

## **SYMPOSIUM**

### **LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS AND DYSFUNCTIONS IN CYPRUS PRIMARY EDUCATION**

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# **LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS AND DYSFUNCTIONS IN CYPRUS PRIMARY EDUCATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Bush and Glover (2003) defined leadership as a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Harris, Muijs and Crawford (2003) reviewed a number of studies on school leadership and they concluded that leadership has been established as a key factor in school effectiveness and, specifically, in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of teaching in the classroom. More recently, Paletta and Vidoni (2006) pointed out that most analyses on school leadership accept the crucial role of school leadership for the well being of the institution. Overall, the evidence from the international literature demonstrates that effective leaders exercise an indirect but powerful influence on school effectiveness and student achievement.

The present symposium paper focuses on school leadership in the primary education of Cyprus. To this effect, three research studies are reviewed, relative to three posts in primary education: inspector, headteacher, and deputy headteacher (Theophilides and Stylianides 2000; Theophilides, 2002; Theophilides, Michaelidou, Stylianides and Charalambous, 2004). In order to provide insight into the functions (what primary school administrators and school inspectors pursue in their everyday practice) and dysfunctions (what is missing from their everyday practice), all three research projects looked at the current and ideal practice relative to the duties and responsibilities of the three posts. As a result, the research effort described in this paper is useful for a number of reasons:

- It provides the baseline for a detailed role prescription for each leadership position.

- It highlights the shortcomings of the selection process of school administrators and inspectors which currently exists in Cyprus and pinpoints to necessary changes in this respect.
- It presents useful feedback for a major educational reform effort currently contemplated in the public educational system of Cyprus.

The three studies were conducted between 2000 and 2004; they all relied on multiple sources of data and their primary focus was to investigate both the functions and dysfunctions of management and leadership in primary education through qualitative and quantitative approaches to research designs. To help readers understand the rationale and the outcomes of the study, we present below: a) the necessary background information on the Cypriot educational system, b) a brief description of the studies and their outcomes, and c) our conclusions and recommendations about management and leadership in primary education in Cyprus.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE CYPRIOT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

The Cypriot educational system is centralised. The highest authority rests with the Ministry of Education and Culture (from now on MEC). The educational policy is decided by the Cabinet of Ministers upon the recommendation of the Minister of Education and Culture. The educational policy, therefore, (e.g. curriculum, textbooks, school schedule, school staffing and promotions to administrative posts) is centrally decided and implemented. The implementation of the educational policy is supervised and assessed by school inspectors.

The reader should have at least another four pieces of information in order to understand the rationale and the focus of the research reviewed in this symposium: *size* and *structure* of the system, *duties* and *responsibilities* of inspectors, headteachers and deputy headteachers, and *administrator recruitment*.

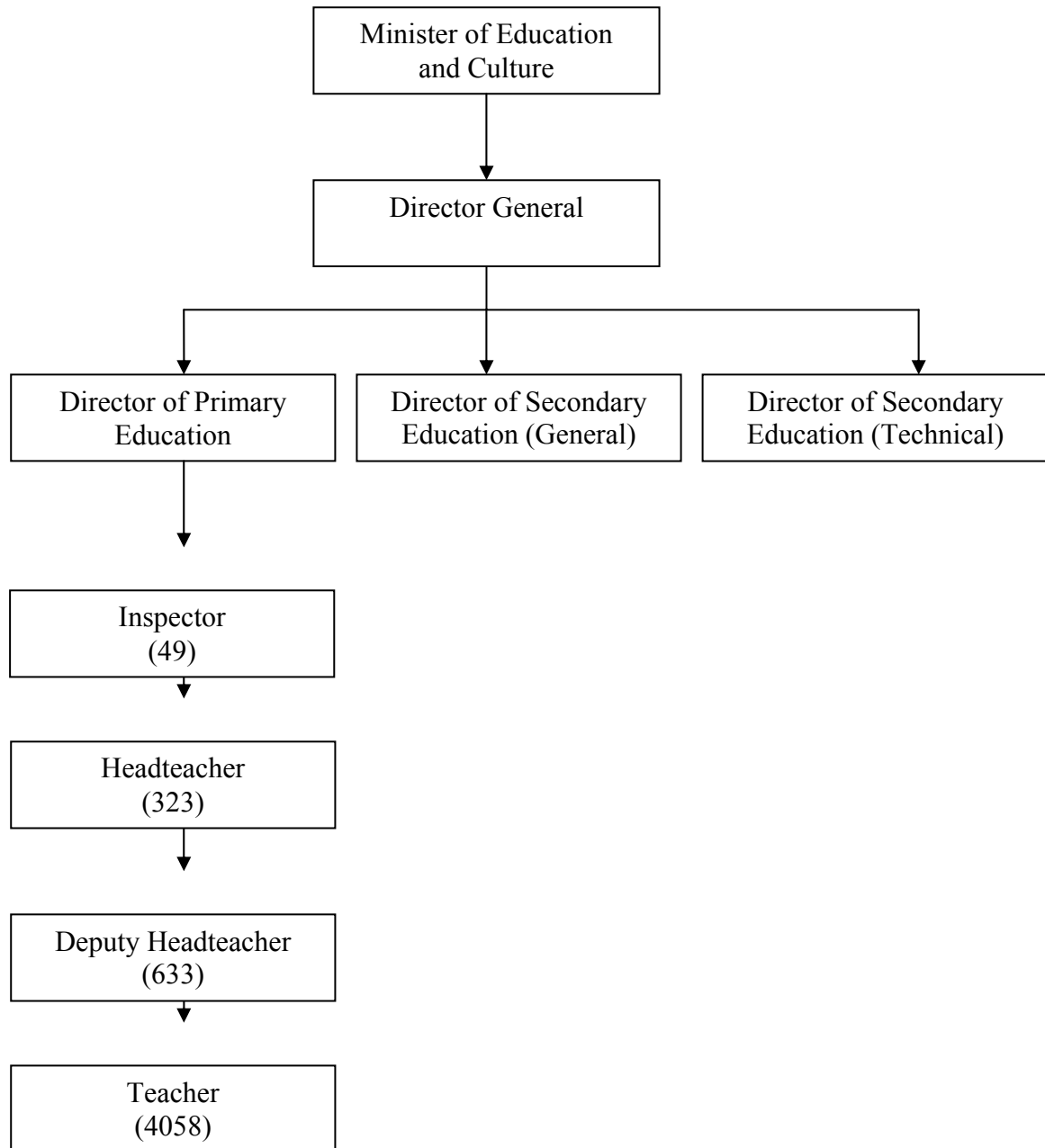
Cyprus is a relatively small country. Being the third largest island in Eastern Mediterranean after Sicily and Sardinia, it occupies an area of 9,251 square kilometres. The whole island comprises one single educational system. Table 1 presents detailed information about the size of the educational system.

