

The mauritius
institute of education
on teachers
education essay



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Education has always been among the top priorities of every government into power. In Mauritius, education was declared free after the country gained independence from the British in 1968. Since then, every child of the country had the opportunity to go to school and learn. After the decision of free schooling, the government found the need to train sufficient teachers to work in the schools in regions where there were growing demands. Such training course is still being delivered by the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), which equip the future teachers with the necessary skills to deliver a quality service.

From the beginning of the 21st century much emphasis is put on the quality of teaching and management in schools as it has been proven that schools with strong ethical managing members outperformed other schools in the academic results. It has always been said that “ Discipline is the key to success”; those schools realised it through hard and structured work and achieved the best results. Discipline is not meant for pupils only and applies for teachers and even top management of the schools. Certain schools even set codes of conduct for their teachers to abide too; which provide a clear line of conduct expected from the teachers. These codes of conduct are simply ethics of care, justice, critique, profession and community put into phrases which demonstrate the expected behaviour of top management and teachers of the schools.

Review of Literature

The significance of school management and leadership

There is great concern in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century. Since people believe that the quality of leadership makes a

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significant difference to school and student outcomes. In many parts of the world, there is recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners. As the global economy gathers pace, more governments are realising that their main assets are their people and that remaining, or becoming, competitive depends increasingly on the development of a highly skilled workforce. This requires trained and committed teachers but they, in turn, need the leadership of highly effective principals and the support of other senior and middle managers (Bush, in press).

The process of deciding on the aims of the organization is at the heart of educational management. In most schools, aims are decided by the principal, often working in association with the senior management team and perhaps also with the school governing body. However, school aims are strongly influenced by pressures from the external environment, and particularly from the expectations of government, often expressed through legislation or formal policy statements. Schools may be left with the residual task of interpreting external imperatives rather than determining aims on the basis of their own assessment of learner needs. The key issue here is the extent to which school managers are able to modify government policy and develop alternative approaches based on school-level values and vision. (Bush 2003: 1-2).

Distinction between school management and leadership

The concept of management overlaps with that of leadership, a notion of great contemporary interest in most countries in the developed world.

However, despite these developments management remains the dominant term in the debate about aspects of school organisation.

Cuban (1988) provides one of the clearest distinctions between leadership and management. He links leadership with change while management is seen as a maintenance activity. He also stresses the importance of both dimensions of organisational activity:

“ By leadership, I mean influencing others’ actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals... Leadership ... takes ... much ingenuity, energy and skill.

Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organisational arrangements. While managing well often exhibits leadership skills, the overall function is toward maintenance rather than change. I prize both managing and leading and attach no special value to either since different settings and times call for varied responses”.

Day et al.’s (2001) study of twelve ‘ effective’ schools leads to the discussion of several dilemmas in school leadership. One of these relates to management, which is linked to systems and ‘ paper’, and leadership, which is perceived to be about the development of people. Bush (1998; 2003) links leadership to values or purpose while management relates to implementation or technical issues.

Leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. “ Leading and

managing are distinct, but both are important ... The challenge of modern organizations requires the objective perspective of the manager as well as the flashes of vision and commitment wise leadership provides" (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

Leithwood et al. (1999) make the important point that, in practice, principals in their day-to-day work are rarely aware of whether they are leading or managing; they are simply carrying out their work on behalf of the school and its learners. However, the nature of that work should reflect the school context and, in particular, its needs at any one time. Underperforming schools may require a greater emphasis on basic management, making the organization functional, rather than a visionary approach. This may involve ensuring regular and timely attendance by learners and educators, maintaining order and discipline in classrooms, and providing adequate resources to enable learning to take place. Once schools are functional, leaders can progress to developing vision, and outlining clear aims and policies, with the confidence that systems are in place to secure their implementation.

Models of educational leadership and management

Theories of educational management for over 20 years (Bush, 1986; 1995; 2003) have been presented and classified into six major models: formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity, and cultural (see Table 1).

More recently, the author of these theories has reviewed concepts of educational leadership, notably in work undertaken for the English National College for School Leadership (Bush & Glover, 2002). The literature on

leadership has generated a number of alternative, and competing, models. Some writers have sought to cluster these various conceptions into a number of broad themes or 'types'. The best known of these typologies is that by Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999), who identified six 'models' from their scrutiny of 121 articles in four international journals. Bush and Glover (2002) extended this typology to eight models. These are among the nine leadership models shown in Table 1, alongside the management models mentioned earlier.

Table : Typology of management and leadership models (Bush, 2003)

Management model

Leadership model

Formal

Collegial

Political

Subjective

Ambiguity

Cultural

Managerial

Participative

Transformational

Interpersonal

Transactional

Post-modern

Contingency

Moral

Instructional

Ethics

Ethics refer to accepted norms and standards set by people considering them as good practices that one must follow in terms of behaviour and action. Ethics are frequently interchanged with other words such as values, morality, norms, principles and beliefs.

According to Fraenkel (1973: 49), values represent everything that people regard as important in life. They represent ideas on what is good, beautiful, effective and appropriate," and therefore worth having, worth doing, or worth striving to attain".

Ethics and Values

Ethical framework for education

The literature provides →ve major paradigms used to analyse ethics and ethical dilemmas.

