

Visionary Leadership Phenomenon in School Management

Yücel Daş¹, Şahin Yüksel², Fatih Hayati Beşir³

Article Info

Article Type

Review Article

Article History

Received:

07 May 2022

Accepted:

01 June 2022



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Abstract


The aim of this study is to examine the concept of vision and visionary leadership, of which importance is being understood more and more in the management of educational institutions, and to reveal the positive differences between school administrators with visionary leadership characteristics. In the study, which was designed as a review article, the concepts of leader, manager, vision, and visionary leader were considered in the literature, and the features of visionary leadership, which are open to change and innovation, constantly improving themselves, inspiring the people they work with, guiding them, walking the path together and helping them when necessary, realizing the goals determined have been revealed. Therefore, it has been revealed that visionary school administrators are more peaceful and happier with the internal and external stakeholders they work with in their institutions, they move more confidently to the place where they are thought to be in the future determined for the institution, and that their institution is more preferable than the equivalent institutions around it. Besides, it has been indicated that the school includes innovative educational practices and student-centered studies, supports pluralistic participation in all areas, and shares its authority by giving responsibility. In this regard, the necessity of making legal arrangements that will reveal visionary leaders is an inevitable requirement for the future of the country and the accomplishment of the institutions.


Keywords: Vision, Visionary leadership, School management.

Citation:

Daş, Y., Yüksel, Ş., & Beşir, F. H. (2022). Visionary leadership phenomenon in school management. *International Journal of Current Education Studies (IJCES)*, 1(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijces.8>

¹ School Principal, Ministry of National Education, Yavuz Selim Primary School, Konya, Türkiye, yuceldas73@gmail.com,  ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4804-4320

² Vice Principal, Ministry of National Education, Şekibe Aksoy Primary School, Konya, Türkiye, sahinyuksel303@gmail.com,  ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3203-0293

³ Teacher, Ministry of National Education, Mehmet Münevver Kurban Anatolian High School, Konya, Türkiye, fbesar@hotmail.com,  ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2159-2482



Introduction

As a social being, human needs to be in a group by nature and feels obliged to act in groups. For this reason, he interacts with the group with his actions and tries to recognize the goals and objectives of that group. In fact, the creation and mobilization of groups of people oriented toward certain goals and targets require a separate skill and persuasion ability. For this reason, there is a need for people who are needed, who can activate the group dynamics and who can achieve the desired goals. The emergence of these people enabled people to come face to face with different phenomena and concepts and revealed the concept of leadership.

Fundamentally, the concept of leadership, which consists of influencing the group and reaching the goal by persuading them (Acar, 2006), is to create a vision and encourage a culture that supports and can achieve this vision (Yielder & Codling, 2004). Visionary leadership, on the other hand, is not limited to the concept of leadership, but requires looking to the future with a new perspective. In addition, the visionary leader has the ability to influence and mobilize people collectively, inspire group stakeholders, and create a synthesis by blending the future with the past.

One of the reasons for the gap in terms of success between schools stems from the understanding of leadership and management in institutions. With the global change, the world has become a small village and the events that have taken place have affected everyone individually. School administrators, who could not catch up with the era, could not follow the changes in the current world and left their institutions behind these innovations. In the process of rapid change occurring in the world, visionary administrators and leaders who carry the school forward can make the institution preferable by showing themselves in the quality of the school and the success of the students.

Management and Leadership

Management and leadership concepts; despite being seen as similar in terms of directing and managing individuals, it is likely to say that there are fundamental differences between these two concepts. A leader is a person who can gather a group around certain goals and has the ability and knowledge to influence and mobilize them for these purposes. As can be understood from this explanation, the core of leadership consists of influencing others and directing them to behave. In short, the leader is a guide who can influence others, show where and how to go, and set goals and tasks, that is guide.

Management, on the other hand, reflects the organizational hierarchy and the manager is appointed from above for a task (Yielder & Codling, 2004). An executive is defined as a person who provides management on behalf of others, makes efforts to achieve predetermined goals, carries out work in a planned way, and tries to control (Oğuz, 2015). In this regard, it is used to express management, authority, and status (Topçu, 2017).

