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The Personal Change of The Manager - Core of the Organizational Change

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Abstract: *The school organizations in Romania are confronted with the continuous perspective of change by reference to the legislative changes, to those at the level of the educational paradigm, but also at the social level. The present paper aims at a historical and evolutionary recovery of the concept of change in the school organization, with emphasis on identifying strategies and techniques for managing the process of developing and changing the manager, taking into consideration his professional competences and his personal abilities, considered as core and trigger agent for effective change in the organization.*

Personal change involves dynamics, which implies personal development, becoming, training. In order to complete the process of personal change of a school manager it takes a long time, of involvement in one's own development in order to trigger induce support the change of the school organization. In order to adopt the most appropriate organizational strategy (maintaining/restricting/developing or diversifying the organization), the manager must constantly evaluate his own abilities/competencies, to value those that bring performance to his organization.

The methodology consisted in the rigorous analysis of the specialized literature and the empirical research, instrumented by a survey based on a questionnaire applied to the managers of 15 early education organizations in Dâmbovița county. The main conclusions from the study focus on the process of becoming a manager, with an emphasis on the triggering moment of his personal change, transposed into behaviors that will have implications for the culture of his organization.

Keywords: *personal development; manager; school organization; organizational change.*

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1. Introduction

More than ever, today the manager plays an important role in the *turbulence and complex change in the economic and social environment that have become*, as Kotler has stated, *states of normalcy*. [4, pp. 85-96].

As a consequence, the manager must first and foremost be a visionary and a change agent. Visionary, because they must have a clear idea of the changes to be made and what is likely to happen, rather than an idea of the real changes. Agent of change, because he not only has to initiate change, but he also has to implant a culture of change, which is a heavy and risky task.

The school organizations in Romania are confronted with the continuous perspective of change by reference to the legislative changes, to those at the level of the educational paradigm, but also from the social level. The school manager is in a position to adapt quickly to these changes and to outline in the school organization future directions of change.

The present paper proposes a historical and evolutionary recovery of the concept of *change in the school organization*, with emphasis on identifying the attitudes and behaviors of the school manager in managing the different situations that trigger the change.

Managers admit the idea that they are the main agents that determine the change at the organizational level, taking into consideration his professional competences and his personal abilities, regarded both as a nucleus and as a trigger agent for an effective change in the school organization.

2. Problem Statement

According to Predişcan M., the organizational change represents "the action, a set of actions, a process, which seeks to modify, partially or totally transform an organization, its component elements or the processes that take place here, allowing the passage, from the present state to a desired future state, which differs quantitatively and/or qualitatively from the first" [5, p. 166]. The achievement of a directed change in an organization is achieved through a large and complex process that involves the successive stages.

2.1. Organizational change - content theories

Many specialists who have researched the topic of organizational change have differentially described the way in which this materializes in an

organization. In the specialized literature, several models of organizational change have been highlighted, detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Organizational change according to content theories

Theoreticians / models	**Elements of the process of change**			
Lewin (1947)	Defrosting	Change		Freezing
Beckhard and Hariss (1977)	Current status	Transition status		Future status
Beer (1980)	Insatisfaction	Process		Modeling
Kanter (1983)	Breaking tradition and crisis	Strategic decisions and first movements		Action and institutionalization
Tichy and Devanna (1986)	Act I Awareness	Act II Mobilization		Act III (epilog) Strengthening
Florescu and Popescu (1988)	Definition	Motivation	Implementation	Design
Ivancevich, Donnely and Gibson (1989)	- understanding the factors that trigger change - recognition of the need for change - diagnosing the problem - identification of the methods and alternatives by which the change will take place - presentation of the existing conditions - selecting the method - overcoming resistance to change - implementation and coordination of change			
Nadler and Tushman (1989)	Energizing	Vision		Enabling
Buchanan and McCalman (1989)	Trigger layer	Visionary layer	Conversion layer	Maintenance and renewal layer
McCalman and Paton (1992)	Definition	Projection		Implementation

Source: own adaptation

Kanter and collaborators offered an alternative - *the Big Three model, the model of the 3 C- changing, coordination, controling*), which combines macro- and micro-evolutionary forces with political forces for change. They identify three forms that the change process takes and three categories of people involved in the change process [3]. In the Romanian specialized literature, Florescu C. and Popescu N. delimited a model of organizational change

structured in four phases: *defining change, motivating change, designing change, implementing change* [2, p. 67].

