

Perceptions on 'Effective' Head Teacher's Leadership within the Slovenian Context

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The paper presents some research findings about 'effective' head teacher leadership within the Slovene post secondary school context which indicate the dimensions of head teacher leadership processes. The head teachers' responses to a questionnaire indicating features of knowledge about leadership, which were captured in four interpretative categories, namely 'being,' 'knowing,' 'acting,' and 'effecting.' Furthermore, the findings of some case studies gave a funneled perspective on contextually bounded leadership knowledge. The present paper points to dimensions of and to the nature of knowledge about leadership and, moreover, to some dilemmas and questions about the ways in which knowledge about leadership could be understood and learned.

Key words: school leadership, leadership effectiveness, the nature of leadership knowledge

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon, leadership, which 'has been, and continues to be, a source of endless curiosity to academic commentators, journalists, practitioners and the general public' (Gronn 1999, 67). The topic is not new: it has been studied quite extensively. Caldwell (2006), for example, mentions that he has a personal professional library of about 900 books, mainly on educational leadership, management, and policy. However, the focus of this research is on effective head teacher leadership in the Slovenian context.

Slovenia declared and gained independence from former Yugoslavia in 1991. The 'ex-socialist' republic became a parliamentary democracy. The transition in the field of economics, as well as in other areas of social life, was marked by the development of market competition, integration into the European Union (2005), and managerialism: the new ideology that replaced the 'old' one (which was self-management) (Kuzmanić and Sedmak 2006).

In the field of education, major changes started to occur during the period of transition and continued thereafter. These changes sprang from two sources: first, the change of the state's political and economic systems, and independence, which required changes in legislation as well. Second, which was specific for education, was the intention to modernise education. A package of legislation that was adopted in 1996 was subjected to adjustments and has been continuously upgraded according to the ongoing restructuring of education. The interest in effective leadership of schools increased. The expectation that the training provided by the National School for Leadership in Education would change the perceptions of effective leadership and hence the practice of head teachers, has received professional and scientific interest. As in other countries in transition, in Slovenia also there emerged a search for good practices that had been 'imported' from other countries where the literature and empirical research on headship and leadership was already extensive. Moreover, the literature used for this research was mainly produced in western countries. However, it forms the basis of this study for two simple reasons: a) there is still little empirical research on leadership in Slovenia and b) we can trace a sort of 'policy borrowing' (see Novoa and Yariv-Mashal 2003; Trnavčević and Roncelli Vaupot 2007; Trnavčević, Logaj, and Trunk 2008), mainly from the English speaking countries.

Methodology

The present study is rooted in qualitative methodology (Fine et al. 2000; Kincheloe and Mc Laren 2000) and could be considered as an exploratory study (Bouma and Atkinson 1995) regarding the unexplored Slovenian context.

In this study, grounded theory was used as an analytical approach as it is viewed as being useful in 'unexplored' contexts because 'it is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents' by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 23). In spite of grounded theory have been subjected to a considerable amount of criticism, according to Haig (1995) it embodies a conception of scientific inquiry. Charmaz (2000) argues that 'essentially, grounded theory methods consist of systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analysing data to build middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain collected data' (p. 509). The method used and the emerging concepts and relationships among them are generated inductively and also provisionally tested through triangulation. This study consists of two parts. For each part, one method of data collection was used.

