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Micromanagement or macromanagement? Diagnostic procedures of management styles in the selected educational institutions – a pilot study

Mikrozarządzanie czy makrozarządzanie? Procedury diagnostyczne stylów zarządzania w wybranych placówkach oświatowych – badanie pilotażowe

Summary: The theoretical background for the article is derived from the review of the literature in the field of educational and general management theory, sociology of organizations, pedagogy as well as child development. The authors pursued a goal to diagnose the management style from the micro- and macro perspectives, based on a pilot study involving specifically designed in-depth interview. The key research focus was located around the role of people in charge and their management

functions in educational institutions. The selection of respondents was carried out on a non-randomized basis; the research sample included two school principals, one kindergarten director, and one person temporarily performing the functions of a school principal at the time of the interview. The research results have been discussed in relation to the current strategies of educational institution management science. The study findings made it possible to conclude that school managers prefer micromanagement, being more content with its seeming efficiency. The reluctance to introduce changes appears for the reason of "comfort" for the work of the whole school team. The selected strategy predetermines the fact that the performance on the ongoing tasks arising from the operation of schools is seen as more significant for both managers and employees than a long-term development policy aimed at the well-being of all the school stakeholders.

Streszczenie: Podstawy teoretyczne artykułu wywodzą się z przeglądu literatury z zakresu teorii zarządzania oświatą i zarządzania ogólnego, socjologii organizacji, pedagogiki oraz rozwoju dziecka w wieku szkolnym. Autorzy postawili sobie za cel zdiagnozowanie stylu kierowania z perspektywy mikro- i makrozarządzania na podstawie badania pilotażowego z udziałem czterech uczestników, którzy udzielili odpowiedzi na pytania specjalnie skonstruowanego pogłębionego wywiadu. Kluczowy punkt badań skupiono wokół roli osób kierujących instytucjami edukacyjnymi i ich funkcji kierowniczych. Dobór respondentów został przeprowadzony na zasadzie nielosowej; w próbie badanych osób znalazło się dwóch dyrektorów szkół, jeden dyrektor przedszkola oraz jedna osoba czasowo pełniąca w czasie wywiadu funkcję dyrektora szkoły. Wyniki badań omówiono w odniesieniu do aktualnych strategii nauki o zarządzaniu instytucjami edukacyjnymi. Na podstawie wyników badań stwierdzono, że dyrektorzy szkół preferują mikrozarządzanie, są oni bardziej zadowoleni z jego pozornej skuteczności. Niechęć do wprowadzania zmian pojawia się ze względu na „komfort" pracy całego zespołu szkolnego. Wybrana strategia przesądza o tym, że realizacja bieżących zadań wynikających z funkcjonowania szkół jest postrzegana jako ważniejsza zarówno dla kadry kierowniczej, jak i pracowników niż długofalowa polityka rozwojowa skierowana na dobro wszystkich stakeholderów szkoły.

Introduction

Nowadays, management focuses on proper, efficient as well as low-cost practices in an enterprise, a place, where the most significant component is financial result (or profit). However, in the era of ubiquitous evaluation as well as the emphasis on the constant improvement of competence and efficiency, the elements of enterprise management are being incorporated into educational institutions, where managers adopt a variety of methods of exercising control. Educational institutions are increasingly becoming business oriented (non-public), where the needs and preferences of clients (students, children) become a significant factor in improving the quality of services. Therefore, managing an educational institution, i.e. a school, kindergarten, is an intricate task due to the fact that the perception of school and its functions has changed, with a specific focus on the approach to teaching and, above all, the awareness of parents as well as students regarding teaching methods and techniques. With ever increasing expectations, against the background of the tendency for reduction of the schooling working hours, parents become overburdened with responsibilities, unable to devote as much time to children upbringing as they would like. At the same time, there appear to be certain changes in teachers' roles and functions, making the educators spend a disproportionate amount of time on purely administrative tasks. In this respect, it is school principals who should apply efficient approaches to managing an educational institution. One of the possibilities is macromanagement, followed by micromanagement with the implementation of clear objectives and relationship-based management (team building) techniques. Therefore, there should be posed the key question: which management technique is the most efficient for each educational institution? Can it be applied from the perspective of both micro and macromanagement? The goal of this research is to provide answers to the aforementioned questions based on a pilot study carried out among the professionals who perform management functions in educational institutions, with the focus on their views concerning the preferred management style and its efficiency.

