

Management educativo e Sport per la formazione delle Risorse Umane

Educational Management and Sport for the Human Resources Training

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to highlight how the aspects of the educational and formative approach of an individual, can improve the enterprise management and the respective human resources, and vice versa. It identifies that the objective of such reasoning is an overall social well-being; in fact, by applying an “educational management” model, defined by the promotion of values such as hospitality, consideration and collaboration, is able to create a more “human friendly” working environment. Moreover, such organizational wellbeing creates the opportunity to increase the productivity and development of the individual, which will reflect in his social skills. An example considered in the paper regards the sports sector, the managing model of which is very close to that of the educational management. This sector, although increasingly influenced by the dictates of corporate management, has never abandoned the educational and formative values inherent in the sports culture.

Keywords

Management Educativo; Formazione; Risorse Umane; Occupazione; Sport.
Educational Management; Training; Humane Resource; Employment; Sport.

Introduction

The higher education system, which has evolved so radically since the end of the 1990s, has significantly changed the balance within universities and has given greater importance to the management and organizational structure, making it the key instrument capable of supporting the research and teaching actions/phases. This has led to a new Governance, a new management and organizational dimension, in which users (students, teachers, staff and other external users) have created a community of stakeholders responsible for their involvement in the analysis of critical issues and problems, and in the design, management and delivery of training services; in this way, they embrace a vision of shared knowledge production, in which each user is recognized first as a person and then as a stakeholder. The principles of sociality, personal and professional responsibility and collaboration are therefore pedagogical aspects with a central value, since each stakeholder participates in each process by undertaking rights and duties, with the contribution of his/her tangible and intangible heritage. This could and should also be reflected outside the educational sector in order to structurally redefine the concept of business management, according to the principles of a new management model based on the values of the individual's educational and formative approach. The latter, defined as educational management, is aimed at individual and therefore collective well-being, capable of generating benefits in terms of management by increasing productivity, as well as in terms of training and social development of the human capital. This innovative management model enhances the concept of "team spirit", understood as cooperation between individuals to achieve a common goal. In this regard, sport is identified as an example of a sector managed according to these principles. Despite this sector is increasingly influenced by the management constraints of the classic economic-productive sectors, it is still capable of respecting certain educational values which allow for the pursuit of economic and social objectives, and which probably contribute decisively to its sustainable development.

1. Educational Management

The contributions and research activities by the scientific pedagogical community, which have investigated the possible relationships between pedagogy and management in recent years, converge on three interpretations (management models) which, albeit for didactic purposes, contribute to clarifying certain dichotomies. The main characteristics of the management and organizational contexts that public and private companies adopt as management models can be linked to three systems: that rational, natural, and open (Alessandrini, 2004). The key concept, regardless of the various systems, concerns the understanding of the extent to which the concept of Managing through an educational style is fundamental to translate decisions (company lines) into a "Management-making" dimension; this involves taking all those actions that concern the management, administration, organization and control of people, processes, products/services, and so on, predisposed to face possible critical situations due to which there will be the need to reorganize some aspects, or that are indispensable to resolve conflicts between people. In this way, both conceptualization and management are considered issues of pedagogical investigation. In a natural and open management system, where the human and relational component and the correlation between environment and organization are the key issues, this is even more evident. In this case, in fact, the possibility (and perhaps the need) of employing a more pedagogical Management is manifested, in which values such as listening, support and care are decisive for the management and enhancement of the tangible and intangible heritage. Moreover, the concept of Management refers today to a dynamic and active organization, where the exchange between individuals and their environment plays a decisive role. In fact, these individuals interpret work, its limits and opportunities (Alessandrini, 2004). A Management model that contemplates the implementation of the educational values, and consequently of the

responsibility towards all the actors, must resolve the so-called “power situations” in order to be effective in the face of critical issues and internal conflicts. (Sciarelli, 2011).