SURVEY

A survey in a non-standardised form of questionnaire (Johnson 1994) with open-ended questions was used, because it 'gives the respondents an opportunity to state a position in their own words' (Fink and Kosekoff 1985, 23). The questionnaire consisted of questions which address the variability of the sample. The head teachers were asked about their gender, about their experiences at work, in education, and in headship. Further on, they were asked about (1) what they perceive as 'effective' head teacher leadership, (2) what they regard as indicating such leadership within the school context, (3) what are, according to them, examples of 'effective' head teacher leadership, (4) what, in their opinion, makes a head teacher effective, and (5) they could also add anything they thought was important. The purpose was to construct a more general account in the Slovene context of the views of respondents and a maximum variety of Slovenian head teacher's perceptions of effective head teacher leadership. A suitable sample was drawn from the population and 197 head teachers, 99 males and 98 females, of Slovenian primary and secondary schools out of the 644 of all head teachers were included in the sample. The volume and diversity of the data collected was considerable. All responses of one particular respondent have been considered as being 'a case per se,' still they were regarded as indicating elements of more general interpretative categories. Themes which were common across cases were searched. Four generic dimensions emerged from the data. The dimensions embedded within each response were identified. The responses were taken apart and categorised, each of them into categories of 'being,' 'knowing,' 'acting,' and 'effecting.' This laid the groundwork for constructing a more general perspective on what the informants of this study perceived as 'effective' head teacher leadership. After that, the data were categorised into each category and thematic subcategories. On the basis of this categorisation and subcategorisation, a provisional typology of effective leadership was developed.

THE CASE STUDY

The case study provided an opportunity for collecting data for an in-depth understanding of various actors in school life, such as teachers, pupils, and head teachers. The informants can be seen as 'knowledgeable agents of social life' (Giddens 1984). That is to say, all social actors know a great deal about the conditions and consequences of what they do in their day-to-day lives (p. 6), the social

agents are knowledgeable, and their knowledgeability is based in their practical and 'discursive consciousness' (p. 6) as well as on their unconsciousness (tacit knowledge). Therefore this study could be considered as interweaving both the process of constructing this knowledge and the search for understanding what informants of this study understand as being 'effective' head teacher leadership.

The data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews. Six secondary schools were defined as cases (case studies), because they are 'an instance of some concern, issue, or hypothesis' (Merriam 1991, 10). Within each of the six schools, interviews with the head teacher, six teachers, and six pupils were conducted. When the data of the interviews were interpreted, the data of the specific school context was also considered through case studies, which were based on a substantive theme rather than on an institution itself. The basic research question was: How do participants understand and interpret the topics concerned in this study in their own cultural context? For that purpose, an exploratory form of interview was adopted. 'The purpose of exploratory interview is essentially heuristic: to develop ideas and research hypotheses rather than to gather facts and statistics' (Oppenheim 1992, 67). The sampling strategy was an adapted variation of a sampling technique called the 'snowball technique' (Guba and Lincoln 1989), by which rich cases were identified. The phenomenon was studied through the perspectives of one head teacher, six teachers, and six pupils from each school, because understanding 'effective' head teacher leadership means viewing it from various perspectives, not only from that of the head teacher.

Two analytical strategies were used to analyse the gathered data: the categorisation of responses and the ethnography of case studies. They both opened two qualitatively different, yet still interrelated, perspectives on 'effective' head teacher leadership. They appeared as a horizontal perspective which embedded a great amount of 'dotted' individual perspectives of each respondent on the questionnaire about 'effective' head teacher leadership that were contextually detached, but still had some common glue (i.e., the idealisation), and a funnelled perspective which was contextually bounded (concrete school settings) and triangulated (head teachers, teachers, pupils, and the researchers) in a concrete school setting.

For the purpose of improving the credibility of the findings, a triangulation, something which has been generally considered as a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation, was employed.

So, multiple data sources such as head teachers, teachers, and pupils, were used. Two methods, a survey and case study method were combined for the purpose of triangulation. The aim was to increase the validity of this study. Once the data were analysed, the possibility of triangulating the sources with different theoretical schemas was used in order to see what might be the most illuminating fit between the formal theory, the data, and the emerging theory.