As mentioned above, management and leadership have different meanings, and managers and leaders also express different characteristics, roles, and behaviors. However, sometimes one can be used interchangeably in everyday language. It should be noted that, unlike management, the emotional side of leadership outweighs the intellectual



and cognitive side. On the other hand, these concepts are not synonymous. Some people can be both a good manager and a good leader, some people become managers and cannot be leaders, and some people become leaders and cannot be managers. A manager can be defined as a person who tries to achieve organizational goals by using all available resources and organizational and managerial processes. Ideally, however, managers are expected to be leaders as well. However, it can be said that this is not the case for most managers (Şişman, 1997).

Some scientists who have researched on the phenomenon of leadership have tried to describe the differences between them by comparing the concepts of leadership and management. According to Bush (2008), leadership is independent of authority while the administration is directly subordinate to institutional authority. As the manager is appointed by his superiors, the leader tries to reach the result by using the ways of sanctions and rewards thanks to his authority and position; he is someone who influences people and shows people what can be done and how can it be done. If a manager is able to exceed certain practices and certain sources of authority in influencing and directing the thoughts, moods, values, beliefs and behaviors of his employees, he or she has leadership characteristics (Tahaoğlu & Gedikoğlu, 2009). In this respect, it is possible to talk about situations where manager and leader characteristics converge and merge. The main differences between leadership and management are given below.

Table 1. Fundamental Differences Between Leader and Manager

Manager	Leader
managing	innovative
repetitive	original
Concervative	Making improvements
Focuses on the system and structure	Focuses on people
Relies on supervision	Honest, relies on facts
Has a short term perspective	Has a long term perspective
Asks how and when questions	“why” questions
Accepts the current conditions	Opposes the current conditions
Depends on Orders	Being himself
Thoughts are right	Thinks in the right way

(Source: Bennis, 1989 as cited in Keçecioğlu, 1998)

While (Babil, 2009) states that the leader should be an honest and respected person in order to influence those who follow him, (Ürkmmez, 2008) states that the leader should be the person who sees what everyone cannot see. While (Çelik, 2009) states that the leader should be able to communicate and cooperate well with the followers (Aydın, 1998), a manager with leadership characteristics states that he/she should have the ability to influence those around him and to create a conscious community in order to achieve goals beyond what they hoped for. According to (Bridge, 2003), the leader should have the potential to overcome obstacles and failures with his guiding and forward-looking view, knowing what he wants to do, while according to (Çelik, 2000), he should be



able to use the power of the followers well and use them appropriately. According to (Doğan, 2007), leaders should be well educated and able to influence those at the lower level with their expertise.

Stogdill stated five basic characteristics of leaders that differ from followers (Lunenburg, Ornstein, 1991).

1. Capacity (Intelligence, attentiveness, originality, and judgment)
2. Achievement (Education, knowledge, and athletic achievement)
3. Responsibility (Dependence initiative, resistance aggression, self-confidence and desire to excel)
4. Participation (Activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, and wit)
5. Position (Socioeconomic position and popularity)

A leader is someone who integrates, inspires and exhilarates, invigorates, innovates and leaves a lasting impression. The main characteristics of the leader that reveal his personality and cannot be acquired later are four. These, together with the innate characteristics, form the personality that develops in the first twenty years of his life. These features are; honesty, foresight, stability and professional competence. (Baltaş & Baltaş, 2004). In short, the leader assumes a creative and initiating role in the realization and development of certain goals of the organization. Since the leader has the authority to take all kinds of critical decisions about the organization, the leader must be forward-thinking, visionary, and able to set goals and direct people in this regard in order to make decisions for the benefit of the organization (Şişman & Turan, 2002).

Leadership Approaches

From the leadership research that started in the 1900s to the present, many different views on leadership have been expressed, but the generally accepted conceptual leadership theories are discussed under three titles as trait theory, behavioral theory and contingency theory (Çelik, 2000). The model in which the development of leadership approaches is explained in the historical process is as follows.