The concepts of micro- and macromanagement in educational settings

Micromanagement is one of the methods of managing both human and non-human resources of the enterprise, consisting of directing and controlling a person or a group of people with excessive or unnecessary supervision

or input. Micromanager is a person who assigns tasks while examining the effects of work progress, imposing a certain "vigilance" upon the process of performing the assignment, indicating who could complete it faster and better (Serrat, 2010, p. 3).

Such a type of management, characterized by scrupulously controlling people, may imply a lack of decision-making capacity among subordinates, forcing them to either implement imposed decisions or adopt recommended ones. During meetings or conversations, the micromanager demands constant progress notes, reports, or updates on their status. In addition, such "bosses" practise collecting materials, archiving them in binders, cabinets, or safes, with the explanation of this to be done for security reasons. Micromanagers stand for top-down decision-making along with a feeling of knowing how to complete the tasks of employees better than the staff themselves.

Micromanagers, therefore, can be characterized by the following features: lack of confidence in delegating responsibilities; involvement in the work assigned to others; depriving others from the possibility of making decisions; involvement in the work of others without prior consultation; supervision of the work of others with the expectation of continuous reporting; underestimating the work and commitment of others; application of a perfectionist approach to work and commitments based on the principle of 'do something well or do not do at all'; focusing on the irrelevant priorities, which often resulting in haste and a lack of time for performing their own tasks; cultivating demotivation among team members (Shuford, 2019, p. 37).

Furthermore, overly controlling individuals, typical in educational institutions and some corporations, cause disadvantages for the staff by holding numerous distracting meetings and imposing restrictions on conversations unrelated to work during working hours[1]. As a result, micromanagement can damage employee morale through excessive control, increase employee turnover, and induce feelings of being overworked and stressed in bosses themselves. According to K. Sumi, "cultural taboo is the workplace etiquette that many supervisors will conduct to avoid prosecution and protect their reputation. Although for several it is an appropriate title, there are misconceptions concerning what it means to be a true micromanager" (Sumi, 2016, p. 794).

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[1]   The situation is mostly noticeable in "total" institutions, such as research institutes or departments at universities, where the immediate superior supervises and controls the work of the team, monitoring the process of work completion.

Harry Chambers (2004) identifies certain templates of the discourse applied by micromanagers in the described situations: "I'm only trying to help"; "I'm only trying to be sure we're successful"; "I'm sharing my experience and knowledge. I'm just trying to make it easier"; "I just want to know what's going on"; "I'm only doing what is necessary to ensure success" (Chambers, 2004, p. 15).

It seems clear from the evidence above that micromanagement may negatively affect team performance, openness among employees, and horizontal and vertical trust between them due to faulty interpersonal communication, suspicion, and the incorrectly provided feedback. Micromanagement can have a deteriorating impact on the efficiency of innovation implementation by a team, constructive and critical thinking of its members. Managers of this style are referred as "control freaks", or "dream killers", who give rise to employee frustration, unpleasant working experience, being often passed on to the relations with the family members of the staff, which brings on a detrimental impact on the quality of work causing labor turnover (Serrat, 2010, p. 3). Therefore, micromanagement negatively affects the overall organization performance.

At the same time, it appears significant to emphasize that micromanagement is defined as a subjective concept, consequently, a distinction should be made between what can be considered as intervention by some individuals, while as support along with interaction by others. Participation, guidance, and cooperation may be seen as interference, while others would treat this policy as manipulation, and then some other people would believe it to be a decent pattern of behavior. Researchers indicate an extensive range of variations forming a gap between the polarized perceptions of micromanagement. "When someone is accused of micromanagement, the most frequent response is »I do not deal with micromanagement«" (Chambers, 2004, p. 14). At the same time, micromanagement cannot be blamed for being abusive, because the domain of abusers and bullies is characterized by totally different behavior patterns, such as ridicule, anger, shaming, groping, inappropriate phrases, deprecation, contempt, deliberate disrespect, demanding blind loyalty (Chambers, 2004, p. 21).

