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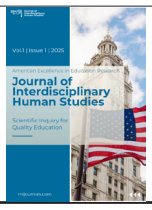

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Sarviniso SANAKULOVA
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pedagogical Sciences,
Senior Research Fellow, Kori Niyoziy National Institute
of Educational Pedagogy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
E-mail: s.sanakulova87@mail.ru

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF VALUES-BASED MANAGEMENT IN GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Abstract. *This article examines the conceptual and methodological foundations of values-based management in general secondary schools. It proposes a five-component model integrating axiological, systemic, strategic, reflective, and participatory approaches. Indicators of organizational trust, procedural fairness, stakeholder participation, and leadership accountability are suggested. The paper is a conceptual analysis; the effectiveness of the proposed model has not yet been empirically validated.*

Keywords: *educational management, values-based leadership, school principal, ethical leadership, reflective management, organizational culture, trust.*

INTRODUCTION

Managing a general secondary school is not limited to implementing the curriculum, supervising staff activities, or maintaining reports. School leaders make daily decisions in situations where different interests, needs, and ethical criteria intersect. In rewarding staff, addressing student complaints, allocating resources, or communicating with parents, the leader's value orientation acquires practical significance.

UNESCO's 2024/5 Global Education Monitoring Report on leadership in education highlights the role of school leadership in creating conditions for teaching and learning [5]. OECD research emphasizes the need to clearly define leaders' responsibilities, strengthen instructional leadership capacity, and regard leadership as a collective process [6]. These findings indicate that interpreting

school management merely as a set of administrative procedures is insufficient.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" establishes fundamental principles such as the right to education, the priority of education, and non-discrimination [2]. Values-based management requires these legal standards to be consistently applied to everyday school decisions. Accordingly, the concept of values is regarded not merely as the content of moral and educational activities, but as a practical standard for management.

The problem is that values such as fairness, transparency, and respect articulated in a school's mission may not always be reflected to the same extent in actual decision-making. A gap between declared values and management practice may adversely affect organizational trust, teachers' initiative, and the quality of conflict resolution. The management mechanisms for diagnosing and addressing this discrepancy require scientific analysis. In contemporary pedagogy, systematizing the conceptual and methodological foundations of values-based management in general secondary schools, proposing a structural model, and substantiating diagnostic indicators and organizational mechanisms for its implementation in leadership practice can be regarded as pressing issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Schwartz's theory of basic human values explains the relationship between values, personal motivation, and choices [7]. However, directly transferring a theory of individual values to school management is insufficient: collective agreement, formal procedures, and accountability mechanisms must also be considered.

Schein explains organizational culture through the interplay of underlying assumptions, espoused values, and observable practices that organizational members learn and transmit to one another [8]. This approach provides a theoretical basis for identifying discrepancies between declared values and actual management practices in schools.

Brown, Treviño, and Harrison associate ethical leadership not only with leaders' personal conduct but also with their demonstration of ethical standards through communication, rewards, and decision-making [9]. The synthesis of

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school leadership research by Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins emphasizes that leadership often influences educational outcomes indirectly through organizational and pedagogical conditions [10].

This article employs theoretical analysis, conceptual comparison, conceptual synthesis, systems modeling, and analysis of practical scenarios. The evidence base comprises published scholarly works and regulatory documents. No claim is made that surveys, experimental studies, or statistical testing were conducted; the proposed indicators were developed for subsequent empirical validation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Values-based management acquires practical significance only when integrated into the school's strategic planning system. If a school declares collaboration to be a core value but teachers do not participate in decision-making discussions, that value remains declarative. Values must therefore be linked to measurable procedures, designated responsibilities, and feedback channels. A key consideration is balancing the leader's personal responsibility with the institution's collective responsibility. Although principals should be willing to acknowledge their mistakes, the system should not depend solely on their personal qualities. Transparent criteria, staff participation, and appeal procedures help maintain management continuity even when leadership changes. Caution is also required. An ambiguous or one-sided interpretation of national values must not restrict the rights and interests of different social groups. Values-based management must be consistent with the principles of human dignity, equal opportunity, legality, and non-discrimination. In contemporary educational management theory, management effectiveness is determined not only by the extent to which an organization achieves its stated objectives but also by the principles, organizational relationships, and value orientations of management actors that guide the achievement of those objectives. In this respect, values-based management is particularly significant as a conceptual approach that aligns the strategic development of an educational organization with the principles of humanism, fairness, responsibility, collaboration, and social trust. Values perform two functions in an educational organization. First, they provide a normative

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orientation that determines the content and priorities of management decisions. Second, they operate as a socio-psychological mechanism regulating relationships among teaching staff and shaping the organization's internal culture. The integration of these functions is an important condition for ensuring institutional stability and consistency in school management processes.

A distinctive feature of values-based management is that the methods used to achieve management outcomes are also evaluated according to ethical criteria. For example, when a school principal establishes a strategic objective of improving educational quality, the process of achieving that objective must take into account teachers' professional dignity, students' individual needs, parents' legitimate interests, and the principles of collective collaboration. Values-based management can therefore be interpreted as a management paradigm aimed at balancing effectiveness and humanism within an educational organization.