Ethic of Justice

The first type of ethic is the ethic of justice. This ethic often provides a basis for legal principles and ideals. Here, one may ask questions related to the rule of law and the more abstract concepts of fairness, equity and justice. Starratt (1994) characterizes this ethic as originating in two schools of thought, one focusing on the individual as central and the other stressing society as its key component. The former generally involves the concept of social contract where the individual gives up certain rights for the good of society; it includes the work of earlier philosophers including Hobbes and Kant and more contemporary scholars such as Lawrence Kohlberg and John Rawls. The latter conceptualizes justice as emerging from “communal understandings” (Starratt, 1994, p. 50). Also writing within this paradigm is Kenneth Strike, a scholar who focuses on justice and its influence on educational decision making by stressing concepts such as maximum benefits and its relationship to respect for individual needs (Strike et al., 1998).

Ethic of care

Second is an ethic of care. Out of the ethic of justice, the ethic of care shifts the emphasis on rights and laws to compassion and empathy. When the ethic of care is valued, school leaders emphasize relationships and connections in the decision-making process, rather than techniques and rules associated with a hierarchical approach. Nodding's (2003) work is central to this ethic as are the writings of contemporary scholars including Gilligan (1982) who challenged Kohlberg's (1981) model of ethical decision

making as relates to women and Sernak (1998) who contends that school leaders must balance power with caring.

Ethic of Critique

Critique is the third ethic. Firmly rooted in critical theory, the ethic of critique seeks to challenge the status quo and give voice to the marginalized sectors of society. Under the ethic of critique, theorists such as Apple (2000, 2001, 2003), Capper (1993), Foster (1986) and Giroux (1991, 2000, 2003), among others, ask us to not only rethink laws and justice, but also consider other concepts such as privilege, power, culture and language.

Here, one might question who makes the laws, who benefits from them, and how they apply to a variety of different people. Grogan (2003) and Marshall et al. (1989) join the ranks of these contemporary scholars who urge educators to consider issues of social justice in their ethical decision making.

Ethic of the profession

The ethic of the profession (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2001) calls for school leaders to consider professional and personal ethical principles and codes, as well as standards of the profession and individual professional codes to create a dynamic model that places the “ best interests of the student” as central. This paradigm considers the other frameworks as well as issues such as what the profession expects, what happens when personal and professional ethics clash, and how community influences educators’ ethical decision making. This paradigm of the profession moves beyond a multi-paradigmatic approach and strives to consider “ moral aspects unique to the

profession and the questions that arise as educational leaders become more aware of their own personal and professional codes of ethics" (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2001, p. 18). As Walker (1998, p. 300) points out: " The well-considered shibboleth that the best interests of children will be taken to override conflicting interests may be considered both a safe and essential grounds for educational decision making".

Ethic of the Community

Furman (2003) proposes a fifth ethic for educational leaders - that of community. Furman (2004) explicates this ethical posture in an article appearing in this issue of the Journal of Educational Administration. For Furman, community becomes the context within which the other ethical postures are applied as school leaders make decisions in an ever-changing environment. She defines the ethic of community as the moral responsibility of educators to engage in communal processes. Here, the communal, rather than the individual, is the major focus of schools' moral agency. This ethic is very different from Sergiovanni (1994) who views community as an entity and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) who see community in relation to the individual.

Each of these three paradigms is important to educational leaders who are asked to make ethical decisions. By considering the paradigms as complementary parts of a whole, the school leader has access to a more advanced set of tools for decision making.

Ethics in School Management and Leadership

For a better understanding of the impact of ethics in school management and leadership, a framework would be much appropriate. In their book, *Ethical Leadership and Decision Making in Education*, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) propose a framework for responding to ethical dilemmas.

Ethical paradigms based on models of justice, caring, and critique are merged into a fourth paradigm, that of the profession. At the centre of this conceptualization is the “best interests of the student.” Educators have often used this concept to justify important moral and ethical decisions; therefore it seems apt that this concept would lie at the heart of a professional paradigm.

Application of Ethics in School Management and Leadership

The point that school administrative decision making requires more than the mechanical application of existing rules, regulations and various levels of school and school-related policy has been well established (Hoy and Miskel, 2005). The essential aspects of school leadership are more than simply possessing and carrying out certain technical skills to ensure effective and efficient management of organizational operations (Sergiovanni, 2009). The emphasis and preoccupation with bureaucratic scientism and management perspectives has given way to the importance of value, moral, and ethical bases for educational leadership decision making. There is an increasing recognition that putatively value free administrative decisions and actions are actually “value-laden, even value-saturated enterprises(s)” (Hodgkinson, 1978, p. 122) that undergird our understanding of what Greenfield (1985, 1999), and others (Green, 1990) have articulated in more precise terms as <https://assignbuster.com/the-mauritius-institute-of-education-on-teachers-education-essay/>

the careful location of purpose and worth in things, or in other words “ moral education” and “ moral leadership.” This recognition of value-driven, moral leadership action, according to Hodgkinson (1978), is an “ administrative logic” of a new order.

The Ethic of the Profession and the Model for Promoting Students’ Best Interests (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2001, 2005; Stefkovich, 2006), recognizes moral aspects unique to the profession that are primarily client-based and highlights the inevitable internal struggle experienced by school leaders due to a wide variety of considerations and factors that seek to inform and influence their moral practice as school leaders. This existential struggle can be characterized as a phenomenon of intrapersonal moral discord experienced as part of the process of deciding ethically when faced with difficult moral choices centered on personal versus organizational and/or professional value discrepancy, described as a “ clashing of codes” within the framework. The professional ethic recognizes moral aspects unique to the profession of educational leadership and grounds the moral dimension of the profession on the monothetic injunction to “ serve the best interests of the student” (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2001, p. 23) whereby “ promoting the success of all students” (ISLLC, 1996, p. 8) by focusing on the needs of children (Walker, 1998).