Findings from the Survey: Horizontal Perspective

Patterns of the emerged data were classified and honed into categories (interpretative and thematic). From this study four interpretative categories emerged: 'being,' 'knowing,' 'acting,' and 'effecting.' 'Being' indicated immanent personality characteristics of the head teacher and might be viewed as reflecting the 'state' of a head teacher's personality. 'Knowing' emphasises the varieties of a head teacher's knowledge. It is considered as already possessed and also as 'required' knowledge (what is 'important,' 'should/has to be known'). The 'acting' mode views the head teacher in 'action,' emphasising the process dimension of effective leadership. The 'effecting' mode might point to the outcomes ascribed to leadership. Although such categories might be viewed as unexceptional, they indicate the nature of effective leadership as seen widely in the current management literature and are hence an echo of it in the Slovenian context. The findings based on this study cannot simply be generalised beyond the boundaries of a case study. Yet they can be viewed as a small step towards a generalisation (Stake 1994).

THE 'BEING' DIMENSION

The 'being' category points to the head teacher's personality characteristics, which might also be seen as a person's potential to influence others. It might be viewed as presented in the management literature, which is oriented towards the personality of a leader (traits and behaviour) in relation to their effectiveness at work (Bass 1990; Yukl 1998). Although the trend in leadership studies could be regarded as moving away from focusing on the personality traits of a leader (Gronn 1999; Geijsel, Meijers and Wardekker 2007), there are components of it in the 'new' leadership styles (charismatic leader), which can be noticed in practice in the context of the global economic crisis. The trends in leadership studies might be seen as oriented towards why and how a leader is ascribed as such by followers or towards the power and influence that a school leader exercises (Geijsel, Meijers and Wardekker 2007). The 'being' of a leader might

be viewed as indicating a 'personality potency' which enables influencing others. This is consistent with Gronn's (1999) arguments that a 'leader's capital' is what made them influential in the eyes of 'followers,' and hence accepted as a 'natural' (emerging from the group) and not only as a 'formal' leader. It could be assumed that the 'being' category characterises the head teacher's 'personality potency' and that this potency is related to effectiveness in a professional role.

The perceptions of the respondents are grouped around personality characteristics that can be regarded as influencing interpersonal relations, around abilities for playing a professional role, and abilities related to the execution of tasks. That might mean that the personality of a head teacher is perceived as synonymous with professional performance and could, because of that, be regarded as 'being a potency' for performing the job. The term 'being' also implies the innate nature of such 'potency.' The data does not indicate which characteristics are regarded as inborn and which learned, although the responses strongly indicate that a head teacher needs 'something inborn' to be 'effective.' Which part of that is inborn can only be the subject of speculation. A clear distinction between what is perceived as innate and what is perceived as acquired is not evident from the data. The same dilemma also confronts personality studies (Musek 1993; 2000) where it is argued that it is not 'objectively' possible to prove what is 'purely' an inborn characteristic of personality and what is not so.

THE 'KNOWING' DIMENSION

The data from this study indicate that the respondents perceive the head teacher as 'knowing,' thus possessing knowledge related to their profession (teaching and headship) and broader areas of work, which are also determined by legislation, such as pedagogy, economy, law, management, and leadership. The data also imply that a head teacher 'knows' how to approach each concrete situation, and is capable of 'planning,' 'decision making,' 'communicating,' 'organising,' 'problem solving,' etc., and hence possesses knowledge about practical approaches at work. It could be assumed that the head teacher is regarded as possessing professional expertise. Moreover, the respondents also view the head teacher as having a 'broad' knowledge and as being 'well educated.' That implies that their knowledge is not viewed as framed in a narrow version of a profession but as based on knowledgeability in a broader sense of the word.