Even though, the number and name of the stages and phases, which are presented as necessary for the journey in a certain succession, differ from one specialist to another, in essence, they aim to achieve the same objective: to establish a new state instead of the existing one.

A competent analysis on the models of organizational change, represented in Table 1, shows that each model is characterized by a step-by-step process, the whole organization transforming itself through the prism of the completed stages, without minimizing the manager's role in initiating, inducing or supporting the change of the school organization.

Starting from the premise that organizational change involves a long process, we will detail Buchanan and McCalman's (1989) model, a specific model for large-scale organizational change, which has some interesting details regarding the triggers of change and how the organization responds to it. challenge. The model of perpetual transition management is seen as comprised of four groups of synchronized management processes, which take place both in implementation and in supporting organizational changes [1]. These processes operate at different levels and may involve different employees in the organization hierarchy. In Figure 1. are presented the four groups of management processes called layers, which the organization goes through.

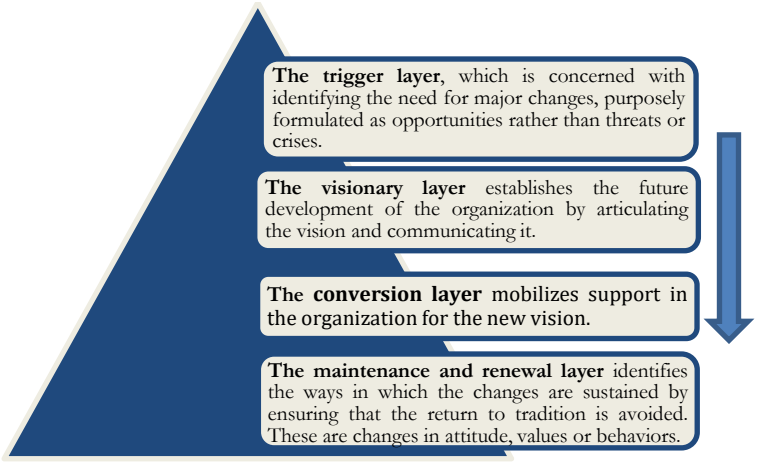


Figure 1. The model of perpetual transition management
Source: adapted from Buchanan, O. A., Mc Calman, J, *High-Performance Work System: The Digital Experience*, 1989 [1].

In the processes that take place at the level of the first layer, the trigger, it is necessary to understand what causes the need for change in the

organization. If the trigger for change has been clearly expressed and acknowledged, it is necessary for the managers of the organization to define the future. Managers must visualize the future in terms of three elements:

- the change is seen as a response to the triggering event;
- the change is the identification of the desired future state of the organization;
- the change must be a challenge and an incentive.

The third layer of perpetual transition management is related to gaining momentum for change and at this stage managers need to be involved in two large groups of activities: establishing the exchange planning team and discussing each opportunity for change with employees for a better understanding of change it. The maintenance and renewal layer emphasizes the idea that change becomes a norm in the organization. In order to avoid some kind of aging of the change process, it is necessary for the organization to allocate resources for maintaining and renewing the original vision in evolutionary programs.

In this sense, management takes part in the process of change which is described as a perpetual transition. We cannot speak of management without discussing the manager's approach and personal imprint.

In building the research tool, we started from these four layers of the perpetual transition management model, which the managers adopt in the change process, and, in the following, we will present some profile elements that can trigger, support or determine the change in a school organization, referring precisely to their personal behaviors, attitudes and abilities.

