UNDERSTANDING TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN THE LIGHT OF SOME SOCIOLOGICAL PARADIGMS

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Abstract. *The field of effective teaching is not only significant but also unique in relation to the demands placed before it and the issues it faces along the way. It can be said that adequate, positive leadership is the answer to the demands and a promising solution in reducing the issues and challenges of the current reform. Although researchers and practitioners have emphasized the importance of leadership in education, teacher leadership is a field that has started to be "in the spotlight" only in the last few years and is a topic that has not been sufficiently researched. For the purposes of adequate affirmation and understanding of the nature and essence of teacher leadership, as seen by the author of this paper and the leading authors in this field, it is necessary to make a brief review of the foundations of its origin, that is, different theoretical perspectives of looking at leadership in education in general. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to review and analyze two significant and at the same time quite influential sociological paradigms of leadership in education (the structural-functionalist and constructivist) which further reflect on the shaping and development of teacher leadership.*

Key words: *paradigm, education, leadership, structural functionalism, constructivism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership in education is an important field of scientific research and undeniably necessary for organizational success. Although the significant importance of leadership in education was highlighted in numerous papers, it was often linked to the hierarchical leadership present in schools, and leadership characteristics were mostly attributed to school principals, supervisors and those with formal titles. Teacher leadership was given little space in such papers, so the researchers left out the issue of teacher leadership and its contribution to the effectiveness of teaching. Over time, in progressive schools and districts

across developed countries, the importance of the leadership behavior of those who directly participate in the implementation of teaching was recognized, and the concept of teacher leadership began to come to the fore, which was finally proven through professional and scientific literature, through various theoretical and research efforts and initiatives. The key role of teacher leadership in student learning, the effectiveness of the teaching process, innovative and productive approaches to teaching, school climate and culture, school improvement, education policy development and education reform planning have been emphasized by research and practice in other countries. It could be said that teaching effectiveness is only one of the aspects in which teacher leadership can help in solving the most sensitive and relevant problems in education, and finally (and most importantly) in motivating students to learn who, based on their competences, will then adequately contribute to society in the future.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that leadership is treated in the relevant sources as a relatively new and modern phenomenon which was introduced to organizations only in the 20th century, the difficulties in articulating this concept arose from different perspectives and the authors' attempts to comprehend its nature and essence. This is particularly evident when it comes to understanding teacher leadership. Like with other concepts, researchers clearly had conflicts of opinion as to how the concept of teacher leadership can best be defined and at the same time well understood. Perhaps the "powerlessness" and difficulty in understanding this concept is clearly reflected in Wigginton's claim that "the issue of teacher leadership is complicated as hell. The word itself is frustratingly ambiguous" (Wigginton 1992, 167). In Serbian education, unfortunately, there are no such efforts to unravel the very essence of this concept or they are not a priority of research interest. Nevertheless, teacher leadership exists and takes place despite the absence of its clear and precise definition and study. For the purposes of adequate affirmation and understanding of the nature and essence of teacher leadership, it seems worthwhile to take the first steps and start from those more influential sociological paradigms, such as structural functionalism and structuralism, which form a good basis for the interpretation and description of this complex concept.

2. FUNCTIONALISM AND EDUCATION

Functionalism, also known as structural functionalism, is seen as one of the main theoretical perspectives in sociology, and starts from the premise that society, like a biological organism, is made up of interconnected parts that are held together by a "value consensus". Functionalists believe that every sophisticated and progressive society tends to function on the basis of this value agreement, that is, a common set of norms and values that everyone agrees on, commits to, and applies. This value consensus is an auxiliary tool in the establishment of a common identity and the construction of unity, cooperation and goals through moral values. Similarly, Macionis (1989) suggests that society is "a system composed of parts, each of which performs a specific role in the functioning of the whole." The individual is not more important than the society or the organism – it is vice versa. Each part of this organism is a driving force, that is, it helps in achieving balance and maintaining social equilibrium for the continuity of society. Thus, functionalism views each part of society in terms of its contribution to the stability of all of society, and society is more than the sum of its parts. Each component plays its role, and as Durkheim (Durkheim 1972; 1976) predicted, no part functions alone and in isolation. When one of