Table 1: Schools, teachers and pupils in the Cypriot educational system by level of education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2005)

Level of education	Number of schools	Number of students	Number of teachers	Number of inspectors
Primary*	589	67499	5051	49
Secondary General	107	52162	5731	41
Secondary Technical	14	6192	495	11
Total	710	125853	11277	101

\*including preprimary

The central character of the educational system has already been stressed. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the administration of education, the implementation of educational laws, the administration of the budget, and the implementation of educational policy. The administrative structure of the system, as it relates to the research studies reviewed and the respective population for each study, is depicted in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Structure of the Ministry of Education as it relates to primary education*

Despite the centralised character of the educational system, at the school level there is considerable autonomy. Primary schools function under broad guidelines issued by the MEC. However, each school is entitled to develop its own action plan, based on the aforementioned guidelines, and teachers have the right to put forward their own teaching methods. As a result, the role of the three posts reviewed in this symposium become crucial determinants for the school culture and ethos developed by individual

schools. As it has been well documented by a number of studies, the role of both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is crucial in determining school effectiveness and school improvement. For example, effective headship was identified as a common characteristic of the improving schools. A study by Ofstead (2000) identified common features of leadership skills and attributes of the headteacher that contributed to school effectiveness. Leadership in these more effective schools was described as: inspirational; committed to the school and the local community; able to create belief in the possibility of success; consistent; and fostering good teamwork amongst staff. Also, in one of the most comprehensive studies on school effectiveness, the involvement of the deputy headteacher was found to be one of the most significant school factors affecting student achievement (see Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob, 1988).

It is, also, important to review the duties and responsibilities for each administrative post in primary education. Inspectors have a twofold responsibility; on the one hand, they supervise and guide teachers in order to improve their teaching practices and, on the other hand, they assess the effectiveness of individual teachers, school administrators, and school organisation as a whole. Inspectors are expected, therefore, to play a decisive role in teachers' and school administrators' career development.

Primary school headteachers are responsible for the administration of the school and the implementation of the governmental educational policy set out by MEC. As a result, headteachers deal with bureaucratic (registration, attendance, inventory, school correspondence, school maintenance, co-operation with various agencies) as well as educational (staff organisation, staff development, curriculum) issues. They are also responsible for the monitoring of pupils' progress and, to a limited extent, with the

evaluation of the staff. A consequence of centralisation is that: a) headteachers' involvement in curriculum development is limited, and b) headteachers are not concerned with recruitment of staff and salaries. Headteachers are posted to schools with at least three teachers. As Table 2 reveals, 39.1% of the primary schools (almost 2 out of 5) are medium-size schools (with 3-10 teachers). More than half of the schools (in exact figures 57.4%) can be considered large school units.

Table 2: Size of primary schools\*

Number of teachers	Schools		Cummulative	
	N	%	N	%
Less than 3	12	3.5	12	3.5
3 to 6	54	15.6	66	19.1
7 to 10	81	23.5	147	42.6
More than 10	198	57.4	345	100.0
TOTAL	345	100.0		

\*Pre-primary schools are excluded

Deputy headteachers are appointed in schools where staff exceeds six teachers. Thirty-five percent of their time is assigned to administrative duties and responsibilities. Their duties include: assisting the headteacher in the efficient administration and management of the school, replacing the headteacher when he/she is absent, co-ordinating various school activities assigned by the headteacher and involvement in bureaucratic and educational procedures.

Inspectors and school administrators are recruited centrally by the Education Service Commission<sup>1</sup>. No prior training on school management is required for somebody to be recruited in an administrative and leadership position. The existing vacancies for each post are formally announced. Interested candidates submit their application and,

<sup>1</sup> The Education Service Commission is a five-member independent body appointed by the President of the Republic for a six-year team.

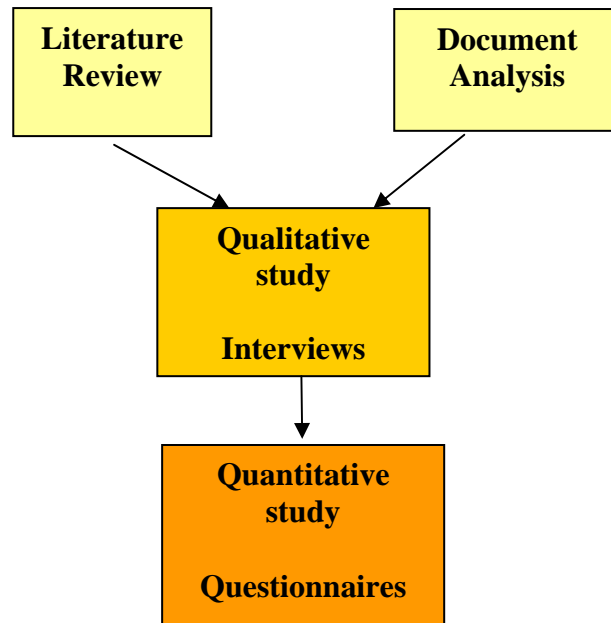
through bureaucratic procedures, they are selected for the job based on the three criteria of merit, seniority and qualifications. After their promotion to school head, headteachers are required to participate in a short in-service training course offered by the Pedagogical Institute.