This results in a management approach that, by promoting values such as the satisfaction of the primary need for safety, social recognition and sense of belonging, aims to create a model with a higher degree of sociality and harmonious development of the individual within an organization, which is also characterized by greater responsibility in the working processes and by an increased level of creativity and autonomy. The evolution of the concept of Management towards an educational system model must absolutely focus on culture and on the promotion of the main pedagogical values; otherwise, its physiological criticalities that, for the most part, are expressed in the inability to be a training instrument capable of achieving a person’s overall development, as well as in the inability to recognize and satisfy material needs, would remain unresolved. The ideological assumption of the distinction between those who manage and those who carry out the work has gone along with the idea of Management up to nowadays. In fact, this is the first great challenge of this innovative management approach, i.e. to develop a model capable of offering all subjects a perspective of growth, education, training, material satisfaction and peer sociality (Macpherson, 2003). Promoting a Management modality through an educational style therefore means contemplating the possibility of structuring a way of managing people, things, processes, products/services, decisions and relationships, where mistakes, conflicts and cuts should also be considered as an opportunity for global growth. We are suggesting a system that, even if imperfect, remains dynamic and active, where the concepts of crisis and conflict are faced in a pedagogical (and therefore positive) way, because they can generate a new possibility, a turning point, a change, a new possible scenario, something on which to rebuild a new reality that is more solid than the previous one. For this to happen, however, it is essential that in the relationship between the manager and his/her collaborators, or between the various stakeholders, first of all there is the recognition of a human relationship based on educational principles. From the point of view of pedagogical problematicism, conflict is an index of existential criticality; this means that, when it is present, it does not matter whether it is explicit or latent: it manifests a situation of crisis and anxiety, or rather, a condition of existential disorder, which, however, can and must be tackled from the constructive point of view of the existential planning (Contini, 2002). This management approach contemplates an authentic, free and active cooperation modality with the different stakeholders, where promoting the encounter with the other means accepting him/her as someone different from oneself, understanding his/her reasons through listening and hospitality, in order to give rise to the idea of a shared and participated planning (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2003). Educational management certainly does not exclude conflicts or mistakes. On the contrary, it contemplates them as educational tools capable of generating a more pedagogically evolved synthesis; the mistake leads to a choice that is to be understood as a further and new possibility of positive development. So the research question is to verify the possibility of creating within any organization, where there is a Management activity, an environment seen as a social place where pedagogy can help build a common place where everyone can feel self-realized, by means of a culture of new values. It certainly represents a difficult challenge, but not impossible to pursue, able to generate an individual benefit that impacts on the community. The simplest and most intuitive system from which to take inspiration, from a managerial point of view and according to a pedagogical idea of Management, is probably the familiar one. Just think of the concept of home economics and of the related family organization, in which each member works to get resources (of any kind, from the financial to the immaterial ones) for the family, and just assume to adopt it, with the necessary reflections, for a work organization, in which everyone has the same possibility of expression, encounter and development, precisely because the bonds are based on empathy and mutual respect. This mechanism could be extended to a conception of Organizational Management as a system in which there are individuals with different cultural systems, each with a reference background and with a different relational system with regard to people, things and processes. Therefore, a Management based on attention and care between managers and col-

leagues, or even between colleagues themselves and between workers and other stakeholders, which offers the possibility of accepting different opinions and points of view and that manages to have an authentic interest in the problems of others and the things that are managed, laying the foundation for pursuing a sustainable solution over time. In order for the concept of management to embrace the values of an educational and formative approach, contributing to making the organizational culture a managerial expertise capable of guaranteeing multidimensional development in the long term, it is undeniable that in a time like the current one, in which organizations are oriented towards mere short-term economic satisfaction, it will be necessary to act “step by step”. The first and fundamental step is to make management more human (in structure and political leadership), i.e. aimed at interpreting everything that happens within an organizational system according to a humanistic and integral training-oriented approach.