them is dysfunctional or experiencing instability and crisis, other parts tend to adapt to fill in the gaps and produce new forms of order, stability and productivity (Pope 2016). Morgan (1980) starts from the premise that the functionalist paradigm is mainly "based on the assumption that every society has a specific, real existence and systemic character, all oriented towards the production of an ordered state of affairs". In the analysis of this paradigmatic direction, he suggests that human beings have their own specific roles within society that are directed towards its development and continuous growth. This author goes so far in his efforts to try to understand and explain the specific behaviors of individuals that arise under the influence of the society they are an integral part of. It is worth mentioning that the goal of functionalism is to understand society as a whole and how society generates empirical knowledge. Nevertheless, in the context of a more complete understanding of the nature, the way of working, and general functioning of organizations, it could be said that it has a futuristic orientation, i.e., it emphasizes how organizations, including all its members, possess the "ability" to focus their actions and behavior towards reaching the preferred vision, i.e., the future condition. In this regard, Morgan's position that "behavior is always seen as contextually bound in a real world of concrete and tangible social relationships" is quite justified (Morgan 1980, 608). In the context of organizational society, this paradigm sees society as a specific structure characterized by an ordered set of social structures. Bearing in mind the abovementioned, it seems that functionalism emphasizes the functional integration of all individual members of a specific structure to the same extent as their roles. Basically, compared to supporters of all other paradigmatic approaches, functionalists seem to be better at identifying and describing specific patterns and structures than at elaborating their significance or how they contribute, for example, to the success and growth of an organization or a specific society. Namely, with a deeper and critical analysis of this paradigm, one shortcoming can clearly be observed, which Holmwood (2005) drew attention to, and it is the lack of a deeper explanation of the importance of each function and member of a specific structure, which other more modern paradigms are able to explain.

The functionalist perspective is largely based on the works of Durkheim, Parsons and Merton. Bearing all this in mind, proponents of functionalism emphasize education as an important social institution that helps meet the needs of society and maintain stability, that is, the positive functions performed by the education system. More specifically, four such functions are: (1) creating social reality, (2) teaching skills necessary for work, (3) teaching values, and (4) assigning roles and meritocracy. In this regard, Parsons argued that education acts as a "focal activity of socialization" in the sense that the school "plays" a central role in the process of secondary socialization by taking over primary socialization (Parsons 1959). Especially since the family and wider society apply different principles and children need adaptability in order to orient themselves in the future world (Parsons 1956, according to Haralambos & Holborn 2022). This is in accordance with Parsons' functional preconditions for the stability of society, namely 4 basic functions: (1) adaptation, (2) achieving goals in relation to the environment, (3) integration, and (4) achieving the highest governing patterns (Vuković & Todorović 2020, 99). Merton's version of functionalism differs from the arguments of other functionalists. He believed that functionalism should not only consider positive social institutions, but also negative consequences, i.e. dysfunctions. Moreover, the focus should be on balancing functions and dysfunctions, that is, on the overall determination of society as functional or dysfunctional (Vuković & Todorović 2020). He deeply believes that the educational institution is functional for some groups of society while it is dysfunctional for others, arguing that if an individual considers that education is useful for

him, then that person will see the school as functional or vice versa (Merton 1968). This attitude is explained by the existence of manifest and latent functions of educational organization, i.e. intentional and recognized, and neither intentional nor recognized, and speaks of much more complex processes than Parsons does. For example, the manifest function of the education system is to transmit culture to new generations in society, but one of the latent functions is to take care of children in a safe place during the work engagement of parents (Vuković & Todorović 2020).