The importance of knowledge for head teachers in general is

explicitly emphasised by authors such as Sergiovanni (2001) and Reeves, Moos, and Forrest (1998). Knowledge is also viewed as related to the specific requirements of the job, such as 'knowing the job through and through' (Day 1999) and to specific fields of work, such as 'communication' (Bredeson and Johansson 1999), 'building vision' (Silins 1994), 'delegation' (Kushner 1994), 'managing of changes' (Fullan 2008; Hargreaves 2009), and 'reculturing schools' (Geijsel, Meijers and Wardekker 2007). The authors argue that a 'broader knowledge' (McCleary 1992; Berg 2000) as well as an 'expert/professional' knowledge (Fiedler 1996; Eraut 1993; Hyland 1994; Hughes 1998; Carr 1993) are important. The head teacher is also expected to 'know' 'what is going on out there' (Hargreaves and Fullan 1998) and also how and what one knows: 'knowledge about learning' (Day 2003a). A strong emphasis on the 'knowledge' dimension of the head teacher's work might be indicated in competence studies (Eraut 1993; Esp 1994; Roncelli Vaupot 1997). In that context, theoretical and practical knowledge need to be demonstrated via performance (Thomson 1990). Knowledge is regarded as a ground (established knowledge) as well as an aim (embedded in objectives and assessed) of various approaches to the training and education of a school/leader (Gronn 1999; Day 2003a; 2003b; Caldwell, Calnin and Wise 2003; Harris 2003; Hopkins and Jackson 2003). That might point to understanding leadership as a learned/trained activity, as a rational induction to leadership, viewed as a profession and also suggesting belief that leaders could be 'made' by learning although the failures in such 'making' are commonly ascribed to 'unpredictable' factors.

THE 'ACTING' DIMENSION

In this study, the respondents see the head teacher's 'acting' as related to interacting intensively with 'followers,' by means of 'motivating' and 'collaborating,' in a way which could be seen as 'positive' in relation to others, 'caring,' 'stimulating,' and 'supportive,' which might imply that they try to be accepted by the followers and, through that, be perceived as good leaders. Besides that, they also view the head teacher as enabling the school to operate well through 'organising,' 'co-ordinating,' 'trouble shooting,' ensuring that the school is developmentally oriented, 'planning,' 'setting goals,' 'improving quality,' and 'building vision.' That might well influence the perceptions of the followers as well as it might raise the image of the head and consequently the school's accountability in the community.

Various dimensions of a leader's activities, such as 'listening'

(MacBeath 1998), 'creating, maintaining and constantly monitoring relations' (Day 2000), 'empowering and supporting others' (Fernandez 2000; Blase and Blase 2001), 'caring and behaving protectively' (Blase and Anderson 1995), 'collaborating' (Leithwood and Jantzi 1990), and 'communicating,' which is also viewed as related to a 'broader image' of a head teacher, such as 'being' invitational (Stoll and Fink 1996) and 'being a welcoming person' (Bridgeman and Woods 1999), are emphasised in the current management/leadership literature. Views on distributing leadership across a school (Spillane 2005) and hence 'removing' a school leader from the centre are also present. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) emphasize three dimensions: setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization.

In some school leadership studies, an emphasis is put on the 'acting' of a head teacher, which could be related to the need to be recognised and accepted as a 'natural' leader as might emerge from within a group. So Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) state that 'doing good work on behalf of one's school, and being seen to do such work, is likely the most powerful strategy for positively influencing teachers' perception of one's leadership; put simply, it is what you do, not what you are, that matters to the teachers' (p. 531). Moeller (2000) also views the head teacher's 'acting' as related to being 'perceived as a leader of a school.'

THE 'EFFECTING' DIMENSION

The 'effecting' category of this study strongly emphasises both the effects of positive climate ('satisfactory,' 'pleasant,' 'relaxed,' 'working,' 'good') and people/child centred culture of the school ('child is in the centre of school work,' 'respecting') as well as the outcomes/results ('academic achievements,' 'results,' 'successes') of school work. It might be assumed that the 'effecting' of a head teacher's leadership might be viewed as oriented to the 'outcomes' rather than to the processes of influencing teachers.