### **THE WORK PLAN**

As it has already been pointed out, the major purpose of the research effort was twofold. Firstly, to investigate the major functions of each of the three positions reviewed and, secondly, to reveal any deficiencies which exist in the exercise of the incumbents' duties and responsibilities. More specifically, the purpose of the research studies was:

- To examine the management and leadership philosophy of inspectors and headteachers through their subordinates' perceptions.
- To pinpoint the major functions exercised by each post in the educational system of the island.
- To assess if any deficiencies exist between current and ideal practice relative to the duties and responsibilities of the three posts reviewed.
- To prescribe what the role of each post reviewed should be.

In order to present an answer to the issues raised above, the research design presented in Figure 2 was applied:



*Figure 2: Main components of the research design*

Figure 2 verifies that the research approach involved the selection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative approach was employed mainly during the first stages of the research design; it relied on interviews and open-ended questions with a relatively small sample; the information gathered at this stage was used as input to the development of the structured questionnaires used in the study during the follow-up stages of the research effort.

Two important observations should be made concerning the structured questionnaires. Firstly, the questions used were problem based in the sense that they were aimed at investigating the deficiencies between actual and ideal practice in the various domains of the job responsibilities. To this effect, a series of statements relative to job duties and responsibilities was developed. For each statement three questions were asked relative to **current practice**, **ideal practice**, and **importance of the statement**. An example of the approach is cited below.

Statement: *Quality of instruction (e.g clear objectives, well structured lesson, consideration of local conditions)*

(a) To what extent does it **currently happen/exist**?

To a minimum extent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 To a maximum extent

(b) To what extent should it **happen/exist**?

To a minimum extent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 To a maximum extent

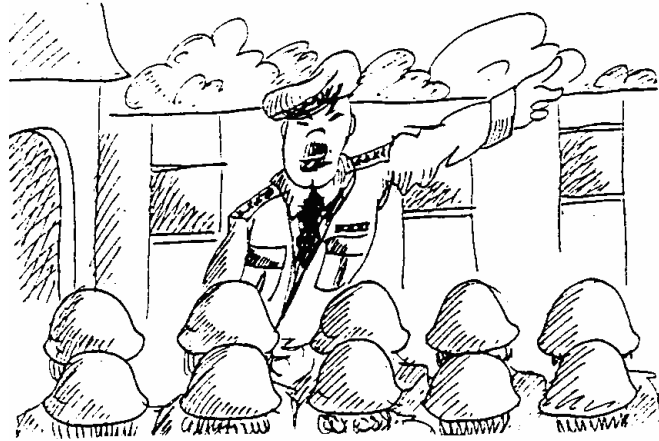
(c) How **important** is it?

To a minimum extent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 To a maximum extent

By subtracting (a) from (b) the difference between the current and the ideal practice is measured. By multiplying the difference score by the importance score (see above (c)) the deficiency score is computed.

Secondly, factor analytic studies were used to group the number of various job duties and responsibilities into categories (factors). This enabled the description of the major components of role responsibilities and also the calculation of the deficiency score for each category (factor) using the methodology described above.

To study the management philosophy employed by headteachers and inspectors, four symbolic pictures were used to describe four different leadership ideologies: directive leadership, non-directive (human relations) leadership, laissez fair leadership, and participative leadership. The subjects of the study had to (a) select one of the four pictures which best described the leadership practice they either put in practice (headteachers) or they experienced (headteachers and teachers), and (b) to rank the four pictures in the order of their preference. As an example we cite below the symbolic picture for directive leadership.



*'You have to conquer the hill. You have to act on the basis of the directions I prepared. Those who will act exactly as I suggested will be given an honorary leave of absence. You succeed only when you conquer the hill'.*

The first research study looked at the **headteacher** post. A series of statements which described the criteria for successful school management and leadership on behalf of the headteacher were given to the participants and they were asked to assess each statement using the methodology described above. Also, the four symbolic pictures were used as described above. All primary headteachers (N=280) as well as a sample of 900 teachers participated in this study.

In the second study, the perceptions of headteachers and teachers about the school **inspector** were investigated using a similar methodological plan. The four pictures were used to describe inspector intervention in the system. Thirteen statements about the inspector's work were assessed in the same fashion as above. The sample of the study consisted of 280 primary headteachers and 900 teachers.

The third research study investigated the role of the **deputy headteacher**. A composite methodological plan was followed with interviews and open-ended

questionnaires as a preliminary pilot study. The preliminary data led to the construction of two structured questionnaires; one about basic fields of work and the second about actual activities undertaken by the deputy headteacher when exercising his/her duties. All statements were followed by the three questions described above.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in all three studies. Mean values, graphed data and factor analytic approaches revealed interesting results. Also, inferential statistics were used to examine possible statistically significant differences among groups within the samples.

### **THE OUTCOMES OF THE THREE STUDIES**

The presentation of the outcomes of the three studies is structured along three main questions. These are:

- a) What leadership styles inspectors and headteachers employ while exercising their duties and responsibilities? How do their subordinates perceive those styles?
- b) What are the main functions of the three posts reviewed?
- c) What are the major deficiencies in the exercise of each role?

#### **Leadership ideology of inspectors and headteachers**

Headteachers were asked to assess the leadership style(s) put forward by inspectors as well as by themselves. Teachers were asked to assess the leadership styles put forward by inspectors and headteachers. Table 3 and Figures 3 and 4 highlight the response to this question.