In the context of the above, all individuals are part of the same organism, and education, by teaching key values and assigning roles, carries out the function of creating a sense of identity. It could be added that in this way a feeling of belonging to the community is created. In the majority of available scientific papers, functionalism is crucial for the conceptual understanding of educational organizations, especially when it comes to analyzing different theoretical approaches and concepts in educational leadership in management. From the extensive list of different and popular paradigms used by authors in the study of educational leadership and management, functionalism is the most preferred sociological perspective, which is often justified by the fact that it integrates the diversity of many, if not all, theoretical approaches. As early as in 1965, Martindale himself, looking at education from the perspective of functionalism, emphasized that in the context of managing educational institutions, functionalism focuses on how universal education can respond to the needs of society (Martindale 1965). It can rightly be said that the main strength of this paradigm in the field of educational management is actually its share and contribution in identifying the role and importance of education for each individual member of society. Speaking differently, some authors emphasize the more manifest role of education, which includes the transfer of skills and knowledge to the next generations, than the latent one. Nevertheless, most functionalists have reached a consensus solution generally speaking about both the manifest and the latent function of education. The first refers to the intentional functions of politics, processes, social patterns and activities, which are tendentiously designed and expressed, and include the things that the institution expects to be provided and realized. The second reflects the policies, processes, social patterns and activities carried out by schools and other education institutions, which are not always visible, and if they are not recognized in a timely manner, it can result in unwanted, but not always unexpected, consequences. Furthermore, authors such as Stocking (1984) who focus on another fundamental basis of functionalism, which is the moral aspect of education, i.e., the idea that education is a crucial transmitter of the essential and moral values of society, as in every organization. The specific values that are built and developed, implemented and applied by individual members also have an impact on the management of educational institutions, of course, with the inclusion and respect of the basic moral rules of learning in those institutions. And the main role of functionalism is to explain how the process of such transmission takes place easily.

From a functionalism perspective, the existence of educational organizations and supporting structures is experienced and understood exclusively in the service of the well-being of its members, as well as for the achievement of a defined purpose. Putnam (2007) presents a similar view, arguing that in a typically functional paradigm, each member of the organization acts more or less within the framework of specific rational boundaries and is characterized by one-way uniformity that is exclusively intended to achieve very specific organizational goals. Speaking generally, functionalism, unlike all other paradigms, is focused on the functional role of each structure, system and individual member of the

organization, on the causal connections, behavioral inputs, sensory inputs and mental states of all elements and is able to explain how the system must carry out its specific functions to achieve goals. However, there are also certain limitations that need to be highlighted, and they relate to the fact that it is not only the functions and causalities among the specific elements of the organization that are important, but also the implications of such functions and the importance of each element. In a complex organization such as an educational one, such limitations must be overcome.

2.1. Leadership in education and teacher leadership from the perspective of structural functionalism

Analyses of numerous theoretical and research papers indicate that in educational management, the structural functionalism perspective of leadership is most frequently used. Guided by the essence and features of this sociological paradigm, authors such as Slater (1995) and Dereli (2003) agree that leadership can be described as a set of measurable behaviors and skills. Moreover, this perspective confirms the idea that leadership is directed through social structures so that it does not go beyond social norms and values. And since society is viewed as a stable, organized and integrated system, it is quite undeniable that there is a belief that every part of society contributes to the functioning of the whole. Moreover, as Durk (2007) points out, this paradigm views society as a complex structure made up of several relatively stable and smoothly functioning social structures. At the same time, he believes that such social structures are called groups or institutions of common norms, cohesion and special culture. Seen from the perspective of educational sciences, organizational sciences and management itself, leadership is treated as a component of organizational behavior in a special (inter)relationship with organizational culture. Researchers found it particularly challenging to understand this relationship, and even today the controversial question still remains: does the organizational culture determine the style of leadership and the leader himself, or does leadership determine and shape the culture of the organization? In a constant attempt to answer this question, authors often relied on the perspective of structural functionalism. If it is taken into account that in this perspective every organization has its own culture which is treated as a component/dimension of the organization, a managerial tool for achieving optimum performance and quality. It is quite logical that the leader shapes the culture, so in that sense leadership is "older" than culture. Without intending to diminish the value and importance of efforts to clarify this relationship through other paradigms, such as the interpretive one, it is clear that the number of research papers focusing on structural functionalism is more extensive, and the view that the leader shapes the culture is more sustainable.

This perspective of leadership is based on several variants of key assumptions, and according to Dereli (2003), they can be summarized as five key ones: (1) the survival of the institution basically relies on the achievement of set goals through the design of its structure that can function under specific circumstances; (2) organizations can function effectively and efficiently when individual preferences and organizational choices are determined by certain rational norms and values; (3) the provision of specializations brings expertise and a high level of performance among individuals; (4) coordination and control among substructures of the organization is the main concern of organizational effectiveness; (5) every problem comes from "sensitive" or "damaged" structures and they can be managed by remodeling a new system in the organization. For these reasons, leaders of a structural or

functionalist orientation always focus on analyzing values, setting clear guidelines and directives while holding each individual responsible for the outcome and investing efforts to work out organizational problems according to restructured policies, plans and strategies.

