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Characteristics of the headmasters, teachers and students in an effective school

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Abstract

In an effective school, the headmasters should have the features listed below: “The headmaster oversees the educational programs prepared by the teachers; the headmaster’s communication with the teachers, students and parents are strong; the headmaster is successful in restoring discipline and order among the students in the school and classroom environments; the headmaster represents a role model to all peers of the school with his attitude and speeches; the headmaster gives importance to the students’ improving their academic success; the headmaster is able to use the technological tools of the age and provides that the teachers and students also utilize these tools in the classroom; the headmaster helps the students in making choices and forming goals together with their teachers; the headmaster is fair; the headmaster fulfills his/her responsibilities.” The main issue concerning this study can be stated in one sentence as: “what are the fundamental characteristics of the headmaster, teachers and students who are the different aspects of effective schools?” The purpose of this study is to examine the characteristics of the headmasters, teachers and students, who are the parts and necessary aspects of an effective school. The method applied in this study shall be the reviewing of the literature on this subject. For this purpose, the books (in Turkish and English), graduate and doctorate theses (domestic and international), articles (domestic and international), and the bulletins (domestic and international) written on this subject shall be examined and the knowledge gathered shall be compiled. In the conclusion and suggestions sections of the study, an emphasis is made on the existence of a strong communication between the peers, realizing a cognitive, social, psycho-motor and kinetic development of the students and the utilization of contemporary technologies and new methods of teaching.

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1. Introduction

Education is a whole consisting of efforts to enable the individual to get to know himself/herself in a way that prepares him/her for the future and forms the foundation for him/her to live life in social harmony (Çağlayan, 2002). School is an organization necessitated by the culture. If a school consistently undergoes certain changes concerning its functioning and the related processes, according to the age it’s in, it shall continue its existence (Özdemir, 2000).

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When the necessary environment and the necessary conditions are provided, any school can provide an education meeting the expectations of the society and therefore produce an educational service.

In order for any school to be effective, it needs to have an autonomous structure concerning the endeavors it shall carry out concerning itself. Such a school can administer itself, reach its own resolutions and can apply these present resolutions in the form that's most appropriate according to the external conditions.

In the concerning literature, certain dimensions and factors have been indicated concerning the effective school. Among these, administrative leadership, the goals and the mission, expectations, participation in the decision, time management, program, planning, academic success, the educational process, communication, coalescence, integration, harmony, motivation, innovation, change, autonomy, flexibility, culture, climate, evaluation, school environment and the family participation are the most important factors (Şişman, 2002).

The purpose of developing the schools and increasing the quality of education is to create a school community by getting people to take responsibilities in school as well as outside the school and by getting the support and contribution of the environment. The reason for this is that the child's education, which starts in the school, continues in the social environment. An effective education depends on the coordination of the family, school and the environment as well as particularly depending on a strong connection between the school and the family.

2. The Main Issue

The main issue of this study may be expressed in a single sentence as follows: "what must be the fundamental features of the headmasters, teachers and students, who constitute the different dimensions of an effective school?" In this study, the aspects concerning the headmasters, teachers and students, constituting the three different dimensions of an effective school have been studied.

3. The Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine the features of the headmasters, teachers and students constituting the elements of effective schools.

4. The Method

The research method applied in this study is the reviewing of the literature on this subject. In this method, the books (Turkish and English), postgraduate theses and dissertations (national and international), articles (national and international), memorandums (national and international) written on this subject previously are examined and the data gathered is compiled.

5. The School

The school is a unique social system and a formal organization. The main purpose of the school is to educate the children (Aydın, 1994). The school is an essential and important social organization that concerns everyone either directly or indirectly (Baştepe, 2004).

Enabling a real development in schools and enabling the schools to answer the needs of the changing society can only be possible with the development of new plans, policies and applications. The obligation of the schools to fulfill their responsibilities as the fundamental building blocks that keep the society in a dynamic state, is an indicator of the burden on the schools' shoulders. That's why, schools need to be constantly developed and their structure be constantly strengthened (Cafoğlu, 1995).