Traditional Leadership Approaches

Features Approach

The first emerging approach to leadership is the traits approach. In this approach, it comes to the fore that the qualities of the leader are the most important factors in determining active leadership. In other words, the unique characteristics of the leader enable him to lead and manage the group within the organization. A leader is a person who differs from group members because of his personal characteristics. According to this approach, it is important for a person to have different characteristics in order to be a leader (Koçel, 2001). According to the trait theory, one cannot become a leader later on, leadership is an innate trait. A person is distinguished from others by virtue of his characteristics. Physical characteristics (height, age, weight), personal characteristics (intelligence, education, communication power, confidence), emotional characteristics (perception, high sense of achievement, sense of trust), social characteristics (success, good communication, certain features such as self-acceptance) were emphasized (Koçel, 2001).



Behavioral Approaches

In behavioral theory, what the leader does is defined. Accordingly, leadership behaviors are determined, and the view that a person can have these behaviors in terms of the way in which education is emphasized. Thus, the thesis of the traits approach has been tried to be disproved. The main idea of the behaviorist leader theory is that the behaviors exhibited by the leader in the leadership process make him an effective and successful leader rather than the qualities of the leader (Peker, 2003). The leader's personal qualities are replaced by his behavior towards everyone. In behavioral theory, researchers mainly focused on two leadership styles. The success and effectiveness of the leader does not depend on his characteristics, but on the behaviors displayed by the leader during his leadership, which determines the behaviors such as the way the leader communicates with his followers and sets goals (Tengillimioğlu, 2005). The main difference between trait theory and behavioral theory is that behaviors can be learned.

Contingency Approach

After the 1960s, leadership approaches were also influenced by the radical changes in the field of management and focused on the environment in which the leader and the group interact. Contingency approaches suggest that different events and circumstances require changes in leadership style. Accordingly, the leadership style may change according to the current situation, sometimes a democratic attitude stands out, and sometimes an authoritarian attitude can have the effect (Mohan, 2001).

The contingency approach generally rejects effective leadership and management style, unlike other approaches. Contingency approach; He argues that the aim and quality of leadership vary according to the characteristics of the group members, the characteristics of the organization, experiences and personality traits. In the contingency theory, it has been stated that different situations require different leadership, and the issue of what the leadership style can be according to these situations has been given importance (Zel, 2001). It has been stated that the most appropriate leadership behavior may change according to the situation and that there is no single and best leadership style.

Modern Leadership Theories

Modern leadership approaches have revealed the different aspects of the leadership process that were ignored before, and the size of the relationship between the leader and his followers constituted the main elements of the studies as the most important difference.

Charismatic Leadership

Personal characteristics of the leader come to the fore in charismatic leadership. Trust, respect and sincere commitment are among the characteristics of charismatic leadership. These leaders have left emotionally intense images on their followers by establishing a very strong identification with their personalities. The effect of



emotions such as enthusiasm, confidence, commitment to personal goals, and fear on employees has been enhanced. According to some traditional thinkers, it is perceived that charisma forms the basis of the leading power of leaders. However, the findings obtained in studies have revealed that charisma is a general feature and that the same characteristics can be found in the leader's subordinates (Dubinsky et al., 1995).

Charismatic leaders put themselves at risk, make sacrifices, and gain the trust of their followers. The charismatic leader has full self-confidence. Charismatic leaders demonstrate their uniqueness by finding original ways of finding organizational goals. They make very good use of the environmental factor and the opportunities that arise. They show the sensitivity they show in many issues to their followers. They have the courage to implement rational changes by imagining different dimensions from the situation they are in.

Transformational Leadership

Increasing competition in the globalizing world has forced businesses to restructure all their resources and production processes. Thus, the direction of change has changed. In today's changing and increasingly competitive environment, the need for transformational or transformational leaders who give strategic goals, explain vision and enable them to participate in decisions that motivate their subordinates is increasing. Such leaders develop new forward-looking methods, introduce new strategic conditions, and keep up with the pace of innovation. The most important feature of change leaders is that they are open to continuous learning (Eren, 2004).