2. The contribution of educational management for human resources in work contexts

Identifying the main educational values that need to be promoted in an organization, in order to tailor it to people’s needs, is therefore the main prerequisite for achieving a state of overall well-being in public and private workplaces. As previously stated, a work context in which educational values like organizational culture are proposed, where there is respect between colleagues and there is mutual collaboration, may appear ideal and simultaneously difficult to achieve. However, this cannot mean that we are forced to passively accept a professional degradation that, at present, is one of the main causes of the crisis of companies and socio-economics in general. Instead, it is necessary to pursue and achieve a utopia through education. Indeed, organizational change is an educational process that needs the right phase of metabolisation and sedimentation, and for this reason, in a linear time dimension, the culture of the organization is a value that is naturally conveyed, turning into ever new visions also thanks to the people who are part of it, with their uniqueness, their will and their ability to convey their organizational memory within the organization itself, towards a development and an overall educational enrichment (Costa, 2011). In order to pursue this transformation process through the innovative managerial model proposed, it is important to specify that, in a dimension of work understood as an educational moment, in case of a situation of imbalance, the person providing support must perform a targeted action with a twofold objective: in fact, he/she must provide support and listen to a colleague, but at the same time must use an appropriate sensitivity, in order not to risk being intrusive and limit his/her autonomy or repressing others’ diversity. Moreover, managing through an educational approach tends to reduce imbalances and inequalities between different collaborators in the work context, as well as in any other social context. For example, there are many forms of imbalance to be dealt with, such as the situation of a new employee who, once in the workplace, is “obliged” to ask his new colleagues for support, or that of a non-EU person who is hired in Italy and who inevitably finds himself/herself in a disadvantaged situation. In short, these are all the conditions in which a relationship between an employee who initially appears disadvantaged and one who finds himself/herself in a dominant position is established (Costa, 2011; Sciarelli, 2011). Whoever finds himself/herself in a dominant position usually holds a privileged and stable position within an organization, often has a high cultural level and, theoretically, should be a cohesive and educational factor towards the less “strong” ones. By adopting an educational management approach, in fact, he/she should be a “trainer” for disadvantaged resources, allowing them to pursue a professional and personal awareness. The educational values in the management of the working context promote social bonds that are not only created with people (colleagues and other stakeholders), but also with objects and places, which from neutral elements turn into familiar ones, strengthening the relationship with the working environment and stimulating productivity. Unfortunately, the current situation is characterized by impersonal organizations with colleagues who do not know each other despite spending most of their day in the same professional context, so much so as to seem

almost strangers to each other. What is not seen is the great pedagogical resource given up by a working context that is satisfied with cold relationships, in which the basic principles of an educational model are lacking (Costa, 2011). Such values would favor the deep bond that turns a group of people into a work team; a team with a single common objective that prevails over the individual ones, but that, at the same time, satisfies them too. A team spirit in the workplace would emerge with active collaboration and participation, capable of overcoming someone's absence thanks to the motivation and empathy within it. For each individual, the purpose of his/her action is no longer achieving an individual interest, but a collective one based on mutual availability. The outcome and the organization itself are no longer an expression of singularity, but of a common identity that acts and thinks as a group and for the group. The latter, in fact, favors precisely the "didactics of involvement", because a working context in which everyone applies this approach develops the awareness and responsibility to play a task or a role, to create a relationship, aimed at a project and an outcome resulting from a common effort, mutual availability and sharing. Proposing the idea of educational management also in the workplace would mean introducing the concept of "clinical training" in the company, which is perfectly combined with a specialized training and a basic culture that can encourage paths of orientation, promote skills, support personal and professional projects of individuals and implement forms of understanding, mediation and interpretation of behavior (Bell & Harrison, 1995; Dato, 2009). A more decisive awareness of the educational dimension of work is stimulated; in fact, this promotes the attitude and habit of reflecting and re-elaborating an experience, and allows experimenting with a way of relating to professional activity that turns it into the possibility of learning something new (Rezzara, Ulivieri Stiozzi, 2004).

