Chapter 8
Leadership in the Formation and Change of School Culture

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Abstract Educational reform is essentially a cultural transformation process that requires organizational learning to occur: changing teachers is necessary, but not sufficient. Changing the organizational culture of the school is more imperative and indeed an urgent necessity. The culture of the education system as reflected in various schools must undergo radical change, with the main catalyst being the principals managing the process of formation, sustainability and change of the school culture. This paper has examined the internal and external factors influencing school culture especially the school founders, administrators and school history. Meanwhile key symbolic and cultural leadership roles of school principals were explored calling for the school principals to be role models as well as transformational leaders. Key mechanisms in management and change of school culture especially communication and decision making were equally examined. Lastly the paper engaged the nature of chaos and complexity that obtains in the process of school culture formation and change.

Keywords Leadership · School culture · Culture formation · Culture change · Chaos and complexity

8.1 Introduction

Culture is not something that occurs suddenly since its formation occurs within a certain time frame. For a strong school culture to occur at the expected level within a school, it depends on various conditions and factors. Among the main factors and conditions in the formation of a strong school culture include long-term togetherness of teachers as school community members, absence or relative lack of sub-cultures

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in the school, cultural attributes among members such as strong communication and interaction as well as the managers' cultural leadership.

The formation of a corporate culture in institutions and schools is quite a complicated process. Some researchers who have explored the issue, have approached the subject focusing more on managers in terms of creation of this culture, and its survival in strengthening it as well as necessary attention to the role of managers in changing the culture. In this process much of the research focuses on the role of school leaders in the management of school culture change.

A common culture is produced and is therefore a product of people who share common cultural assumptions and values. The culture in question therefore is produced, shared and reproduced by people. Thus people don't just form mechanically or as adaptive transfer mechanisms per se but are also conceived as a builder and converter of such cultures. In this process, however, some factors may be more decisive and effective than others. The main determinants in the development of school culture may be discussed in two sections as internal and external factors. Among the external factors; the social, cultural, political and economic environment of the family within the school setting may be mentioned.

The occurrence of a corporate culture is subject to the presence of an interacting group of people and is a long term association above everything else. We cannot speak of groups of people interacting with each other without talking of a common culture among them. In the absence of a continuous and stable teaching staff and a leader in a school, a strong corporate culture cannot occur. Each school member carries the external environment and the cultural properties of the same environment which are added to the cultural aspects in the school's history. The culture of the external environment can also be developed through similar or different cultural properties. In the formation of a school culture, internal effects related with the environment, the founders, owners, leaders, employees, including the organization's history can be handled under certain titles.

8.2 School Founders

In the creation and sustenance of a powerful and corporate culture change, the founders, leaders and heroes are considered to hold an important place. The founders and managers in particular, are a key determinant of the dominant values expected in an organization. Those who establish a school are expected to have dominant values as well as some views, opinions and above all a vision. In this respect, some values that prevail during the first opening of the school are a foundation of the school culture. Vision which is about what you want to accomplish and achieve by providing a consensus on common goals, is an important factor in the formation of organizational culture. This situation can be seen as more significant in private schools. If the technical or social characteristics and values of the founders are highlighted, the resulting culture can be different. Naturally, every founder does not have the same effect in the formation of organizational culture.

Researchers, who have examined the basic field of organizational cultural formation and this culture's historical formation process at the same time, look at culture change as a complex phenomenon. However, research shows that organizational culture changes over time. In this process managers and leaders are seen as key determinants of cultural change.

8.3 School Principals

Besides the founders of the school, school principals can also be effective and decisive in the formation of culture in a school. There is a striking emphasis on the role of top management in impacting the process of cultural formation and change. Institutional practices and decisions as well as a number of issues adopted by the managers are based on core values and beliefs. However, school culture is not an ideology of school principals.