Table 3: Leadership philosophy and practice of inspection and school administration as practiced and perceived by headteachers and teachers

Leadership philosophy/practice	Inspection		School Administration	
	Headteachers (%)	Teachers (%)	Headteachers (%)	Teachers (%)
Directive	26,0	31,0	2,8	17,0
Non directive (human relations)	14,0	12,0	2,8	11,9
Laissex faire	11,0	20,0	0,6	17,2
Participative	49,0	37,0	93,8	53,9

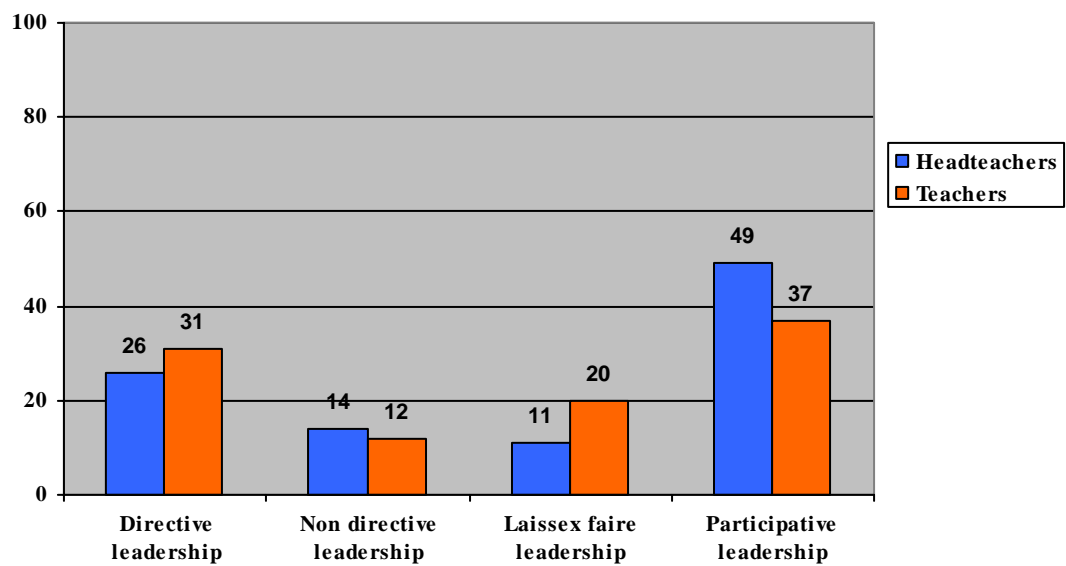


Figure 3: Philosophy of inspection as perceived by headteachers and teachers

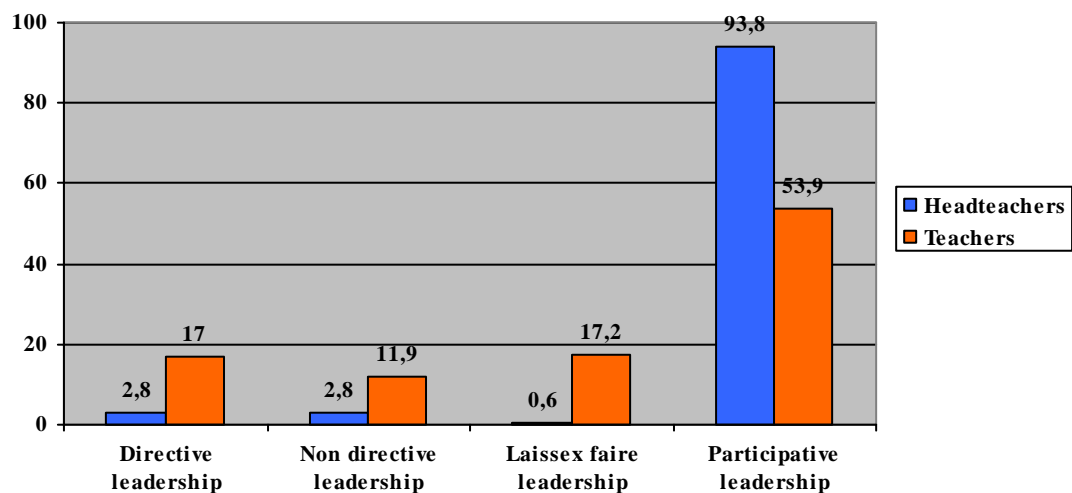


Figure 4: Philosophy and practice of school level management as perceived by headteachers and teachers

Table 3 and its accompanying two figures warrant two major observations:

- The distribution concerning the philosophy of inspection is bimodal for both headteachers and teachers. Both groups perceive the inspection process to rely, to a considerable extent, on a participate style of leadership; the respective percentages are 49 and 37. At the same time, however, 26% of the headteachers (approximately one out of four) and 31% of teachers (approximately three out of ten) perceive the inspection process to be of a directive style.
- The agreement cited above between the two groups is not present when school management and leadership is considered; while the overwhelming majority of headteachers (approximately nine out of ten) perceive themselves as practising a participative style of leadership, only 53,9% of teachers (approximately one out of two) believe so.

### **Main functions and dysfunctions of the three posts**

#### **Inspectors**

The main functions of the inspectorate were investigated through the perceptions of headteachers and teachers. In essence, we asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which inspectors engage themselves in each of ten main functions which emanate from the schemes of service. The assessment was made on the basis of a 7-point interval scale. Table 4 presents the assessment of headteachers and Table 5 that of teachers.