Speaking about the educational context itself, structural functionalism as the prevailing perspective of educational leadership is conceptualized through the striving of the school as an organization towards stability. Primarily, the focus is on leaders who advocate for social integration and consensual processes in creating a stable school. It could be said that the entire education system based on the social structure is directed through this perspective. In the light of educational struggles and reform, it is primarily focused on teachers as leaders who evaluate, design, integrate and provide assistance to students in the learning process. Accordingly, the authors Augustsson and Bridges (2012) advocate the thesis that only teachers design the entire learning process based on the relationship between policy, curriculum and activities.

Based on structural functionalism, students and teachers should comply with strict processes, especially if we take into account the implementation of those activities that have already been determined and clearly specified through the rules and procedures of the school. Specifically, teacher leaders strive to provide resources, articulate a vision, set expectations, create boundaries, enforce social rules, and provide clear instructions to students through the teaching-learning process. In addition, this approach is particularly focused on the social order and work environment in relation to students and their ongoing learning activities. Thus, the main properties of structural functionalism reveal that there is a more influential and powerful responsibility of teachers in the classroom environment and school culture than of the students themselves. Furthermore, teachers-leaders constantly observe and analyze the teaching of their colleagues, provide help and support in improving the quality of teaching, develop the curriculum, coordinate the curriculum, conduct more frequent visits to classrooms outside of their classes and do not hesitate to seek consultation from their colleagues about teaching-related questions and specific teaching situations. For Barnett (1990), teachers-leaders plan and set goals, monitor, evaluate, communicate, allocate resources, organize, engage in various curricular and extracurricular activities, model appropriate behavior, manage policies and supplement activities where necessary. This list is of course not complete because it can also include the engagement of teachers in a wide range of activities and roles that can include leadership.

It is worth mentioning the authors' tendency to view teacher leadership as a process rather than a positional concept, which includes a series of behaviors rather than formal positional duties. In the process of implementing very specific duties, teachers should be given more opportunities and freedom to express their leadership skills through specific activities in the school. Teacher leadership seen in this way is based on professionalism and collegiality and refers to those teachers who improve the education climate by engaging their colleagues and students in various activities designed to improve the education process and positive learning outcomes (Pounder 2006). Perhaps Li's statement (Li 2010) could be taken as an adequate example of understanding teacher leadership from a structural functionalism perspective. Namely, this author believes that teacher leadership implies the skill of influencing through professional knowledge, moral authority and emotions by participating in decision-making and managing daily teaching activities in a collaborative environment in which learning and a common organizational culture are highlighted. Teacher leadership occurs as a result of a process of mutual learning and guidance among colleagues and is reflected in participation in school management,

formulating daily activities, and building the culture of the school with its leaders (Li 2010). In such reformed cultures, according to Ash and Persall (2000), teachers are leaders both inside and outside their classrooms. The foundations of structural functionalism can be seen in different models of teacher leadership. For example, the model of interactive teacher leadership highlights the social architecture of the education group and how expectations, personal values, and interpersonal relationships affect the ability of teachers and students to realize the vision of the school as an organization. Klenke (1996) advocated the thesis of a "complex pattern of interactions between leaders, followers and situations" by looking more systematically at this model. According to her opinion, context, culture, gender, leadership, tasks, specific organizational structure, and personality are components of the social construction of leadership, and these components are in constant mutual interaction. She believes that interactive leadership includes formulating and communicating a common vision of the future that creates a common platform enriched with diversity, offering a creative response to changes (Jovanović 2022, 58). Transferred to the school context, a teacher using this style of leadership encourages student participation in decision-making at the level of the education group, empowers students, nurtures reciprocity in maintaining the teacher-student relationship and building consensus, especially when talking about common values. Thus, contextual factors are the ones that set boundaries within which teachers and students communicate and they define the limitations and requirements that surround the dyad teacher-student, that is, leader-follower. Therefore, the needs and requirements for leadership are differentiated depending on contextual dynamics and limits. Clearly, different educational organizations, both formal and informal, represent a complex network of relationships, and each of them carries its own set of contextual parameters that should be taken into account.