Administrators may consider some cultural criteria in the selection of personnel in schools, but for principals in state schools in Turkey there is no such authority. In order to realize organizational socialization there is need to highlight and strengthen values that can be adopted in the in-service educational activities held. Whether the innovation and risk of managers is there or not, whether new ideas and suggestions are supported or not, reward and punishment practices as well as attitudes in the crisis affect the formation of school culture.

According to the research conducted on this issue, the manager is seen as the most important actor in the development of school culture. Administrators can create a shared vision for an institution inside and outside the school and should be able to integrate them within shared values. However, two major problems in the manager's cultural leadership are emerging. It is difficult to find a clear answer to these questions in modern society: Which norms and values should managers strengthen? How should they form them? In multicultural societies it is not so easy to answer these questions.

In a school, administrators must first recognize and evaluate the dominant culture, and they must then develop strategies for strengthening or transforming the culture. Leaders need to know the cultural resources, the school's history and the region's characteristics. In this process, the administrator can see the positive or negative effects of the factors mentioned on the existing culture. Thus, evaluating the existing condition of the culture helps to determine a culture that supports positive values, norms and traditions. Accordingly, attempts towards strengthening and transformation of culture can dully start.

8.4 School History

Each school has a historical and cultural past. The cultural history of the school provides a deep social and symbolic meaning; the future of the school is also built on this culture. This creates an archive of the school's values and cultural memory and builds a bridge between past and future of the school. Besides some photos of the written history of the school's past, articles and videos also form the cultural collections of the school. In addition to these, there is an oral archive belonging to the school's history.

A school's history is important for the school's versatility. School culture is a resource that is born, developed and continuously fed within the history of the school. The written as well as the unwritten myths about the school create an institutional memory lane for the school archive. Successful schools pride themselves in having a long history and past. The institutionalization process which is briefly referred to as the organization's traditions and values is in short the process of formation of institutional culture. The described legends related to the founding of the school like problems and crises encountered overtime and how they were dealt with, requires reinforcement of institutional values within the school community members such as; founders, managers, employees and leaders as well as creating some successful memories like stories and legends which can be used especially as a means of socialization and integration.

In order to form a strong school culture at the expected level in a school, various conditions must be appropriate in terms of the internal school environment. Organizational actors are subjects of the organizational culture.

8.5 Leadership in the Formation of School Culture

The relationship between organizational culture and leadership is a hotly debated topic in the literature on whether these relations would supply a complex situation. This may be viewed from the various roles of the school principal abound. However, the basic roles expected from the school principal are; to determine meaningful school aims and values; to prepare a working and learning environment regularly; to create a strong school culture and a positive school climate for learning; to ensure the effectiveness of the school; to take actions that will improve the performance of teachers and students. The school principal therefore has the power to influence many cases related with the school.

There is emphasis on the new conceptualization of leadership and the subjective aspects in the image of leadership. Typically, when attempting to describe an administrator with more rational and objective concepts, leadership is defined with an emphasis on more subjective concepts. Understanding cultural leadership behaviors of school principals, school culture formation, influence, change and transformation may be listed as management functions. In this context, conceptualization of cultural

and symbolic leadership comes to the fore. In school culture studies, school administrators are conceptualized in the context of school culture associated with the main leadership styles such as, wide cultural leadership, ethical leadership, transformational leadership and instructional leadership.

Just like in social life, symbols constitute an important dimension of school management and leadership life. One of the principle symbols of the administrator as a leader is that he is expected to focus on the symbolic aspects of the school more than daily routine work. Some of the metaphors about the school and the administrator explain how a school administrator interprets their roles and those of the school, how they conceptualize the school and how their values and beliefs are reflected in their practices. Accordingly, a school administrator himself can be seen as a gate keeper, a bureaucrat or instructional leader.

Language and discourse analysis provide clues about the dominant values that should be held in schools. From this perspective, some school administrators may prefer discourse in general written rules, routines and implementation of procedures, i.e. schools may be a source of inspiration and excitement for stakeholders to concentrate more on future results by condensing the prevalent challenges in the process.