As in other organizations, schools also have organizational, administrative and educational purposes and are established in order to realize these purposes. Schools have certain organizational, administrative and educational purposes that have been designated to them by certain laws and regulations. In order for the schools to fulfill these tasks and responsibilities expected from them and in order for them to be effective and efficient, good, healthy and consistent interpersonal relations need to be present in the school. The purpose of all interpersonal relations in a school may easily be described as channeling the energy of all educational workers of the school in order to realize the school's (social, economic and political) goals and to motivate them to work as a team in order to fulfill the

requirements of the educational workers. The school administration must work in cooperation with the internal (teachers, students and non-educational personnel) and external (families, business organizations, pressure groups and central organization) elements in order to establish healthy and consistent interpersonal relationships as well as a healthy and consistent school culture and environment.

6. The Effective School

In an effective school, the goal is to teach basic skills and appropriate behaviors to all students. Besides, in such a school, an optimum learning environment is created by supporting the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social and aesthetic development of the students.

Various definitions of an effective school are given below:

- - The school allows the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social and aesthetic aspects of all students of different intelligence and skill levels to develop. (Klopf et. al. 1982, Cit. Baştepe, 2004).
- -In this organization, the relationship between the individuals is strong and all peers are working in cooperation. The organization aids the students in developing their fundamental skills while on the other hand providing them with critical thinking skills (Scheerens and Stoel, 1988).
- -It is provided that all students studying at the school benefit optimally from the given programs, in other words, it is provided that the program prepared realizes its goals (Lezotte, 1991).
- -It is an environment where all students attending the school can learn (Jacobson and Lombard, 1992)

A good and efficient school is one with well trained teachers and highly motivated and effective teaching methods. In order for a school to be termed as effective, it needs to have certain characteristics. These characteristics may be listed as below (Balci, 2002):

1. Effective schools are lead by administrators who have a broad vision concerning education and they are able to motive those people around them. The leader is able to transfer his/her vision to in-class applications.
2. Effective bonds of communication and relationships based on trust give teachers the opportunity to enhance the school's policies and to be able to have a say in the application of these policies. These schools have explicit goals and purposes that have been put into writing. These goals and purposes have been developed with the participation of all members of the staff.
3. The lessons are taught in a comfortable, orderly and substantive atmosphere.
4. The personal and social development of the students is enhanced.
5. The school has a mission focusing on clear and explicit purposes.
6. It presents all students with an opportunity to learn in a timely fashion and gives the students learning opportunities that enhance their learning.
7. It tracks the students' academic development and has rich academic programs.
8. It develops the relationship between the school and the family.
9. It has an appropriate atmosphere for schooling.
10. The school's resources are channeled for improving the students' success at a fundamental level.

6.1. The aspects of an effective school

6.1.1. The effective headmaster

An effective headmaster must first of all guarantee the success and learning centered school programs, processes and applications covering the social and emotional developments that are required in order for the academic successes of all students to be high. Besides, he/she is successful in interpersonal relationships. He/she is fully aware of any needs of his/her peers and helping them reach their goals, the effective headmaster appreciates the successful works accomplished (Tanrıöğen, 1988).

The features of an effective headmaster are listed below (Neufeld, 1982, Cit. Şişman, 2002):

- He/she is an educational leader,
- He/she provides that the teachers participate in the making of decisions,
- He/she sets forth explicit rules and applies them,
- He/she emphasizes success and evaluates the basic needs,
- He/she spends his/her time making observations and instructing,

- He/she has an ability to represent others,
- He/she has high expectations from the teachers and states this to them openly,
- He/she believes in and trusts the teaching staff,
- He/she determines his/her leading style according to the present conditions,
- He/she involves the students in school activities and gives them responsibilities,
- He/she focuses on developing the curriculum,
- He/she has the support of the senior administration,
- He/she has the support of the school and the board of directors,
- He/she makes sure that the teachers dedicate their time to continuous education,
- He/she explains to his/her peers that the most important function of the school is to enable learning.

