



The influence of leadership communication on school teachers' job satisfaction

Influența comunicării manageriale asupra satisfacției în muncă a profesorilor

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Summary

Education is at the corn stone of our social existence. Daily we are facing the fact that there is a strong correlation between a good leader within a school and the influence he or she spreads on the school teachers in their day by day activity. What does it really mean to be an effective leader, how to improve communication skills, what is actually job satisfaction and how it can be achieved? These are the concepts explored thoroughly within this article.

Key words: leadership, leader's skills, effective communication, teacher performance, job satisfaction.

Rezumat: Educația reprezintă temelia unei societăți. Așa a fost și așa va rămâne pretutindeni, iar în acest context profesorii sunt cei care ne înalță și joacă un rol decisiv în viețile noastre. În ultimul timp se vorbește tot mai mult despre abilitățile managerilor școlari și despre influența acestora asupra gradului de satisfacție în muncă a profesorilor. Astfel de concepte precum tipul de manager, comunicarea eficientă și satisfacția în muncă sunt regăsite în cele ce urmează în acest articol.

Cuvinte cheie: noțiunea de manager eficient, abilitățile manageriale, comunicarea eficientă, performanța didactică, satisfacția în muncă.

Leadership is a universal phenomenon that has been the subject of research for a long time. Many definitions exist in the research literature, yet the concepts are rather complex, elusive and somewhat contradictory. Some researchers stress that product-oriented leaders are most effective. Others believe that it's the process that determines the leader's effectiveness.

Educational leadership is undergoing a metamorphosis, and so is the level of teacher's job satisfaction since these two factors are strongly correlated. This is partly due to current restructuring initiatives in Education. The shift to school based-management seems to stand in need for educational leaders requiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that are different from those of the 70s and 80s. Thus, the knowledge, skills and attitude needed for effective leadership in today's schools needs to be endeavored.

Leadership seems to be the most operational tool of influencing people so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the accomplishment of goals. Leaders design motivation systems not only to encourage employees to perform in the most effective way but also to draw potential candidates. The key to create a conducive atmosphere in the school is an answer to the question what really enhance teacher's job satisfaction.



The study which was conducted in the frames of the title “*The influence of effective leadership communication on school teachers job satisfaction*” is based on the growing interest of studying various aspects of leadership, search of the unknown and improvement of perfection though it is elusive.

Nowadays leadership is more like a philosophical issue. In order to understand better this concept and to exclude the tension between the core of leadership, i.e. its theoretical frame and its practical application, the topic should be explored and investigated consciously and unstoppable [1].

The problem touched in the research was to discover that principal’s leadership type of two sample schools implying 68 teachers had significant effects on decision-making, communication and delegation to improve the level of teacher’s job satisfaction and thus teachers performing expectation. It has been achieved by investigating the influence of leadership type, i.e. particularly democratic and autocratic types on teacher’s job satisfaction and level of performance in two sample schools from Dondușeni region, located in the North of Moldova.

In order to get a better view about the actual setting where the experiment took place, some graphical representation are presented onwards.

