ADMINISTRATION OR MANAGEMENT: A TERM DILEMMA.
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ABSTRACT

The present paper deals with the task of revising two terms that are commonly mistaken when referred to Education in Spanish Administración and Gestión. Terms that are commonly taken as equivalent. So, in order to understand the differences, they are analyzed from the perspective of their field study that is integrated in English from the Business Administration field and the Management field as well, and it is referred for the purpose of this work as the Administración (in Spanish to be precise) /management field of study, which has transferred applied concepts and theories to Education. It is also analyzed in this paper, how through this process the original meaning has been changing. Finally a particular definition from the author’s point of view is proposed for each one of the controversial terms in Spanish.

Keywords: Administration, Education, Management

I. - INTRODUCTION

The term gestión educativa in Spanish, that can be translated into English as management of education, has gained quite relevance in México. The term is used regularly and naturally in educational contexts. As in most processes oriented to the construction of knowledge, many sciences merge and overlap their object and fields of study (Cecchini, 1996). Therefore it is possible to study a single one from different perspectives. Take, school dynamics for instance, it can be analyzed from a Sociological, Psychological or Anthropological perspective, as well as from the point of view of Philosophy or Education among others.

This is a natural and even desirable phenomenon, due to the need for consideration of principles in different fields of study, while trying to understand a reality in order to transform it. In the same sense, Education has taken elements from other fields and has incorporated them to its own. We can talk about Psychology and say that Psycho pedagogical studies are indispensable in a teacher’s training agenda.

As for Philosophy, a pioneer in the study of humans and their fundamental problems from a rational perspective. And Sociology that has devoted to the study of phenomena produced form the collectivity in a historical-cultural context. Both fields present in all of the studies an attempt to understand the different paradigms, tendencies and contexts that have taken modern pedagogical sciences where they are now.

Educational Sciences and its constant evolution gave place to the need to establish and measure objectives, goals, indicators, enablers, strategies and tactics for learning. And so, it was required to conceive its activities as human processes with expected outcomes. All of this as part of a context that can only be understood as a system.

The need to plan for changing environments, and the importance of considering other elements such as leadership and motivation, the coordination among educational actors and factors; as well as many other tasks gave place to the above mentioned phenomenon of recurring to other fields in order to acquire the necessary principles and techniques, which in this case is Administration/management, referred in Spanish as Administración / Gestión.

II. - ARGUMENT

2.1 Administration or management as in Spanish Administración or Gestión

Are Administration and management taken in Spanish as synonyms? Is it a mistake to use them indistinctively? No, not really, it all depends of the point of reference at least in Spanish.

Since Administration studies first appeared in the United States, it is worth looking up to definitions from an American English dictionary. Oxford dictionary (2013) defines it as “the process or activity of running a business, organization, etc.”
Oxford (2013) places the term as “the arrangements and tasks needed to control the operation of a plan or organization.

As for the term “management” according to Oxford dictionary (2013) “the process of dealing with or controlling things or people”, as well as “the responsibility for and control of a company or organization”. Cambridge (2013) defines it as “the control and organization of something” and as “the group of people responsible for controlling and organizing a company”. Both terms in English are defined as nouns and not as actions (verbs). Although, actions are implicit once you expand on each one of the terms. Now, as far as for the translation of the first term into Spanish, Administration is often simply translated as its corresponding cognate Administración that refers to both of the definitions above, depending on the context. For instance when it refers to how a country is run, it is Administration just as the cognate Administración in Spanish. On the other hand when it is referred academically as a field of study, it might be better understood as management, which is translated into Spanish as Administración (Wordreference.com, 2013) . That is the first part of the misconception of the term, since “management” is often translated from and into Spanish as gestión (Cambridge, 2013) while the very same term is translated from Spanish into English as “negotiation” or “step” (Oxford, 2013).

According to the Real Academia Española (RAE, 2013) the Spanish term administración is the action or effect of administer or manage. The term gestión has two meanings; one is referred to negotiate and the other to manage. The two situations may be inferred: a) according to RAE gestión a synonym for administración and the action of gestión which is also considered part of management the field of study.

As it can be seen in both languages the definition’s dilemma persists since they overlap one another and the terms are used distinctively or indistinctively all depending on the context. However, Administración is the name given in Spanish when it is referred to a field of study.

Administración /Management, the proper term for the field of study, implies necessarily the study of the social process (Brech, 1969) its characteristics and relationships) from social groups (Petersen & Plowman, 1939) and social organisms (Koontz & O’Donell, 1972) in pursuit of common purposes (Jiménez, 1990). Common purposes represent the objective of administración/management the science, also defined as properly coordinated services (Tannenbaum, 1961) or as efficient ways to reach a specific goal (Weirich & Koontz, 1993).