8.6 Symbolic and Cultural Leadership Roles of School Principals

Leadership is a process of influence and the most important tool in this concerned influence is language. Studies in school leadership indicate that the most important role of leadership is determining the school's vision, mission and values as well as strengthening the communication process to other members in the transfer and adoption of the created school culture.

Traditional management science's language in general is based on rational and logical concepts. In this view, subjectivity, sensuality and individuality are not included. Whereas leadership is irrational, it is an overriding concept with subjective and emotional aspects. In recent years, research on leadership focuses on the relationship between language and leadership and emphasis has been put on conceptualizing the subjective leadership with mental, moral and spiritual leadership.

School principals are a symbol generator and symbol manager. Symbols are powerful tools in the process of building school culture as well as school-related organizational change, innovation, restructuring and transformation. School administrators can have a significant impact on the words and actions with messages that are distributed, interactions, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors. If leadership is briefly seen as a process of influence, managers can communicate key messages via symbols; symbols can bring common sense, strengthen school culture and add new items to the culture.

The principal as a symbol builder: A school administrator uses a group of symbols that may also lead to the formation of new symbols. The place where the

administrator's room is located in the school, objects forming a room's decoration and their arrangement reflect the values considered important by the manager. Some administrators may prefer the immediate entrance of the school; while some may prefer a quiet, secluded location as a management room. In the rooms of administrators, objects such as a variety of student activities, trophies won in various competitions, awards received, artistic posters, photos, etc. can be found. These send a number of messages to the audience as to what aspects are important in terms of the school as an organization. Staff and students pay attention to the awards and values highlighted by the administrator especially during organizational or social crises.

The principal as a role model: Administrators themselves can be the symbol itself, the symbol leader, cultural hero and role model. The administrator's age, gender, philosophy of life, reputation, attitude, temperament, office furnishings give an important message to the members forming the school community. The administrator's coming to school in the morning, walking around the school, visiting classes, greetings to people encountered and talking to them are important symbolically. The administrator's performed actions, while meaningful to members containing a number of messages on the school's values and permits, at the same time have symbolic content. The forms of behavior the administrator used previously at the school, the issues focused on and paid attention to, books read, magazines, newspapers and daily routine will give clues on the values he emphasizes to others.

The principal as a communicator and orator: The principal defines the objectives of the school in a meaningful way and emphasizes them with appropriate messages to the members of the school community. He adds power and an emotional content to the messages. In the communication process he uses a strong symbolic language. The principal creates significant value in the messages to ensure effective communication and thus adds different forms of language to the symbolic content such as the use of; stories, analogies and metaphors. Metaphors, analogies and stories describe the emotions and facts of certain comments.

Written communication used in the management language, the language contained in the words, the text format and appearance, declared success in the school, determination of certain school-related written rules and regulations send a powerful message to others. Written materials give hints about the values of the administrator. In order for the administrator to influence the members of the school community in school life he can use some words, metaphors, slogans, myths, stories, jokes, epigrams, posters, newsletters, clothes, gestures and facial expressions. These can strengthen attitudes, behavior, values and emotions related to the image of a certain school.

That way, the symbols in question provide integration among members constituting the school community and may also provide joint effort to the members towards realizing shared objectives and actions.

The principal as a social actor: Leading executives stress the importance of the values during rites and ceremonies or important occasions organized at the school. Activities such as ceremonies provide common experiences to people in the school,

when the shared values are stressed they become a sacred rite and the shared beliefs and values in the school are consequently reinforced. Meeting days, tea parties, dinner meetings, opening and closing ceremonies, retirement ceremonies, are important opportunities to emphasize a set of values in a school. These actions help to meet sharing, socialization and integration purposes. Meanwhile in these activities, achievements are celebrated, approved behavior and situations are highlighted, and heroism and success stories about the school are told. Stories about the administrator or described by the administrator develop the audience's view about what they should expect from members of the school community and how and what should be the values and beliefs of the school system. Behaviors related to symbolic leadership vary according to the school, type of school and student characteristics. Besides, several studies on leadership behaviors in schools have also revealed some differences and similarities between managers in terms of behavior.

