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## ASSESSING LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT BEHAVIORS IN A TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

BY

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**Abstract.** In educational institutions, the effectiveness of school management plays a crucial role in organizational performance. This study explores how frequently key managerial behaviors are perceived to occur in a technical high school, based on staff feedback. Using a quantitative approach, a structured questionnaire was administered to 30 respondents, both teachers and administrative staff. The instrument evaluated behaviors such as leadership, communication, fairness, innovation, decision-making, and moral integrity. Results show that while moral integrity, fairness, and communication are generally seen as consistent traits among managers, behaviors like risk-taking and innovation are less frequently observed. Notable differences emerged between perceptions of teaching versus administrative staff, underlining how roles shape expectations. These insights suggest that some areas of leadership are well-developed, while others may benefit from targeted professional development. Overall, the study highlights the need for continuous assessment and feedback to support managerial growth and strengthen leadership practices in schools.

**Keywords:** management behaviour, leadership, assessment, technical education.

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## 1. Introduction

When it comes to managing schools in the pre-university system, especially in technical high schools, the way leaders behave makes a real difference. These schools often face specific hurdles, like juggling different educational tracks, staying in sync with what employers want, and making sure students get real-world experience through internships. Because of that, school managers can't just stick to rigid methods; they need to be flexible, open to new ideas, and capable of working closely with others.

Leadership that inspires and supports change is essential (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005). Because each person is unique and different from others, there is no ideal method for influencing subordinates. However, in certain contexts, the degree of maturity required to perform a task tends to indicate which leadership styles are more likely to achieve good results. For example, individuals who are not available to perform specific tasks should be given careful guidance and supervision, while individuals who perform the tasks should be supported through two-way communication (Hersey *et al.*, 1982). According to Rogers (2003), innovation takes place when members of a social system adopt new ideas related to the innovation (Rogers, 2003). This concept is also captured in the phrase 'learning organization,' which signifies the transformation experienced by individuals and teams as a result of learning, deemed essential for innovation (Crossan *et al.*, 1999). As sustainable innovation relies on the learning processes of individuals or groups, it is valuable to explore how learning unfolds in real-world settings within sustainable innovation and what advantages the individual learning process brings.

This paper looks into different leadership behaviors and how they affect the school's environment, performance, and the satisfaction of the staff. Managerial behavior, in essence, refers to how school leaders act and make decisions in their day-to-day relationships with teachers, students, parents, and the wider community.

The purpose of this research is to analyze how often school managers demonstrate behaviors that are considered essential for effective leadership and administration. Hence, the paper aims to contribute to the field of educational management by examining the frequency and consistency of key managerial behaviors as perceived by staff in a technical high school setting.

## 2. Educational Leadership in Technological High Schools

Robbins and Coulter (2018) group leadership behaviors into three categories: those that are interpersonal, those related to decision-making, and those focused on information management (Fig. 1).

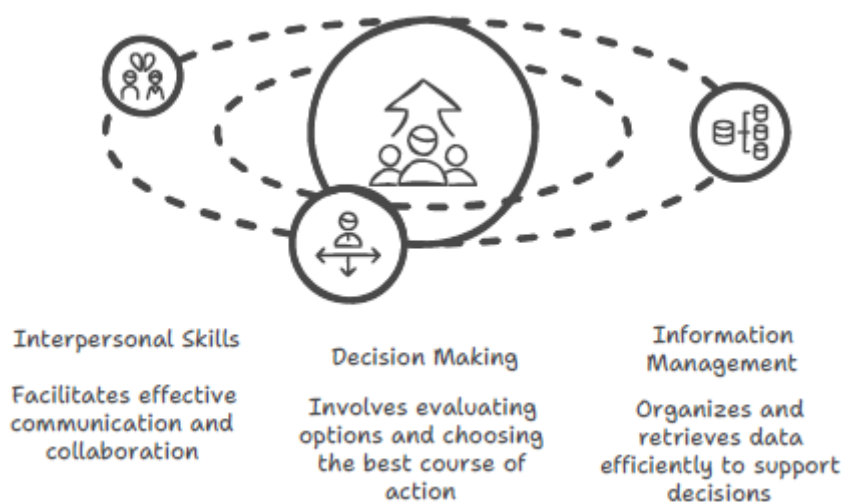


Fig. 1 – Leadership behaviours, adaptation after Robbins and Coulter (2018).