Table 4: Headteachers' point of view for the inspectorate's effectiveness

Function	Scale	Mean values		Discrepancy	Deficiency score
		$\bar{X} 1^a$	$\bar{X} 2^b$		
Instructional improvement	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,94	6,47	2,53	16,01
Contribution to the solution of practical problems	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,46	6,09	2,63	16,76
Presenting feedback to teachers/headteachers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,53	6,17	2,64	16,48
In-service training of teachers/headteachers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,07	5,90	2,83	17,25
Facilitating adjustment of instruction to student needs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,37	5,93	2,56	16,16
Objective and fair evaluation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	4,09	6,66	2,56	17,24
Encouragement of experimentation and initiative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	4,17	6,16	1,99	12,61
Nurturing work motivation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,52	6,10	2,58	16,02
Encouraging and sustaining good interpersonal relations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	5,20	6,37	1,17	8,29
Creating a climate conducive to effective communication	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	4,74	6,42	1,68	11,02

$\bar{X} 1^a$ , — Current practice       $\bar{X} 2^b$ , ..... Ideal practice

Table 5: Teachers' point of view for the inspectorate's effectiveness

Function	Scale	Mean values		Discrepancy	Deficiency score
		$\bar{X} 1^a$	$\bar{X} 2^b$		
Instructional improvement	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,65	6,34	2,69	18,25
Contribution to the solution of practical problems	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,09	6,27	3,18	21,51
Presenting feedback to teachers/headteachers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,42	6,30	2,88	18,94
In-service training of teachers/headteachers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2,82	5,98	3,16	19,29
Facilitating adjustment of instruction to student needs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2,81	5,93	3,12	19,46
Objective and fair evaluation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,75	6,66	2,88	19,63
Encouragement of experimentation and initiative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,67	6,25	2,58	16,66
Nurturing work motivation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3,36	6,15	2,79	18,14
Encouraging and sustaining good interpersonal relations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	4,55	6,53	1,98	13,15
Creating a climate conducive to effective communication	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	4,17	6,49	2,32	15,45

$\bar{X} 1^a$ , — Current practice       $\bar{X} 2^b$ , ..... Ideal practice

Tables 4 and 5 present interesting information:

- Both groups are not satisfied with the effectiveness of the inspectorate. The current practice score for headteachers ranges between 3,07 and 5,20 on the scale 1 to 7 (1= to minimum extent); the respective figures for teachers are 2,81 and 4,55.
- The difference between the current practice and the ideal practice score ranges between approximately 2,0 and 3,0 points on the scale 1 to 7.

- When the deficiency score was computed (see last column of Tables 4 and 5), it was found that the major areas of dissatisfaction for each group were as follows:

Table 6: Areas of dissatisfaction by headteachers and teachers

A r e a	Headteachers	Teachers
In-service training of teachers/headteachers	17,25 (1)*	19,29 (5)*
Objective and fair evaluation	17,24 (2)	19,63 (2)
Contribution to the solution of practical problems	16,76 (3)	21,51 (1)
Presenting feedback to teachers/headteachers	16,48 (4)	
Creating a climate conducive to effective communication	16,02 (5)	
Instructional improvement	16,01 (6)	
Encouragement of experimentation and initiative		16,66 (3)
Facilitating adjustment of instruction to student needs		19,46 (4)

\*Rank order

### Headteachers

Table 7 summarizes the main findings from the leadership survey. The table describes what the two groups, headteachers and teachers, describe as current practice. While teachers are satisfied with the extent to which headteachers contribute to the quality of instruction, they would like to see them investing more energy into a number of other functions including: establishing a shared vision, exercising dynamic leadership and promoting communication, creating a school culture conducive to learning, and providing for teacher development through in service training.

Table 7: Headteachers' and teachers' perceptions of the current practice relative to the leadership position

Areas of job responsibilities	Mean values		t-value
	Headteachers	Teachers	
Shared school vision	5,63	4,63	7,57**
Focus on instructional improvement	5,22	5,20	0,24
Quality of instruction	5,33	5,09	2,42*
High expectations from teachers and students	5,13	4,48	5,74**
Effective communication and reinforcement	5,70	4,71	7,82**
Following student progress and achievement	5,54	5,10	3,61**
Dynamic leadership	5,94	4,78	8,35**
School-parent relationships	5,59	4,82	6,39**
Classroom climate conducive to learning	5,58	4,75	7,10**
Inservice training of teachers	4,76	3,70	7,58**

\*p<0,02 \*\* p<0,001

### Deputy headteachers

Tables 8, 9 and 10 summarize respectively the point of view of headteachers, deputy headteachers and teachers about the current and ideal practice of deputy headteachers. Table 8 makes clear that headteachers expect more from deputy headteachers; the difference between current and ideal practice, in all cases, exceeds two scores on the scale 1 to 7. The three greatest deficiencies appear in the areas of: contribution to teacher inservice training, teaching personnel advisement and supervision, and teaching personnel evaluation. The message is clear: headteachers look at deputy headteachers more as members of the administrative team intended to take over some

of their responsibilities and alleviate them from some of their management responsibilities.

Deputy headteachers themselves believe that they should be involved in school management to a greater extent than the current practice prevails; however, the difference between current and ideal practice is less when compared to that of headteachers. Deputy headteachers state that they are involved mainly in routine and management activities (e.g. smooth functioning of the school, student discipline, school appearance). While they accept this role, at the same time, they suggest that they should be also involved to a similar extent in activities like teaching personnel advisement and supervision, coordination of classes and curriculum areas, developing a plan of action, and promoting change and innovation.

Finally, teachers believe that there is a discrepancy between deputy headteachers' actual and ideal practice. Teachers believe that deputy headteachers should be very much involved in the following management and leadership activities: smooth functioning of the school, student discipline, school appearance, formulation of an action plan, and promotion of change and innovation.

A factor analytic study of 36 items describing activities to be undertaken by deputy headteachers revealed the following six factors: School Vision and Developmental Orientation, Instructional Coordination, Smooth Functioning of the School, Taking Responsibility for Bureaucratic and Management Tasks, Utilization of Teaching Aids and Materials, and, lastly, Teacher Advisement and Supervision. When mean values were computed for each factor relative to current and ideal score (see Figure 8), it was

again reaffirmed that deputy headteachers are greatly involved in routine administrative tasks (e.g. smooth functioning of the school) and less involved in leadership acts (e.g. coordination of academic work, school vision and developmental orientation).