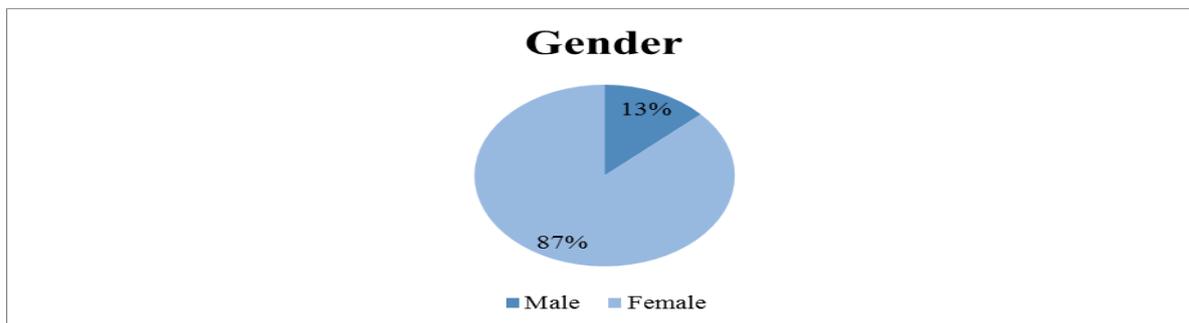


Figure 1.1. Gender representation

According to the information gathered within the experimental frame, out of 68 teachers (100 %) 9 teachers are male and 59 are female. The percentage is envisaged accordingly. It shows that majority of teachers in sample schools of Dondușeni region are female.

As far as academic qualification is concerned, respondents were categorized into four groups, Diploma, First degree and Master degree and Secondary education. The graphic below reveals that 40 (58.8%) had diploma, and 8 (11.76%) had first degree. From this information, one can see easily that qualification of the majority of respondents is first degree. This is in line with the guideline drawn by Ministry of Education, that is at least first degree holders are supposed to teach in Moldovan schools.

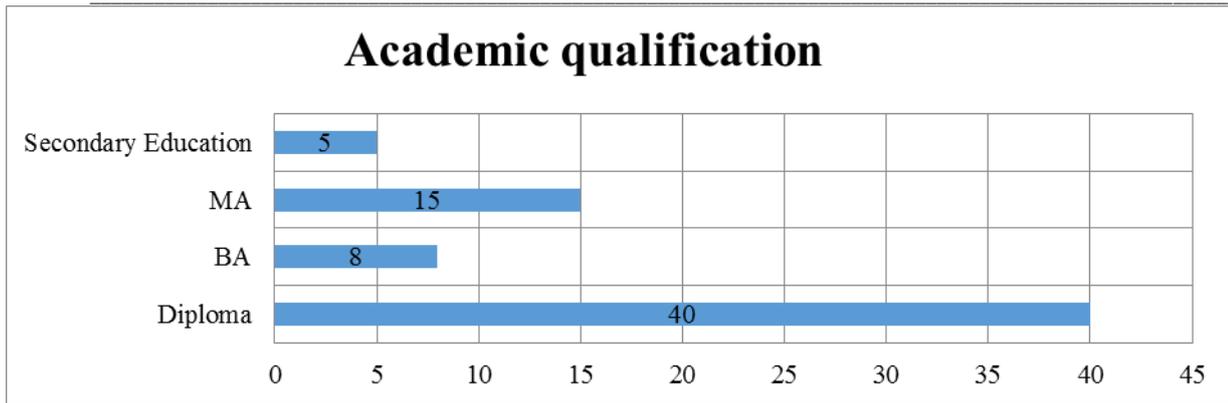


Figure 1.2. Academic qualification

According to the information presented in the next graphic, it can be observed teachers teaching social sciences (History & Geography, Business & Economic, Languages including local languages 24 (35.3%). While respondents that teaching Natural sciences (Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, ICT&T.D and Sport) were the majority 37 (54.4%). This was because many students specialized in Natural sciences because of 70% to 30% in educational system in Donduşeni. This is due to the government policy of encouraging the teaching of sciences, vocational and business subjects. This is shown by equipping schools with up-to-date laboratories to promote teaching of sciences and opening up of vocational secondary schools to promote the teaching of vocational subjects, but this unfortunately is mostly seen in schools of the largest country cities, such as Chisinau, Balti and Orhei.