The principal as a transformational leader: Research on transformational leadership shows that a significant share of the leaders in question creates a vision that inspires them and their success. In contemporary discussions leaders are seen as an inspiration for the group members, being a source of enthusiasm and motivation for the group, following the group's belief, sensitive to the beliefs and values of the group as defined by the integration features towards the establishment of a different world and good moral values that can create new community around these values. In the background of such discussions, the language of the leaders holds an important position. In this respect the leader's language and concepts depicted in this language world are extremely important in terms of followers. Formal, official rhetoric which is far away from passion is not expected to have an impact on the audience. In trying to adapt to change in a changing society, a leader has to undertake an important role, being a role model for others, and is required to establish ethical and moral standards. The basic function of managers and leaders in the school is specifically the management of meaning and feelings.

Symbolic leadership applies in all contexts, literal, words, actions and cannot be discussed in terms of awards only. Behaviors related with symbolic leadership vary according to the characteristics of the school, school staff and students. Besides, several studies on leadership behaviors in schools have also revealed some differences and similarities between managers in terms of behavior.

8.7 Managing Cultural Change in Schools

Cultural change is a subject much discussed between anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists. Culture shows a special interest in cultural issues of change which are closely related to issues of theory and research about change. Cultural change includes changes that occur in the cultural beliefs, values, spiritual elements as well as the abstract or concrete and tangible items.

Culture, may differ from society to society and from organization to organization and has the ability to change over time. However, this change may sometimes occur

naturally based on internal and external impacts. Some cultural elements of change can be relatively easy. Rapid change in elements of material culture is accepted more than the elements of spiritual culture. However, some cultural characteristics in particular beliefs and values can take a long time to change.

Organizational change and process of change are cultural and symbolic aspects. An organizational change program is a process which substantially comprises cultural characteristics. In a school; strategy, purpose, structure, process and procedure changes are made in relation to the changing patterns in the minds of existing models and symbolic meanings within the school system. Institutional change also means substitution of an organization's sedentary habits, traditions, legends, images, etc. However, they are not easy to change. These cultural elements are emotion and value-laden.

According to some of the conclusions that can be drawn from the discussions of research related to school culture and change management, not all aspects of school culture change the same way, some are short term while others are long term changes. The most important task in this regard falls on the administrator. Management has the power to influence the formation of a strong school culture especially in the newly established school. This is because some traditions and subcultures have not yet occurred in the school. In such an environment management has an important opportunity of creating a strong corporate culture for realizing the school aims. However, if a school in the past didn't have a successful leader and/or employees were not satisfied with the existing cultural values and norms, the subsequent leader is expected to engage initiatives to change the existing culture. A principal is not one who follows only the values and norms he found at a school, but should be someone who adds new ones as well as changing the input where necessary.

In the process of cultural change, constituents of cultural change should be considered together. Although it may be easier to change items appearing in culture change, changing beliefs and values may be more difficult. Organizational beliefs and values can be highlighted according to the beliefs and values of the culture forming part of the more superficial organizational symbols and practices to deal with some changes. Various studies done on the subject show that some of the symbols of organizational and managerial practices can be used to redirect the energies of members of the organization in order to influence school culture and change. In this regard the duty of the manager is to find and use cultural items corresponding with their situation and institutions.

Schools are complex social systems formed from such components as purposes, rules, and regulations and surrounded by more networks and symbolic meaning than the formal system. Amendments to the formal structure of the school cannot bring about much change in the lives of the teaching staff and students. In the process of restructuring the school, there is need to concentrate on the symbolic domain and to create new symbols and mental models which are built primarily to change some habits in the school system. Policy makers concerned with education and school reform are more focused on the structural elements related to the school. Due to this, the results expected from the change efforts are not that much.

