

## Education and Development: contributions of social and community psychology for understanding school

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**Summary:** Based on the idea that school has a unique and plural reality, with its own specific characteristics in terms of the uniqueness of its mission in society and in the construction of knowledge in a complex appreciative approach, it is our goal to address some analysis variables.

**Keywords:** Community; Development; Education, School.

For Matos (1997, p. 1), *"it is never enough saying that development alone can be considered as the purpose of education". This development concept "enshrines the notion of a permanent construction of both what the person is being acquainted with, what the person learns how to do, and even what the person becomes, a concept valid for all who live the school ethos and members of an educational community"* (...) Matos (1997, pp. 6-7) points out that "the school organization has a crucial role in creating a climate of change, in responding to innovation proposals and in the capacity for self-renewal. The isolated efforts of individuals to change their practices will be of little use if they take place outside the school dynamics" (Nóvoa, 1992, p. 41, quoting Matos, 1997, pp.6-7).

As Mintzberg (1995) points out, innovative organization cannot rely on any form of standardization to coordinate its activities. Thus, organizational innovation is the implementation of an attitude, a look for the future and to create new challenges, involving a joint effort

of the players in the organization as a whole. Leadership plays a very important role in the study and implementation of change in all organizations (Jesus, Campos, Alaiz & Alves, 2000). According to Nóvoa (Ventura, 1999, p. 1), after a traditional perspective that favoured "*whether the micro level of the classroom or the macro level of the educational system, a study of school organizations has emerged that proposes to opt for a mezzo level of understanding and intervention because the processes of change, innovation and education need the understanding of school institutions in all their technical, scientific and human complexity*".

Specifically, Education and Development are concerned with the components and processes that intervene in the life of groups where all members exist psychologically for each other and in a situation of interdependence with potential interaction. "*Psychology is usually defined as the science of human behaviour and social psychology as the branch of this science that deals with human interaction*" (Gergen, 2008, pp.475). A group can be defined as a group of people in interdependence who cooperate to reach the end that made them gather, with some durability in time and inevitability of communication. Regarding the concept of school organization, Costa (2003) states that there are different organizational images with which the school is visualized. Etymologically, the word organization comes from the Greek *organon* (organ, instrument) and is associated with order, coordination and purpose. Organizations are constructions that reflect the nature of the structure of the society to which they belong. Litterer (1970) sees organization as a social fabric in which people establish relationships among themselves whose purpose is to make possible the achievement of a set of goals and purposes. According to Sedano and Perez (1989, pp. 41-42), quoting Weber, an organization is a cooperative group perceived as "a social relation regulated by rules, orders and directions carried out by individuals or an administrative group". Bertrand and Guillemet (1994) state that it is possible to find five common points:

the behaviour of an organization is oriented largely by a culture, mission, purpose, intentions and goals; using knowledge, know-how to fulfil the tasks predicted and achieve the intended goals; it implies a structuring and integration of activities: formal division of labour, attribution of responsibilities, coordination, integration, centralization or decentralization; it is based on the participation of people and their characteristics: intelligence, sensitivity, motivation, personality; and, the organization is a whole with a nervous centre that organizes and controls all activities. According to Hogg and Vaughan (1998), in society we find different institutions: they all have a common point but show specific characteristics that give each institution an identity. The school is no exception, it has a complex reality given that, among the organizations that make up our society, the school organization has an influence on all the others. In their configuration, schools are different from other social organizations, as Costa (2003) underlines, namely in terms of the singularity of its mission, which is essentially pedagogical and educational: educational institutions thus reach a dimension where important decisions are made in educational, curricular and pedagogical terms.

The notion of cohesion is absolutely key to Kurt Lewin in the study of restricted groups (point out the force that holds together the molecules of a body and in physics language: tension, pressure, valence, global attraction). Cohesion factors may be extrinsic - those that precede the formation of such groups (functional dependence); and intrinsic factors - those belonging to the group (social and affective factors - attractiveness of a collective action, feeling of belonging to the group, common goal, interpersonal affinity, satisfaction of personal needs, motivations, communication, emotions and values) and operative and functional factors (distribution and articulation of roles, group behaviour and leadership mode) (Galinha, 2010, 2011 a) b). Also for the study of educational institutions and, starting from the studies of Moscovici, we define social representations as a kind of knowledge, socially elaborated