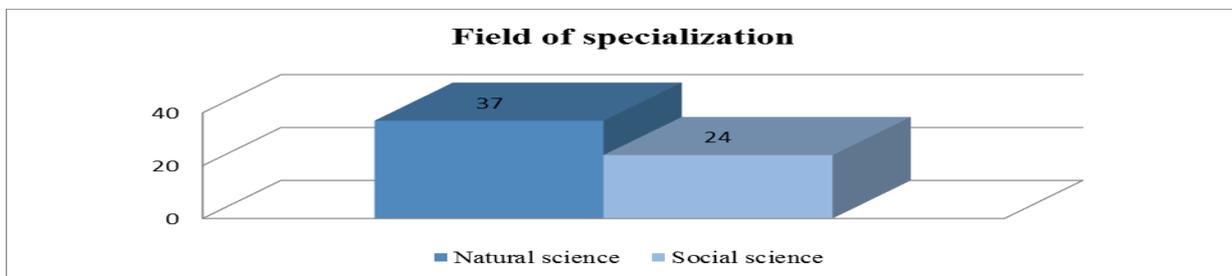


Figure 1.3. Field of specialization

Regarding respondents teaching load per week, the majority, and actually the entire number, i.e. 68 (100%) of the respondents had their teaching load of 25 and above per week. This is mostly explained by the fact that there is a huge lack of teaching staff in Donduşeni schools, so mostly all the teachers are overloaded with teaching activities. This means that majority of school teachers in Donduşeni region need to meet the required teaching load; a maximum of 18 and 24 lessons per week to teach at higher and normal level sections respectively, as per the recommendations by the Ministry of Education of Moldova. Since these teachers are over loaded, their performance is expected to be relatively high; but such has not been the case.



As far as respondents years of teaching experience is concerned, the experience conducted revealed that out of 68 teachers, 4 of them (5.88 %) of teachers have the services of 3 years and up. But the rest 5 (7.37 %) or 14 (20.6 %) and 45 (66.17 %) have 4 -7, 8-16 and more than 17-26 year of service respectively. As the result undercover, less teachers are in the service year of three and less, thus a critical support and coaching should be available for them, because they may faced by various methodological problem in class management assessing and recording marks which lead to reducing their performance level. At the same time this: could imply that most teachers have to get sufficient professional knowledge of teaching from others. Moreover, 45 (66.17 %) above 8 years of service therefore, imply that almost teachers are well experienced and it is a good opportunity to share experience. It is worth saying that the majority of teachers in these sample school are retired, but still performing their teaching activity due to the lack of teaching staff, which has become a problem for many years.

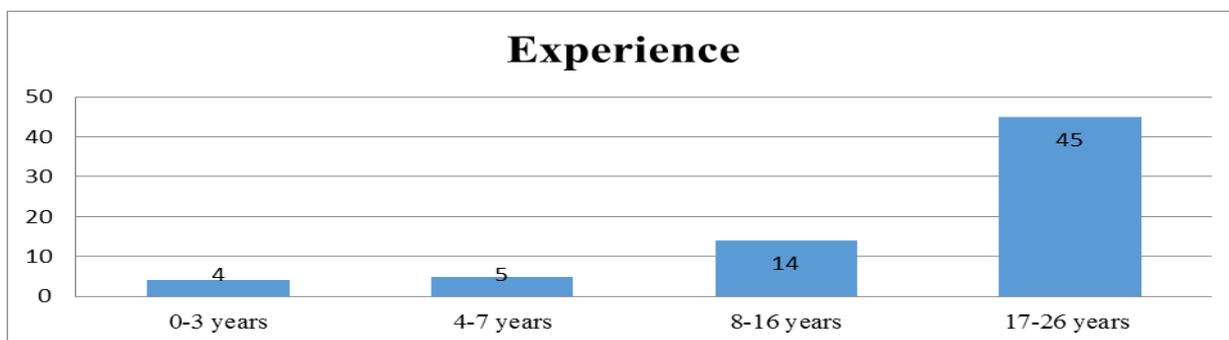


Figure 1.4. Experience

Within the study, there were stressed out such targets as defining the concept of leadership and job satisfaction, revealing the nature of both, establishing the variables that influence teachers' job satisfaction and performance, studying the characteristics, origin and development of leadership and analyzing democratic and autocratic leadership features.