The integration of axiological and reflective competencies in school principals' management activities is of particular scientific significance. Axiological competence refers to a leader's ability to make management decisions based on value-oriented criteria, whereas reflective competence enables leaders to critically analyze their own activities, identify mistakes, understand their causes, and improve management methods. The relationship between these competencies is manifested in aligning the principal's personal views with organizational interests. For instance, although a leader may regard a decision as fair, members of the teaching staff may perceive it differently. In such situations, reflective management enables principals to refrain from treating their own position as unquestionably correct and to analyze how other participants perceive the decision. Accordingly, it is proposed that school principals' axiological-reflective management competence be understood as an integration of the following components: value awareness, ethical decision-making, critical reflection, social responsibility, and corrective development.

Value awareness entails understanding the principles that take priority in a leader's management activities. Ethical decision-making refers to the ability to apply these principles to actual management situations. Critical reflection enables leaders to objectively analyze their own actions and decisions. Social

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responsibility involves considering the impact of management decisions on teachers, students, and parents. Corrective development is directed toward making appropriate changes to management practices based on identified shortcomings. The functional relationship among these components can be regarded as an important theoretical condition for developing school principals' values-based management practices.

Organizational justice in school management is an important factor shaping teachers' attitudes toward leadership decisions. Organizational justice theory generally distinguishes distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. Distributive justice refers to the justified allocation of rewards, resources, and opportunities. Procedural justice concerns the consistency, impartiality, and transparency of decision-making procedures. Interactional justice entails respect, courtesy, and clear communication of information in leaders' interactions with teachers. In school practice, these forms of justice are interrelated. For example, when a principal distributes teaching workloads, not only the final allocation but also the criteria on which it is based are important. If criteria are explained in advance, teachers' views are heard, and decisions are justified, favorable conditions emerge for strengthening staff trust in management processes. The function of social trust in management is not limited to relationships between leaders and staff. In an environment characterized by trust, teachers have greater opportunities to express their views openly, report problems, advance innovative initiatives, and participate more actively in professional collaboration. It is therefore appropriate to use indicators of collective trust and organizational justice as distinct diagnostic criteria when evaluating school principals' values-based management practices.

The relationship between values-based management and educational quality can be explained through direct and indirect mechanisms of influence. The direct mechanism is manifested in the impact of management decisions on the organization of the educational process. For example, principals' decisions aimed at addressing students' individual needs, developing an inclusive environment, supporting teachers' professional development, and allocating resources fairly create the organizational conditions necessary for educational quality. The indirect

mechanism may operate through teachers' motivation, professional collaboration, initiative, and sense of belonging to the school. A fair and transparent leadership style may strengthen teachers' trust in the organization, which in turn may positively influence collaboration and professional responsibility in teaching. It should also be recognized that educational quality is influenced by students' socioeconomic circumstances, teachers' level of preparation, resource availability, and other factors. A multifactorial analysis is therefore appropriate when assessing the impact of values-based management.

To determine the effectiveness of values-based management, a diagnostic approach integrating leaders' self-assessments, teaching staff perspectives, and analysis of management documents is proposed. The first component of the diagnostic system involves the principal's reflective assessment. Leaders evaluate the fairness, transparency, alignment with staff interests, and effectiveness of their management decisions against established criteria. The second component focuses on the teaching staff's assessment of the management environment. It examines teachers' trust in leadership, participation in decision-making, opportunities to express professional opinions freely, and perceptions of the fairness of the reward system. The third component involves analyzing management practices on the basis of objective evidence. This may include decisions of the pedagogical council, the strategic development plan, internal monitoring results, and procedures for handling complaints and requests. Comparing the findings from these three components makes it possible to identify discrepancies between the principal's self-assessment and the staff's assessment of management practices. At the same time, it is important to observe the principles of anonymity, data confidentiality, and non-punitive use of assessment results. Diagnostics should primarily serve to develop and improve management practices. Before making any significant management decision, a principal may consider five questions: (1) What legal and ethical criteria underpin the decision? (2) What is its impact on stakeholders? (3) Are the decision criteria clear in advance and applied consistently? (4) Is there a mechanism for raising objections and reviewing the decision? (5) When and how will the outcome of the decision be evaluated? These questions supplement the leader's subjective confidence with independent scrutiny

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and accountability. For example, when rewarding teachers, consideration should be given not only to the leader's general impression but also to previously agreed professional criteria, observational evidence, and opportunities for employees to express their views. Similarly, when addressing disciplinary matters, employee dignity, procedural justice, and regulatory procedures must be ensured simultaneously. These examples are conceptual illustrations rather than findings from observations at a particular school.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical analysis indicates that values-based management should be interpreted not as a collection of moral and educational activities at school, but as a management system integrating strategic planning, everyday decisions, organizational culture, and reflective monitoring. The conceptual contribution of the article consists in integrating a five-component model, a set of questions for evaluating decisions against value-based criteria, and multi-source diagnostic indicators into a unified management cycle. Although these proposals are theoretically substantiated, their effectiveness has not been empirically validated. For practical implementation, it is recommended that the values articulated in the school mission be translated into verifiable criteria, safe feedback channels be established for staff, leaders' self-assessments be compared with independent data, and a transparent corrective action plan be maintained for identified problems. Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Initial audit: analyze the school mission, internal regulations, and staff perspectives.

2. Operationalization of values: agree on specific behavioral and decision-making criteria for each value.

3. Reflective seminar for leaders: conduct ethical reviews of complex situations and practice feedback skills.

4. Pilot management cycle: test new criteria in staff rewards, resource allocation, or conflict resolution.

5. Reassessment: compare results using anonymous staff feedback and documentary evidence.

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6. Corrective action: assign responsibilities, establish deadlines, and define development tasks for identified gaps.

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