In a technical high school, leadership has to reflect the institution's specialized nature. These schools often collaborate with businesses and industry partners, which means that leaders need to manage not just people and curriculum, but also external relationships (stakeholders), and the integration of technology into teaching and administration. Bush emphasizes that effective leaders in vocational settings understand the importance of such partnerships and actively support them as part of their leadership role (Bush, 2011).

The leadership style chosen by school managers significantly shapes workplace dynamics. It influences how motivated teachers feel, how engaged students become, and ultimately, the quality of educational outcomes. Leithwood and Jantzi argue that transformational leadership, where leaders encourage new ideas, communicate with empathy, and keep a long-term perspective, tends to lead to higher levels of organizational success (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005). On the other hand, rigid or top-down leadership styles can have the opposite effect.

When employees feel excluded from decisions or overly controlled, morale drops, and friction within teams tends to increase (Marzano *et al.*, 2005). Fullan reinforces the idea that schools thrive when leaders build trust, encourage professional independence, and support ongoing staff development (Fullan, 2014). These conditions help create an atmosphere where teachers and employees are more inclined to innovate and grow professionally.

In technical high schools staying current with evolving technology and labor market needs is critical. As the OECD highlights, schools that adapt quickly are more likely to remain attractive to students and better prepare graduates for real-world success (OECD, 2019). In such environments, proactive and forward-looking leadership becomes not just beneficial, but essential. In addition, balanced and empathetic managerial behavior plays a key role in shaping school

climate. Hoy and Miskel believe that school climate is built on shared perceptions of interpersonal respect, administrative support, and the credibility of leadership (Hoy and Miskel, 2013).

In technical education settings, where staff often come from diverse professional backgrounds, leaders must find ways to harmonize pedagogical goals with industry-oriented expectations. Recent studies also offer several relevant perspectives that enrich this discussion. For instance, Riveras-León and Tomàs-Folch (2025) highlight the benefits of distributed leadership in fostering innovation. When leadership is shared and staff is actively involved in decision-making, the culture becomes more dynamic and open to change. This inclusive approach strengthens accountability, goal alignment, and collective problem-solving. Along similar lines, research by education scholars applying the *Innovator's DNA* framework describes successful school principals as “innovator-architects”, leaders who are willing to challenge assumptions, take calculated risks, and inspire new ways of thinking. These leaders create school environments where questioning the status quo is not only allowed but encouraged.

Rikkerink et al. bring attention to the importance of context-sensitive leadership, arguing that innovation must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each institution (Rikkerink *et al.*, 2020). They propose a model that emphasizes shared ownership of change, continuous reflection, and gradual learning, all essential in schools with diverse staff and resource limitations (Fig. 2).

Another relevant angle comes from a systematic review on sustainable school change, which found that successful innovation depends not only on leadership vision but also on leaders' ability to model behavior and build strategic internal and external networks. Such efforts ensure that innovation becomes part of the school's long-term identity, rather than just a temporary initiative.

Finally, Dennis Harper promotes a more student-centered model by advocating for student-led technological innovation ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis\\_Harper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Harper)). In his approach, students take active roles in teaching teachers, solving digital problems, and driving school-wide tech projects. This type of leadership, while unconventional, empowers students and transforms school culture in powerful, lasting ways.

Taken together, these perspectives reinforce the idea that managerial behavior in technical high schools must be adaptive, inclusive, and deeply responsive to both internal and external change.

Leaders who embrace collaboration, risk-taking, and reflective practice are far more likely to guide their institutions through successful and meaningful transformation.