and shared, with a practical view and concurring for the construction of a common reality to a social group. Social Representation had the first theoretical basis with Serge Moscovici in 1961 with the work *Psychoanalysis, its image and its public*. The purpose of the Social Representation Theory is to explain the phenomena of the individual from a collective perspective, without losing sight of individuality (Hogg & Vaughan, 1998). Given the need for involvement, it is important for leaders to actively promote interaction processes and a collegial peer culture as a way to successfully promote ongoing professional development and to stimulate assessment systems that support teacher autonomy, encouraging them to respond positively to change (Day, 2001). Confirming this idea of interaction between school development and teacher development and the system itself, Kemmis (1987 quoting Garcia, 1999) claims the necessity of adopting a dialectical perspective that recognizes that schools cannot change without the commitment of teachers, institutions and systems that are interdependent and interactive in the reform process. Even if teachers are internally motivated for development, if they do not feel properly supported, they shall hardly adhere to change: a change that is not internalized will probably be symbolic and temporary... For example, the first cycle supervision presupposes a set of increased responsibilities for the intermediate managers (Formosinho, 1991). Day (2001) adds that school principals and leaders in general have a crucial role in creating professional learning philosophies that motivate teachers to systematically engage in individual and collective, formal and informal learning, solely and with others. Reflection on teaching is not merely an intellectual process, it requires emotional commitment and involves the mind and heart (Day, 2001). According to Parente (2006, p.106), resuming the concept of change, we can also say that the various levels of learning processes often find conditions conducive to their development.

Teachers' expectations on how to engage students in school activities can be fulfilled in part to the extent that the school environment

meets the basic psychological needs of students, as stated by Guimarães and Boruchovitch (2004). For the same authors, this is not an easy task, it depends on the effort to create autonomous and less controlling interactions, for example, *“providing choice opportunities and making students accountable for the consequences of their choices, sharing decision-making, listening and questioning students’ arguments, among other strategies”* (Guimarães & Boruchovitch, 2004, pp.148-149). The authors also add that the need for competence can be nurtured by providing challenges adequate to the students' level of development and with information on their performance. According to Bergamini (1997) and Silva, Wolf, Costa, Costa and Magro (2006) there are no universal motivational strategies to promote the satisfaction and well-being of the individual within the organization. Jesus, Vieira, Almeida, Santos, Gomes, Martins (2009, p. 28) support an integrative perspective *“in a study on the integrative model of cognitive motivation theories, given the multiplicity of motivation theories to analyse the processes that allow explaining the dynamics, direction and persistence of behaviour”*, provided *“the theories considered and introduced in a model have the same theoretical-epistemological assumptions and are complementary”*. According to the authors, the global understanding of motivation requires an attitude of theoretical integration that seeks to combine the specificity and complementarity of several cognitivist motivation theories.

According to Genoves (2010), Educational intelligence is the leaders' ability to adjust education according to the needs and interests in order to contribute to a better development of individuals. War (2006) mentions that education starts from a radically positive assumption: any human being can be improved and anyone who is not in this line cannot dedicate to the task of educating (Tavares & Albuquerque, 1998). These are the basis of Howard Gardner studies, who published *Frames of Mind* in 1983, referring for the first time to multiple intelligences, defining it as a capacity to solve problems or to produce goods that have value in a cultural or collective

context. Emotional intelligence, according to Daniel Goleman, encompasses skills such as: self-motivation and persevering capacity despite adversity and frustration; impulse control and the ability to postpone satisfaction; the ability to control humour and to prevent anxiety from altering the reasoning faculties; empathy; hope. Thus including Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences.

In a study carried out with teachers on motivation in the teaching profession, it was verified that the most valued factors are the feeling of professional competence and the relationship with students (Jesus, 1998). On the other hand, if teachers feel professionally fulfilled and motivated in carrying out their activity, they become a contagious example for their students, who will have more competent teachers and committed to their duties (Marques, 2003). Motivation is a concept that is often invoked to explain variations of specific behaviours and is undoubtedly of great importance for the understanding of human behaviour (Fonseca, Galinha & Loureiro, 2017 a) b).

