

## THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERS' VALUES

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The fish always stinks from the head downwards.

Values are fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes or actions and help us to determine what is important to us. They describe the personal qualities we choose to embody to guide our actions; the sort of person we want to be; how we treat ourselves and others, and our interaction with the world around us. They provide general guidelines for conduct. But for the investigation of values in educational administration, the concept is defined as conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable, which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action." But the given definitions boil down to this defined meaning – values serve as a guiding compass in the decision-making processes of every individual. The activities and reactions people make are by-products of their inherent and accumulated values and culture.

The study suggests that school leaders' values are essential in leadership decision-making. The school leaders' values are paramount to their administrative duties and, consequently, the whole school function. Generally, values are determinants of school function and school life.

One of the most notable challenges in the school community's values orientation is the clash between personal and shared values. Both influence the behavior and direct the individual to action.

It has been emphasized that school leaders start the formation of the culture in school units. The school leader is the role model. But that is only sometimes the case. The influence of school leaders' values on the school culture is not always positive. It can happen, therefore, for different subgroups to emerge in a school sharing different value orientations due to the leaders' priorities being affected by their values, resulting in the degradation of the school operation and disruption of school functions. School leaders must understand that effective leadership means resolving

conflicts amid the diversity of values by understanding the motivations, biases, and actions of every element of the school. And in an increasingly pluralistic school environment, school leaders must be able to distinguish and interpret personal, professional, organizational, and social values.

Finding your voice by clarifying your values is equivalent to setting examples by aligning actions with shared values. The personal values of the school community members are part of its shared values – finding common ground is the key.

The fish stinks from the head downwards, but the smell doesn't always come from the fish.

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