In decision making, effective leaders must be rapid and precise. Effective leaders should have great capacity for detail. A comparison of behaviors between effective and ineffective leaders as defined by *Likert*, revealed that “effective leaders focused on planning, coordinating and facilitating work” [1, p. 14].

Every leader in every organization performs certain roles/tasks for the smooth running of the organization and improvement of organizational performance. As a result we can say that leadership above all is the act of influencing people so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the accomplishment of goals. A leader cannot work alone; he must have people to influence, direct, carry along, sensitize and mobilize towards the achievement of the corporate goal.



Evans tells us that “leaders must aim not at manipulating subordinates, but at motivating followers who invest themselves actively” [2]. This requires leaders who are skillful, but who are credible. According to Evans, to be credible, the leader must be authentic. Authentic leaders link what they think, what they seek and what they do.

Efficient communication of leaders may be from bottom to top or top to bottom levels of management. Employee commitment is one of the most important measures of leader success, especially within a school organization. Teacher’s commitment reaps benefits far beyond improved organizational performance. However, these valuable benefits of employee loyalty can only be achieved through high levels of effective school leader communication. Such positive relations depend largely on competent leadership skills, many of which are firmly grounded in communication abilities including listening/ feedback, coaching, and information-sharing. Fortunately, these skills can be learned. Leader communication abilities can be improved as a result of training, and this improvement positively affects the performance of direct reports.

Moreover, communication is a powerful catalyst for establishing and sustaining trust, the emotional state that is shared by highly committed teachers and their leaders. Leader communication is the bridge that transmits behavioral intent to employees, thus creating the foundation for trust. In other words, trust is a relationship of mutual confidence in contractual performance, honest communication, expected competence, and a capacity for unguarded interaction.

There are many applicable leader communication skills and practices that help to generate school’s organizational loyalty. These techniques include across-the-board guidelines, listening/ feedback, coaching, and information-sharing. To be effectively implemented; however, these methods require the proper school organizational context.

Optimal leader communication activities involve effective listening skills and understanding one’s own communication style. These diverse practices can be more neatly categorized into types of leader communication skills that inspire teacher’s loyalty. Most communication experts agree that active listening is a major factor. Active listening includes such behaviors as empathetic body language (eye contact, appropriate gestures and expressions), posing helpful questions, validating employee expression through considerate conversation turn-taking, and paraphrasing to ensure mutual understanding.

Feedback is another group of communication skills that is both critical to fostering loyalty and integrally linked with listening. The necessity for feedback has to be based on timeliness and mutuality. To achieve mutuality, leaders must be receptive to honest, useful criticism from teachers. These leader communication practices are aligned with recent performance management innovations in



multi-source feedback. With multi source feedback, leaders receive developmental input on performance from a variety of relevant, anonymous sources. In addition, constructive leader feedback is significantly linked with other worker loyalty-related outcomes such as performance, self-confidence, recognition, and emotional bonding.

School organizations are increasing their information sharing to teachers due to rapid innovations in technology, especially in the area of human resource information systems. In addition to greater personal control, high technology based information-sharing reinforces worker loyalty due to its perception as organizational responsiveness to hectic schedules and work/ family balance. Also important, school intranet systems have to now deliver just-in-time, highly specialized training modules that enhance career development on a 24/ 7 basis. Teachers should interpret this convenience as a valuable school organizational benefit.

Communication by itself can lead to higher level of performance if it is properly used. If communication allows the person to track how well he/ she is doing in relation to the goal, so that if necessary, adjustments in effort can be made. Communication may be in form of memos, telephone calls, messages, posting notices, writing letters and sending E-mail or fax. Unfortunately, these modes of communication are not properly applied in fields of education.