Table 8: Current and ideal practice of deputy headteachers: headteachers' point of view

Areas of Action	Scale*	Deficiency score
Involvement in school management	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	16,5
Contribution to the smooth functioning of the school	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	15,6
Contribution to teacher inservice training	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	20,4
Teaching personnel advisement and supervision	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	19,1
Promotion of student discipline	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	14,5
Coordination of classes and /or curriculum areas	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	17,9
Communication with various constituencies	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	16,1
Contribution to external and internal school appearance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	13,4
Teaching personnel evaluation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	17,1
Development of an action plan for school improvement	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	18,1
Promoting school-wide innovation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	19,8

\* ——— Current practice

..... Ideal practice

Table 9: Current and ideal practice of deputy headteachers: deputy headteachers' point of view

Areas of Action	Scale*	Deficiency score
Involvement in school management	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12,5
Contribution to the smooth functioning of the school	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	10,0
Contribution to teacher inservice training	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	14,3
Teaching personnel advisement and supervision	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12,7
Promotion of student discipline	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	9,1
Coordination of classes and /or curriculum areas	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	11,5
Communication with various constituencies	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12,0
Contribution to external and internal school appearance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	7,7
Teaching personnel evaluation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	14,4
Development of an action plan for school improvement	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12,2
Promoting school-wide innovation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	14,0

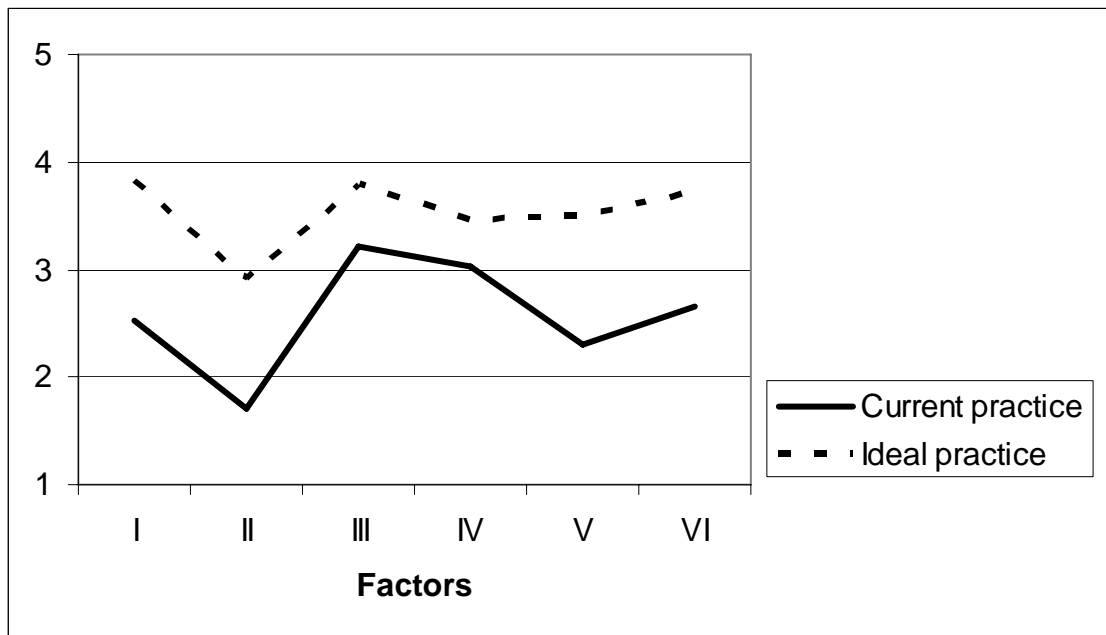
\* ——— Current practice

..... Ideal practice

Table 10: Current and ideal practice of deputy headteachers: teachers' point of view

Areas of Action	Scale*	Deficiency score
Involvement in school management	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	9,5
Contribution to the smooth functioning of the school	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	9,5
Contribution to teacher inservice training	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	13,2
Teaching personnel advisement and supervision	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	11,6
Promotion of student discipline	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	11,6
Coordination of classes and /or curriculum areas	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	11,8
Communication with various constituencies	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	9,3
Contribution to external and internal school appearance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	9,1
Teaching personnel evaluation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	7,9
Development of an action plan for school improvement	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	11,1
Promoting school-wide innovation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	15,2

\* ——— Current practice                      ..... Ideal practice



*Figure 5: The discrepancy between current and ideal practice of deputy headteachers*

I= School Vision and Developmental Orientation

II= Instructional Coordination

III= Smooth Functioning of the School

IV= Bureaucratic and Management Tasks

V= Utilization of Teaching Aids and Materials

VI= Teachers Advisement and Supervision

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE THREE RESEARCH PROJECTS**

We consider the three research projects as a whole and we summarize our conclusions and recommendations around six major topics: role deficiencies, routinized school management, initial and inservice management training, democracy in action, supervision instead of inspection, and turning the school into a professional learning community.

### **Role deficiencies**

It was made clear that there are role deficiencies for all three posts reviewed in this research. A discrepancy between the current and ideal practice was present for inspectors, headteachers and deputy headteachers.

Teachers and headteachers expected inspectors to be more efficient in teacher advisement, to be highly experienced educators with expert knowledge both in a curriculum area and its pedagogy and to also be relatively young people.

Teachers also stated that they sensed deficiencies on behalf of headteachers in school management and leadership. More specifically, they expected headteachers to be involved to a greater extent in issues like shared school vision, teacher development, school discipline, improvement of learning outcomes, and teacher interaction relative to instructional planning and implementation.