2.2. The changing school manager - profile elements

The manager is considered the one with the pedagogical expertise. It maintains high standards of performance, monitors the instructional-educational process, coordinates curriculum implementation and monitors student progress.

In order to work with students and teachers, educational managers need special knowledge in the field of adult education, children, young people. The success of the school manager depends on the ability to orient, organize, guide and motivate the collaborators, subordinates for the optimal achievement of the proposed objectives.

Specific to the school is that the manager leads two broad categories of people, respectively students and teachers. This implies for the manager a permanent adoption of the principles of management, of the leadership style, of the capacity of understanding, etc., depending on the segment to which the unit's problems refer. This requires managerial culture, managerial

professionalization, interdisciplinary approach to managerial theory and practice, consideration also as science and art, mastery.

The competence approach must be carried out on two levels: on the one hand, the competence granted, assigned, also called official authority and, on the other hand, the actual competences, also called personal authority. The first side demands the decision-making freedom, the right of decision of the holder of the management post, the possibility of his decision-making involvement in or for solving the different problems faced by the field. The second side concerns the knowledge, qualities and skills that the manager must possess in order to exercise under the conditions of normality of the authority with which he is invested in that position. This second dimension of competence can and should be treated in two situations: professional competence and managerial competence.

In Romania, the managerial competencies necessary for the efficient management of the school, in the current context, that of the orientation towards the professionalization of the management, guidance and control functions in the educational field, can be presented by categories of competences, specific competences, fields of application and modalities of achievement. According to the Law of National Education, at art. 97 it is foreseen that the principal exercises the executive management of the educational unit.

This competence profile of the school manager was finalized, in its current form, in 2002 in a working group of the National Center for Personnel Training in Pre-university Education, within the Ministry of Education and Research. It was published in the magazine "Continuing training", no. 3-4, and is currently on the site M.Ed.C./ C.N.F.P. [6].

We consider it appropriate to present these competences, especially since they constitute, at the present time, the starting point for the continuous training programs that are accredited at national level, in order to be attended by the school managers in charge or by those aspiring to a leading position in the educational field.

Specialists from the Institute of Education Sciences appreciate the school manager as follows: "The manager is one of the key factors in introducing any educational changes. Without competent, trained managers, able to decide quickly and efficiently in the most varied conditions, educational reform will fail. In the context of managerial activity defined as the art of making things happen in organizations through others, the manager is the one who procures, allocates and uses physical and human resources to achieve goals " [7].

Training and development of managerial skills is a complex process consisting of specialized training and continuous improvement throughout

the entire career. Talent and natural inclination play an important role, but we do not think they are enough to be a good manager.

Competency modeling is a human resource management process that has gained more and more supporters both from practitioners and researchers around the world. The competence profile of the manager of the educational system is specific and is structured on three domains [1, p. 68]:

a) authority/responsibility (ability to analyze, forecast, plan, organize, efficiently coordinate activities, manage time budget, develop internal order and organizational chart, work with people);

b) the education process (the ability to control and correlate the plans, to motivate the teachers, to organize trainings, etc.);

c) interpersonal relationships (the ability to communicate, to essentialize ideas, to resolve conflictual states, self-control, self-analysis).

Manager's competencies, summarized below in Figure no. 2, are not only a condition of authority, but also an important component of the success of the school organization.