The concept of communication in leadership is highly internalized by many scientists. They endeavored to describe how it is used, operated and thus stressed its importance. They argued that information is usually communicated to employees in form of memos, meetings and telephone calls to enhance their performance. Communication is "multidirectional while ideas are exchanged between employees and the leader" [3, p. 8]. In this style of leadership, a high degree of staff morale is always enhanced. These ideas are supported given the fact that for performance to be effective, it is important for employers to communicate on what is to be done and how it is to be done. Communication may be presented directly or indirectly to individuals to boost up their performance. However, a good counseling and guidance for individual may come as a result of good and open communication provided by heads of human resource departments or heads of institutions like principals. This concept of communication is supported by many theories such as House Path-Goal Theory that stipulates that for subordinates to perform well the leader has to guide or direct them through verbal or written communication in form of notices, memos or meetings. The theory further stresses that through communication errors are identified and corrected. It also helps one to know how well or bad he or she is performing a given task. This enhances performance in any organization or institution of learning.

Communication therefore becomes more than distributing messages, it becomes an interplay between actors. Depending on how communication is conducted, in what circumstances and with what



actors, it can deliver different outcomes. The communication quality is dependent on both the actors, such as principals and teachers, and the actual situation and its prerequisites.

To view leadership as a social process makes communication essential both for understanding how the work inside organizations contribute to results and how the individual leader use communication as a tool. Communication is so vivid in our everyday work and lives, we easily forget how much it affects what and how we do things. A traditional way to describe communication is as a process including a sender, a message, channels, a receiver and feedback. Today's view of communication is therefore much more complex. Communication can have several purposes, to satisfy individual and social needs, to cooperate and understand the world, as well as a way to distribute information and messages.

One of the most important issues touched in the research was to determine the vital correlation between effective leader communication and job satisfaction of teacher's working in educational environment. The concept of job satisfaction is one of the most important indicators of the vocational adjustment or outcome. In addition, understanding the level of job satisfaction of employees' is important in order to understand the predictors of success. This knowledge contributes to the qualitative and the quantitative improvement of vocational rehabilitation outcomes for individuals.

The concept of job satisfaction is of greatest importance for the study. An investigation was done by setting out the frames of experimental conduct. Result were gathered and interpreted correspondingly, and they envisaged mostly the fact that above all the great shift in educational system, there is a gap that needs to be urgently filled, since teachers especially from the north of our republic, do need something that will improve their job satisfaction. Since hard times can be the word describing the times we are living now, it is crucial for finding solutions that will encourage young generation to fight for and preserve their utmost rights

People work not only for the purpose of earning a living, but also for self-actualization. For minority or multi-culturally diverse groups, including people with disabilities, having a job is essential because it indicates economic independence, improvement in quality of life, and inclusion in society.

Job satisfaction may be defined as favorable or positive feelings about work or the work environment and describes how happy one is with the job. On the flip side, it can also be defined in terms of unfavorable or negative feelings about work or the work environment, and describes how unhappy one is with the job. A widely accepted definition of job satisfaction states that job satisfaction can be defined as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception of one's job as fulfilling or allowing the fulfillment of one's important job value.

The happier people are with their jobs, the more satisfied they are said to be, which results in



higher productivity, morale and initiative.

Further on, a graphic is shown which reflects a part of the questionnaire answered by sample school teachers, which will actually undercover most of the basic criteria that leads them to be satisfied with their activity throughout their lives.