Finally, a successfully built school culture could influence the commitment and motivation of teachers, which is directly reflected in the growth and development of student achievement, and which in turn directly affects the teaching and learning process with the pretension of continuous sustainability.

3. CONSTRUCTIVISM AS A BASIS FOR UNDERSTANDING PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

From the aspect of education theory, constructivism is reflected in the efforts of the main participants in the education process to design and develop an environment imbued primarily with a spirit of trust, which further activates the potentials, analyzes and redefines old assumptions, maps and models implicit beliefs, creates meanings and sense of action, formats actions based on new patterns of behavior and purposeful intentions. A leader with a constructivist orientation strives for constant exploration and consideration of already established paths, i.e., of previous conditions, situations and circumstances that participants in the education process found themselves in when previously involved in the organization, work and overall functioning of the school. A leader's actions are futuristically modeled considering that based on the acquired knowledge he plans, defines and adjusts the way the school should function, striving to find ways to achieve what is planned. And leader does all this in a context in which everyone involved can be mutually connected and bound in a relationship. At the same time, Jovanović (2022) suggests that understanding the core of constructivist learning gives leaders from educational institutions opportunities to ask

questions and provide them with frameworks of activities that would result in self-building and equal distribution of authority. The importance of these factors is indisputable, especially when it comes to designing a constructivist-based curriculum, assessment and instruction. Constructivism gives multiple opportunities to the school leader, especially in terms of building a favorable learning environment based on curiosity, a unique perception of learning, community, authentic work and assessment. Consequently, it could be said that the main goal of a constructivist-oriented leader is to implement real change inspired by intention rather than prediction. On the other hand, the complex process of change in an equally complex educational environment can only be understood through a dialogue between coleaders in a learning community. Through research, analysis and planning, it is important to engage in a community where memories and experiences are shared. And such communities, as suggested by many authors, are important because they are constructed based on the past and guided by the goals for the future (Watson 2014; Spradley 2008). Therefore, constructivist leadership could be formulated as reciprocal, purposeful learning and action in the community. In relation to the fundamental assumption that learning takes place through a constructivist process, it could be stated that this process includes several essential segments: (1) access to the learning process based on one's own mental capacities, (2) collaborative participation in learning experiences, (3) detecting and formulating new ideas, (4) articulating and integrating new ways of thinking, and (5) constructing new knowledge based on experiences. With all this in mind, it seems that constructivism and the learning based on it deserve special attention.

The question arises of the relationship between constructivism and education, specifically constructivism in the school context. Schools, as dynamic organizations, are constantly influenced by changes in education and, accordingly, constantly strive to "comply" with or respond to them. One of the most important factors that has a transformative impact on schools is the constructivist approach. Constructivism as a theory of reality, knowledge and learning is not a completely new and original paradigm in science because its origins can be found in the works of authors from the 18th, 19th and early 20th century (Ćirić & Jovanović 2018, 60). Over time, it has undergone certain modifications in relation to the conceptual assumptions, methodological-research specifics, and authors' affinities. The effects of constructivism on education are clearly essential. This especially comes to the fore when constructivism is viewed within the framework of the school environment. As Yildirim (2012) suggests, this approach and other developmental influences lead to changes in school management. It remains an open question what roles leaders, specifically teachers and researchers should have in the transition of reform policies and interventions in relation to the best practices in schools.

A constructivist approach to teacher leadership advocates that teachers should be allowed to develop the ability to use reciprocity in problem solving through collaborative research. This reciprocity is as much about thinking as it is about solving problems and engaging in action research at school. The purpose of this approach is to track the developmental flow of teachers' thinking about collaboration and research as they participate in research-based learning. This type of learning describes a wide range of curricular, philosophical, and educational approaches to teaching, especially considering that constructivism is based on observation and extensive scientific studies of how people learn. When applied to schools, this would mean that students build their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiential learning and reflection of those experiences. The constantly present tendency of human nature to perform a kind of alignment and insight