Since ancient times, leadership has been also the target of analysis and studies. For Bento (2006), in the twentieth century the so-called situational or contingency theories of leadership assume that the most appropriate behaviour for a leader depends on the specific situations or circumstances in which the leader is. One of the theoretical models that had more acceptance was the Fiedler's contingency model of (University of Illinois). Fiedler developed a scale called LPC (Least Preferred Co-worker) to measure leadership style. The goal of the LPC scale is to differentiate the leadership style focused on the relationship from the task-focused leadership style (Bento, 2006). The contingency organizational theory adjusts organization to its relevant environment, where it needs to be systematically adapted to the collective goals. The concept *it depends is opposite to that of one best way*. This organizational adjustment principle leads us to an adjustable leader and to a dynamic theory of leadership proposed by Fiedler in which there is no single style or characteristic leader in each situation, but rather

a leadership model that can achieve efficacy and the efficiency by controlling the situation (Chiavenato, 1999). In a study carried out, it was observed that 1) the transformational and transactional values of leadership models are predominant in comparison to the “*laissez faire*” model; 2) The perceptions of men and women are different; 3) Participants' perceptions vary with age; and (4) Transformational and transactional leaderships and their categories are linked to more positive outcomes (i.e., efficiency, satisfaction and extra effort) (Galinha, Vala, Jardim & Pereira, 2016, p.33). The new conception perceives the leader not as one who leads in a hierarchical and rigid way the process of influencing others to reach a goal, but as a meaningful manager, the one who leads his path and his support values. Thus, leadership is one of the most common themes in the study of organizations, although “*this prevalence has not achieved the same prominence in the case of educational organizations, particularly in some geographic contexts*” (Trigo & Costa, 2008). It is in this sense that these authors invoke the model of Management based on Values “*breaking the most technical-instrumental aspects of traditional management theories can contribute to a shared reflection with the leadership of educational organizations, especially taking into account the conceptualization of leadership as a dialogue about values*” (Trigo & Costa, 2008, p.1). Still regarding coaching, it is recent buzzword in the field of leadership and motivation. The practice, however, is old (Rego, Cunha, Marcelino & Oliveira, 2004). According to the authors, it is no longer up to the leader to discover what is best - this is something that must be done by every teacher/individual. It is up to them helping to discover intrinsically how to best express their skills. Two meanings of the term *coaching* help understanding its application to the world of institutions: on the one hand, coach is the trainer, one who helps in the development of skills; on the other hand, it is a means of transportation, which explains the process of self-development as a journey of discovery and improvement (Perez, 2009). *Coaching* can be taken as a process that aims to foster self-knowledge and drive the desire to improve over time.

It is therefore a leadership philosophy based on the idea that the development and acquisition of skills are continuous processes and the responsibility of all, and not only episodes limited in time and coming from the hierarchy. The choice of a profession and its exercise contribute decisively to the identity of the individual and lead to different degrees of satisfaction. The inclusive school also needs to respond to teachers' problems in terms of their quality of life, well-being and mental health (Picado, 2009). Due to a need for intervention, Sampaio, Stobäus, Mosquera and Jesus (2012, p. 2) accompanied a group of teachers from 2005 to 2008 to evaluate *"stress and occupational exhaustion variables, coping strategies, self-image and self-esteem, trying to better understand the situations that cause dissatisfaction, as well as organizing interventions addressing issues of dissatisfaction vs. well-being"*. We consider that in a complex and dynamic society the role of institutions, particularly educational institutions, is key. The way people know, think, and feel is an emerging issue. Within social cognition, psychosocial well-being is a variable that assumes a unique prominence in the areas of human sciences because of the underlying complexity and importance it has to the life of individuals. Given the increase in quality requirements, strategies are necessary to regulate efficiency with respect for and promoting the dignity of people and their rights, as well as the satisfaction of their needs. The organizational relationship is important for the development of adequate interpersonal functioning and provides unique opportunities for learning specific skills. Social skills (such as communication) have been related to the sense of well-being since through them individuals can develop more rewarding interpersonal relationships, greater personal fulfillment, development and professional success (Ackroyd, Batt, Thompson & Tolbert, 2006 ). Social skills also include assertiveness, cooperation, among others (Chaves, Galinha & Gontijo, 2017). According to the founder of modern Positive Psychology Seligman, it *"is the study of the positive experiences, personalities and positive institutions that allow the flourishing of individuals, organizations and communities"*. Adaptation and de-

velopment issues, and even the various issues of human survival have been more closely watched given the suffering and loss involved. (Santos, Ferreira, Figueiredo, Almeida & Silva, 2010, p. 2, Seligman, 2007). According to Siqueira and Padovam (2008, p. 207), researches on *"identity, private components and interdependence between the traditional concepts of subjective well-being and psychological well-being, plus proposals about the design and the components of well-being at work, are all contributions that consolidate the principles of positive psychology"*. For Cunha, Rego and Lopes (2013, p. 314), *"the premises that humans adopt influence the way they act"* because thought influences our action and the way we act towards others. We point out the importance of Martin Seligman's perspective within organizations in general, and educational institutions in particular, in the sense of building a positive holistic profile of capabilities and possibilities.