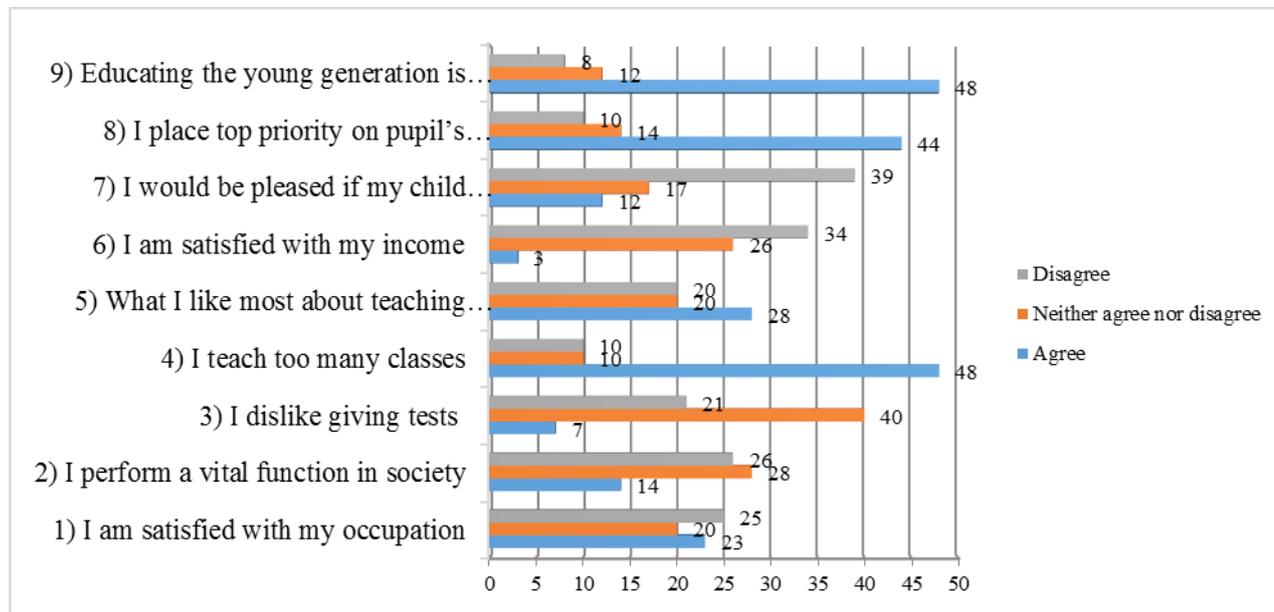


Figure 1.5. The most basic criteria that leads teachers to be satisfied

Scholars in the field of education also contend that high levels of job satisfaction are linked to positive behaviors and consist of higher productivity and performance level, while low levels of job satisfaction are linked to negative behaviors and consist of lowered commiteemen and lower productivity. Rising levels of job satisfaction in educational setting is vital. It can be implied that when teachers are valued, supported and celebrated for their achievements, then job satisfaction is raised, work productivity is heightened and work performance levels are increased.

Job satisfaction is closely related to societal value judgements and the mental and physical health of teachers. Additionally, they suggest that when factors such as mental and physical health are low, staff turnover and absenteeism rates are low. This, in turn, increases societal judgement values and works in favor to the educational setting as a whole, thus working as a public relation asset to the organization.

It can be argued that when a teacher values a particular facet of a job, satisfaction is more greatly impacted both positively (when expectations are met) and negatively (when expectations are not met), compared to a teacher who doesn't value that facet at all.

In the case of educational settings, the research was conducted mindfully taking into account that teachers form attitudes towards their jobs based on their overall values, and factors such as feelings,



behaviors, and beliefs.

For the purpose of the study in question, job satisfaction will be defined as the degree to which a teacher feels positive about their work, the teachers with whom they work and the organization or environment in which they work. This definition signifies that when feelings of teachers are positive, they are satisfied and when the feelings of teachers are negative, they are dissatisfied.

Much of what is known about job satisfaction has developed as a result of numerous studies and job satisfaction theories. Numerous theories have looked at a variety of contributing factors that may relate to one's satisfaction in the job. Such received knowledge, experience and on-going research help an understanding of how job satisfaction has been conceptualized.

The notion of motivation is associated with job satisfaction, and theories of motivation form the basis of models and measures of jobs satisfaction. Furthermore, it is argued that job satisfaction is closely associated with motivation because satisfaction may motivate effort and motivated effort may lead to satisfaction. The relationship between job satisfaction and motivation can be viewed as a symbiotic process, and numerous theories are divided into two contrasting theoretical approaches, content theories and process theories. They will be deeply analyzed within the study.