3. The sports sector as an example of application of educational management

The motor and sports sector is now a multifaceted network of activities, experiences and subjects, which encompasses, involves and conditions international, central, regional and local institutions, sector bodies, professionals, amateurs, research centers, schools, universities and, above all, millions of practitioners, workers, fans, users and consumers. Sport has also become increasingly important over time as an educational and training tool. Although the social and educational perspective of sport in Europe only became evident in official documents at the end of the 1990s, there has been a much more marked need for a Community rule for sports rights because of the economic importance of this sector, with more than 15 million people employed and a contribution of 5,8 % to total EU employment (SpEA, 2012). Sport's official inclusion among European priorities dates back to 2007, when the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union established that the Union had to contribute to the promotion of the European sports profiles, by taking into account its specific features, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function. Sport in general, without distinguishing between individual and collective ones, is in all the information that children, adolescents and adults receive every day. The new research models in the field of education have long insisted on the need for a general education of the individual at intellectual, motor, emotional, social, physical and corporeal levels. It is no coincidence that the role and importance of sport in Anglo-Saxon universities, for example, is already a consolidated reality (Mari, 2007; Farinelli, 2005). In fact, the elements of sport integrating with those artistic, economic and political contribute to the educational and training action for the individual, in order to prepare him/her to become a full citizen. This makes it clear that, to date, sport refers to a value system that is extremely compatible with the value system of education and with the managerial approach analyzed in this paper. These include, for example, personal overcoming, individual and group dialectics within the team, participation in a social reality that has its own rules and that must be learned and applied subsequently, and the feeling of belonging to a community. To the tranquility of the "work carried out", the sportsman opposes the search for something more, both from his body and from his ac-

tions; in fact, in his performances he tends to reach the limits of his possibilities to highlight and explore all the virtuality he feels in himself. This is certainly one of the main aims of managing through education. In fact, it encompasses concepts such as “leading out of...”, “taking further”, “overcoming what the inheritance has left in us”, “creating new possibilities”, thus succeeding in creating a new person, a more competent and competitive resource. The school of sport can serve as a model for the school tout court in this area (Isidori, 2012; Isidori & Fraile, 2008). Sports and intellectual training thus rediscover the same methods of implementation. Sport (and team sport in particular) is thus one of the most effective forms of expression in the educational management model. In fact, each one has a role to play, a place to be and a function, and is at the service of everyone. The individual is in a relationship with the others, acts in relation to the others and his/her personal value is at the service of the community; hence the double concern to improve himself/herself personally in order to be an active element of the group and to better serve the community to which he/she belongs. This fully represents one of the essential aims of education, i.e. to develop the subject in his/her individual and social dimensions, to make him/her a citizen with a personal wealth to be put at the service of society, confirming even more the educational value inherent in sport (Light & Dixon, 2007). Practicing sport means respecting certain rules that must be learned and applied; practicing group sports means respecting the rules of the game, adapting one’s own behavior and that of the team within this institutional framework, the borders of which are known and all its possibilities must be explored in order to know where one’s own freedom begins and ends. In this way, in an educational perspective, sport contributes to understanding the need to have a rule for every human social activity and the importance of accepting and learning it, and knowing how to apply and use it. Through sport, new forms of relationships, exchange and dialogue are developed and established; today, in fact, training the human being in his/her totality, developing all his/her virtualities and creating new possibilities in him/her implies that physical education and sport are an integral part of education (Zhong-gan, 2005). Besides being considered a necessary condition for pursuing a better psycho-physical situation, sport represents a sector which, although bound by the market rules of the main economic and productive sectors, through the educational values it can express, proves to be a management model close to the educational management one, able to favor a cultural, educational and socio-economic development in the long term.

Conclusions

The relationship between the educational and pedagogical approach and the various management models has become increasingly important over time, so much so as to stimulate scientific research towards the identification of a new management mode capable of overcoming the stillness and impersonality typical of traditional management schemes. In this regard, the educational management models and its impact on the working environment have been proposed. In a period like the current one, characterized by business logics and social systems aimed at satisfying purely personal objectives often of exclusively economic and short-term nature, implementing a management policy conditioned by educational principles represents a major challenge. On the other hand, this cultural transformation of the way of understanding management, both from a theoretical and practical point of view, represents an important (if not unique) opportunity for a sustainable socio-economic development over time, and is considered a major challenge. In fact, first in the work context and then in the general organization and management of business and social system, the educational management approach enhances collaboration and team spirit by prioritizing group (and therefore business and community) outcomes over individual and personal ones. An effective example of a system managed in a very similar way to that of educational management is the sports system. This, despite being increasingly influenced by business and market logics, manages to maintain some fundamental educational principles inherent in the “sports culture” at the basis of its management. Probably,

the economic and social development which still characterizes the sports sector at both local and global level is also and above all due to this management approach. The emulation of such an example and the proposal of work and business environments led according to the educational management model would thus be desirable, with the awareness that this represents the stimulus for a positive socio-cultural and economic transformation.

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