In many countries, schools and educational objectives, educational programs, roles and responsibilities in the school have been reformed during the past decades. In this framework studies conducted on various topics such as; standards, qualifications, performance improvement, accountability; standardized tests to measure student achievement oriented with an emphasis on the development of cultural and symbolic aspects of school life are ignored. However, the process of change in a school covers many aspects of the school such as changes in working forms, habits, values and norms, teaching methods and techniques.

The most important task in the process of changing school culture falls on the managers. Research shows that a school principal as an instructional leader has a key role in the creation of an effective school. For this, the principal as a cultural hero and role model should first and foremost create a unified and integrated culture within the school. School principals, on the one hand cherish existing cultural values, norms and symbols in schools to ensure continuity of the culture of the school and the school itself, if necessary however, they make changes to the state of affairs in the school. Different sub-cultures can co-exist in a school and the school's achievement of its goals can be realized through benefitting from cultural differences and diversity. In this process, the principal who allows one of the sub-cultures to prevail within the school and the exclusion of other cultures opens up to various conflicts and results in terms of the school. For this, the school principal must create an enveloping common culture in order to mobilize the various sub-cultures in the same direction.

8.8 Strategies for Management of School Culture

Literary, it is not possible to map out a standard way for school administrators in the management of culture. However, it may be said that administrators can take advantage of a number of mechanisms in this regard. The duty of managers is to select the most appropriate mechanisms for use according to them or develop some new ways and methods outside of these. By scanning the relevant literature to the topic, some of the mechanisms that may contribute to the formation, effectiveness and change of school culture are listed below:

Role Modeling and Leadership: The school principal as an instructional leader of the school should have basic mission and goals and must provide leadership to other members about the expected dominant values and norms of the school. The principal must be a role model for other members of the school community about new values, behaviors, thoughts and actions. In this context, the school administrators must be forward-thinking, innovative, motivating, engaging, risk takers, those who can cope with uncertainty, problem solvers, those who have high expectations, flexible and tolerant.

People's behaviors may be more effective than words. Administrators can be role models and can influence culture if they use some other forms of behavioral aspects or cultural symbols such as physical appearance, dress code, clothing, gestures, facial expressions, gait, posture and sitting styles.

Information and Communication Process: The school administrator uses various tools in influencing culture particularly oral, written and verbal communication methods. One of the means of communication is language. Language as a system of symbols is a tool of basic management, control and influence. The verbal communication manager will choose words, terms, concepts and metaphors that can affect certain values and can create a new school image. Metaphors are one of the most referenced forms of expression in verbal communication. In everyday life, individuals often refer to the metaphors in oral and written expression. For example; schools, factories, family, prison, free markets, hospitals, clinics. These metaphors affect the image of the school and the relationships in the school. Similar metaphors are used by school members to describe themselves and in qualifying students.

One of the requirements for building a strong culture is to have a common language and a series of concepts. In order for the administrator to influence the school culture, he has to create a new discourse and image of the school with a new language and series of concepts.

Changes in Institutional Structure: Organizational structure and distribution and use of power in this structure may vary according to culture. Organizational structure influences culture. The form of organizational structure created, some organizational processes and practices adopt a management philosophy that reflects the basic assumptions about human nature adopted by the manager. In an organization, topics such as the manager—subordinate relations, decision making, communication and audit management create the basic assumptions, time and form of organizational structure, organizational processes and applications and hence affect the culture of the organization. If people see dominant assumptions about human nature in a school as a good asset, then the creation of organizational structure and hierarchy are expected to be less centralized. In contrast, if there is more involvement, more autonomy and devolution, less power and distance in the relations between leader—subordinate as well as giving greater importance to multi-directional communication, then distant supervision can be expected to be preferred.

Management and Use of Symbols: Just as schools shape people's lives, people shape the life of the school. They give direction to the culture as an important element and its symbols. School administrators should strive to understand and analyze the world meaning of the school. In this context, in order for a leader to improve the quality of school life he has to create new meanings and symbols; he should also use symbols as a control tool, as a means of motivation and influence as well as organizational change management and leadership. According to some researchers organizational change process is not something else but a transformation process which carries symbolic and ritualistic features.