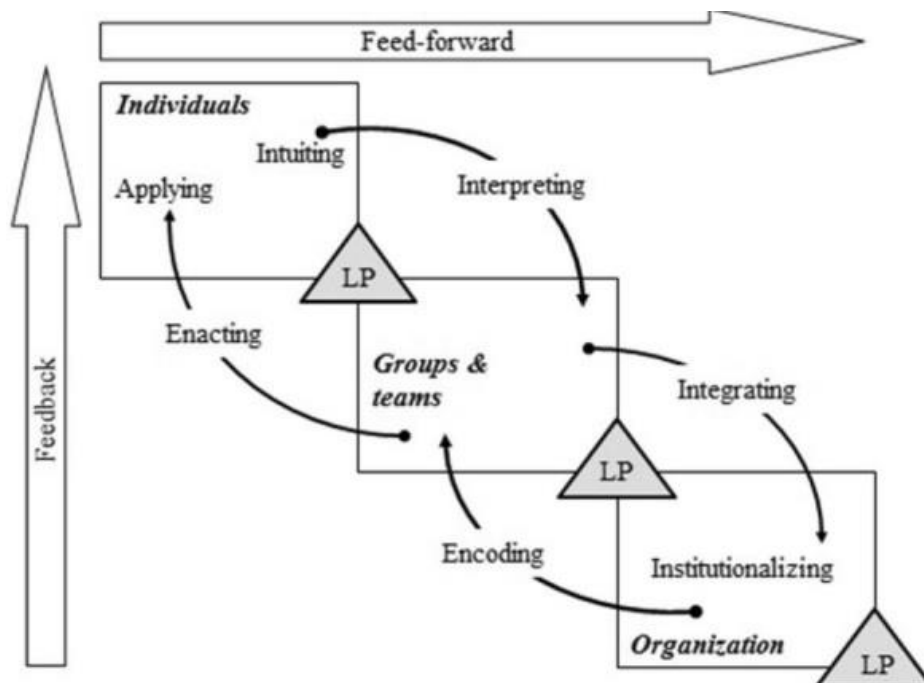


Fig. 2 – Conceptual model of sustainable innovation (Rikkerink *et al.*, 2020).

### 3. Methodology

The research aimed to explore how managerial behavior is perceived within a technological high school setting. To this end, a quantitative approach was employed, using a structured questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. The survey was distributed to a group of 30 employees from the same educational institution, including teaching, auxiliary teaching, and non-teaching staff (70% of employees, institution has a total of 43 employees). The instrument consisted of 13 items, each designed to assess a specific dimension of managerial behavior. These dimensions included, among others:

- fairness in performance evaluation,
- communication and interpersonal relationships,
- consultation in decision-making,
- responsibility in managing resources,
- conflict resolution,
- delegation and trust,
- motivational capacity,
- ethical conduct, and
- openness to innovation.

Each item was evaluated using a five-point Likert scale, with the following response options: *Always*, *Usually*, *Sometimes*, *Never*, and *I don't know*. This format was chosen in order to allow respondents to express the frequency with which they observed each type of behavior, thereby ensuring a more nuanced understanding of managerial practices.

The questionnaire was administered directly within the school environment, in conditions that ensured anonymity and encouraged sincerity. Participation was voluntary, and no personal identifiers were collected, in order to preserve the confidentiality of responses and to reduce response bias. The data collected were grouped and organized to identify general trends and recurring patterns in the perceptions of staff members.

Given the exploratory nature of the study and the relatively small sample size, the analysis focused primarily on frequency distribution and descriptive interpretation, rather than inferential statistical techniques. Although the results are not generalizable beyond the investigated institution, the findings offer relevant insights into how leadership behavior is experienced by employees in a technological high school and may serve as a reference point for future studies on organizational climate and leadership effectiveness in similar educational contexts.

#### 4. Results and Interpretation

The analysis of the collected data highlights a range of perceptions regarding the managerial behavior within the investigated technological high school. While responses vary across items, certain trends can be observed, reflecting both the strengths and areas for improvement in leadership practices as perceived by the staff.

One of the most positively rated aspects was the manager's openness to consultation and listening to others' opinions. Item 3, which addressed the practice of seeking advice and consulting specialists before making decisions, recorded the highest number of affirmative responses: *9 respondents selected "Always"*, and *3 selected "Usually"*, indicating that participative decision-making is, to some extent, acknowledged by the staff. Similarly, item 11, referring to loyalty to the organization and prioritization of institutional interests, also received a relatively high number of positive responses (*8 for "Always"*, *7 for "Usually"*), suggesting a perception of integrity and commitment at the managerial level.

