

Reflections on Coordinated Development of Educational Leadership and Education Marketization for Future Development Needs

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Abstract: With the spread of neoliberal education policies around the world, schools have shifted from being public goods to being competing entities in a market economy and now operate in quasi-market systems. Critically analyze the coordinated development of educational leadership and education marketisation in response to future development needs in this paper. Given the changes in foreign policy, this paper explores how the dynamics of marketisation—such as school choice, performance accountability and commodification—create a severe "double bind" for school leaders. Educational leaders are under increasing pressure to behave like corporate managers and marketers, focusing on quantifiable indicators and financial survival rather than all-round pedagogical development and educational equity. Although market mechanisms may increase administrative efficiency temporarily, they fail to address the core ethical and intellectual aims of education in an unchecked commodification of education. Further development will introduce a change to the top-down control mode and use a bottom-up participatory model. Through coordination of market efficiency and a strong ethical system, future educational leaders will be able to face neoliberal pressure, resist the erosion of 'publicness' in education, and protect the original aim of schooling: all-round development of individuals and democratic citizenship.

Keywords: Educational Leadership; Education Marketization; Neoliberalism; Commodification; School Management; Future Development.

1. Introduction

In recent years, many western and other countries have introduced neoliberal economic ideas into their education systems and made many reforms. Under the new ideology, market mechanisms have been introduced systematically in the administration and provision of public education, such as competition, consumer choice and high-stakes accountability. At its base, this movement believes that if schools are subject to the strict discipline of a free market, their academic standards will rise, administrative efficiency will improve, and better educational results will be achieved for the knowledge economy. Therefore, education is being increasingly viewed as a private good or a right of the individual rather than a public good or a right guaranteed by the state, and is now subject to market competition.

The results of this change in ideology have extended beyond the administrative offices of schools and universities to alter the social contract among the state, educators and the public at a fundamental level. When education becomes a commodity, its original purpose of promoting self-cultivation and moral education will be lost; only financial benefits and material interests will be sought. At present, the idea of education has become too pragmatic; people now only seek tangible outcomes such as higher test scores and direct applicability in their work at a company. The purpose of education is gradually narrowing, and this is a serious problem in modern teaching. Teachers are no longer regarded as independent intellectual figures but are instead supervised closely and serve as standard-product delivery staff for students. As a result, the discourse of educational reform has been overrun by the vocabulary of business management, and terms such as 'efficiency', 'return on investment', 'customer satisfaction' and 'quality assurance' have completely replaced

traditional pedagogical language.

At the base of the structural reform are educational leaders. School principals, university administrators and district superintendents are the first line of responsibility for combining the ideals of education with the demands of market competition. In the past, the primary roles of educational leaders have been teaching and guiding, developing courses and building communities. However, due to the continuous pressure of the education marketisation today, these leaders are required to serve as both the company's top executives and public relations officers and strategic marketers. They need to promote their institutions actively, aggressively compete for students, and pay close attention to standardised performance indicators to ensure the survival of the institution.

An increase in the scope of application has also brought problems. When the life of an educational institution is directly related to its market share and rank in the publicly released league table, the top school may be compelled to make an opportunistic choice. They need to balance their profound moral obligations for all-round student development and educational fairness with the harsh, means-end instrumental goals of the quasi-market. With the development of the world in the future, it will be increasingly complex and unequal; therefore, unchecked marketisation of the education system poses a serious threat to the original goals of education. Therefore, it is necessary to explore a way for educational leadership to develop together and sustainably under the influence of, or in opposition to, market forces.

Critically examine the combined development of educational leadership and education marketisation in light of the demands for change in future society in this paper. Following the above introduction, Section 2 examines the historical development of public-good education and market-driven commodification. Section 3 investigates the

operational 'double bind' and performative pressures faced by contemporary school leaders. Section 4 is the demand for a transition from transaction management to critical, value-oriented leadership. Finally, Section 5 presents the main contents and offers a concluding view on protecting the ethical foundation of education in a market-oriented future.