Use of Stories and Legends: Symbols are tools that can be frequently used both in the creation and transfer of a culture as well as its transformation. In this context, corporate ceremonies, heroes, stories are used as a tool of cultural transformation. School-related stories, memories, legends; are some of the tools managers can use to influence organizational culture. Leaders encourage positive stories and legends that are told about the school inside and outside school. School culture is strengthened

when the core values of the school are well described and followed to the letter. The heroes of these stories and legends create role models for members of the culture, represent the core values, and encourage integration, success and competition. Each school would be expected to have some potential hero. Most importantly, this hero is kept alive in a vivid manner. In order for managers to create an effective and an excellent school as well as a strong school culture, they have to take into account the role of the heroes, train the heroes and cherish them.

Ceremonies and Meetings: The ceremonies and meetings are basic elements of organizational life and organizational culture just as in everyday life. Many daily behaviors in school organization carry a ceremonial and ritualistic character. The school's daily, weekly, yearly, opening and closing ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, school participation, separation and retirement ceremonies, balls, fairs, various festivals, days and weeks regarding the commemoration and celebration ceremonies, speeches made, sung anthems and songs etc. constitute important parts of the school culture.

Ceremonies and meetings as monitoring and control tools are the basic means that can be used by the school administration to influence, change, integrate and make placement for new values in culture. Organizations and schools with strong organizational culture at the same time have well-organized and effective meetings and ceremonies.

Regulation of the Physical Environment: One of the tools that managers need in order to have a major influence on culture is their office as well as some arrangements to be made in the physical environment of the school. A change laden school administrator can affect school culture by making some changes in the physical environment of the school. Accordingly, a number of materials used in regulating the school environment image possess cultural meanings. For example, the location of the executive room, the arrangement of the room, forms of decoration materials, a physical symbol and each one of these reflects a number of meanings, messages and contains a sense of the administrator's management philosophy. In a school, offices, classrooms, workshops, hallways, playgrounds, materials used in the decoration and furnishings that make up the physical environment of the school set up by the administrator; reflect and influence the culture. In this context, school-related exhibitions, newspapers, paintings, slogans, logos, posters, uniforms, colors, badges, emblems, pennants, etc. constitute a part of the school culture.

Education and Socialization Programs: It is important that training and development of employees to improve their work be held in the school. In-service training carried out under names such as adaptation to work, internships, and staff development forms part of the educational activities, organizational learning and the process of organizational socialization. Organizational learning or socialization process is in a sense, the process by which organizational culture is learned. In a school, there is participation in educational activities such as the new accession ceremony for teachers; stories are told at these events, there would be heroes, and all these are important tools for learning school culture. Providing those working in the school with confidence and motivation for change can be achieved through training and acclimatization means.

Personnel Selection Process: The school administrator's power in personnel selection is extremely limited. However, it can be said in this regard that managers in private educational institutions have more authority. In the selection of staff, schools are expected to search for other qualities other than professional qualifications of the personnel concerned. One of these relates to the corporate culture of the staff who should be well equipped to adapt to the dominant values of this culture. In the selection of staff knowledge, skills and abilities are taken into consideration. The qualities possessed are assessed in view of the school and those with the appropriate values are selected.

Decision Making Process and Criteria: Decision making process, is a process of making a choice between alternatives in problem-solving. There are many variables that influence the decision making process. Prevailing or dominant values are an important determinant of school management's decision making on various issues of corporate culture. Decision making process is influenced by the values of the decision-makers. Also in the decision making process cultural characteristics affected by the decision should be taken into consideration. Organizations may encounter various crises and conflicts. In such cases, decisions of administrators are extremely important. The criteria adopted in this decision affect culture. In crisis periods the administrator's attitudes are seen among the factors that influence and strengthen culture.

Administrative Practices: Organizational strategies, policies, routines and procedures, assessment criteria, promotion processes, award—promoting changes made in systems and control systems provide for a cultural change. Culture should also be considered in the managerial practices carried out by school management in schools. The selected methods should be empowering and developers of culture.