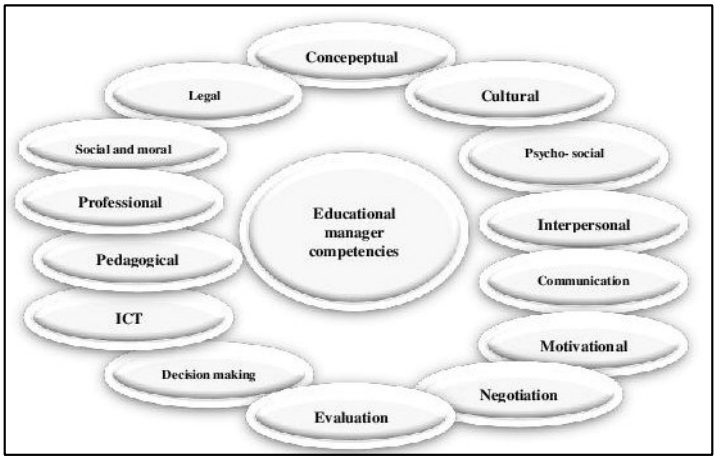


Figure 2: Educational manager's competencies
Source: own adaptation

3. Research questions/Aims of the research

The purpose of the research was to carry out an analysis of the managers' perspective on the personal approach to organizational change, the research objectives being:

- highlighting the perception of the school managers about the change process;

- identification of the implications of the personal change of the manager at the level of the school organization.

4. Research Methods

In order to carry out the research, it was used to analyze the specialized literature from the international and national space for a historical and evolutionary recovery of the concept of change with the emphasis on the dimension of the school organization but also on the questionnaire-based survey method. The beginning of the research was marked by the discussions conducted during a methodical meeting organized by the Dâmboviţa County School Inspectorate with the managers of the early school education organizations on the topic of organizational change and the personal way in which each of them manages the process of change in the school organization they lead. Following the record of the managers' opinions regarding the approach of the change process at the level of their organizations correlated with the information in the specialized literature, a questionnaire with objective and subjective items regarding the change in the school organizations was designed.

The analysis and corroboration of the participants' points of view and the data collection through the group interaction on the proposed topic facilitated the application of the structured questionnaire on 7 components regarding behaviors and attitudes adopted by managers in:

- socio-professional relations with subordinates;
- management and problem solving at the school organization level;
- delegation of responsibilities;
- the decision-making process:
- exercising control over subordinates;
- motivation of subordinates;
- personal skills that support the managerial activity.

The questionnaire was applied in the last two weeks of October 2019 to the 15 school managers of the early education organizations in Dâmboviţa county, managers who hold this function as a consequence of the National Competition for the occupation of director and deputy director organized by M.E.N. in the school year 2016 - 2017. All respondents are women, and the average age is 45.9 years. The operators administered the questionnaire through the virtual space.

With regard to the environment in which the school organizations that the respondents lead operate, we have 1 manager from the rural area and 14 from the urban area, distributed as follows: 9 managers from

Târgovişte, 2 managers from Pucioasa and one manager from the cities of Fieni, Găeşti, Moreni.

Regarding the distribution of managers from the perspective of managerial experience, from the data provided by the Human Resources Management Department of the Dâmboviţa County School Inspectorate, it was found that 50% of them are between 0-5 years of experience, being in the first term, obtained after at the national competition, 21. 4% are in the range of 5-10 years of experience, 14. 3%, in the range of 10-15 years of experience and also 14.3% of them, in the range of 20-25 years of experience.

It should be noted that all 15 managers are members of the National experts in educational management.

5. Findings

The research was carried out by investigating several aspects relevant to the proposed purpose and objectives. The starting point of the research consisted both of the discussions conducted within the formal framework, of the semester-long methodical meeting of the managers of the school organizations of early education organized at the level of the Dâmboviţa School Inspectorate, as well as of the informal discussions fostered by the piloting of a new National Curriculum this school year. for early education, due to the existence in debate of several national legislative proposals regarding the taking over of the Nurseries by the early education organizations with legal personality or to the proposal of generalizing the large group. The main conclusions drawn from the discussions with the managers revolved around the idea of the need for organizational change, adaptation and management of the change process through participatory debate, by establishing a socio-professional climate based on communication, negotiation, collaboration between human resources of organization. All participants claimed that the change is influenced by the manager of the organization, by his personal style of leadership.