Micromanagement might trigger various issues for both micromanagers and their subordinates, where the most unfavorable ones include burnout, illusion of effectiveness, inability to discover solutions to issues quickly, the creation of bottlenecks, obstacles to transformation, and an inability to locate and provide support within the organization. These are the main reasons why the elimination of micromanagement in a company›s management style is

often recommended by human resource management professionals. Instead, the flexibility is suggested as an opportunity to implement different managerial techniques and strategies suitable for a variety of employees. Furthermore, it is recommended to transparently define specific, measurable, achievable, realistic goals for employees and set them in a timely manner. Suggestions to safeguard employees› autonomy in achieving the set goals are seen as appropriate for a sustainable and competitive enterprise; moreover, coaching methods are often welcomed to address certain issues within an organization (Limon & Dilekçi, 2020, 123–140).

Although micromanagement is usually considered destructive for employees, certain advantages can be singled out for a boss and the organization he or she leads. These are as follows: micromanagers often focus on eventually controlling the results, not other members of the team; they prepare subordinates to deal with possibly more difficult issues in the future; they believe that excessive guidance of team members in the time of innovation implementation should help them adopt the new working conditions and tasks efficiently; micromanagers are perceived as trustworthy as well as physically powerful individuals; in organizations where the staff require constant control and performance monitoring, micromanagers fulfill the function of encouragement to improve and perform better; their management approach ensures the avoidance of failure, poor performance, and guarantees customer satisfaction (Mishra et al., 2019, p. 2950).

Macromanagement, on the other hand, is defined as a more independent style of organizational leadership, where the manager (director) withdraws from controlling obligations by offering employees the freedom to perform within the scope of assigned duties. Such manager is often overshadowed by the team, offering greater autonomy for the employees, who in educational settings also include parents. The goal of the macro approach is to focus on the bottom line, ensuring better performance of the team by fostering greater confidence in the team, focusing more attention on the goal rather than the way to achieve it and the performance details, and exercising less control over the employees (Bucăloiu, 2019, p. 377).

Bearing in mind clear advantages of working with a macromanager, it is possible to single out certain side effects as well, such as the lack of management directives resulting in employees' neglect in performance of the tasks, disregard of the supervisor, blurring the boundaries between private and occupational issues at work (Levitas, 2013, p. 1069–1084). Leaders applying a macro style

sometimes are too negligent in achieving the mission of the institution, they delegate tasks too recklessly without in-depth analysis of the situation. In educational environments this may imply an excessive focus on results instead of values and the functions of the educational institution, where too much trust may discourage teachers to focus on performance efficiency in relation to the courses taught, leading, as a result, to the overall decline of school success from a long-term perspective. The excessive autonomy of employees, always subjective in nature, can be applied to the understanding of diligence in task performance, which may trigger chaos in documentation elaboration (e.g., plans and syllabuses) and management-staff paradigm communication patterns, often deprived of respect for the leader.

The presented analysis makes it reasonable to single out the unresolved issue: which should be the most appropriate management style applied by a principal, headteacher, or any other person performing managerial duties in an educational institution? The authors' practical experience as well as the literature review of the present research elaboration indicate the existence of certain anxiety among teachers generated by the notoriety of the bureaucratization of the teaching profession, the requirements of excessive reporting and the burden of students' progress evaluative activities. The regulations issued by the Ministry of Education and Science meant to govern the activities of educational institutions seem to fail to bring a solution in this respect. Therefore, we find it necessary to look for ways out of the complicated issue in the array of research provided by management science and find efficient tools that could be used for the benefit of educational institution maintenance and sustainability. To accomplish the mentioned task, we have decided to carry out a pilot study to take a deep insight into the preconditions of efficient management of an educational institution, identify the preferred management styles of school leaders and their perception by the teaching staff. This will further enable for the elaboration of appropriate management recommendations.