Culturally appropriate reward and incentive systems, representing an ideal culture support, and performance evaluation systems take place in this context. In application of issues such as incentives, performance evaluation and reward-punishment, the importance and extent of assumptions and values adopted by managers may be different. The implementation of the recently adopted different criteria can give rise to different matters relating to organizational cultures. Apart from these, time management can be utilized more in other ways such as job rotation, assignment and relocation.

Create a Learning School: Organizational learning generally refers to the continuous improvement of organizational processes and products as well as transfer of knowledge into action. A learning school is a result of having the competence of the people in the school well developed. Organizational learning is an ongoing process. For people the moment you stop learning, living also ceases to exist. This also applies to a school. Because schools are defined as living social organisms, they have to meet the changing expectations of being sensitive to environmental changes in order to survive and adapt to change. This kind of school learns quickly and adapts as quickly as possible. Building a learning school is a responsibility issue of the managers.

People learn from individual life and experiences, observations and other ways. Just as it is about learning in general, is also not possible to identify the best method

for organizational learning. One of the ways of organizational learning is learning from mistakes. But what is most important is to be aware of organizational errors. Otherwise, if organizations are not aware of the errors, these errors will constantly repeated and consequently extend the habit. Another way of developing a model of learning is through imitation. This is premised on the view that one of the most important tools associated with organizational learning is organizational symbols.

A leader in organizational learning is supposed to be a good learner, teacher and role model. To be able to talk about organizational learning in an organization leaders should learn first. As a result of this learning leaders must be able to modify the necessary understanding and application of their management. For this to happen, an effective learning environment and climate needed for organizational learning must be created. Leaders should facilitate organizational learning, they should keep the roads accessing information open, and they should support efforts at development of new strategies, methods and techniques.

8.9 Chaos and Complexity in Building a Positive School Culture

Education in one form or another has been an essential ingredient contributing to the cultural and physical survival of communities for millennia in an oftentimes harsh and inscrutable arctic environment. The accumulated knowledge systems, worldviews, and ways of knowing derived from first-hand engagement with the community are integrated into the fabric of the societies and passed on seamlessly from one generation to the next in the course of everyday life. Education is thus an integral part of a self-sustaining cultural system (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2003). School culture therefore, does not only stand out as challenging but may actually turn out to be chaotic and complex if systems are not well planned and managed by all those in charge.

There is always a claim that schools are home to a "culture of chaos and disregard for authority." In such schools it becomes hard to manage school affairs from learners to the staff itself and every school system may fall out of hand. It would thus be imperative to think of building a school culture that is quite appealing to all systems in the school.

Nanavati and McCulloch (2003) identify a number of aspects attached to complexity of building a positive school culture. The principals and other stakeholders in the school system ought to be abreast with the same lest they fail to put across a tangible influence on school culture:

Workload and Resources: Many challenges are faced by schools and administrators as they try to build and maintain a positive culture. Time, priority of other issues in the school, mandated government initiatives like standardized testing and the skills of the team members all factor into the success of a school. Developing a positive school culture is not a process that happens quickly. It takes time to create a

foundation of shared beliefs. Specific and strategic planning is therefore needed by administration; this can be provided by a proper cultural leadership strategy.

Isolation and Need for Training: Isolation in the job is another concern and principals emphasize the need for training and mentorship in the role. Principals who are new to the role need the opportunity to network with those more experienced. Otherwise there are high chances the principals will be lost in the technicalities of school culture.

Staff Turnover: Principals also worry about turnover among team members and note the need for stability. An effective administrative team takes time to develop and rapid turnover hurts the desire to make positive inroads in school culture.

Maintaining Optimism: Maintaining optimism and dealing with staff negativity is indeed a challenging aspect for all administrators in varying school settings. Bringing a staff on side through a change process is difficult but very rewarding.