They chase after their big goals and ideals, and this requires constant learning. Transformational leadership places emphasis on common virtues such as freedom, equality, justice, and fraternity. In this leadership, the bonds between the team and the environment and the core goals of the organization are valued. This style of leadership aims to improve the uniform and pragmatic efforts of employees who are oriented toward big goals. The energy, which is formed by the influence of the people in the organization depending on the shared goals, enables the group and individual goals to be realized more easily. In transformational leadership, people's attitudes, thoughts, and values for a certain purpose; it turns into attitudes, thoughts and values that consider others (Starratt, 1995).

Transformational leaders encourage the continuous development, improvement and growth of their subordinates, guide them, increase their personal competence with development and training policies, and develop methods to increase the success of their subordinates. Apart from this, it is also necessary for the transformative leader to be able to define ways and make plans in order to achieve the goal. Transformational leadership consists of inspirational leadership, individual attention, ideal influence and charisma and mental stimulation sub-dimensions.

Interactive Leadership

Because a leader believes that results will create meanings, he adjusts the whole adaptation process according to results. When this type of leader is in question, it is based on preferring what is beneficial for the guidance of the employees, and there is an understanding that considers the employees as a tool within the organization and sees reward and punishment practices as an effective method. In the interactional leadership style, there is a change-



oriented relationship between the leader and the followers. In other words, some rewards are received in return for the attitude of the followers of the leader (Berber, 2000). Leadership gives subordinates the role of interacting, understanding, and influencing the leader in the organization, and transactional leaders motivate their employees to do what is asked of them. The power of subordinates depends on the power of the leader.

Transactional leaders present the needs of their subordinates and provide the necessary support in order to achieve the goals of the organization. Leaders use punishment to motivate subordinates. The fact that the leader has a high commitment to the current situation and the tendency to strengthen this culture by preserving the existing orders and business culture shows that he has a leadership understanding that implements traditional management strategies (Zel, 2001).

Strategic Leadership

Strategy is expressed as directing to a certain purpose, providing joint action and regulation. Strategic leadership is explained as developing a foresight about what may happen in the future and designing plans that will adapt without losing time in the face of possible changes. In management science, it is explained as the ways that the organization follows in order to achieve the goal it wants to achieve. The strategic leader includes every unit of the organization in the strategy process that develops as a result of correctly analyzing the internal and external environmental conditions in the place where the organization is located and acting with the right strategy at the right time. Strategic leadership, in today's world where change is experienced very rapidly, makes its importance felt with the mobility in competitive environments. In addition, strategic leadership is important in order to respond more quickly to the risks and dangers developed by the effect of globalization (Kirim, 2002). In this leadership, there is the ability to create and dominate change, to perceive risks differently and turn them into opportunities, to start working for goals from today, and to have the intuition, common sense, and vision necessary for change.

Quantum Leadership

This type of leadership has been created based on quantum physics. In quantum physics, when the assumption that objects have wave and particle properties together is put forward and evaluated, leadership is resolved as an interaction field expressing the same integrity in the follower and leader dilemma (Erçetin, 2000). This type of leadership, unlike the traditional understanding, does not consider the followers and the leader separately. Quantum leadership explains that the leader can be strong when the followers are evaluated holistically. Therefore, both a follower and a leader are needed in order to create the energy that drives the organization. While the leader directs the people around him, the followers help him/her move forward with the support they give him (Blank, 1999).

In the quantum leadership approach, leadership can always change hands. The leader gains the support he receives from his followers not from the power of the status quo, but from trust, commitment and mutual respect. On the



basis of this approach, it is impossible to keep up with the speed of change and in case of confusion in parallel with this change, the quantum leader approach clarifies the management of uncertainty (Erçetin, 2000).