In the second stage of the research, the questionnaire elaborated and structured on 8 sections was applied, as will be presented below.

• The first section of the questionnaire asked the respondents to specify the behavior they adopt in the relations with subordinates. As can be seen in Figure 3, out of the 15 school managers, 86.7% consider subordinates to be informed and provide opportunities for their personal and professional development, while 13.3% consider that it is very important to permanently support subordinates. The behaviors characterized by indecision, the abusive exercise of control and the pursuit of their own

interest being, in the opinion of the respondent managers, undesirable behaviors in the relations with subordinates.

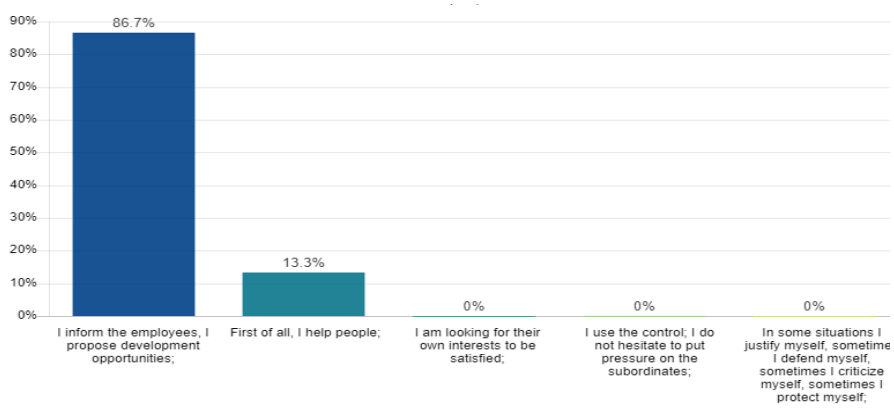


Figure 3. Behaviors of managers in relationships with subordinates
Source: the authors

• The second section of the questionnaire captures the managers 'opinions about the attitudes they adopt towards the subordinates' proposals, 86.7% of the managers consider it very appropriate to adopt an open attitude, based on communication, exchange of ideas and negotiation, while 13.3% support whether or not they take into account the subordinates' proposals depending on the circumstances, the need analysis, the viability and the relevance of the proposal. The respondent managers consider inappropriate, in relation to the subordinates' proposals, attitudes based on criticism, discouragement and individualism.

• Problems arising at the school organization level require the manager to exercise their management and solving skills. In managing the problems the respondent managers, as can be seen in Figure 4, on the one hand, in the percentage of 73.3%, they relate to the objectives set at the level of the school organization but also, to the quality of the employees' life. On the other hand 20% of the managers handle the circumstantial problems, giving priority when the interests of the employees, when those of the organization, and 6.7% are concerned with the realization of the interests of the organization. Attitudes to avoid problems but also to manage only to the benefit of subordinates were not found among the expressed options of managers.

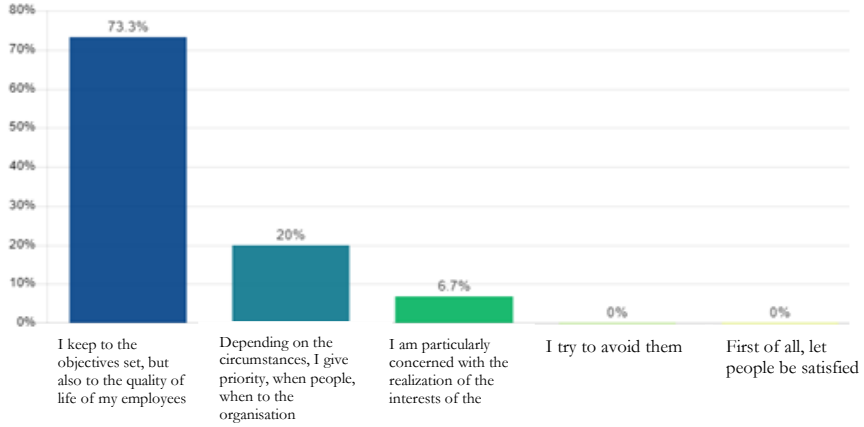


Figure 4. Attitudes of managers in managing the problems of the organization
Source: the authors