The 'effecting' dimension might be viewed as 'derived' from school effectiveness studies, which argue that a leader makes a difference to school work (Mortimore 1998; Stoll and Fink 1996; Hallinger and Heck 1996). These could be seen as instrumental views about the effects of leadership, which means that leaders are expected to demonstrate that they 'act as causal agents who engineer desired effects or outcomes which, but for their actions, would not otherwise have occurred' (Gronn 1999, 9). The 'effects' of leaders might be viewed as deduced from the perceived (defined by indicators, stan-

dards) effective work of the school, implying that the head teacher has an impact on school, although the direct impact is not easily defined (and/or measured) or that it might be viewed as consequential (through teachers) (Leithwood and Jantzi 1999; 2000). The school 'effectiveness' studies could also be regarded as re-oriented from viewing head teachers as managers towards primarily viewing them as school leaders (effective school or educational leaders).

In that context, various dimensions of such leadership are emphasised, such as transactional and transformational leadership, post transformational leadership, moral instructional cum pedagogical leadership, and leadership related to learning organizations and organizational learning. Leadership can also be viewed as a shared process and not a 'property' of formally appointed leaders, and hence, as distributed. Discussing educational leadership has almost grown into an 'art of leadership' area, where inspiration, vision, non-hierarchical relationships, shared decision-making (Anderson 2004; Harris 2003), and collegial relations (Rubin 2002) are asserted. This suggests that studies have re-oriented their focus from school effectiveness to a search for strategies for the collaboration of formal leaders with teacher leaders by 'empowering' these teachers through enabling their participation in leadership. This, consequently, leads to an influence on the school's work and effects as well.

The initial categories of 'being,' 'knowing,' 'acting,' and 'effecting' could not be regarded as distinctive to this study but as widely present in the existing management literature. On the one hand, the initial interpretative categories might be viewed as epistemological presumptions about the nature of leadership presented through the respondents' perceptions. And on the other hand, they might also be regarded as a kind of reflection of the management literature, which is predominantly created in the West.

The respondents, however, perceived all these dimensions as interrelated. That, on the one hand, created an image of an ideal head teacher who exerts 'effective' leadership, and on the other hand, it also pointed to the fact that their perspectives on the phenomenon being researched needed to be regarded as not narrowly monistic, but as broad and variegated. In order to gain a funnelled perspective rather than claiming to gain an in-depth perspective, a case study was carried out.

Findings from the Case Study: The Funnelled Perspective

The aim of the second part of this research was to understand and interpret the 'effective' head teacher's leadership through the var-

ious perspectives of those who experienced it in a concrete school situation, in order to construct an in-depth or, rather, a funnelled perspective.

COMMON FEATURES OF AN EFFECTIVE HEAD TEACHER'S LEADERSHIP IN SIX CASE STUDIES

Despite various contextual specifics which pointed to some differences, all the case study schools had some common characteristics which were perceived by the teachers and the pupils. For example, the head teachers in these case studies were regarded as: 'real' people facing real situations and having problems (enrolment rates, resources, equipment, quality of teaching, climate, etc.); they were criticised (for being too democratic with pupils, too open, not always there for teachers and pupils); they were involved in conflicts (some teachers and pupils struck) and also caused critical incidents. They were perceived as individuals who have specific personal histories (that the teachers and pupils know about), which was in turn perceived as part of the head teacher's reputation (good former teachers, innovators, mentors, and various leaders, etc.). They had a long history within the schools (ex-pupils, ex-teachers, ex-deputies), which they led; they were also regarded as having (there as well as out of school) various leadership experiences (pupil leaders, teacher leaders, leaders of community boards). It appeared as if head teachers were a part of the school's tradition—its culture. They also seemed to like their work (they felt dedicated to their profession, perceiving it as their personal mission and not only as a job). They were regarded as outstanding teachers (two of them remained teachers even during their headship). They also seemed to know the schools they led very well, even from the pupils' perspective.

Building Strong Social Alliances

It seemed that head teachers were building strong social alliances with their deputies, teachers (specific responsibilities within the school), pupils (mainly with their representatives), and also people out of school. All these social alliances functioned in a way in which the head teachers could be regarded as being the only (formal) link among all the members of such an alliance (dyadic communication links). They could be seen as a sort of reinforcement of the head teacher's influence and as being a protective shield for the head teacher as well as the school.