The school based domain is of great importance for leaders to understand if teacher morale is to be increased. This domain comprises many of factors that contribute to teacher's dissatisfaction. If a leader can ensure that teachers feel empowered, motivated and valued, these factors may have less impact on teacher's morale and eventually may begin to lose value and importance. Upon review of the literature, clear patterns emerged from the numerous studies examined. These perspectives on job satisfaction will be discusses as it follows.

It is vital for leaders to understand the positive and negative effects their leadership types may have on teachers' satisfaction, particularly when it has been determined that job satisfaction can be the utmost important factor for a school's success. Accordingly, when a leader understands the relationship between morale, satisfaction and school climate, improvements to the overall educational establishment can be put in place.

Numerous studies can be cited to support the fact that leaders make a difference in their subordinates' satisfaction and performance.

Leaders express leadership in many roles. These, among others, are: “formulating aims and objectives, establishing structures, managing and motivating personnel and providing leadership” [4, p. 28]. However, providing leadership is a very essential component of a leader's role. The leadership style leaders choose to perform the above mentioned roles will determine whether they will accomplish the task at hand and long-term organizational goals or not, and “whether they will be able



to achieve and maintain positive relationships with staff“ [5, p. 3].

Furthermore, leaders need to begin recognizing the common themes, traits and the individual attitudes contributing to the job satisfaction of teachers. Job satisfaction could be improved if leaders better understood the link between theory and practice. However, this is also true for the teachers. While teachers need to feel motivated and valued, they should also be respects as professionals who are competent in their field of work. Moreover, it can be implied that a teacher’s job satisfaction is increased and work performance is raised when they are treated as true professionals.

The relationship between personal teacher performance and a leader type of leadership is seen to be rather complex and mediated by teacher’s satisfaction on the job. Leadership type of a school leader is a major source of influence on the internal content and work circumstances an individual experiences in an organizational setting. Although, different leadership types differ in the way they influence and shape the inner organizational setting, they are not an exclusive element of personal teacher performance

Great leadership works through emotions and effective communication. When leaders drive emotions positively, they bring out everyone’s best. Many call this resonance. On the other hand, when emotions are driven negatively, it leads to dissonance.

Furthermore, the study showed that the better performance in schools might be well motivated teachers by school leaders. The study concluded that the way school leaders involve teachers in decision-making have a significant effect on teacher’s job satisfaction and performance in schools. This indicates that school leaders involve teachers in decision-making through staff and departmental meetings and teacher’s views in meeting are valued and implemented in final decision of the schools. This has greatly enhanced teacher’s performance in the region as well as their job satisfaction. Regarding communication findings revealed that regular communication between the school leaders and teaching staff makes teachers effective in their performance because they were informed on what to be done and how to be done. The finding concluded that the way school leaders effectively communicate with teaching staff has a significant effect on teacher’s job satisfaction and performance in sample schools. This shows that school leaders communicate with teachers through meetings, memos, note board and telephone call has made teachers well informed of what to do and how to do it. This enhanced their performance.

The finding indicated that the better performance depends on school leaders who reward their teachers in terms of monetary, promotion, and verbal appreciation for any duty delegated are democratic in nature. Such rewards motivate teachers, make them committed and hardworking thereby enhancing their performance. The finding revealed that the better performance depends on proper



delegation of duties basing on teacher's knowledge enhances their performance and makes the work simpler.

So, obviously it has to be concluded that school leader's delegation of duty to teachers has a significant effect on teacher's job satisfaction and performance in sample schools of study areas. This implies that school leader delegation of duties to teachers according to their teaching experience, skills, talent, commitment and knowledge of subject specialization has enhanced performance of teachers in Dondușeni study area.

The study finding indicated that achievement of better performance depends on school leader who allow demonstrate, initiation, creative and innovative of teachers in decision making of the schools. It should be noted that teachers were willing to participate in decision making if they perceive that their principals sought their opinions but allowing teachers that opportunity to make the final decision.