• Regarding the attitudes of the managers in solving the problems from school organization, all managers stated that they identify problem solving solutions in accordance with the goals of the school organization together with subordinates. The attitudes of postponing the solution, adopting compromise solutions, passing on solving problems to subordinates or deciding on the solutions themselves and the ways to follow are not found among the expressed options of managers.

• The decision-making process, according to the respondent managers, is characterized, as can be seen in Figure 5, with 71.4% of behaviors based on the negotiation of decisions with subordinates, in full coherence with the organization's objectives. On the other hand, 21.4% of the respondents consider the opinions of those who will apply the decisions taken important, and 7.1% consider that the manager's decisions must be respected and applied exactly.

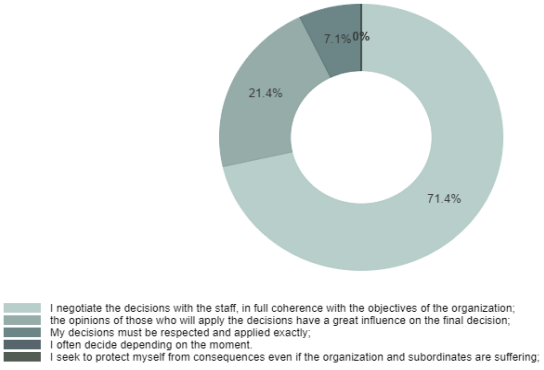


Figure 5. Behaviors of managers in making decisions. **Source:** the authors

• Regarding the delegation of responsibilities, the respondent managers considered 92.9% as the fundamental condition in delegating responsibilities, choosing the professional and personal human resources, and 7.1% admit that they delegate responsibilities according to circumstances.

• Another section of the questionnaire refers to the exercise of control over subordinates. The respondent managers, as shown in Figure 6, stated that 50% control some activities and others do not, depending on the circumstances, 35.7% consider self-control as the main form of control, especially in the case of competent subordinates, and 7.1% consider that they prefer to exercise control, considering that it is much more rigorous than letting their subordinates practice self-control. Also 7.1% of the respondents avoid severe control, as it is concerned with maintaining good relations with subordinates.

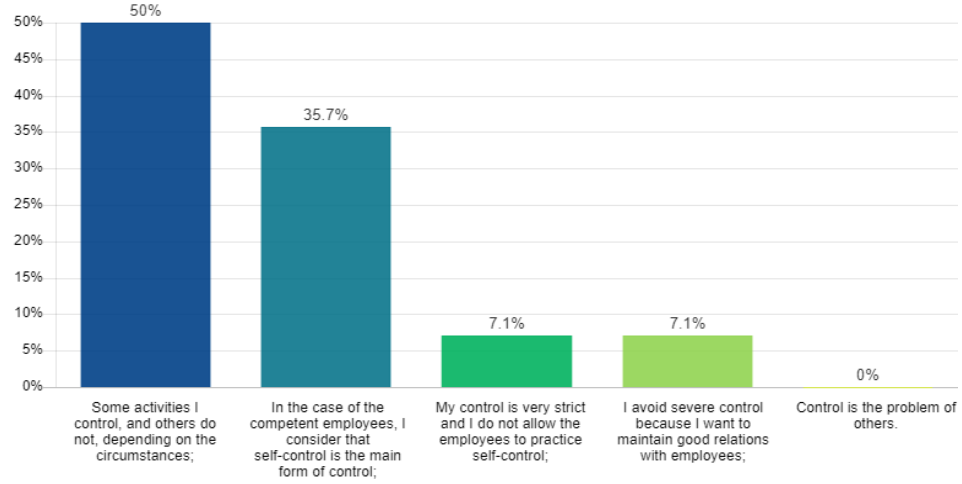


Figure 6. Behaviors of managers in exercising control
Source: the authors

• The motivation of the subordinates is found in the managers' concerns respondents, 65.3% of them consider that they manage to mobilize their subordinates around the organization's objectives, 25.6% are concerned about the satisfaction of their team, and 9.1% consider that obtaining a high efficiency is the result of the involvement of the subordinates.

