

Chapter 10

Sustainability of the School Leadership in the Digital Era Under the Shadow of Crisis

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ABSTRACT

Today, ‘innovative era’ paradigm waves of 4th Industrial Revolution (4thIR) have deeply changed and prominently affected many lifestyles, organizational structures, and job profiles, including educational setting which cannot be considered independent from the environment, institutions, and their school leaders. In this digital era where the lifestyle has been reshaped, school systems and leadership should be redesigned expediently. This chapter aims to shed light on school leadership’s unpredictability and uncertainty under the shadow of the Covid-19 crisis that will possibly overtake all parameters that were known before on the topic. In this paradigmatic change, school leaders’ behaviors have been playing a pivotal role in school improvement, revealing the vision and mission of the school. However, Covid-19 pandemic has turned all the known facts about school and face-to-face education upside down. In this context, school leaders have had to take precautions setting directions and improving teaching and learning environment for sustainable educational development.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the fount of learning goes beyond the scope of schools and teachers. With the increasing use of digital technology in social life, learners find the opportunity to reach information whenever and wherever they want. Although Industry 4.0 ensures golden opportunities for people who are well educated and prepared to develop skills, it also presents various challenges for disadvantaged students, traditional educational systems, and routine professions. Thanks to information and communication technologies, we can experience new knowledge. However, they change repeatedly and continuously. Thus, the focus is now on school leadership in the complex and dynamic school environment in the 21st century. In

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this respect, the main issues are to adapt to the new normal, straighten the challenges, cope with the Covid-19 pandemic, and transform schools. The global world, changing dynamically with developments in information and communication technology, has resulted in a new term called Industry 4.0. This era has led to transform the industrial society into a knowledge society. Because its scope was very broad and worldwide, the winds of change blew hard in the field of education, as well (Leahy, Holland, & Ward, 2019). The world of education has endeavored to react to this revolutionary phenomenon with Education 4.0 to harmonize and integrate digital technology into instructional processes (Priatmoko, 2018). Today, the waves of this 'innovative era' paradigm named the 4th Industrial Revolution (4thIR) have deeply changed and prominently affected many lifestyles, organizational structures, and job profiles. It also includes an educational setting which cannot be considered independent from the environment, institutions, and school leaders. In this digital era, the lifestyle has been reshaped. Therefore, school systems and leadership should be redesigned expediently according to Education 4.0.

The society in which we live and school organizations in which individuals are shaped according to the educational goals require its citizens/students to exhibit several competencies such as 21st-century skills to deal with the challenges of today and the future. Without a doubt, digital technologies are configured to attain these goals. Thus, the education systems worldwide have to actualize their educational transformation according to the 4thIR as the workforce is extremely the tendency to change with the advancement of digital life, the internet of things (IoT), robotics, artificial intelligence, and automation technology. The great news is that there is an increasing interest concerning the application of Education 4.0 and its management in educational settings. However, very limited research by now has been realized about its advantages, limitations, effectiveness, challenges, and characteristics in educational environments.

The educational challenge of an unusual era, the twilight process of the Covid-19 epidemic which changed the normal functioning of education systems and the nature of schools and completely turned the flow upside-down, requires taking some radical decisions, changes in education policy, precisely calls for the school leaders as well as the teachers to follow an open-minded approach towards the changes caused by expeditious progres in technology in the context of school improvement. However, for the past two decades, although school leaders in many education systems have wanted to follow their professional development (Machado & Chung, 2015) in parallel with Education 4.0, some antecedent studies have exhibited that school leaders could not reach appropriate professional development for effective and sustainable school leadership. Researchers reveal that the crucial limitation of digital adoption is the deficiency of an educational platform in which school leaders and educators can build customized digital experiences or lack of the time for thinking and discussing the pedagogical value of digital content and activities (Munoz-Cristobal et al., 2015). Through this approach, the school leaders transform into the main actors in the educational system. In Education 4.0 context, school leaders have to not only transform themselves into leaders but also, by promoting a positive school climate, orient their teachers for the contemporaneous education system to be renovated in line with the new educational policy based on 4thIR and educational goals. Earlier last year, as the 'undeniable chaos' (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020) of the COVID-19 pandemic caused to slam doors, shut on all aspects of everyday and workplace life, and disrupt economic growth in educational institutions globally, school leaders undertook a new and unusual challenge collaborating with teachers and searched for technology-based new opportunities. In a way, under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis and challenges of technological changes, this is the projection of efforts to recognize a school improvement for sustainable school development (SED), revising classic understandings related to school and the footsteps of new education service beyond the perception of the traditional school inherited from the industrial society.

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