THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SCHOOL

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Abstract

Introduction: In the current social context, Man is understood as a whole, in interaction with the environment that surrounds him, in which the concept of emotional intelligence allows him to live and regulate all actions in the reach of personal well-being.

Methodology: This study aims to know the characteristics of emotional intelligence that guide the action of the school director and what perspectives teachers and operational assistants have regarding the way leadership is carried out. A mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative nature was used. In the method of quantitative data collection, the instrument used was a questionnaire with the socio-demographic characterization and Emotional Intelligence Scale constructed by Moreno (2012). In the qualitative method we opted for the semi-structured interview. The sample consists of 131 subjects, 3 school directors, 100 teachers and 28 operational assistants.

Results: The results show the three directors with the perception that they have good emotional (personal and social) competences for the performance of the position. For the remaining groups, teachers and operational assistants, despite the recognition of innumerable characteristics of emotional intelligence, they consider that their directors do not always manifest it (apply).

Conclusion: The conclusions of this study highlight the fact that the leader plays a decisive role in the dynamism of the groups, insofar as it promotes the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. It is noticed that the need for investment in human resources management, at the personal, professional and social level, is a condition for the success of organizations.

Keywords: emotional competencies; leadership; school.

1 INTRODUCTION

For a long time, Intelligence, measured through the Intelligence Quotient, has been taken as the main factor in determining the success of the individual. Although important, studies have shown that Intelligence does not fully explain success, and therefore there are other determinants of individual success variation, specifically Emotional Intelligence (IE). It is a fact that the existing literature has joined efforts to confirm this position and one of the most representative guidelines defines IE as a set of cognitive skills responsible for the processing of emotional information, translating these skills into abilities to perceive, express, understand, regulate and use emotions (Davies, Stankov, & Robertes, 1998). In the context of 21st century educational organization, as a complex organization with a specific culture, the school cannot abstract from these concepts, since its leader is constantly challenging to promote success. The leadership style that each leader chooses defines the school organization within it and the image it has abroad. The leader of a school, together with his peers and the entire educational community, must recognize the emotional intelligence, which he will associate with the intellectual, for the benefit of all and for all.

2 METHODOLOGY

The main goal is to know the characteristics of the emotional intelligence that guide the action of the school director and what perspectives have the teachers and the operational assistants regarding the way the leadership is carried out.

The methodology used was both of qualitative and quantitative nature. The method used to collect quantitative data was a questionnaire with sociodemographic characterization and Emotional Intelligence Scale designed by Moreno (2012).
The qualitative approach was based on the semi-structured interview. 

The sample comprises 131 subjects: 3 school head teachers, 100 teachers and 28 school operational assistants.

The intervening directors lead schools deemed effective, within the assumptions of the central Administration. The three are located in the central area of the country, PORTUGAL, in order to create natural, geographic and social conditions that put them in similar levels and experiences. They are directors with a vast experience of leadership, who have experienced different models of organization and management of schools. Their ages are similar, putting them, at the beginning, in a line of identical thought. Regarding the teachers of the schools, they are characterized according to age, the disciplinary group and the bond they possess. These criteria relate to the need to know the institution concerned, the different organs and models of direction they have already met, and the bond and degree of involvement they possess with this concrete establishment. Finally, the non-teaching body surveyed is also that of the schools.

3 RESULTS

The results show that the three head teachers are perfectly aware of their emotional skills (personal and social) to perform their duty, although they have differences in their performance and have diversified styles. In the other groups – teachers and operational assistants - the expected result can’t always be confirmed. In spite of the recognition of their innumerable characteristics of emotional intelligence, head teachers do not always meet their expectations.

So, as to

1 To verify if the performance of a school director is guided by characteristics of emotional intelligence,
   o The leaders assume awareness of their strengths and limits, a view corroborated by most teachers and operational assistants;
   o The leaders assume that they always reflect on the criticisms made of them; the other two groups manifest disagreement;
   o The 3 directors say they recognize their strengths and limits, presenting strengths and weaknesses;
   o A large number of teachers and operational assistants understand that their principal does not have the ability to read their own emotions.

2 To understand how the characteristics of emotional intelligence are present in the action of the director and meet the expectations of teachers and operational assistants,
   o Teachers, operational assistants and principals confirm that the leader is not absent when they need him;
   o The leaders positively evaluate the directors in meeting the needs of the educational community;
   o There is a marked discrepancy in the director’s performance only when the problems become apparent. The directors say they never do;
   o There are differences in the certainty of the leadership and motivation of the employees for success, when compared the vision of the directors with that of the other groups.

3 Understand the perspective of teachers and operational assistants regarding how management is carried out,
   o Most teachers believe that the advantages of having a common sense of mission within the institution are reinforced, as the 3 principal’s point out;
   o For the most part, teachers feel that they are treated as individuals. As for the operational assistants, the majority says they feel treated as one more member in the group. Only one director assumes this position;
   o Directors express satisfaction when others meet expectations. Most teachers and operational assistants agree.