Alexander (2011) thus contends that dealing with the complexities of integration in cultural diverse school settings requires a holistic approach. The development of educational programs and curricula that enhance awareness, knowledge, and skills for learners is vital if schools are to provide culturally relevant, respectful, and affirming quality teaching-learning environments.

To that end, the development of culturally sensitive teaching, learning and intervention strategies, as well as professional training needs to take place. It is important that the latter actions should be structured along the lines of awareness, knowledge, skills development and an awareness of cultural diversity. This can only be realized through an effective leadership strategy in the schools in order to form, sustain and change the school culture where needed.

8.10 Conclusions

Within the school system, the roles of the administrator, teacher, and student should be redefined. Administrators should see themselves as a consultant according to teachers and teachers too according to the students; the manager himself/herself should have power, the teacher himself/herself should endeavor to find correct answers to students' questions and they should not be seen as a validator. As teachers use various methods they should engage efforts that help to develop the students' own abilities, setting their own goals, identifying as well as reaching these goals either alone or jointly to produce creative ideas of the highest quality. Diagnosis, recognition, comprehension should be used as purposive measuring instruments by the teachers; if not the ultimate control of student learning should not be considered. Some of the educational goals should also be redefined. As noted by leading scholars in the field of education, it seems to me that modern schools are in crises around the world. In order to overcome these crises, we need to redefine the roles of schools in the context of larger societal arrangements.

Many of the social problems experienced in modern society are concerned with understanding the meaning of values. Above all, the world meaning of the school

has to be rebuilt whereof the main goal should be the central area of values education from student-centered education to "human-centered education". Schools stack with which knowledge is transferred to the learners and places that prepare students for exams should be removed. The school where people are formatted should be reformed; they should not be places where mind formatting takes place. Schools, have to be transformed or converted into environments where people develop themselves, their interests and discover their talents. The sole aim of education should not be to prepare students for specific exams; exams which simply aim at enabling students to access higher vocational schools which provide a training element. The success of the school should not be considered basing on or limited to academic scores taken at the examination level. Exams should be seen as tools that enable people to recognize and explore themselves. In other words, schools need to redefine their traditional roles in light of the present societal and cultural changes that shape people's life.

A school is a significant place for students; an attempt should therefore be made so that learning becomes enjoyable for students. Schools are annoying places for students, the period spent in lessons is perceived as a waste of time, this means that there are serious problems related to school and education that need to be thought about. The crisis in schools essentially the crisis of meaning, is a cultural crisis. The origins of this crisis are based on very old tendencies. Therefore school leaders should be able to challenge existing school culture for the betterment of next generations.

The current crisis in contemporary society and education is one brought about by modernization and the values it produces. The perceptions of policy makers, practitioners, parents and adults about education and the school should be reconsidered. Politicians must stop viewing schools as places where individuals who have internalized the official ideology of the school are trained. Parents should stop viewing children's preparation for exams as a horse race. Schools should primarily be places where basic human and moral values must be internalized and the creation of a student's personality is experienced. School should be the place where values are learned and practiced.

Schools are physically similar. However, the culture, climate, people, traditions are unique to each school. Schools must abandon matching and standardizing according to each other. Each school is unique, distinct and has its own generic culture. School based relationships and the power of discourse relations based on dialogue and discourse format should be started. This relationship and the discourses should be understood basing on the main objectives of the school. Supportive and acceptance forms of discourse rather than exclusionary and defensive forms of discourse should be brought to the forefront.

Relations based on subject-object relationship between teachers and students should be abandoned in schools. A new relationship where students are actively involved in the whole process of school activities should be implemented. This kind of relationship is expected to bring about self-worth among the students. Schools themselves should be able to build their own authentic social facts. Rather than externally imposed policies, each school can develop their own policy which must

be transformed into relatively autonomous structure. Schools which aim at creating a self-taught, self-learning, self-controlled and socially responsible individual instead of externally controlled training of individuals and formation of schools should be considered. In sum, building a strong school culture in this era plays more important role than teaching and learning. Schools principals' role is to create and sustain a positive school culture.

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