Finally, teachers thought that deputy headteachers were involved to a minimum extent in school management and leadership. At the same time, both headteachers and teachers suggested that deputy headteachers should hold professional qualifications

which allow them to provide inservice training for teachers and carry out their administrative duties and responsibilities in an effective way. Greatest deficiencies between current and ideal practice of deputy headteachers were observed in areas such as development of improvement plans, teacher advise on instructional matters, inservice training of teachers, and promoting change and innovation.

### **Routinized school management**

According to law, promotion to school management positions should rely on three criteria: merit, qualifications and seniority. In practice, however, there has been over reliance on seniority.

Merit takes the form of annual ratings on the scale 1-40. As it has been repeatedly shown, however, this rating does not satisfy the validity criterion<sup>2</sup>. Annual ratings depend very much on seniority.

Interestingly enough, no academic or professional qualification is required beyond the first degree for eligibility to candidacy for anyone of the three management positions. The end result is that promotions to school management positions rely very much on seniority and to a lesser extent on qualifications.

The net outcome of the above practice is twofold. On the one hand, people are promoted to headship positions at an advanced age. The mean age value for headship was 54.9 years for all promotions decided in 1999. The mean age value for promotion

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, 1999, 2000, and 2001 Annual Reports of the Education Service Commission. These reports include clearly extremely low values for the range and standard deviation measures for the annual rating of the teaching personnel.

in the post of inspector was still higher. School administrators, therefore, are expected to stay in the position for a limited amount of time.

As it has been well established, however, (Ribbins, 1998), it requires at least three years to conceptualise the demands of the role and to act effectively. It comes out that, then, at the time newly promoted school administrators mature on the job, they retire. On the other hand, school administrators enter their role without any preservice education relative to its major functions. They act by trial and error or, at least, they imitate what they have previously observed on school administration. Today's teachers become tomorrow's deputy headteachers and thereafter headteachers, without any prior training.

Being promoted at an advanced age and without any prior management training, school administrators apply a routinized style of school management and leadership, traditional in nature and without vision for the future. Routine action resembles the situation prevailing in a playground at which the ball is constantly moving without scoring. Headteachers and deputy headteachers try their most for the smooth functioning of the school through engagement in routine tasks. An enlightened eye relative to school management is not present. Under such conditions, the school resembles a boat tied to the dock with a missing captain intended to supply information relative to the destination of the boat and the parameters of its sailing.

### **Initial and inservice management training**

It was pointed out above that there is no requirement for management training prior to undertaking a management position. In a way, "the cart is put in front of the horse".

In the absence of prior management training, there is no presence of an “enlightened eye” on school management (how best to pursue and promote mutually decided goals and objectives) and leadership (what the goals should be and how to establish and sustain a school vision). As Cooper and Shube (1988) have succinctly pointed out, those who administer a school should act purposefully and systematically; they should know in concrete terms what they are aiming at, why they aim at it, and how they could achieve their objectives. They should be rational in their decisions as much as possible, given that they have to exercise their duties and responsibilities in a turbulent environment.

The purpose of comprehensive management training will be to turn school management effective. Such training should combine theory and practice. Included in the course should be topics such as: dynamic leadership, school ethos and vision, curriculum development, quality of instruction, measuring and reporting student progress, introducing change and innovation, management skills (decision making, communicating with internal and external audiences). Similar training courses have long existed in various countries like the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and most European countries. The NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headteachers) is now mandatory in the UK.

It is also important that the initial management training should be reinforced by local inservice management training so that school administrators keep abreast of new developments and ideas on school management and leadership.

Initial and inservice training for school management is feasible nowadays. Not only the University of Cyprus but the Pedagogical Institute and Private Colleges as well are in a position to provide both forms of training.

### **Democracy in action**

While nine of ten headteachers thought they were acting democratically, only one out of two teachers thought so. Democracy has been one of the words highly misunderstood and highly overused in school management in Cyprus. The rhetoric of democracy should be transformed into a way of school everyday life. The issue is not what the headteacher says but what he/she actually does and the leeway she allows for teacher participation in decision making. While it is reasonable for teachers not to be involved in all types of decisions and in all matters concerning school life, it is understandable that they expect to participate in decisions which fall in the “zone of their interests” and for which, therefore, they have a stake. For teachers to realize democratic management they need to feel empowered; they need to feel that they are recognized as professionals and as able enough to contribute to decision making on professional issues. Harris (2005) points out the advantages of distributed leadership in schools. Such a management ideology not only influences teachers’ perception of the nature of school management and leadership, but it also contributes to school effectiveness.

Teacher participation in school organisation and administration goes along with at least two major outcomes. On the one hand, the school becomes more effective in pursuing declared aims and objectives; on the other hand, the teacher-school relationship is positively reinforced. Participation in a task at hand multiplies the

human capital which works for its realization. More importantly, teacher participation in a task at hand not only leads to synergy, it also goes along with the message that teachers are recognized as professionals. Through participation teachers come to “discover” the problems of the school, they become emotionally ready to work for the solution of those problems and to also discuss ways and a time framework for their solution. In simple words, they feel committed to work for their solution.

### **Supervision instead of inspection**

It came out that the way inspection is practiced presents deficiencies concerning teacher advisement and support. It was also made clear that inspectors rely to a greater extent on the power emanating from their hierarchical position rather than on their expertise. Both the teachers and the headteachers who participated in the study indicated a clear preference to the supervisory rather than the inspectorial role. Both groups described a number of personal and academic qualifications which a supervisor should command. The profile of a supervisor appeared to be as follows:

- He/she should be somebody with deep knowledge in a curriculum area and its pedagogy. These two qualities enable the supervisor to act as a reference person for teacher advisement relative to curricular and learning issues. These qualities are made present through graduate work relative to both curricular content and its pedagogy.
  - He/she should act as an adviser and animator for subordinates, and, at the same time, as change agent. Not only he/she should be a specialist in planning for instruction and in contributing to the solution of practical problems, he/she should also be an agent of change and development in the curriculum area he/she serves.
- There was a clear reference that the supervisor should command the expert

knowledge which will allow him/her to act as a specialist for instruction and for the solution of everyday instructional problems such as classroom management, differentiation of instruction, and evaluation of learning outcomes.