6.1.2. *The Effective Teacher*

The effective teacher displays exemplary behaviors by conveying the fundamental values to the students. Moreover, such a teacher displays behaviors that fulfill others' expectations concerning quality, perfection and high performance. The teacher of the 21st century is aware that he/she may develop effective teachers' behaviors by constantly developing himself/herself and focusing on "learning" and the "student." The teacher who can develop himself/herself is aware that he/she can utilize these effective behaviors for managing the classroom and in the school environment. The effective teacher attempts to realize his/her inadequacies, perceives development as an ordinary and mandatory process rather than an optional process and has a philosophy of "lifelong learning and development."

In short, the teacher, as an effective leader, supports the development of all students in the classroom and creates learning experiences for them according to their individual differences (Buckner and McDowelle, 2000).

According to Cruickshank, Bainer and Metcalf (1995), the personal characteristics of effective teachers may be listed as below:

1. **Willingness:** It is a characteristic that's closely related to the students' success. Willing teachers trust in themselves and their students and enjoy the subject matter that they're teaching. This characteristic, which expresses itself in the way the teacher speaks, his gestures, mimics and facial expressions, motivates the students and enables them to learn better. Willing teachers are defined as dynamic, stimulating, energetic and charismatic.
2. **Cordiality and Humor:** The cordiality of the teacher is realized instantly in his/her relationship with the students. The teacher who acts friendly, displays a positive approach, values each student individually and shows an effort for them to be successful makes a positive contribution to his/her relationship with the classroom whereas the teacher who isn't fair in his/her relationship with the students and instead, is harsh and judgmental, eliminates this cordiality between the teacher and the students. Appropriate and temperate humor is one of the most important characteristics of effective teachers. Humor decreases disciplinary problems and increases the feeling of trust.
3. **Trustworthiness:** Students believe that the effective teachers are trustworthy. There are three ways of being trustworthy: The diplomas owned, the messages communicated to the students and the behaviors exhibited.
4. **High success expectation:** Effective teachers expect a high level of success from both themselves and their students. They sincerely believe that they can teach and that their students can learn what they're teaching.
5. **Encouragement and supportiveness:** Effective teachers make their students feel that they are accepted as individuals and that what counts is not only the end result but also the effort that they're showing. Encouragement is closely related to other teacher characteristics such as cordiality, willingness and success expectation. Encouragement and supportiveness are particularly important in situations when students that aren't academically successful are experiencing difficulty in learning.
6. **Systematicness:** Taking their responsibilities seriously and working systematically are important characteristics of effective teachers. Even though this definition brings a cold, boring and grumpy teacher to one's mind, studies show that the students perceive the teachers that are systematic as more cordial and attentive. These teachers channel both themselves and their students towards clearly defined learning goals.
7. **Adaptiveness/Flexibility:** Naturally, education isn't a wholly foreseeable process. Effective teachers are ready for unforeseeable situations and they can adapt themselves to new situations. Flexibility and adaptability requires people to be aware of the need for change and to adapt to these changes.

8. **Knowledgability:** Even though it isn't clear how knowledgeable a teacher must be on a subject in order to teach it, it can be claimed that the effective teachers know their subjects better.

6.1.3. *The effective student*

In effective schools, students participate in the decisions on matters that concern themselves and they have high expectations regarding success. In effective schools, teachers must search for answers to the questions such as “what,” “why,” and “how” (Şişman, 2002).

In education, the fundamental goal is to teach the students critical thinking skills. In effective schools, the students are expected to have critical thinking skills.

In such schools, student centered education and teaching methods are applied. Therefore each student is accepted as a separate entity presenting a value and it is provided that they participate in educational, learning and even administration activities of the school. It is provided that the students show an active learning effort. The effective school operates in accordance with the democratic method of administration. In such a school, the type of student that needs to be created is one that takes responsibility, shares, participates in discussions, is stubborn concerning his/her goals regarding success, has a good time, and in short, lives a fulfilling life.

In an effective school, the students are respected, the environment necessary for them to be successful is set, they are allowed to work their way up and prove themselves, they are treated with trust and respect like adults and a strong bond of communication is formed with them (Başaran, 2000).