2. The Trajectory of Education Marketization and Commodification

The course of education marketisation is a significant ideological deviation from the post-war consensus that education should be a public good provided by the state. Early studies of this change identified an underlying philosophical contradiction between the ideals of a free market and the essential purposes of education [1]. The Reasons for the growth of the market are competition among enterprises, maximising financial gains, and responding to people's demands. On the other hand, genuine education aims to cultivate students' self-learning abilities and thinking capacities independently, as well as promote the all-round growth of all students, rather than focusing on economic benefits. When the government establishes quasi-markets for education and introduces elements such as voucher schemes, charter schools, or decentralized funding, these civic institutions and commercial entities are deliberately mixed together. Public-private partnerships are also examples of how market logic enters education through cross-sector cooperation, and school governance is becoming more dependent on management coordination and external resource negotiation [3].

Marketisation is no longer limited to the areas with a historically weak public sector; it has been extended to areas with strong welfare states. For example, the Swedish education system, which was once the world model for egalitarian, state-run schools, has undergone aggressive marketisation and now has many for-profit independent schools that are far removed from public schools [4]. Education is considered a commodity and is therefore easily interchangeable in this environment. With the arrival of the 21st century, younger generations have come to see higher education as something to be used for practical purposes; they judge how valuable their university degrees are based on whether they will help them earn more money or secure employment early in life [5].

At the same time, they have lost their original educational goals. To be successful in the competition among schools, they need to be different from other schools and are now engaging in institutional marketing. Early studies in the United Kingdom have shown that the establishment of a social market in education has led schools to shift considerable funds away from their main teaching efforts to support advanced public relations strategies intended to attract "high-value" students [2]. In the face of competition, the cooperative network among schools has disintegrated, replaced by institutional rivalry, and the democratic and fair nature of the public education system is thus at risk.

This market-oriented mode of operation will also change the idea of educational equality. In an ideal public education system, resources would be allocated according to the overall demands of the system to guarantee a basic level of opportunity for all citizens. However, in a market-oriented system, schools are compelled to compete for the "best" students, who are generally those from wealthier families

with fewer financial constraints and thus require fewer resources to achieve high scores in standardized tests. Schools that can attract these students will be at the top of the list, receive more funds, and thus draw in even wealthier students in a virtuous cycle. Schools in poor areas face considerable economic difficulties and cannot meet the high standards of a quasi-market. The schools are thus penalized, labelled as 'failing', and subject to punitive administrative measures or closure. The market logic will probably reward differences rather than fix the problem of inequality directly. Therefore, the application of market logic to public education will inevitably worsen the existing social stratification and turn the school system from a driver of social mobility into a more vigorous mechanism for social reproduction.

3. The 'Double Bind' and Performative Pressures on School Leadership

At the intersection of these market forces and the daily practice of school administration are highly precarious professional positions for educational leaders. The Australian public school sector is a representative example of a highly marketised system that presents a serious 'double bind' for principals [9]. On the one hand, their professional ethics require them to serve all students fairly and cooperate with other public schools. At the same time, the whole-school marketisation model is moving forward, and they need to vigorously promote their specific school to attract families for funds and enrollment. Many principals are very uncomfortable with this marketing demand and feel that the pressure to 'sell' their schools directly conflicts with their original beliefs about what public education should be.

Moreover, the trend of 'managerialism' in education policy has added to this problem. Managerialism is an ideal that advocates for directly applying the system of management for private enterprises to public education. As a result, school leaders are subject to a strict system of quantitative accountability, and their professional ability is almost entirely measured by the performance of their students in standardised tests and the financial efficiency of the school [6]. Therefore, the educational leaders are focused on achieving specific results rather than anything else. Transactional leaders in the commodified higher education system, for instance, are more likely to treat students as mere consumers and will adopt an aggressive business model to maximise institutional revenue at the expense of cultivating students' minds and morals [11].

Strengthening efforts to ensure the survival of the enterprise will inevitably lead to neglecting the goals of social equity and moral values in education. When school principals are consumed by the demands of audits, marketing and performativity, their ability to tackle deep-seated structural inequalities, social gaps and community disenfranchisement is greatly reduced [12]. Neoliberalism may therefore be less concerned about addressing the problems facing all students and will favour protecting the institutions that have harmed these marginalised groups. As a result, the marketized school leader is often reduced to a top-level corporate technician and detached from the moral requirements of the teaching profession.