Research methodology

Management in an educational institution is commonly defined as exercising control over the operation of the educational institution, overseeing the investments performed, influencing the employed staff as well as the day-to-day operation of the premises, including management of the school property. Management of school facilities should be distinguished from general management

in education, which implies the consistent practice, where the local government employs essential resources (principal, teachers) to deliver the expected value in education to stakeholders, presented in the strategic documents of the local government as crucial educational priorities, while ensuring their implementation in accordance with the requirements of public finance discipline as well as economic principles of efficiency (Niedźwiecka, 2012, p. 2).

The cited above author singles out and analyzes six types of educational management models practiced in Polish educational institutions: managerial, entrepreneurial, competitive, democratic, centralized, and non-interfering (Niedźwiecka, 2012, p. 2).

Before analyzing the management styles of school principals, it seems significant to mention the necessary requirements for candidates to occupy this position. Specific qualifications are defined by the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of 11.08.2017 on the requirements for a person occupying the position of a principal and other managerial position in a public kindergarten, public elementary school, public secondary school (§ 1). The position of a principal may be occupied by a person who fulfills the following requirements:

1) holds a university degree of Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Engineering or equivalent, as well as pedagogical preparation and qualification for a teaching position in a kindergarten, school;
2) has accomplished a university or post-graduate degree in management or a qualification course in educational management conducted in accordance with the regulations of teacher training institutions;
3) has at least five years of experience as a school teacher or five years of experience as a university teacher;
4) has obtained: a) a good performance evaluation in the last five years of work or b) a positive performance evaluation in the last year or c) in the case of an academic teacher, a positive performance evaluation in the last four years of work in higher education (Lorens, 2021).

For the current research, four persons participated in the in-depth interview. Two respondents performed the functions of school principals. One person had just graduated from the university and obtained a degree in Educational Management by the time the study was carried out, and at the moment of this text preparation was running a kindergarten. The fourth interview participant performed the duties of the head of the educational institution. For anonymity reasons, in the study the masculine gender will be applied to all the

respondents, with the use of words "principal" and "manager". The research tool – non-standardized interview questionnaire – was specifically designed to achieve the research goals. The interview contained 22 questions and focused on the following research problems:

1) *Understanding the role that the principal/director performs in a modern educational institution.*
2) *Identification of the management type that has a negative impact on the working conditions as well as the atmosphere in the school.*
3) *Defining the leadership style as recommended by the respondents.*
4) *Clarifying the effects of excessive control, rationing of working time and direct supervision of tasks on school management.*

The data obtained were transcribed and grouped. The interview responses were not recorded, however immediately transcribed by means of the electronic medium and the application called Easy Recorder. Stefan Nowak stated that the primary function of a pilot study, otherwise known as a reconnaissance, is to obtain preliminary and incomplete knowledge in terms of the data the researcher seeks to obtain. Besides, the purpose of a pilot study is to confirm the convenience of research methods as well as tools applied in a certain environment (Nowak, 2007, p. 59). For this pilot study, the sample of four persons for the interviews was chosen as sufficient to verify whether the inquiries in the interview questionnaire were comprehensible and significant for the respondents (Zieliński, 2012, p. 15). In-depth piloting method was selected to determine whether the questions in the questionnaire provide the research relevant information.

The tasks of the pilot study were the following: 1) verification of the research problems in the studied communities; 2) verification of the research tool: evaluation of the questionnaire and its inquiries to establish contact between the researcher and the respondents; 3) determination of organizational as well as technical aspects of the interview: verification of the time necessary for interview implementation (commuting, conversation with a respondent), determination of costs, verification of the network of interviewers; 4) processing of the collected empirical data: preparation of instruction coding, decisions on result tables, and methods of statistical verification of the data if applicable (Gruszczyński, 1999, p. 101).

Research results

During the interview, the authors attempted to find solutions to the afore-mentioned research problems. The inquiries of the interview were grouped around each research problem them.