By contrast, motivational capacity and support in gaining subordinates' trust (item 7) scored significantly lower. Only *3 respondents selected "Always"*, while *12 marked "Never"*, pointing to a perceived lack of consistent motivational strategies or interpersonal engagement. This could be interpreted as a possible gap between leadership intent and staff expectations, particularly in terms of recognizing and encouraging professional efforts. Equally notable is item 5,

addressing conflict resolution skills, which revealed a relatively even distribution of responses, with 5 selecting *"Always"*, 7 *"Usually"*, and 9 choosing *"Never"*.

The spread suggests differing experiences among staff members, potentially influenced by departmental context or the visibility of managerial interventions in conflictual situations. Items referring to ethical conduct (item 9) and taking responsibility for decisions (item 8) received a moderate level of agreement. Although some respondents acknowledged such behaviors, the presence of 10 responses marked *"Never"* for both items raises concerns about the perceived consistency of these traits in everyday leadership practice.

Furthermore, item 10, regarding the manager's orientation toward innovation and improvement, reflects a rather divided perception. While some employees noted this as an existing practice (6 marked *"Always"*, 6 *"Usually"*), a significant number (9 respondents) felt that such behavior is *"Never"* demonstrated. This disparity may reflect differences in how change initiatives are communicated or how staff members interpret innovation in their daily work environment.

Overall, while there is evidence of positive perceptions related to communication, organizational loyalty, and decision-making openness, the results also point to certain weaknesses, particularly in the areas of motivation, conflict management, and ethical leadership. These findings suggest that leadership behavior, although partially aligned with best practices, may not always be perceived as consistent or sufficiently supportive across all categories of staff.

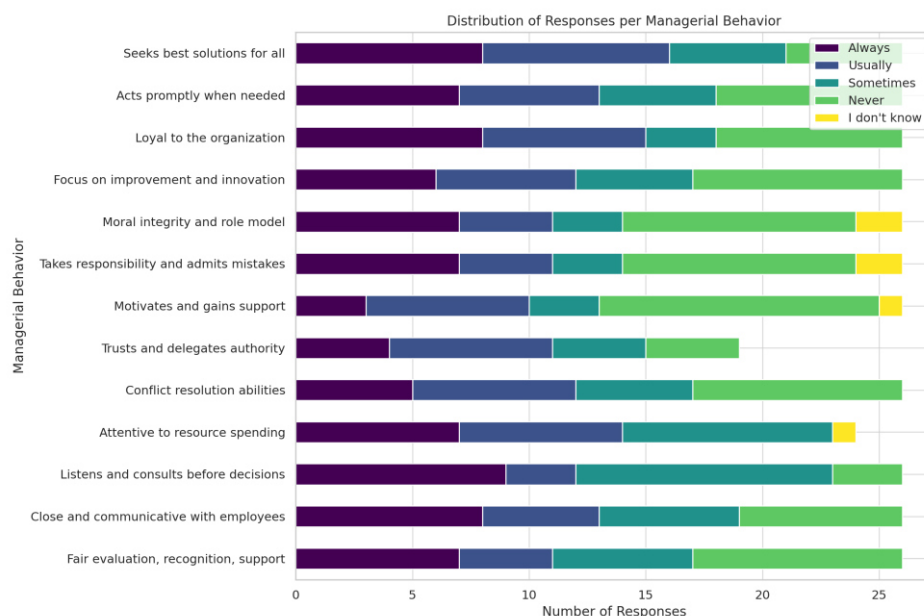


Fig. 3 – Distribution of Responses per Managerial Behaviour.

The chart presented in Fig. 3 offers a clear and intuitive view of how responses were distributed across each item in the questionnaire. Several patterns stand out:

- Certain managerial behaviors received predominantly positive feedback (*Always* and *Usually*), such as consulting others before making decisions or showing loyalty to the organization.
- Other areas reflect more negative or divided perceptions, for example, the manager's ability to motivate staff or take responsibility for decisions, where *Never* was selected more frequently.

There are also items with a more balanced distribution of answers, indicating mixed experiences among staff. This can be seen in responses related to resource management or acting promptly when needed.

Table 1 includes the first 5 positive behaviors identified by employees as having a high frequency of occurrence, while Table 2 includes the last 5 behaviors, as well as the frequency of occurrence.

