DOBRANICI (căs. DUMITRESCU), PhD Student, “Gheorghe Asachi” Technical University of Iasi-Romania, Faculty of Industrial Design and Business Management, Engineering and Management Department, Email: ana-maria.dumitrescu@student.tuiasi.ro, Mobil Phone: 0729072804.

Silvia AVASILCĂI, Professor, “Gheorghe Asachi” Technical University of Iasi-Romania, Faculty of Industrial Design and Business Management, Engineering and Management Department, Email: silvia.avasilcai@academic.tuiasi.ro, Mobil Phone: 0744633919.

Adriana BUJOR, Lecturer, “Gheorghe Asachi” Technical University of Iasi-Romania, Faculty of Industrial Design and Business Management, Engineering and Management Department, Email: adriana.bujor@academic.tuiasi.ro, Mobil Phone: 0745399248.

Florentina BÎRLĂDEANU (căs. EFTINCĂ), PhD Student, “Gheorghe Asachi” Technical University of Iasi-Romania, Faculty of Industrial Design and Business Management, Engineering and Management Department, Email: florentina.eftinca@student.tuiasi.ro, Mobil Phone: 0740639646.