To obtain the data to be able to solve the first research problem (***understanding the role that the principal/director performs in a modern educational institution***), interview questions related to the functions and duties the respondents perform as the leaders in their educational institutions were posed. Two of the interviewed participants administer direct control over subordinates in terms of duties, regulations, and missions, regardless of the function at school (teachers, or as described by some of the respondents "employees 'at the blackboard'", as well as the service personnel and school counselor). The respondents mentioned frequent/regular conversations in their office as well as requesting reports on activities as a confirmation of direct control over a subordinate.

When asked whether they practice tracking the activities of employees to eliminate errors and shortcomings, school headmasters responded they trust employees, however, verify the accuracy of task performance on a regular basis by monitoring the progress of work. One respondent shared a similar opinion, describing their strategy as "trust, but verify". The tendency to exert a certain control over employees was explained by the educational institution director's responsibility for any risks and dangers that could take place on the institution premises, and the safety a school or kindergarten must guarantee to the pupils and their parents.

All the interviewed managers stated that they sometimes monitor the working hours of their employees, but the chores of teachers as well as the other employees of the facility are commonly monitored due to the schedule of lessons as well as the work cycle of the school. In addition, classroom hospitalizations are organized, both informed and non-informed, canteens for cleaning supplies are checked as well as the state of cleanliness of various parts of the school buildings. The directors and school principals occasionally undertake these duties independently or in cooperation with their deputies.

In all the institutions represented by the study participants, the employees perform their duties according to job descriptions. When some complementary ideas come up, the subordinates should seek approval from the supervisor (the principal or the headteacher). This implies quite a limited autonomy in certain areas of decision-making. At the same time, the interviewees emphasized that

the staff are encouraged to introduce new methods, classroom techniques or new tools without consulting management personnel.

Looking for solutions for the second research problem, with a goal to *identify the management type that has a negative impact on the working conditions as well as the atmosphere in the school*, we found it difficult to obtain the data from the respondents. The interviewed school administrators indicated the necessity to balance between the control-imposing manner of management and the democratic one. However, by asking certain questions, it was possible to derive predominantly the elements of control-imposing management strategies. The interviewed school principals pointed to their direct responsibility in monitoring the deadlines of institutional activities, checking schedules, assignments, and tutoring deadlines.

At the same time, there was a mention of the need to reduce the distance between the levels of the school hierarchy, demonstrating care and support for employees from the management staff. This is usually practiced by means of appreciating the work done by the subordinates, offering financial rewards for outstanding performance, organizing integration activities, or vacation trips, which significantly help raise the morale of the staff. Showing interest and care about the employee's family, living and financial situation was mentioned as a factor that increases the cooperation possibilities, although none of the respondents named the relations with the subordinates as those typical between friends. Generally, the respondents possess information about the marital and family status of their staff, still, they describe the relationships by the word "acquaintances" rather than friendships. Depending on the acquaintance duration, confidence is greater and affects the quality of contacts in schools. One respondent pointed out that relatively older employees enjoy more trust from the school staff, whereas the opposite view is held by students who perceive younger teachers as an opportunity to introduce a "breath of fresh air", because it is them who are more proactive in implementing innovative methods, techniques, and technology rich practices. Therefore, school leaders view younger employees as those who are ready to transform, adopt new educational methods and resources, and are more willing to develop professionally. To encourage the staff to gain appropriate professional experience, the interviewed administrators organize competitions for the title of "The best teacher", special awards (jubilee awards), congratulatory letters or appreciation expression at school meetings.

The study participants were asked about the job satisfaction of their staff. The data obtained indicate that their employees are often frustrated with the

lack of job satisfaction, but it is the socio-economic situation in the country that should be blamed for such a condition (no salary increases), very few chances for getting promoted. An additional stressor producing anxiety among the respondents' institution staff was the situation with education popularity in the country as well as the decline in confidence in the teaching profession in Poland, which negatively affects the psychological comfort of the employees. The interviewed managers could not identify opportunities for transformation in this regard that would be possible to gain on the level of the managed enterprise (the school, the kindergarten. No discussions were organized by the managers on this issue as well as no employees were inquired to express their opinions in relation to the possibility of improving the current situation of teachers in Poland.