into the framework of previous ideas and experiences when facing the new and unknown is present especially in education. During this process, students either modify their knowledge and beliefs or reject new content and information as useless. This is how they become creators of their own knowledge, and in that process the most important learning requirement is focusing on students' questions, research, and evaluation of what they know. Here, the process of collaborative learning is clearly recognized as another term within constructivist leadership in education, which implies the joint intellectual effort of students and their teachers, and indicates numerous different teaching practices and methodologies. In the most general sense, it is about encouraging students to use active learning techniques, such as experimentation and solving problems from real life in order to acquire diverse knowledge, think and discuss how their understanding process goes through different stages of transformation. By questioning themselves and their strategies in a constructivist classroom, students optimally become "expert students" and this certainly provides them with a wider range of tools for future learning. With a well-planned learning environment, students "learn how to learn" which implies that "learning to learn" takes place effectively. Many authors view this process as a learning spiral, suggesting that when students continuously reflect on their experiences, they discover that their ideas become more complex and elevated, and the range of their abilities to integrate new information increasingly moves toward the upper limits. One of the main priorities for teachers is to encourage this process of learning and thinking. Undoubtedly, their skills and ability to create intellectually stimulating opportunities and problem-based situations in class that will activate students to solve challenges comes to the fore. The methods and scenarios through which students engage in joint tasks and dialogue in a sustainable community/group of researchers are emphasized, but also the ways and certain activating modalities through which they influence reciprocity in the teacher's thinking. The teacher makes sure to take into account and understand the students' previous conceptualizations, direct the activities and build on the students' output knowledge. Therefore, the process of constructivist teacher guidance is imbued with both reciprocal and spiritual concepts. Therefore, constructivist leadership leads to the common purpose of learning by providing opportunities for participants to construct meanings in the process, to accept reciprocity, equity, meaning, learning, responsibility and closeness. Based on constructivist learning principles such as active learning, encouragement, facilitation, and shared responsibility, it also requires reciprocal relationships that include active participation, shared goals and values, shared responsibility, encouragement, and facilitation.

Theoretical approaches that offer constructivist premises should be applied to teacher leadership to offer a promising framework for the development of school communities in which dialogue and constant re-examination are encouraged. At the same time, it will also transform thinking among individuals, especially those who resist changes and stick to an implicit pedagogy of what teaching should look like, in order to form a collective school culture based on interaction. Engaging teachers in continuous professional development includes a shared vision, dialogue, collaboration, specific issues (even sensitive ones), and shared learning for a common goal, skill development and passion for the growth of sustainable changes in the school that will result in long-term and sustainable results.

Furthermore, if it is considered that constructivism is primarily focused on the student and that it focuses on the student's assumption of responsibility during the learning process, on building and expanding new knowledge based on current and previous knowledge and experience, then thinking and analyzing the knowledge they possess becomes an indispensable

activity. Building their own views of the world by defining and redefining objective reality, construction and reconstruction of experience that take place in the physical and social environment is guaranteed for the students. The essential aspect of the constructivist point of view, as stated by Ćirić and Jovanović (2018, 63), is the fact that knowledge is not determined by what people find out, that is, by external objective reality, it is not passively received through the senses or through communication, but is the creation of an active knower. From the aspect of school, this would mean that in the process of construction and reconstruction of experience and acquisition of new knowledge, student engagement is in the foreground.

Quite justifiably, constructivism has particularly influenced the philosophy of management and leadership in schools. With the increased interest in implementing a constructivist approach to learning, many contemporary authors such as Brooks (Brooks & Brooks 1999), Lambert and associates (2002), and Shapiro (Shapiro 2002; 2003) advocated that the ideas of constructivist management and leadership rightfully gain importance in education. Although the studies on this matter mainly focused on the perspectives of teachers and students, and made their significant contribution, there is still an obvious lack of studies and analyses of the perspective of school principals and the contribution to organizational changes in the school provided by their constructivist leadership style.

Moreover, since there is a widely-accepted opinion that principals have a key role in school improvement, then the study of the implementation of constructivist principal leadership is extremely important, because they are the ones who are recognized not only as persons in a managerial position, but as persons who are most important for the implementation of new tools and requirements. For this reason, it is worth drawing attention to the potential contributions of school principals as constructivist leaders in school organizational transformations. It should be emphasized that constructivist guidance is no less important in the classroom itself, so we should not forget the equally important role of constructivist teacher guidance in the co-construction of relationships between students and the discovery of new meanings based on experiences and knowledge. This is why it is said that this leadership style is the main component of successful constructive classes and schools. And it is especially important that school principals carry out their leadership roles and tasks in a constructivist manner. Constructivist leaders are flexible, open to change and appreciate diversity of opinion. If they want to initiate change, they must become agents of change themselves.

