

## PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

**Ph.D. Student, Bianca - Cristina VOICULESCU (PROCOPIU)**

"Valahia" University of Târgoviște, Romania

E-mail: procopiu\_bianca@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *This article discusses the defining elements of participatory management and its advantages. Participatory management is a modern form of management, which can only be applied in scenarios where all actors involved have the same interests, without taking into account their personal or professional status. As far as Romanian educational institutions are concerned, it can be observed that there are elements of participatory management, both directly and indirectly, which are determined by internal regulations, by the style of management and, last but not least, by the elements of organisational culture found in them.*

**Key words:** *management, participatory management, active participation of employees.*

**JEL Classification:** *M10, M12.*

### 1. Introduction

The past few years have been an important period in terms of improving the education system in Romania. The launch of the Presidential Administration's project, "Educated Romania", the drafting of the two education laws, namely the Law on Pre-University Education and the Law on Higher Education, which after a broad consultation process were promulgated in July 2023 by the President of Romania and which came into force as of the school/academic year 2023/2024 and the initiation of the National Reform Programme (NRP) 2023 demonstrate that political decision-makers as well as civil society are committed to modernising the education system by making the quality and relevance of studies more efficient, including by increasing the democratic nature of both the process and the relationships within the system. The presence of democracy within the education system is directly proportional to the participation of all players in the management of both the system and the institutions.

Romanian education is undergoing a permanent process of structural change, as part of an organised process of reform and efficiency, which is reflected in strategic and education policy documents. The objective of these reforms is to ensure responses to the specific needs in terms of social and professional training of all citizens, as well as the needs of economic, social, cultural and even political development of the state. In order to remain part of the system and to ensure competitiveness in the educational market, all educational institutions must reform and demonstrate a proactive attitude, including in the implementation of consistent projects aimed at organisational development, with a view to increasing the quality, efficiency and equity of the educational process and the further training of all specialists in all fields. One of the most relevant elements of organisational development that ensures all the conditions for the success of the institution is the management team and, implicitly, the organisational policy promoted by it. Thus, decision-making that affects the future course of the institution and the preparation of related planning documents can be done in the following ways:

a) by involving teaching staff, pupils/students, parents, experts, economic agents and other relevant representatives of society;

b) decisions are made strictly by the management team, who are also the only members who draw up the planning documents;

c) contracting an expert in the design and implementation of development strategies or a management consultant.

Any of the above options has advantages and disadvantages, the basic argument being the enforceability of decisions and the effectiveness of strategic documents in terms of the development of the institution (Bezede et al, 2016). Thus, practice and theory point to the fact that those institutions where participatory management is applied and all stakeholders (parents, pupils, teachers, economic agents, etc.) play an important role in the decision-making process, participate responsibly in the creation of strategic and organisational policy documents, achieve their objectives with greater success.

## 2. What is participatory management?

If we go strictly by the DEX definition, participation is the act of taking part in an activity or action or discussion. When we refer to the management sphere, participation refers to the involvement of people in several managerial processes, whether it is making decisions or evaluating how the proposed objectives have been achieved.

Participatory management style is a modern form of management. However, it can only be implemented when all players have the same interests, regardless of their professional and personal position. Awareness of shared interests creates the conditions for initiative and creativity on the part of each participant in carrying out management tasks. In this respect, the characteristics of participative management are as follows:

- 1) active participation of employees in the management process;
- 2) Involving more people from the workforce, in addition to the management team, in monitoring and evaluation processes;
- 3) active participation of all actors who have an interest in the outcome in the decision-making process important for the institution, where, given the scope but also the intensity, we have two forms of participatory management: direct and indirect.

If we were to talk about educational institutions in Romania, one can observe within them elements that can be likened to participatory management, both in direct and indirect form, depending on how they are specified in the educational policy documents, on the management style approached by the principal and, of course, on the organizational culture of the respective institution. According to Law 198/2023, *"State pre-university educational establishments with legal personality, with the exception of those in the defence, public order and national security system, are run by boards of directors, principals and deputy principals, where appropriate. In the exercise of their duties, the boards of directors and principals shall work with: (a) the Commission for Quality Assessment and Assurance, hereinafter referred to as the CEAC; (b) the Commission for Training and Career Development in Teaching, hereinafter referred to as the CFDCD; (c) the teachers' council; (d) the local public administration authorities; (e) the parents' representative council and parents' associations, where they exist; (f) the trade union organisations affiliated to the representative trade union federations at pre-university education collective bargaining sector level; (g) the pupils' school council"*. (Article 128, para. 1) *"In state educational establishments, the board of directors is the deliberative governing body of the educational establishment"* (Article 128, para. 2) *"The teaching council of the educational establishment is made up of all the teaching staff of the educational establishment, is chaired by the director and meets monthly or whenever necessary, at the proposal of the principal or at the request of at least one third of its members"*. (Article 129, para. 1)

In this sense, it can be seen how the Board of Directors and the Teachers' Council are forms that can be likened to indirect participatory management, as they function within the institution, playing an important role in the analysis and taking of managerial decisions

relevant to the educational establishment. As for direct participatory management, these are rarer. These forms, which are rather informal, being determined and maintained by the principal, through his personality, his leadership style, and the values he upholds and promotes, open up the possibility of informally involving employees or other stakeholders, fully or partially, in the act of management. There are, of course, limits to this, of which every manager must be aware, particularly in terms of the time resources involved in making a decision or solving a problem, the reluctance of some managers to involve the whole team in decision-making or to give them access to administrative matters, the possible need for additional financial resources for participatory activities and, very importantly, the risk of involving subordinates in managerial activities to the detriment of their day-to-day tasks. However, specialists believe that the benefit of involving them in the decision-making process is worthwhile and that these limitations can easily be overcome if there is effective and rational planning of management.

### 3. Conclusions

Direct participative management, even if it does not involve official forms, often has the most significant impact, especially when it becomes a tradition in the institution concerned, with the principal benefiting from the support of all subordinates, decisions benefiting from multifaceted perspectives, and the decision-making process benefiting from a collective assumption of responsibility, including for the implementation of decisions (Nicolescu, 1997).

### References:

1. Romanescu, M. and Tănăsioiu, G., *Management - suport de curs*. Targu-Jiu: "Constantin Brâncuși" University of Târgu Jiu.
2. Bezede, R., Lisenko, S., Scifos, L., Chicu, V., Sinchetru, V. and Girnet, G., 2016. *Elaborarea Planului de dezvoltare strategică a instituției. Ghid methodologic*. Chisinau: Pro Didactica Educational Centre.
3. Condurache, G., 2003. *Management general – suport de curs*. Iasi: Centrul de Consultanță și Management pentru IMM.
4. Nicolescu, O., 1997. *Management comparativ*. Bucharest: Economica Publishing House.
5. Nicolescu, O. and Verboncu, I., 1990. *Management.Economica*. Bucharest: Economica Publishing House.