To *define the leadership style as recommended by the school leaders*, which constituted the next research problem of the current study, the respondents were asked whether they apply direct authority or allow autonomy in their management style. The answers obtained indicate certain conservative strategies in school management policies, where school employees are granted autonomy in their class-related activities (methods applied), which, however, is prone to occasional revision, especially during the analysis of the course plan of a specific subject, or the overall school mission and strategy modification. At the same time, the school leaders mentioned delegation tasks, setting up committees, and organizing teams, but the members for those teams are usually selected by the principals. It is also their responsibility to suggest on-call duties, schedules, send for regular professional development programs, training, and additional courses to improve skills, to set dates for pedagogical council meetings or parent-teacher conferences.

The interviewed school administration professionals usually assign management tasks on their own, while some strategic assignments and issues related to teaching procedures and methodologies are discussed during school meetings, pedagogical council meetings, and meetings with parents. At the same time, the decisions expressed at such meetings are not always incorporated by the school leaders – they retain the right to reject suggestions. This indicates the reluctance of the school managers to delegate certain tasks to other school personnel and administer autonomy in decision-making processes.

When asked about the preference of building teams to perform specific tasks or focusing on the details which should require management duties of the supervisor, the respondents opted for the idea of assigning certain tasks

to individuals whose responsibility is to report on the ongoing task completion directly to the school manager, providing the necessary evidence and documentation.

The interviewees were asked about the strategies of building trust in their organizations. The responses obtained indicate a preference for loyalty from the staff to the supervisor, commitment to work and assigned duties, respect for students and their parents, rational treatment of work based on a proper analysis of the conducted courses. The school leaders singled out school diversity as one of the most difficult issues to tackle, which requires adopting comprehensible school rules, following which should be constantly controlled and monitored, so that the institution is comfortable for all parties – the teachers, students, and their parents. Disputes are usually resolved at the teacher-principal level without the involvement of third parties.

All school leaders interviewed stated the significance of satisfying the needs and preferences of students and their parents as the main customers of the school services. This fact empowers the parents with some possibilities to influence the management strategy of school leaders by voicing the needs during Parent Council meetings where the "class triplets" (the three deputies elected by the majority of parents in each class) make decisions, assign or accomplish tasks related to class functioning (class trips, games, holidays and celebrations). At the same time, the parents lack the possibility of direct influence on the school management in appointing the class teacher or choosing the methodology to be applied by teachers. One of the respondents mentioned administering evaluation procedures of activities, usually by means of reflection questionnaires addressed to parents and students to be filled out.

It seems worth noting to highlight the fact that the respondents justified their right to reject the creative ideas of their employees (usually discussed at school council meetings or within specifically established teams) if these are considered by the principal to be detrimental to the overall school image for the outside of school community.

When asked about their recommendations for a better management style – one based on a corporate strategy of task fulfillment and efficiency or the one focused on reasonable performance combined with innovation = the respondents indicated several factors which make it difficult to make a particular choice: the demands of students and parents, as well as the implementation of the curriculum in relation to the school's mission and statute. Innovation is generally welcomed; however, it requires thoughtful and comprehensible

regulations for incorporation. In addition, one principal preferred to take personal initiative rather than expect subordinates to complete an assignment "in an inappropriate way".

Finally, the research was meant to find the answer whether the school management representatives realize *the effect of excessive control, rationing of working time, and direct supervision of tasks on school management*, which constituted the last research problem of the current study. To obtain the data from the respondents, the study participants were asked how stressful their job is, with an indication of particularly strenuous areas of their occupational duties. The school principals agreed that maintaining the position of a school manager is a responsible, demanding, and strenuous assignment, both physically and mentally. All respondents confirmed pressure from parents, children, teachers, superiors (municipal authorities). One respondent complained that

> the principal's effort is overlooked by everyone: he /she frequently stays at work late, locked in the office, filling out documents, writing reports, providing opinions…a load work needs to be done; moreover, no one else, neither the secretary nor other teachers can do it. In addition, the principal participates in the life of the school by teaching students, meeting with parents, arranging all other meetings, representing the school at the municipal or district authority levels. The functions and roles of a principal are numerous and difficult.

This response makes it possible to conclude that excessive control of the school activities administered by the school leader negatively influences the principal most of all.