The Finding revealed that achievement of better performance based on school leaders who took into consideration the teachers ideas and taught in decision-making of training criteria for the smooth running of the institutions. When interviewed were conducted to school leaders on the manner they involve their teachers in decision making of the schools they all responded by saying that they organize staff meetings in which teachers participate in decision-making, setting meeting agenda, exchange ideas and views of how to run the schools. This indicated that majority of the principals practiced democratic style of leadership. This is because democratic style of leadership promotes unity, cooperation, teamwork and hardworking among teachers, which in turn enhances their performance.

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations were forwarded to be the remedy of the effect by concerned bodies to alleviate and to improve the school leader's type of leadership which are associated with teacher's job satisfaction in schools of Dondușeni region, i.e., the basic influence on teachers performance not to work as expected were found to be school leader's improper type used and unequal treatment of thoughts among teachers in decision-making process. Therefore, the advice related to this issue to ensure the right tracks of involving teachers in decision-making of schools trains school leaders on how to involving teachers", finance, disciplinary and welfare to discharge their responsibility. Moreover, it is advised to provide communication skill trainings for school leaders on effects of communication and on how to communicate with teaching staffs to enhance their performance. So that school leaders should organize regular meetings like three times a term, writing notices and posting in the staff notice board, and sending memos to teachers and using telephone calls. And finally, for the proper delegation of duties, by the school leaders to teachers,



the school leaders should recognize the major duties and criteria of delegating them to teachers providing further training, refresher course, seminar and workshop to both school leaders and teachers so as to be well equipped with new skills and knowledge needed to perform the delegated school tasks.

The purpose of this case study was to answer the primary question, “what does it mean to be an effective leader and how does the efficient communication of the leader influences teacher’s job satisfaction”. According to the data collected, that an effective leader needs to develop skills in a variety of areas as outlined in the analysis of data. My personal perspective on effective communication of school leaders was reinforced by the findings of this case study. I believe that leader’s type and influence has a great impact on the effectiveness of the leader and the general job satisfaction of the teachers involved.

This case study further helped to clarify the characteristics that a leader needs in order to have the greatest impact on the people he or she serves and works with. Effective leader communication requires a person who can make vision building a collective exercise, a willingness to let go of the hierarchical rights so that true power can be realized and a willingness to share the decision-making responsibilities for such tasks as budget, schedules and staff development programs. Effective leader communication requires a person who possesses strong interpersonal skills, who has the ability to communicate and work with all educational stakeholders.

It is my personal belief that in our educational system, effective leadership also requires a person who is gifted by faith and who reflects on his or her daily tasks.

A great leader is a person who genuinely cares for children and treats them fairly. As the people interviewed stated in defining effective leadership one should look at personality first and then the skills after. Effective communication of leaders cannot be mandated. It is rather a state of mind that must be nurtured through a collegial climate.

Thus, in today’s schools effective leader’s communication is about shared vision and working with others and not above others. It is a mutual respect among people and the encouragement of personal and professional growth among the staff.

Actually speaking, the more professionalism is emphasized, the less leadership is needed. The more leadership is emphasized, the less likely that professionalism will develop. It is concerned with influencing staffs to work together toward the achievement of group goals and it even more concerned with empowering the staff with the power of leader, supporting growth rather than control. Effective leader communication is shared effective leadership, where school leaders implement a variety of strategies to foster positive school ethics.

The findings of this case study provide specific insight into the definition of effective leader



communication within school framework. They emphasize that an effective leader is the one who is a facilitator rather than a controller. The leader as a facilitator is willing to share in the decision-making process, treats all educational participants with respect, promotes a collective vision and frequently communicates that vision to staff, students or parents, practices open and efficient communication and encourages personal and professional growth.

Effective leaders promote leadership in others, and this is the most important idea for those who are interested in discovering and developing this concept onwards.

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