Super Leadership

Introduced by Charlez Manz and Henry Sims, super leadership also expressed as self-leadership reveals the leader's self-leadership energy that exists in every person. Rather than the leader determining a direction for his followers and making them move in that direction, it is about maximizing the efforts of the followers by giving them the responsibility of their own actions (Doğan, 2001). The fundamental idea of this leadership style is to give responsibility to followers who can become self-leaders. The task of the leader is to contribute more to the followers by helping them to develop their skills and become their own leaders. The principles of super-leadership are to create self-directed workgroups, to enable employees to think positively, to set goals for themselves, and to enable them to learn (Aktan, 1997).

The Concept of Vision

The concept of vision, which is a concrete vision of the future, is so close that we can see its realization, but so far away that we cannot claim that it will not be a new reality, and it is admirably distant. Vision is the creation in the thought of a situation that can happen or be created in the future. This image can be created by processing information about the future with rational methods, as well as by subjective perceptions of developments pointing to the future (Ali Akdemir, 1998).

The vision enables leaders to go beyond everyday issues and create a framework within which they can work for the future. A leader, his vision and values; uses it to mobilize people, facilitate change and growth, and create a future for the organization. The leader's vision is the template for the organization. It is a picture of the possible, of a better future. The vision should clarify the main direction, instill a sense of shared purpose, and make clear what the organization will strive to become. According to Özden (1998), vision is a concrete vision of the future that reconstructs reality, creates its own future, dreams in accordance with the goals to be achieved in the future, experiences a creative tension and sees the current situation as a problem.

Visionary Leadership

While defining the concept of leadership, the explanation reflects the characteristics of the period in which it was made. When a definition is made considering today's conditions, meanings such as being compatible with the characteristics of the information age, favoring change, prioritizing communication, and giving priority to information are loaded. Recently, organizations choose leadership that can make strategic plans according to radical changes, recognize opportunities, involve employees in the process, develop creativity, cares about human resources management, and combines a leader and vision, rather than surviving today. The explanations put forward in this direction show that the visionary leader type is one of the leadership models that organizations want to work with.

Visionary leadership is to create a balance between the reality of the time and the reality that will be encountered in the future (Erçetin, 2000). A visionary leader is someone who, apart from creating a vision, has the ability to convey this vision to his followers. The visionary leader should determine the way to go, take the right decisions at the right time and convey this to his followers, and prepare and implement a change plan suitable for different conditions. The visionary leader is not content with verbal expressions about the vision, but also reflects the vision feature in his behaviors (Robbins, 2000).

A visionary leader who encourages people, directs them toward common goals, and paints the future, is one who can do effective work with his vision by establishing the link between a clear understanding of the time he is in and motivation, by making a joint effort (Yılmaz & Akdemir, 2005). Visionary leaders motivate employees with vision. The leader, who is the head of the organizational vision, enables the employees to concentrate on the future organizational goals. Visionary leaders, while focusing on the purpose of their employees, take into account their opinions, are in contact, and are respectful to the values they believe in. By distributing the authority over the visionary leaders to their subordinates, they also take their thoughts into consideration in the plan and program, by sharing the responsibilities. Thus, by spreading the vision to the whole organization, they ensure that the employees adopt the vision and be successful at an advanced level (Quigley, 1998).

School administrators, being visionary leaders, are people who can open new horizons in schools. With these horizons they expand, they make their schools more effective. In other words, the effectiveness of schools depends on the presence of visionary leaders (Acar, 2006). School administrators; Together with the teachers, they should create a vision that will lead the institution to success, develop strong strategies on the way to the vision, and move quickly on the path to success with a proactive approach that turns threats into opportunities (Tekin & Ehtiyar, 2011).

Rapid changes in the education system, teaching methods, and educational technologies require the school administrator to make strategic decisions as a visionary leader (Öztürk, 2008). The visionary leader should follow the changes made in the field of education while creating a forward-looking vision (Çelik, 1997). As can be understood from these statements, a leader with a visionary feature should always be ahead of time. Visionary leaders are always open to communication. They inspire and always guide those who follow them. It is seen that a visionary leader gives importance to employee performances. This situation affects the employees and their performance increases. The visionary leadership approach, which gives importance to being in harmony with its team, is important for today's educational institutions (Gül, 2019).