In addition, the school leader's stress gets exacerbated when the staff becomes demotivated to perform their functions and duties well because of the frustrations (mentioned earlier in this paper) related to their professional activities.

Discussion

The described pilot study has evidenced certain characteristic features of the management styles of the interviewed school leaders. First of all, the reluctance to adjust management strategies, practice openness, and build a cooperation policy based on the satisfaction of the students' and teachers' needs is noticeable in the responses of all study participants. It is commonly known that the most significant party in a school is a student, however, it is frequently forgotten

that the commitment and psychological well-being of teachers aimed at the socializing of students are vital as well. Based on the interview analysis, it is possible to conclude that the micromanagement style is more often practiced by school leaders, where the implementation of school assignments, programs, plans, schedules is acceptable, however, it is not necessarily true in terms of methodology, tools, creativity, or innovation, which is sometimes blocked at the management level, where, in the micromanagement style, the constant control of the "boss" over employees is discussed. The principals of an educational institution, school or kindergarten recognize themselves as the guardians of the implementation of tasks arising from their functions. This type of attitude and approach does not align with the preconditions when micromanagement style could bring beneficial outcomes, as concluded in the study by Namrata Mishra et al. (2019, p. 2950), when some assignment seems totally new and complicated, or in case an employee is going to accomplish a specific task for the first time. In the analyzed cases in this study, the principals seemed to be constantly expecting some of the viable reasons for applying the micromanagement style, even though there were none.

The specific environment of the school, the same traditional rules that have prevailed for years, conservatism in perception and understanding of educational and occupational values, where the employees, deprived of any chance for innovation introduction, escape from responsibility by entrusting the control over their professional activities in the hands of the principal or manager – all these factors indicate the adoption of an attitude of convenience and directing the attention of the supervisor to the choice for the implementation of micromanagement style. Similar findings have been obtained by Osmel Delgado et al. (2015), where the authors are cautious of the prospect of micromanagement style implementation, the side effects of which are most noticeable in crisis situations: by entrusting full responsibility for the institution, by being convinced that the manager will take care of the most difficult tasks, the employees usually are reluctant to sacrifice their own time, resources and efforts to address the problems.

The cases analyzed in the pilot study tend to favor micromanagement, which is manifested by several considerations. First of all, the management of educational institutions consists of fulfilling assignments arising from the legislative regulations, as well as the assumed program for a particular stage of education (school or kindergarten). Secondly, the managers are reluctant to introduce transformations into the system by adopting the best practices from business

management or management science. This preliminary research confirms that managers prefer micromanagement, they are more content with its seeming efficiency, they have inherited this style from their predecessors, therefore, the subordinates are accustomed to it. As a result, the reluctance to introduce changes appears for the reason of "comfort" for the work of the whole school team. It appears that the performance of the ongoing tasks arising from the operation of the school seems more significant for both the managers and the employees than a long-term development policy aimed at the well-being of all the school stakeholders.

Conclusions

What does a good school mean? What is the vision of a good school – repeatedly heard in a variety of discourses? The issue is most often of interest to parents in relation to selecting the best educational institution for children. Some people commonly associate a good school with high student performance, prize places in competitions, contests, subject olympiads, well-equipped classrooms and other facilities, cutting-edge technology for the modern physical and cognitive development of schoolchildren. However, a seemingly trivial subject regarding a "good" school tends to provoke a serious discussion: what factors determine the quality of the educational services provided by the school; are they only related to the mastery of teaching and the professional competence of the educators; what conditions are favorable for teachers to find comfort and job satisfaction at work. Furthermore, it should be remembered that schools, apart from creating appropriate conditions for a child's cognitive and physical development, performs some other functions, including the development of "soft skills" of both students and the school personnel (like socializing, teamwork, leadership, cooperation in varied environments, competent management, conflict handling, decision-making skills, to name but a few). The school atmosphere of partnership on student-teacher, teacher-parent, teacher-teacher, teacher-principal levels proves to be crucial in creating the atmosphere of "a good school" capable of preparing a child for a decent life in modern society (Kubiczek, 2016, p. 11).

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