Several investigations have shown that a large number of teachers *"feel that their profession is stressful (...) and many are in a state of emotional exhaustion"*. *The teaching profession may be considered "a profession of physical and mental risk"* (Jesus, 2002, p.14-15). *"In an effort to systematize the main changes that occurred with direct or indirect implications in the teacher's work"* Esteve (1991; 1992) highlights the increasing demands on the teacher, the educational inhibition from other socialization agents, the development of information sources alternative to school, the breakdown of social consensus on education, increasing contradictions in teaching, the change of expectations regarding the education system, the change in society's support regarding the education system, lower social valuing of the teacher work, changes in curriculum content, changes in teacher-student relationships, fragmentation of the teachers' work, poor working conditions, and scarce material resources.

Sousa (2008) considers important for teachers to be psycholog-

ically strong, mature and accomplished people, psychologically balanced and accomplished personally and professionally. The author emphasizes that the performance of the teacher can only be comprehended in a global manner, the cognitive part being associated with the affective and emotional part influencing its personal fulfilment. Only a good developed of these two aspects allow for choice and decision-making, freedom and self-responsibility, participation and innovation. Nóvoa (1992) points out that educational success involves the ability to teach individuals capable of permanent recycling, of acquiring new behaviours and skills, capable of responding effectively to the constant appeals of change. For the change to occur it is necessary for the individual to feel that such change will be favourable and that there will be no loss, being also important that he/she feels involved in the process of change. In order to deal with these constraints, the teacher has to develop specific professional knowledge that involves skills that allow constant articulation of analysis and action, reason and values, goals and constraints (Perrenoud, 1993). This specific professional knowledge involves analysing uncertainties and contradictions; managing obstructions, conflicts; anticipate the other's strategies and their consequences; negotiate commitments and weigh the advantages and disadvantages.

Keyes, Hysom, and Lupo (Gonçalves, 2008) mention to the need to perceive well-being in the development of teachers. As a social being, it is important how teachers relate to others and how they feel accepted as well as how they accept others, seeking and needing to feel balanced regarding the people with whom they relate to feel integrated in the group they belong. *"We can thus understand why teachers feel unsatisfied with the prevailing representations in society. Despite having professional training at a higher level than other sectors, there is no social recognition towards their function"* (Gonçalves, 2008, p.8). In order to feel good in their role, teachers need to feel that society values their work. Some of the teachers' sense of well-being is feeling valued for their impact on the lives

of their students and how they ultimately contribute to the development of society. Seligman (Passarelli & Silva, 2007) states that well-being can be named as a stable extroversion where the positive affect on happiness seems to be related to an easy sociability. According to Siqueira and Padovam (2008, p.201), Ryan and Deci (2001), current approaches to well-being in the psychological field can *"be organized in two perspectives: one addressing the subjective state of happiness (hedonic well-being), called subjective well-being, and another that investigates human potential (eudaimonic well-being) which addresses the psychological well-being"*. According to these authors and Siqueira and Padovam (2008, p.201), based on the Greek definitions, *"these two traditions of study reflect distinct philosophical views on happiness: whereas the former (hedonism) adopts view of well-being as pleasure or happiness, the second (eudemonism) is based on the notion that well-being consists in the full functioning of a person's potentialities, that is, the ability to think, use reasoning and common sense"*. According to Giacomoni (2004, p. 43), subjective well-being (SWB) *"is an area of psychology that has grown in recent years. This area comprises studies that have used the most diverse concepts, such as: happiness, satisfaction, mood and positive affection, besides also being considered a subjective assessment of quality of life. It refers to what people think and how they feel about their lives"*.

Current perspectives define the *"subjective well-being as a broad category of phenomena that includes people's emotional responses, satisfaction domains, and global judgments of life satisfaction"*. Still according to Giacomoni (2004, p.44), Diener indicates that there are three aspects of subjective well-being that should be emphasized: subjectivity - well-being resides within the experience of the individual; the understanding that well-being is not only the absence of negative factors but also the presence of positive factors; well-being includes an overall dimension and not just a limited measure of a life aspect. For Giacomoni (2004), the main theories

and explanatory models of subjective well-being have historically been presented in two large opposing blocks called *bottom-up* versus *top-down*: the main initial theories of subjective well-being were concerned on identifying how external factors, situations and socio-demographic variables affected happiness.