6. Discussions

As a follow-up of the results recorded by interpreting the answers of the managers, regarding all levels of the management of the school

organization through which it is facilitated the linking with the other human resources, a series of skills /competences of the manager, from the personal sphere, that can support the management process can be identified. These skills enhance the act of leadership, beyond the normative levers of the educational system correlated with the general legislative framework, confer a human approach to the organization, create a socio-professional climate conducive to the personal and professional development of human resources with the projection to increase the performance of the school organization.

In achieving a hierarchy of the personal skills that support the manager's activity, with the emphasis on human resources management, the respondents ranked at the top of the hierarchy with a percentage of 11% interpersonal communication, followed by the abilities of initiative and receptivity to new, teamwork and thinking flexible, accountable and assuming 10%. The ability to adapt to new situations, make decisions, persuade, manage and resolve conflicts, finding the third position in managers' options. The last four places in the hierarchy are occupied with a 7% percentage by the manager's ability to be tolerant and to accept the opinions of the employees and with an equal value, 6%, the abilities to work under stress conditions, perseverance and analysis capacity and synthesis.

The managers' choices regarding the personal skills that support their activity are focused on communication, networking, innovation, flexibility, collaboration, responsibility.

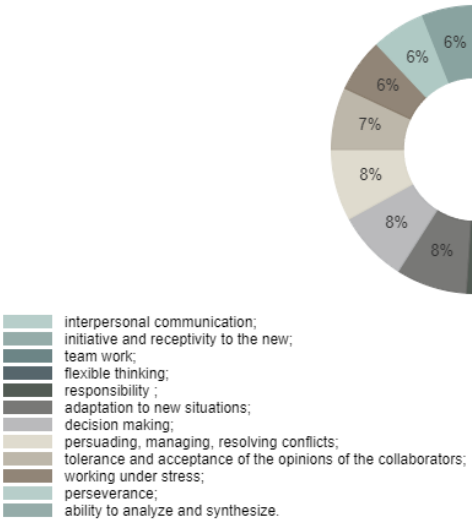


Figure 7. Managers' perception of personal skills that support their activity
Source: the authors

7. Conclusions

Managers call for the collaboration of subordinates both in setting goals and in assigning tasks, encourage interpersonal communication, exchange of ideas, but also negotiation. The managerial style approached by the respondent managers is predominantly democratic, encouraging the participation of subordinates in the management process.

The opinions of respondents managers are focused on the idea that the personal approach is reflected in the school organization through: the decision-making process, the approach of an appropriate organizational strategy, the attainment of an optimal level of school unit performance, behaviors that will have implications in the culture of their organizations.

Managers admit the idea that they are the main agents that determine the change at the organizational level.

The simultaneous involvement in their own personal and professional development process is reflected in the increase of the quality of relations between manager and subordinates, but also between all subordinates, the consequences being the diminution of tensions, conflicts, the increase of their level of participation in order to reach the objectives set at the school organization level.

The present research could be limited by the restricted horizon, being realized only with the participation of the school managers only in the Dâmboviţa county and influenced by the subjectivism of the respondents and by the moment subjected to the analysis, the beginning of a new school year, marked by changes in the normative acts regulating the early education but also curricular documents on this level of the pre-university educational system.

The research could be extended in the school organizations at the level of the heads of the methodical commissions, of the heads of other departments. The results of the research can be a starting point in the realization of the need for training, materialized through programs / courses / projects with external financing, at the level of the management of the school organization.

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