In addition, there are also numerous psychological pressures for educational administrators in this managerialist system, and these are well-known. Consistent examination of high-stakes tests and public rankings has caused a sense of professional pressure to increase steadily. Principals work

excessively long hours, are not in charge of teaching and learning or curriculum planning, but instead are busy with all sorts of paperwork to satisfy the requirements of external audit departments. A high-stress performative load for school leaders may cause them to burn out and leave early. More subtly, it will be harder to carry out new changes in the course of work. Given that even a small decrease in the standardized test scores of a large number of students will have a severe impact on the school's finances and public trust, school administrators are not motivated to try new teaching methods or fund long-term educational improvement initiatives that will yield results slowly. The Market wishes for prompt and visible effects. Therefore, the educational leadership environment is becoming intellectually homogenous; principals in very different social and economic conditions are compelled to use the same standardized, test-oriented strategies out of necessity to ensure the short-term stability of their schools.

4. Coordinating Market Efficiencies with Critical Leadership Paradigms

Given the high demands of future societal development for educational systems, the connection between educational leadership and marketisation needs to be readjusted urgently. It is historically naive to expect the full-scale abolition of market mechanisms in contemporary education; rather, they should be in strict accordance with pedagogical values. The future of school business leadership should not be an extension of corporate emulation; rather, it needs to be revised to address the demands of administration and morality simultaneously [8].

Given the above reasons, we need to move away from the traditional transaction-managerial system and construct a new critical value-oriented leadership system. Educational leaders should be able to use their professional autonomy to oppose the harm caused by neoliberal reforms. Research on headteachers' responses to marketisation shows that successful leaders set clear 'red lines'—ethical boundaries beyond which they will not compromise the well-being of their students for institutional ranking or market advantages [7]. On this basis, there will be a minor deviation from the original plan.

A typical way to develop in the future is to combine critical pedagogy and servant leadership. Principals and university administrators, in the spirit of servant leadership, have stepped away from their roles as top executives of the school or university to help teachers and students address systemic problems [10]. Under the above coordinated model, market efficiency aims to optimise resource allocation and improve transparency in stakeholder communications to enhance the school's ability to offer fair and high-quality education, rather than to generate institutional profit. The educational leader of the future needs to be functionally bilingual: proficient in the administrative language required to operate in a quasi-market, but also deeply rooted in the moral language of social justice, democratic citizenship and all-round development of individuals.

One of the main contents of this future-oriented leadership mode is the vigorous re-education of external parties. Parents, policymakers and local communities have been under the influence of neoliberalism for many years and have learned to assess the quality of schools based only on academic rankings and university entrance rates. The next generation of

education leaders will move away from this limited model proactively. They need to continue to explore and discuss openly why the success of education cannot be quantified by statistics; rather, it should be judged by how much people have developed empathy, how creatively they can solve problems in life, and what emotional stability they have achieved. By altering the local narrative of what constitutes 'success', educational leaders can create political and operational space for the implementation of all-round, student-centred reforms. In addition, the leaders should build a strong cooperative network with other schools and refuse the market's requirement for institutional competition. When the principal collaborates with other schools to share resources, teaching methods and professional support, they can avoid the competitive logic of the quasi-market effectively and establish a strong model of collective and systemic responsibility.

5. Conclusion

In recent years, due to the rapid marketisation of education, many schools have been reformed in different parts of the world. As shown in the above analysis, the implementation of neoliberal quasi-markets, high-pressure performance accountability and strong commodification have created a serious professional dilemma for educational leaders. Given the demands of promoting equitable public education and ensuring the survival of the institution in a highly competitive market at the same time, contemporary school leaders are often compelled to adopt transactional and managerial behaviours that undermine the intrinsic civic values of education.

However, the future development of the educational system will not be driven solely by the blind forces of the free market. Education should not be viewed merely as a means to generate private economic benefits; rather, it is the foundational public goods necessary for building a good-governance democracy and promoting the all-round development of all people. Therefore, the joint development of educational leadership and marketisation should focus more on pedagogical values than on corporate indicators.

In the end, the future development of education will be driven by brave and moral leaders. Set a high moral standard, stop treating students as consumers, and use administrative efficiency to promote social justice rather than competing with other schools in the neoliberal model. To protect the future of education around the world, market mechanisms must be strictly regulated and permanently subordinate to the strong moral requirements of teaching.

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