The three directors consider themselves able to read their emotions and to ponder the ethical and moral consequences of their decisions. The three leaders always reflect on the criticisms they are
made in trying to improve. For them, the recognition of values and objectives are constant and always
demonstrate a concern for the improvement of personal competences, inspiring confidence and
transparency. On the leadership and motivation for success, most teachers and operational assistants
have a positive opinion. However, some still run negative positions. The same trends present in the
question concerning the fulfillment of the needs of others in relation to work, regarding the expression
of satisfaction with the other or the team spirit created. Although most respondents are found to
respond positively, there is still a significant number of less satisfactory responses. When confronts
the viewpoint of the directors with that of the professors and the operational assistants, it is concluded
that the concept that they possess of the person and the performance of the directors does not meet
the judgments that they make of themselves. The two led groups expect their leaders to act in
accordance with each one’s expectations, going to meet what they advocate for the institution where
they work. From the results obtained in the interviews and in the questionnaires, it is perceived that
the questioned directors consider that they possess a high emotional intelligence and make use of it in
their acting as director. With often similar styles, others with some clearings, feel that daily, they guide
their action using emotions as a foundation.

4 CONCLUSIONS
Discussing the interviews of the three directors and the answers to the questionnaires, it is easily
perceived that they present a very positive evaluation of their emotional competencies. In both
individual and social competences, the reporting directors say they are acting at a very good level,
which is reflected in the results obtained. In fact, for the three respondents the self-consciousness and
self-management, characteristics of their individuality, is shown in the most positive extremes of
response, the same happening with social competences.

In this sense, in the self-consciousness of the three directors, it can be read that, the three consider
themselves always able to read their emotions and to ponder the ethical and moral consequences of
their decisions. The three leaders always reflect on the criticisms they are made in trying to improve.
For them, the recognition of values and objectives are constant and always demonstrate a concern for
the improvement of personal competences, inspiring confidence and transparency. The control of
impulses and emotions is assumed as an indispensable characteristic of emotional intelligence, so it is
important to verify the divergences of positions in the three groups. The operational assistants have a
less positive view of the Director, because most consider that rarely and seldom perceive this control.
In teachers, most have a more positive position, even if 40 see a negative performance.

In all three groups, the awareness that the inherent emotional intelligence characteristics guide the
action of the school director predominates, especially regarding the concern to do more and better in
the institution. Asked about this competence, the groups of teachers and operational assistants
present a high percentage of positive responses, in agreement with those of their directors. Another
competence, which justifies the notion that the inherent characteristics of emotional intelligence guide
the action of the school principal, is that leaders are aware of their strengths and limits, as the majority
of respondents present answers affirmative, with most teachers to point out that almost always or
always have this characteristic and most of the operational assistants to emphasize the same opinion.
The view of teachers and operational assistants confirms that of the principals when faced with the
fact that the principal is absent when they need him. Also the recognition and satisfaction of the needs
of the educational community are evaluated very positively, again in agreement with the directors. It is
emphasized that only the teachers’ group considers that the advantages of having a common sense of
mission in the institution are reinforced. Principals respond positively to the emphasis they put on the
above-mentioned advantages, a position that is consistent with most teachers. Regarding the aspects
to be improved in the work of the directors, starting with the personal competences, special emphasis
is given to the reflection they make on the criticisms made to them.

The conclusions of this study highlight the fact that the leader plays a decisive role in the dynamism of
the groups, promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. It is perceived that the need
to invest in human beings, be it in the personal, professional or social spheres, is a condition for the
success of organizations.

In this way, it seems important to develop the following actions:

1 Training for Directors: Training is one of the elements of personal and professional
development. Thus, it is considered timely the frequency of training in the area of leadership
and conflict management, in order to overcome difficulties that arise in the performance of the
position, since the objective is to find tools, mechanisms and strategies that the other in order to achieve goals;

2 Creation of evaluation mechanisms: Self-evaluation and hetero-evaluation are extremely important pillars in improving the performance of all professionals. In order to perceive weaknesses, in the eyes of teachers and operational assistants, it is suggested to create a mechanism for evaluating the director's performance. From it, the strengths and weaknesses / weaknesses of leadership will inevitably result. Thus, the director can improve the performance and meet the expectations of its employees. It is believed that the internal evaluation process of the school should be clear, transparent and objective in scope and should be applied during the mandate in order to avoid the more pessimistic perspectives presented in the interveners' responses. It is also suggested that the director's meetings with the intermediate groups aim at evaluating the management and administration practices of the school;

3 School education plan or project: Teachers and operational assistants, as educational agents, will also be subject to training in this same line of continuity. Thus, for both, emotional leadership training is an essential condition for a school's organizational success. In the group of teachers, and given that many of them hold positions of intermediate leadership, it is important to monitor their practices through specialized training.

REFERENCES