The present research suggests clearly that two major changes should be introduced into the system relative to inspection. These are:

- The post of inspector should be turned into that of a supervisor. The relationship between supervisors and teaching personnel should not be hierarchical and bureaucratic. Instead, the supervisor should be somebody working along teachers on instructional issues (micro-level work) and along headteachers on school-wide issues and problems (macro-level work).
- The cross-curricular inspector should be replaced by a specialised supervisor based on curriculum areas.

### **Turning the school into a professional learning community**

Looking at what the subjects thought as ideal practice we arrive at a major conclusion: that is, school managers and supervisors should turn the school into a professional learning community. Putting the pieces together, we can build the following model.

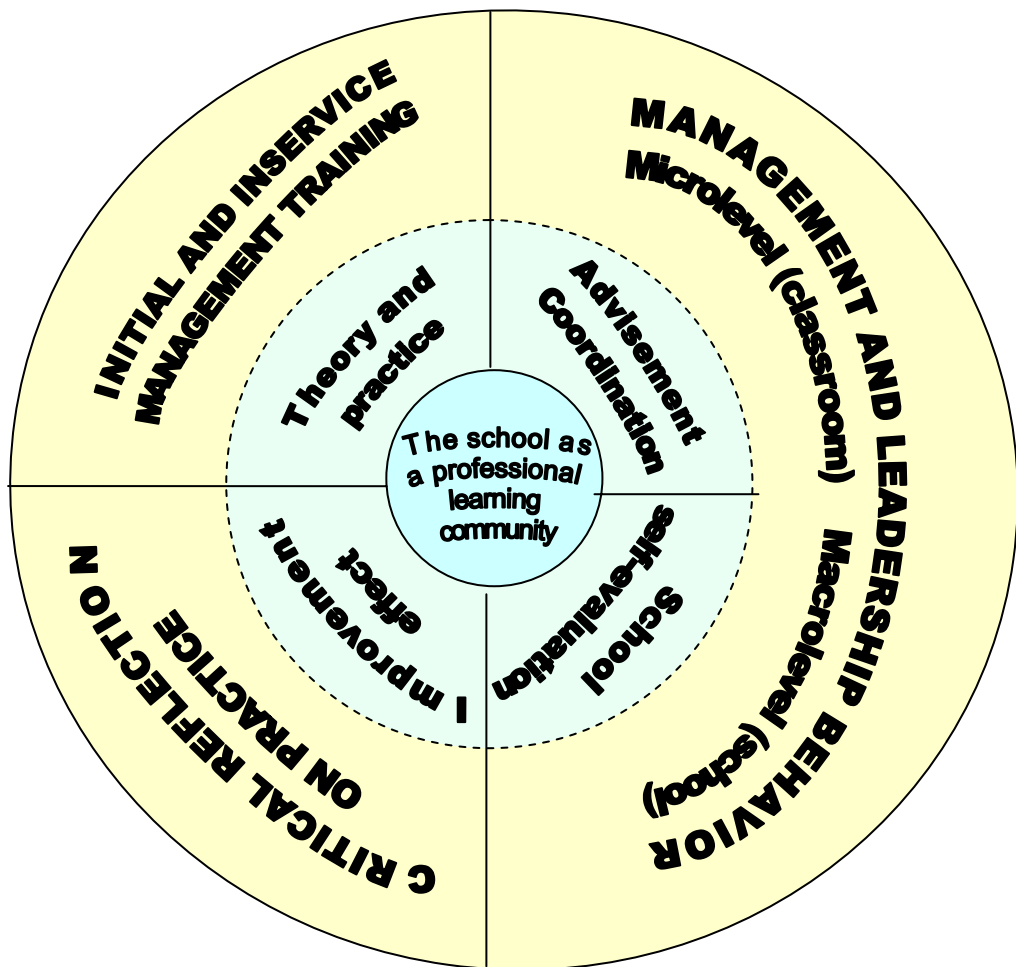


Figure 6: A model of school management and leadership

The central features of the model appear as follows:

- The essence of school management and leadership is to turn the school into a professional learning community. Both internal and external people to the school should work for this idea to materialize. People internal to the school should pool their mental strengths and material resources in order to create a collective wisdom for the school as a whole. School administrators and inspectors should work as catalysts of building a collective wisdom for the school. Collective wisdom will serve as the infrastructure for establishing and sustaining a momentum for a developing school, as described by Holly and Southworth (1989).

- A basic prerequisite for turning the school into a professional learning community is to guarantee professional school management. To this effect, both initial and inservice management training is very much required. In essence, we suggest a continuous management training, authentic in nature, in the sense that it combines theory and practice, very much relative to existing problems.
- Management and leadership behaviour should affect both the micro- and macro-level of school life. The micro-level of school life refers to the classroom. At this level, two important issues should attract major attention; namely (a) teacher advisement, and (b) coordination. Both are intended to serve the quality of instruction. Coordination could be a deputy headteacher responsibility and it could take two forms: either vertical (coordination of a curriculum area across grades) or horizontal (coordination of different sections of the same grade level). The macro-level of school life refers to the school as a whole. Headteachers and deputy headteachers should become the DNA for a school self-evaluation policy, participative in nature, whose major objective should be improvement. Based on a total quality management orientation, the process should rely on self-assessment, identify areas of improvement, implementation of small-scale improvement plans and critical reflection on the outcomes. School administrators should work to create the “chemistry” of collective and concerted effort of both teachers and school management people towards establishing a professional learning community and a developing school.

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