They act as "problem solvers" at the organizational level, that is, at the core of their activity there is a driving force for solving problems in a new and constructively acceptable way. In order for the preferred actions and modifications to have their true and relevant effect, the first step they should take is to review the existing norms and culture of organizational functioning. In that process, it is necessary to win over the partners among interested parties who are ready to make a change, and who are aware of the need for oscillations and sometimes the turbulence that changes can bring with them. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to pay attention to the level of flexibility, diversity, established partnership with parents, development of thinking. Therefore, encouragement to take responsibility is a requirement within the school cultural norm. Leaders in constructive organizations such as schools, who assume the role of leaders of an innovative value-changing organization, divide leadership demands and distribute authority among employees, which is seen as normal behavior. They achieve effective decision-making with the active participation of their partners (teachers, parents, professional associates...) in a democratic and fair manner. This participation in collective decision-making leads to the

internalization of decisions and the development of a shared sense of collective responsibility. By encouraging stakeholders, it is necessary to create a school climate that nurtures shared meanings, because, after all, as Lambert and Walker (2002) said, constructivism by its very nature involves dialogue, conversation, questioning and action. Undeniably, principals consider conversation an important component of constructivist leadership, which they accept as a key component of non-constructive change. They see vision and values as a "compass" for transformation. Through cooperation with society and school, they define unique goals, vision, communicate the mission and define common values. Clear communication with stakeholders, valuing different perspectives and allowing partners to express their own opinions certainly show that principals have the main role in ensuring the success of the school. Among other things, Shapiro (2003) indicates that with their constructivist approach, principals help to create a safe learning environment where the employees and users of educational services are motivated and encouraged to take risks and where their social and psychological needs are met. They fulfill their role as facilitators and constantly encourage school stakeholders and partners in order to ensure that management activities and educational activities take place according to constructivist principles.

Finally, from the perspective of postmodern thinking, constructivism can be seen as a new paradigm, an alternative much different from the traditional positivist approach in which the emphasis is on the relative nature of reality that is co-constructed in relationships among people. At a time when school principals and teachers often face ethical questions that require the use of improvised solutions, a constructivist approach that directs educational leaders toward strategic solutions can help promote and affirm school effectiveness. In order to build schools with a high level of leadership capacity, it is important to ensure wider involvement and functioning of constructivist leadership, establish a common vision that directs the school activities, use an approach to improving practice based on its exploration, develop collective responsibility, establish reflective practice, and constantly foster a spirit of student performance improvement. In conclusion, constructivist leadership implies that all the participants in the education process embrace the culture of learning. In this development process, taking risks whenever deemed necessary is equally important and desirable. It is not about the rules, nor about special instructions and recipes that determine how the teaching process should be carried out, but about enlightening education providers who are both experts in their respective fields, but also permanent learners in executing it.

4. CONCLUSION

It is well known that organizational and management sciences attribute the success of any organization to its leaders. According to some unwritten rule, in any organization, department, team or group, there is a constant need for people who lead, i.e., direct other members of the community towards achieving a unique goal both with their personal and professional qualities. Objectively speaking, we are talking about a person who, with his qualities, and above all with his behavior and actions, will influence every individual in his surroundings to realize the maximum of his own potential (and even hidden ones) necessary for proper functioning both within the group he belongs to and outside of it.

It happens often that in everyday conversations on the subject of leadership, people tend to link this topic to large companies and enterprises, and at the same time lose sight of the fact that educational organizations, more than any other, are looking for a leader at the level of

excellence. Leadership as a process of social influence and a type of model of interactional connection between the main participants in the education process really provides opportunities for enhancing efforts in achieving the intended goals. In educational institutions, leaders are appointed/delegated to positions, both formally and informally, and exert influence over their colleagues, students, parents, other employees, and other stakeholders. Therefore, we are talking about the individual's ability to mobilize and influence others to articulate and achieve the common goals of the educational institution. In this way, leadership in education has a valuable role directly in improving the school, improving the quality of the educational services it provides, and enabling it to realize its full potential by raising motivation, strengthening abilities, improving practice, providing good conditions and resources, and positively and indirectly affects student learning and achievement.

