

The Role of Public Administration in the Realization of the Public Education Service

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ABSTRACT: Due to the multiple roles held within the social system, the public administration field is positioned in the service of the citizen, and through its entire activity interferes with the political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions, where the beneficiary becomes the goal and not the means. It is thus understood that public administration has significance only in interaction with parts of the social system. An important part of the social system, which is in direct line with the public administration, is education, due to its public service performance. Under these conditions, education becomes a service of public interest, where the educational policy is ensured through the specialized public administration. What is the role and how the administration involved in the realization of the public education service is, are questions generating the depth of knowledge at the empirical level in this undertaken approach.

KEYWORDS: public administration, social system, public education service, responsibility

Introduction

Confronted with the international challenges imposed by the current epidemiological context, being aware of the role of education in the human rights system, aware of the major importance given to the governance of the educational systems, the current state actors have given a new meaning to the right to education – seen as a strategic objective - as it “ensures the genuine existence of other rights” (Mahler 1979) and thus the development of society as a whole. Exercised through the educational systems of all nations, efficiency in education is supported by the involvement of a good administration of the educational service. Throughout its entire process, the public administration will promptly respond to satisfy the educational beneficiaries’ interest by providing proper educational service, responsible management of the administrative capacity of the educational system and good governance of the educational process. Moreover, a relationship strengthened on respect for human rights is established between the rulers and the governed in the educational process. At the same time, the interdependence of the right to education with the other rights is noted, where “the theoretical dimension as well as their practical application, must be considered a priority of education policies” (Zlătescu Moroianu 2007, 15).

This context has subjected educational systems to the adaptation and the re-evaluation of the public policies in the field of education in order to provide all the beneficiaries with a quality educational service, “permanently adapted to the existing trends at the European and the international level” (Alexandru 2020, 75). The approach of the administrative phenomenon in the educational systems entails the accomplishment of the public interest by enforcing the public educational service. Starting from these considerations, it is obvious that exercising the right to education is possible through the public educational service, where the “mechanisms and resources of the administration necessary to satisfy the public interest” are highlighted (Alexandru 2019, 229). At the same time, the administrative phenomenon related to the public educational service illustrates legal, political, economic, sociological interferences, where public administration acquires a threefold meaning: the human activity to coordinate/manage/lead a structure/social group, the way of organizing activities and the institution/complex of institutions profiled by fields of activity in order to fulfill specific tasks (Onofrei n.d. 6). Analyzing the three meanings, we understand that the actions taken by the public administration seek to satisfy the interests of the human communities, organized in the state-type administrative forms, often called

“general interests” (*Idem*). Relevant notes for defining the concept of public administration can also be found in the “Dictionary of American Government and Politics”, coordinated by Jay M. Shafritz, which notes the following meanings: the collective term for dignitaries in the government apparatus, the execution of the public policies, the coordination of the governments/institutions, the mandate assigned to the staff in a position of chief executive (governor/mayor). The multiple meanings outline edifying notes for identifying the reasons for the administrative phenomenon. Thus, value judgments and actions are highlighted in the administration process at the political, legal, and managerial levels for the legislative and executive mandates to provide the necessary services to society in general and specifically. In these respects, the public administration must serve the citizens' interests and thus promptly solve the problems they face promptly and effectively. Here, through the issued public policies, the public administration becomes a facilitator in achieving the ideal of social solidarity (Morand-Deviller, 1994).

The enforcement of the educational service from the perspective of public administration springs from the responsible application of the fundamental principles of democracy twinned with the standards of a good administration of the educational system. Therefore, the assumption of a democratic society is built starting from the establishment of a central place for education and its prerogatives of affirmation in the relationship with the citizen and the administration. The connection between the public administration and the public educational service is reflected in the legal rights enforcement and in the obligations, principles applicable to common and administrative law, stipulated in special laws, normative acts, and quality standards of the educational process with deep visibility in the activity of the administration entities within the public educational system. According to these directions, the public educational service requires approaches from different perspectives: ideological, social, legal. The mechanism of accomplishing the public educational service begins with the ideological perspective, which aims to ensure the common good through the beneficial management of the relationship between the state apparatus and the citizen (Alexandru 2020, 10) in the educational process, a firm assurance, a finite product of involvement and responsibility at the public level. The social perspective of the public education service takes the form of the relationship with the internal and external environment, thus determining impulses both among the beneficiaries and the promoters, the educational decision makers. In this way, the needs of the target group in the educational system are quantified and the directions of the action are identified in order to respond to the required needs. In other words, the good functioning of the public education service is conditioned on the one hand by the correct application of the normative card, and on the other hand by the cause-effect, question-answer, decision-action interaction (Dulschi 2019, 21). In the same note, the social perspective engages the service of the rational and efficient administration of the “human, material and financial resources” (Onofrei n.d. 8-9) in the public educational service, in order to “meet the requirements of general interest”, using in case of necessity the prerogatives (attributions) of the public power” (*Idem*). The public educational service from a legal perspective reflects the enforcement of existing legislation and practices regarding the application of social requirements. Such a direction contributes to the definition of the relationship between the legislature and the executive, confirming the position of public administration towards the legislative power, its mission being secondary through the implementation of laws, even in the field of education. The attributions conferred by law through the representative bodies of the state are fulfilled, in our case by the Ministry of National Education.