**Table 1**  
*Top 5 Most Positive Managerial Behaviours*

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>
Attentive to resource spending	2.91
Seeks best solutions for all	2.73
Listens and consults before decisions	2.69
Trusts and delegates authority	2.58
Loyal to the organization	2.58

**Table 2**  
*Bottom 5 Managerial Behaviours*

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>
Focus on improvement and innovation	2.35
Takes responsibility and admits mistakes	2.33
Moral integrity and role model	2.33
Conflict resolution abilities	2.31
Motivates and gains support	2.04

The study reveals that while managerial behaviors such as resource management, seeking optimal solutions, and consultative decision-making are generally perceived positively by respondents, several areas, especially motivating employees, admitting mistakes, and demonstrating moral integrity, show significant room for development.

The distribution of mean scores suggests that these behaviors are inconsistently practiced, highlighting the need for targeted leadership development programs in educational institutions.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this study reveal a nuanced perception of managerial behavior within the context of a technological high school. While several aspects of leadership are viewed positively, particularly in relation to consultation, organizational loyalty, and openness in decision-making, other dimensions appear to generate concern or uncertainty among staff.

The most appreciated behaviors include the manager's willingness to listen to others and involve specialists in decision processes, as well as a general sense of commitment to the institution's goals. These elements suggest that participative leadership and institutional loyalty are recognized and valued by employees, regardless of their role in the organization.

However, the data also indicate certain vulnerabilities. Motivation-related behaviors, the capacity to assume responsibility, and the ability to resolve conflicts are areas where a significant number of respondents reported dissatisfaction or inconsistency. These responses may point to a need for more visible, coherent, and supportive leadership actions in day-to-day interactions.

The relatively balanced distribution of answers for several items (such as promptness or resource management) suggests that leadership experiences vary considerably across departments or among staff categories. This variation may reflect differences in how managerial decisions are communicated or implemented at operational levels.

Taking into consideration all the above data, the authors propose a few recommendations:

1. Strengthen motivational strategies by recognizing individual contributions more visibly and by fostering a culture of positive reinforcement and encouragement.
2. Develop conflict management practices, ensuring that interventions are timely, fair, and transparent. Training in mediation techniques may be beneficial.
3. Encourage leadership accountability by reinforcing the importance of assuming responsibility for decisions and learning from mistakes. This could help improve trust and credibility.
4. Enhance communication mechanisms across all levels of the institution, to ensure that leadership efforts are perceived consistently and equitably.
5. Promote a more inclusive leadership approach, involving a broader spectrum of staff in planning and innovation processes. This may help reduce the perception gaps between different categories of employees.
6. Regularly assess staff perceptions through follow-up surveys or feedback sessions, to track changes over time and adjust leadership strategies accordingly.

7. Overall, while the current leadership shows several strong points, a more consistent, transparent, and motivational approach could contribute to a healthier organizational climate and improved institutional performance.

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## EVALUAREA COMPORTAMENTELOR DE LEADERSHIP ȘI MANAGEMENT ÎNTR-UN LICEU TEHNIC

(Rezumat)

În instituțiile de învățământ, eficacitatea managementului școlar joacă un rol crucial în performanța organizațională. Acest studiu explorează frecvența cu care sunt percepute comportamentele manageriale cheie într-un liceu tehnic, pe baza feedback-ului primit de la personal. Folosind o abordare cantitativă, un chestionar structurat a fost administrat unui număr de 30 de respondenți - atât profesori, cât și personal administrativ. Instrumentul a evaluat comportamente precum leadershipul, comunicarea, corectitudinea,

inovația, luarea deciziilor și integritatea morală. Rezultatele arată că, în timp ce integritatea morală, corectitudinea și comunicarea sunt în general văzute ca trăsături constante în rândul managerilor, comportamente precum asumarea riscurilor și inovația sunt observate mai puțin frecvent. Au apărut diferențe notabile între percepțiile asupra personalului didactic față de cele administrativ, subliniind modul în care rolurile modelează așteptările. Aceste perspective sugerează că unele domenii ale leadershipului sunt bine dezvoltate, în timp ce altele pot beneficia de o dezvoltare profesională specifică. Per total, studiul subliniază necesitatea unei evaluări continue și a unui feedback pentru a sprijini creșterea managerială și a consolida practicile de leadership în școli.