Homogenisation of the Perspective on Future Development

The congruence of the perspective on the future development of the school was identified and appeared to be regarded as extremely high. It was considered that such processes could be a results of (intentional and perhaps unintentional) processes of homogenisation and unification (a sort of fusion of ideas into some mainstream ideas) of perspectives, in this case of the head teacher's social circle. The head teacher's strong motivation for realising the vision might also reinforce the pressure to homogenise their perspectives: to accept the initial vision as if it were their own. And teachers which were interviewed as well as pupils neither perceived their contribution to the vision clearly nor did they consider it important, but still followed 'that' vision.

Head Teachers As 'Teachers' for All (Pupils and Teachers): Pedagogy of Interpersonal Relations

Head teachers could be regarded as the ones who educate teachers as well as pupils in intensive contacts with them. They appeared to be using an influencing strategy which they had adopted when they were teachers in the classroom. They could also be regarded as perceiving teachers and learners and who need to educate others about what is 'right' for the school and even for their own professional and personal growth. Their 'teaching/educating' appeared to be following values which might be characterised as specific to the school context. They were seen as being engaged in helping teachers to learn how to improve teaching in the school. They also created good conditions for the teachers' learning. The teachers were required to adopt that philosophy and so the head teacher expected such values to become an intrinsic part of their motivation for continuous improvements in learning. Head teachers, as well as teachers, also indicated how they directly influenced the teachers' teaching. They mentioned lesson observation. Head teachers often adopted the role of teachers and used different interactions for that purpose. It could be speculated that within the school culture, the role of teacher and learner was defined by one's position in the school's hierarchy. It was never claimed that the head teacher was taught by teachers nor did such heads talk about their learning in that way.

FOCUSING PUPILS IN THE CENTRE OF CONCERN

Intensive interaction with pupils was identified, such as 'centring' pupils in the focus of their concern and by that also the school's

concern. They regarded this role as very important. They had regular contacts with their pupils and by that they could anticipate the pupils' needs; they could spontaneously teach pupils in daily interactions and were perceived to be personally caring for the pupils' needs as well as fostering the teacher's consideration of the pupils' needs within the school. They were regarded as systematically setting out to gain the pupils' affection and to have established good interpersonal relations for educational purposes. They seemed to use various kinds of contacts for teaching them, and for being models to them as well. They consider the relations with the pupils as good for pedagogical ends, including the interpersonal dimensions with them. That indicated the head teachers' general and specific care for pupils, directly as well as indirectly: through teachers and through ensuring good working conditions.

Fostering Good School Climate

The head teachers were also perceived as influencing the school climate. It was indicated that all interviewees were very satisfied with the school climate. In general, all interviewees perceived their school to be a pleasant place, which sounded like an ideal. It might also be inferred that the head teachers could also be regarded as influencing such a state by being a model to the teacher and pupils of good relations, and by contributing to good feelings within the school. They fostered good feelings by initiating, supporting, and taking an active role in the social life within their schools.

Head Teachers as People

Affable. It appeared that the head teachers influenced others by being very close to the teachers and pupils as human beings: the heads could be seen as social and affable people. They were predominantly perceived as influencing others through face-to-face interactions (individual or group approaches and other channels of communication with pupils, e.g., addressing pupils by internal radio and writing circulars).

Strong Personality. The teachers and the pupils perceived the head teachers to have strong personalities and to be determined to achieve what they intended to do. They were also successful in doing that as well. They were regarded as highly engaged in fulfilling their goals (important for the school and pupils) and for reinforcing their authority. They were also successful in carrying out their ideas through the teachers. However, they adopted various strategies for that, and

all these strategies were based on authoritative grounds: the head teachers basically decided by themselves what was right and they most commonly made others accept those decisions through a 'seductive' behaviour. They also built their charisma on gaining the attraction of others. They knew the context and had a long history within the school. It could thus be supposed that, to them, the school had been a learning medium for their leadership (various leadership roles).