These approaches known as bottom-up are based on the assumption that there is a series of universal and basic human needs, and that satisfaction makes happiness possible, or not. According to Giacomoni (2004, p.44), "*other factors linked by these theories are experiences of daily pleasurable related to positive affection, as the opposite, unpleasant events associated with negative affection*". In short, satisfaction and happiness derive from those happy experiences (Diener, Sandvik & Pavot, 1991).

Social relations thus become necessary for well-being, just as the sense of well-being favours social relations (Passareli & Silva, 2007). Confirming these studies, empirical results indicate that people tend to experience suffering when they are not in any type of group or when they have poor relationships within their groups. All these studies indicate that participation in groups and subjects feeling integrated, accepted and valued in groups of the different life domains contribute unequivocally to the well-being. Ryff and Keyes (1995) presented in their well-being multidimensional model six distinct components of positive psychological functioning: positive self-evaluation and of previous life (self-acceptance), a sense of continuous growth and development as an individual (personal growth), a belief that life has a purpose (meaning) and meaning (meaning of life), quality relationships with others (positive relationships with others), adaptive capacity towards life and the surrounding world (environment control) and a sense of self-determination (autonomy).

Thus, by the Appreciative Inquiry method people may be involved in the planning of their collective future (Lopes, Galinha & Loureiro, 2010). Talks about the organization's positive core give meaning and enable those involved to share the best practices, enabling energy and the flexibility to change. The role of the leader in the MA process, that is, when people acknowledge the best in others, share their dreams and main apprehensions in an affirmative way, which shows the power of encouraging discovery, dreaming, planning, of destiny/creation, promoting and catalysing positive changes, and to participate equally on the opportunity to listen and understand creative ideas, hopes and dreams of all in the organization, acknowledging that their main work is to rise what is best, as states Rivero (2008).

An organizational culture based on courage, hope, optimism, resilience, cooperation, creativity, energy, positive emotions, trust, citizenship and wisdom is fundamental since the organizational environment is in some way a reflection of the organization's culture, that is, the reflection of the effects of such culture in the organization as a whole. The organizational environment is the indicator of the satisfaction level of its members regarding different aspects of the culture or the apparent reality of the organization, such as management model, mission, communication process, professional appreciation and identification with the organization (Álvaro & Garrido, 2007, Chicken, 2010, Chicken & Bridge, 2018 in press). The environment is the synthesis of the institutional variables of psycho-organizational type capable of reflecting the internal dynamics of the school. These variables are the school building, the distribution of classes, the school schedule, and the recreational activity, among many others. According to Sanchez-Vidal (2013), the analysis of mental processes and behaviours is valued, as well as the curiosity to test processes and environments (of socio-educational intervention with a view to personal and social promotion) that stimulate control in subjects, that is: the conscious and self-regulated use of

certain thought strategies according to the tasks or the formal or non-formal contexts with which they are confronted. The aim is to stimulate the adaptive capacity of the subjects, that is: to promote them from a cognitive and social point of view. The environment reflects values, system rules, history, communication means and how authority is implemented or whether it fosters empowerment. An open or closed environment depends on the leader's conduct and role regarding the control of situations and the promotion of cooperation (Ferreira, Neves & Caetano, 2001); leading to satisfied and proud collaborators, or unstable and not quite interested in the tasks (Vala & Monteiro, 2006; Cunha, Rego, Cunha & Cabral Cardoso, 2007). The environment concept applied to organizations suggests in its conceptual nature a multidimensional complexity of elements that influence how individuals behave. We share the importance of organizations as psychologically significant environments (Czikszentmihalyi, 2006; Sousa, 2006).

The etiologic view of the environment suggests that its perceptions are socially built by the following parameters: 1. Symbolic management (symbolic interactions can be directed and therefore are not always spontaneous); 2. Work group (interactions give rise to perceptions of the environment and normative social influence joins the informational influence); 3. Culture (where importance is given to the influence of the underlying hypotheses and the values of environment perception) (Vala & Monteiro, 2006). It is also characterized by a set of social practices. In a world marked by globalization, spaces of education acquire more and more significance so that individuals can discover the path for their completeness as human beings. Hence, it seems that the control and the development of a positive feeling or affection in institutions can determine the way in which each individual perceives and assesses events (Cunha, Rego, Cunha & Cabral Cardos, 2007; Marujo, Neto, Caetano & Rivero, 2007; Magalhães & Lobo, 2011).

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