Considered a national priority (National Education Law no. 1/2011), education requires more attention from the specialized central public administration to ensure “the security of legal relations in the field of education and to implement all the necessary measures so that the negative effects generated by the pandemic of SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus to have a minimal impact on the education system” (OU no. 58/2020). In this framework, for the national educational service implementation, it is necessary to treat political-administrative, socio-economic aspects, based on

which the access to learning should be without discrimination, and the education should respond to the needs of the personal and the economic-social development (National Education Law no. 1/2011). Originating from an objective necessity, the role of the public administration in the public educational service implementation in the given scientific approach, entails both a theoretical and pragmatical vision of the field, which coagulates an approach based on the axes: “Administration - Politics, Administration - Economy, Administration - Civil society” (Alexandru 2010, 75). We signal the outline of an overview with reference to the development of a relationship between the public administration - body of the executive power, the public education service - mechanism for exercising the right to education and the citizen-beneficiary of the public service. The substantiation of these relations consolidates the role of the public administration in relation to the way in which the public education service is carried out and establishes especially the position of the public administration “as an integrated system in the environment in which it is expressed” (*Ibidem*). In this situation, it is obvious “the prevalence of the importance of providing public services in the relations between their citizen/beneficiary and public authorities” (Seciu 2016, 7). Treated as “the set of institutions specialized in the organization and development of education and training” (*Idem*), the public education service is performed in relation to the political, economic and social sphere. Starting from these aspects, in the following approach we will highlight the way in which the three axes are relevant in the process of relationship and integration of the public administration in the public educational service development.

The Administration-Politics Axis condenses the political attributions seen in the organization and functioning within the educational service, because the good administration of the educational system is possible through changes in the content of regulations, application of administrative principles and standards influenced by the political choices of the executive power. In other words, it is confirmed that the activity of the public administration is complemented by the political one through decisions, legal provisions developed and issued in the field of education. Similarly, the realization of the educational service is determined by the way in which “the activities that form the content of the administration” (Bălan 2008, 53) are to be implemented in order to exercise competencies in the field of education. Thus, the public education service is governed by the specialized central public administration, the Ministry of Education as a “branch body” (Apostol Tofan 2008, 244). In government actions, the public education service is carried out through “different degrees of dependence on the center, respectively either through centralization or through decentralization or administrative decentralization, principles that dominate the organization of public administration” (Bălan 2008, 56). The two principles are committed to ensuring the foundation of “organizing the public administration system” (*Idem*), involving the provision of distinct public services, for the benefit of the citizen and building a “performing administrative system” (Văcăreanu 2020, 100). At the level of these principles, a prefigured relationship is outlined in terms of educational policy materialized in a normative framework that offers solutions and good practices for the dynamics of the educational systems.

The Administration-Economy axis is reflected through an extensive process of production of goods and services, where the economy ensures the elements of survival and development at the societal level, and the administration efficiently manages human and material resources. In this context, for economic reasons, education is provided with the material substratum of the exercise of the right to education. Therefore, the economy manifests its influence on education through a “central element, determinant and determinative, educational capital it is the dual component of human capital, defining element through the immanence of work, the economy” (Manolescu 2009). In order to illustrate the directions of the educational capital, we turn our attention to the costs allocated per capita, the adaptation of educational capital (curriculum, human resources, skills, financial resources) to the requirements of the labor market and why not, the costs of investing in educational policies, etc. Beyond these aspects, the administration-economy axis draws our attention to the educational system, to the way in which the educational means and needs can be covered. In a general sense, the channeled resource-needs relationship is obvious to

the way in which it can be covered. Can the needs be addressed from within the system or is there a need for administrative and economic bias and involvement? From a much deeper analysis, it is found that the emergence and satisfaction of these needs depend on the economic availability of resources and their good management. According to these findings, between the administration and the economy there is a relationship of interdependence, based on the development of resources-meeting needs, in other words, a direction of coevolution.

The Administration-Civil Society axis is strongly anchored in the social progress of human communities, aiming to maintain the harmony between the representatives of the public administration and the beneficiaries of their actions by respecting the citizens' rights and freedoms. The integration of this axis in the public education service also brings to the core the complex nature of education, as "education has as its object the construction of the social being" (Durkheim 2002, 39-40). In the context of studying this axis and referring to the social relations (Iorgovan 2005, 121) outlined by the object of the administrative law, the public administration is conceived through the involvement of the human capital (Apostol Tofan 2008, 9). The activities of the public interest undertaken by the public administration emphasize the social character of the guiding directions regarding the education process and its link with the civil society. Therefore, in-depth research of public administration is also carried out in relation to the social environment. Currently, the administration of the national education system becomes "efficient when depending on the degree of knowledge of society, on educators' quality, authenticity, complexity and efficiency of information" (Dulschi 2009), due to the social values of their culture. The elements that substantiate this axis are provided by sociology, by applying modern research techniques and methods, in order to diagnose the object of administration (*Idem*). The adaptation of public administration in the field of education to the social environment is supported by sociological processes that lead to an "individual-centered analysis of the determinations of school results and the effects of these results on the transmission of status and social mobility" (Hatos 2006, 2-3).

From the analysis of these three axes, we find in particular a relationship of complementarity and interdependence in equal measure, which certainly ensures the functional balance of the public educational service supported by the political, economic and social factors, promoters of personal and collective well-being (Raghuram 2009) of the nations of the world. The optimization of the public education service thus depends on the way in which the public administration intervenes in the management of the educational system, this being a condition for the application of structural changes, which effectively aim at smart growth and sustainable development. To the same extent, the development of an efficient educational service presupposes the realization of the general interest, animated by ensuring the balance between the public administration and the citizen, the beneficiary of education, the latter being the subject of the administration and not being the purpose of its actions. All these considerations come to strengthen the fundamental role played by the administration in the development of the public education service, a way of access and fulfillment to the highest possible standards of the educational mechanism, accelerated today, due to the desire to serve the citizen's interest and to position them in the center of the global social system.

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