Having Charisma. The head teachers could also be regarded as charismatic leaders and as very proficient in exerting power: on the one hand, they developed a very attractive behaviour and on the other hand, they decided everything possible within the school. It could be inferred that they had learned leadership by experiencing it in various situations and occasions. As experienced leaders, they knew how to influence others in order to achieve what was needed by them or required of them, as well as in congruence with others. They might be regarded as having emerged as natural leaders. Specifically, they were accepted as positive people (good, trustworthy, helping, collegial); as good teachers (experts in teaching, introducing novelties, project leaders), and then as good head teachers: as being humane to all teachers and pupils, as having visible results (new buildings, equipment, projects, matured results, high academic achievement, competitions, etc.) and as building a positive image of their school (of which all the informants seemed to be a part). They were also perceived as: good problem solvers; having visions for their schools as well as concrete goals; motivated; having established social alliances and strong interpersonal relations with the people around them (in particular with the pupils) and having strong motives for improvement. It appeared as if the head teachers had succeeded in building (continuously) a 'story' for the school with a good reputation and were regarded as a part of the school's extended family, in a relation regarded as at least tinged with paternalism rather than management.

A Balance between the Tendency Towards Achievement and the Tendency Towards Helping Others. It might be inferred that the approach adopted by the head teachers indicated both a strong tendency toward achievements as well as a tendency to help others (a social component). It might be speculated that the head teachers very proficiently balanced two main considerations in their leadership: being affable, humane, and close to the teachers and pupils as human beings on the one hand, and on the other hand, as determined to

realise their ambitious visions and maintain the good reputation of their schools.

Conclusions: The Merging Views

Some common characteristics emerged from the survey and case studies. The head teachers were perceived as strong and affable personalities, who emerged as leaders within the school culture and had played various leadership roles in their previous careers. They built their charisma through the years, especially by acting as excellent teachers and as teachers who have good professional reputations and excellent interpersonal relations, particularly with their pupils. It was obvious that they were putting pupils in the centre of their concern and forced the teachers to follow them in that action. Their 'effecting' was strongly related to building strong social alliances within the school, which were very strong with pupils, as well as with various individuals and social partners outside the school. In that way, they fostered their influence inside the school culture on the one hand, and through close social circles of co-workers and other social networks they also spread the influence inside the school as well as outside, on the other hand. They also put into 'effect' a homogenisation of the perspective on future developments and by that also built a incorporative school culture of continuous improvements. The dimensions of 'Being,' 'knowing,' 'acting,' and 'effecting,' which emerged in the survey approach, were also mentioned by the interviewees.

The key words, such as 'strong,' 'decisive,' 'self-affirmed,' 'highly engaged,' 'affable' and 'communicative,' 'visionary,' and 'respectful,' as 'knowing' how to teach ('quality of instruction'), 'knowledgeable,' 'caring,' 'sharing power,' 'mastering daily routine,' 'creating a positive image of the school,' and 'improving the quality of the teaching,' reflected an idealised person. However, these characteristics were not a set of unique images, but were instead related to specific contexts and interrelated with the new dimensions of leadership, which also reflect the old leadership dimensions that were identified and studied extensively in general management and school leadership. It seems there is still a need for an idealised leader in the school context, as if a merely 'standard' person would not suffice. We hesitate to argue that schools in Slovenia are in the intersection of highly technically strong leadership and inspirational, visionary leadership. This could be the reason why a two-tier system has been implemented in educational institutions. Also, it seems to be interesting that despite the highly competitive and marketized environment of

schools, they still need strong, emotional, caring, etc., leaders. It looks like they counterbalance the competitive environment through the perspectives of being idealised leaders and through their daily practice.

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