Çelik (1997), who revealed the roles of visionary leadership, examined these roles under three main headings. Accordingly, visionary leadership roles are conceptualized as seeing the way, walking on the way, and being the way. In terms of visionary leadership, to see the way is to see the future image of the vision and the place to be reached. The visionary leader should be able to look from different angles and see the right path. There should be a concern to see the plan and the way forward. Because the visionary leader is the person who opens the horizon of the future in this direction by carrying an emotional and intellectual pain for the future. The visionary leader



sees the future with an intuitive power, opens the curtain of the future and draws the map of the future. We can see this map drawn as a vision. In terms of visionary leadership, walking this path is as important as seeing the path to success. Walking on the drawn path requires determination. In this sense, the visible path and the path traveled must be the same. There have been such leaders who set goals for themselves that despite trying to walk towards the goal they set, they stray from the path and cannot reach this goal. The new role that the visionary leader will take as a result of the goals achieved by successfully progressing on the path drawn in terms of visionary leadership is to be the path. To be the way is to make way for the followers. The followers try to walk on this path opened by the visionary leader. The vision is completed with the success achieved as a result of following the path found with thought and intuition. In this way, the path opened by the visionary leader becomes a safe place for those who follow it as a vision. Accordingly, visionary leaders should see the way of the organization, walk that way with the organization and its employees, and be the way of the organization.

School Management and Visionary Leadership

The school principal, who plays a key role in creating a vision for the school and putting it into practice, has to set an example for the teachers, assistant principals and personnel working in his administration with his visionary feature. A visionary manager should include the views of teachers while creating a vision, and should do his best to include them in this process. In order to realize the vision, conditions should be created to provide support for teachers (Şişman, 2002).

The school principal, who has to be a good model for the employees of the institution under the roof of the school, in terms of individual and professional qualities, should follow the researches and innovations in the literature on education and learning and share them with his staff (Şişman, 2002). The school administrator, who has visionary leadership characteristics, is a leader whose vision is adopted by each individual in the school through his foresight and thoughts. In summary, school administrators should go beyond managing the school only according to written rules, perceive schools as a functional center of human dynamics, and strive to increase people's sense of dedication to the institution they work with, with forward-looking plans (Kalyoncu, 2008).

The quality of education in schools is closely related to the visionary leadership behaviors of their managers. The vision feature enables leaders to be forward-thinking. Creating a vision is a very important leadership task that cannot be postponed or left to the next generations. The vision is created and executed by the person at the top of the organization (Özden, 2005). At the same time, it is inevitable for the school, which is in constant interaction with the people around it, to change. In such a case, success in change is related to the prerequisite for determining the vision and mission (Çalık 2003).

Conclusions

A constructive and visionary leader who takes the institution forward; should value good ideas wherever they come from, find solutions with stakeholder participation rather than reacting to problems, avoid short-term universal solutions, be honest and reliable, and give importance to teamwork. Visionary leaders, who drag people

behind them with their vision and open new paths with the visions they produce, give the organization a sense of direction, draw the future picture of the organization and carry their followers to the desired goals.

Visionary leadership, which is concerned with shared values within a very broad framework such as freedom, equality, justice and fraternity; aims to adapt to the rapidly changing environment based on the aim of realizing organizational transformation and progress. As the famous philosopher Heraclitus stated, “*The only thing that does not change is change itself.*” Based on the principle of change in organizations is inevitable. Only a visionary leader can transform this change into development.

Encouraging visionary leaders who support development and creating a perfect workspace for them should be among the main duties of the Ministry of National Education. At this point, the legislator should make school management a primary duty rather than a secondary duty. As the Ministry, studies should be organized to reveal the hidden visionary aspects of school administrators, and administrators should be encouraged in this regard. At the point of reaching the goals we desire as a country, the future goals of our school administrators and the success of the students we want to achieve will be realized in schools with visionary leaders.

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