In addition to the abovementioned, the importance of leadership in education is indicated by the fact that it is not only recognized and acknowledged by state authorities and organizations worldwide, but also declared as the second most important factor in developing the ability to learn. Therefore, the issue of creating more flexible educational organizations, capable of adapting to different social contexts and transformations, especially when talking about developing countries, is more than a priority. Among other things, the creation of a school climate focused on effective learning should not be "reserved" only for users of educational services - students, but also for the providers of these - teachers, in order for them to have full support in teaching future generations how to contribute to society. Clearly, we should not lose sight of the fact that it is the followers who make a leader successful by accepting and supporting his leadership. Consequently, leaders (teachers) and followers (students) collectively play the main role in successful leadership.

Unfortunately, there are certain fields in Serbian science where leadership is not sufficiently developed or sufficiently recognized and acknowledged. To some extent, this is the case with education. Although leadership and management research in the field of education has shown an intense growth trend in recent years, this is still a relatively new and specific topic in Serbia and an insufficiently researched field with a foothold in both education and management sciences. Moreover, the teacher leadership issue as a factor of pedagogical influence on students is always present in the field of pedagogical theory and practice (to a lesser or greater extent), due to the striking discrepancy between accepting the new, unknown and "foreign" to many, changing the existing, and the requirements of education practice.

One of the reasons why schools often do not achieve their education objectives could be found in the lack of teacher leadership, but also in the lack of understanding of what it actually is. Given the complexity, specifics, and value of the leadership phenomenon, as well as the potential for insight from different contexts and perspectives, it is not surprising that there is no uniform definition that would encompass every aspect of it. Heterogeneity in the formulation of the term leadership also exists as a direct consequence of various theoretical and practical needs of the authors, whereby some of them emphasize certain features that other authors do not consider significant. Consequently, differences come to the fore due to unequal treatment of this term. Therefore, understanding this complex and specific concept and process is not easy, and least of all simple, especially when one takes into account the possibility of analyzing it from different aspects and within the framework of different contexts, different preferences and orientations of researchers.

In order to properly affirm and understand the nature and essence of leadership in education, primarily the leadership of teachers, the sociology of leadership is called to help.

Although most disciplines primarily focus on leaders, their talents, knowledge and behaviors, the study of leadership from a sociological perspective believes that it is of crucial importance to understand how leaders progress in groups, organizations, society, and throughout history itself. And in order to reach that level of knowledge, it seemed necessary to select and holistically analyze two highly positioned, and at the same time, influential and authoritative sociological paradigms of leadership in education, which further reflect on the actualization of teacher leadership. The hope remains that this modest contribution of the insight into pedagogical leadership from the aspect of sociological perspectives will be a step towards creating a more realistic representation of its role and importance for modern education.

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RAZUMEVANJE LIDERSTVA NASTAVNIKA
U SVETLU NEKIH SOCIOLOŠKIH PARADIGMI

Područje efektivne nastave je ne samo značajno već i jedinstveno u odnosu na zahteve koji se pred nju plasiraju i probleme sa kojima se na tom putu suočava. Reklo bi se da u adekvatnom, pozitivnom liderstvu leži odgovor u odnosu na zahteve i obećavajuće rešenje u redukciji nastalih problema i izazovima aktuelnih reformskih zahvata. Premda su istraživači i praktičari naglasili važnost liderstva u obrazovnom kontekstu, ipak su liderski stilovi nastavnika oblast na koju se tek nekoliko poslednjih godina „baca novo svetlo" i tema koja nije u dovoljnoj meri istraživana. Radi adekvatne afirmacije i razumevanja prirode i suštine liderstva nastavnika onako kako ga autor ovog rada i vodeći autori iz ove oblasti vide, neophodno je učiniti kratak osvrt na temelje njegovog nastanka, to jest različite teorijske perspektive sagledavanja liderstva u obrazovanju generalno. Stoga, cilj ovog rada je pregled i analiza dve značajne a istovremene prilično uticajne sociološke paradigme liderstva u obrazovanju (strukturalno-funkcionalistička i konstruktivistička) koje se dalje reflektuju na oblikovanje i razvoj liderstva nastavnika.

Ključne reči: *paradigma, obrazovanje, liderstvo, strukturalni funkcionalizam, konstruktivizam.*