In short, the characteristics of the students in effective schools are as follows (Şişman, 2002):

1. They participate in the decision making of matters concerning themselves and they take responsibilities,
2. They have an active role in the education-learning process,
3. They take responsibility concerning the development of school life and they try to develop suggestions,
4. They participate in the various dimensions of the school life,
5. They are active in the learning process,
6. They have high educational expectations,
7. They are aware of what's being expected of them.

7. The Conclusions

The following conclusions have been reached concerning the qualities that an effective school must possess:

1. In an effective school, there is a strong relationship and the communication between all peers. Besides, the teachers and students are successful in education and learning and they display exemplary behaviors and attitudes.
2. In an effective school, the cognitive, social, psycho-motor and kinetic development of the students are provided.
3. In an effective school, new technologies and new methods of teaching are utilized.

The following conclusions have been reached concerning the features which the headmasters, who are an important dimension of the effective school, must possess.

1. The headmaster is able to manage the school successfully with all his/her peers.
2. The headmaster supports a well established communication and strong relationships amongst the teachers and supports the teachers in constantly developing themselves.
3. The headmaster supports the communication and the relationship between the students and the teachers as well as strengthening the relationship among the students. The teachers show a constant effort for the students' academic successes to be high.
4. It is provided that the headmaster, teachers and students display exemplary behaviors and attitudes.
5. The headmaster introduces new technologies to the school. Moreover, he/she provides that these new technologies and methods of teaching are utilized by the teachers.

The following conclusions have been reached concerning the fundamental features which the teachers, who are an important dimension of the effective school, must possess.

1. The communication and the relationship between the teachers and the headmaster are strong.
2. The communication and the relationships among the teachers are good.
3. The teachers form strong communicative bonds with their students.
4. The teachers constantly develop themselves.

5. The teachers give importance to their students having high academic successes.
6. The teachers provide that their students display exemplary behaviors and attitudes.
7. The teachers share new Technologies and methods of teaching with their students in the classroom.

The following conclusions have been reached concerning the fundamental features which the students, who are an important dimension of the effective school, must possess:

1. The students form a strong communicative bond with all peers of the effective school.
2. The students develop themselves with new skills and knowledge.
3. The academic success of the students is high.
4. The students utilize the new technologies successfully and at the same time, achieve more success in their lessons through the use of new teaching methods.
5. The students display exemplary behaviors and attitudes.

8. Suggestions

In order for a school to be effective, the following suggestions may be taken into consideration:

1. In order for a school to be effective, the communication among all peers must be strong. Moreover, the students and teachers must be successful in all educational and learning activities.
2. In order for a school to be effective, the cognitive, social, psycho-motor and kinetic development of the students must be supported.
3. In order for a school to be effective, it must successfully follow the new technologies and teaching methods.

The suggestions developed for the headmasters in an effective school have been listed below:

1. The headmaster must be able to manage the school successfully with all his/her peers.
2. The headmaster must support the teachers for having well established communicative bonds and strong relationships amongst themselves and for them to constantly develop themselves.
3. The headmaster must support the communication and the relationship between the students and the teachers as well as strengthening the relationship among the students. The teachers must show a constant effort for the students to achieve a high rate of academic success.
4. The headmaster must make sure that the teachers and students display exemplary behaviors and attitudes.
5. The headmaster must support the teachers and students for using new Technologies and at the same time, provide that new teaching methods are utilized during the lessons.

The suggestions developed for the teachers, who are yet another important dimension of an effective school, are listed below:

1. The communication and relationship between the teachers and the headmaster must be strong.
2. The communication and the relationship among the teachers must be well established.
3. The teachers must create strong communicative bonds with their students.
4. The teachers must be continuously developing themselves.
5. The teachers must give importance to their students having a high rate of academic success.
6. The teachers must display exemplary behaviors and attitudes for their students.
7. The teachers must utilize and apply new technologies and teaching methods successfully in the classroom.

The suggestions developed for the students, who are the other important dimension of the effective school, are listed below:

1. The students must form strong communicative bonds with all peers of the school.
2. The students must develop themselves, acquiring new skills and gaining knowledge.
3. The students must have a high academic success rate.
4. The students must utilize the new technologies successfully and besides, must learn their lessons in a lasting way with the help of new teaching methods.
5. The students must exhibit exemplary behaviors and attitudes.

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