The Administracion/management field of study has a multidisciplinary origin, where Economy, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Law studies, Anthropology and Mathematics have contributed. And of course it is important to mention Philosophy, which has served as foundation for all the other already mentioned fields. Regardless of all contributions, the Administracion/management field of study does have a field of its own that it is not covered by any other. The Administracion/management field of study implies not only the sorting of material resources, but also, dealing with the human resources, since it has to do with “human relationships and works through them” (Stoner, Freeman, & Gilbert, 1996). It is part of a social network that is guided towards institutional objectives. See Figure 1 which shows the relationship of Administrative Science with other disciplines.

![Figure 1. The relationship of Administrative science and other disciplines](image)

The Administración/management field of study serves to practical purposes and therefore, uses techniques which through instruments accomplish its goals. A technique is formed of a group of rules and instruments that evolve when there is a new procedure to do something (Reyes-Ponce, 1992). The above mentioned instruments are created through experience and they basically have a practical purpose.

On the other hand, Science is constituted of principles, which due to their characteristics, are not found through experience, but by a methodical observation (Otlet, 2008).

The nature of Science is theoretical and provides the foundation to create procedures to be used in the practice. Thus, techniques (rules and practical instruments for administration and management) are based upon principles that integrate the previously mentioned fields of study.

The Administracion/management field of study has established principles (Taylor, 1903; Fayol, 1916) applicable and replicable in the practice for many other contexts. Such fact cannot obviously come from their original historical-logical context; it is based upon time and conditions. Those principles
express and confirm the scientific nature of The Administración/management field of study. For instance: the suitability for a position, management units, interest’s coordination, control chains, workforce divisions and specialization (Terry & Franklin, 1988).

To sustain such principles as they are, some of the characteristics within their nature should be mentioned, as the following, (Bonnin, 2004):

a) Universality, since they appear as an administrative phenomenon that exists in a social organism.

b) Specificity, since the administrative phenomenon is specific and different from the ones that go along with it (economical functions, accountable, productive, mechanical and juridical), this is the reason why it has its own field of study:

c) Temporality, due to the fact that the administrative phenomenon is unique and the elements of the administrative process are always present in higher or lower degree in a timeline of any organization.

As it was stated previously, the administration has a specific field of study; a unique area and precise objectives. It also has exclusive and distinctive principles, is then to the author’s personal point of view, a particular, experimental and applied field of study.

The Administración/management field of study can be defined as it is in Spanish as a social science whose object of study is based upon the principles of managing the will and material resources in social entities (public and private) oriented to establish a political, economic and social order.

Using the term in Spanish Administración as a field of study, it is defined by Álvarez (1998, page 133) as “a set of acts executed over a patrimony with the purpose of keeping it or exploiting it according to its nature”. Generically, such definition refers to guidance acts, coordination and direction of an institution oriented towards the improvement of its objectives and the fulfillment of its purposes. The same author states a definition of the Spanish term gestión as: “a set of rules, procedures and operational methods to carry out a task within a company or enterprise in order to reach specific objectives. Achieving expected outcomes with their own resources and organizational systems” (Álvarez, 1998, pág. 7).

Merli (1997) conceives gestión as the capability of an organization to achieve rapidly relevant operational results that allow it to reach a position successfully in the short, mid and long term. In other words, the establishment of the conditions to become a leader and maintenance of that status.

The difference is that in the term gestión, “it is related to the participation in the management of those being managed” (Sánchez in García, 2004, pág.16).

To be more precise about such differences, Haimann and Scott (1974) can be brought in with their detailed differentiations among the two concepts: Administración and gestión (as actions) considering their functions performed and applications. (See table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions differenciation:</th>
<th>Gestión / Business management</th>
<th>Administración / Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td>It’s the art of having things done through a third party, by leading forces to achieve a preestablished objectives.</td>
<td>Deals with the establishment of general aims and objectives, plans and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature/origin</strong></td>
<td>It is entirely operational.</td>
<td>It has to do with the decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td>The manager decides about who and how.</td>
<td>An Administrator decides what and when something is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Function</strong></td>
<td>A manager gets things done under his/her supervision so it has an operational function.</td>
<td>It is more of intellectual work since it determines plans and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abilities and skills.</strong></td>
<td>Requires technical and personal skills.</td>
<td>Requires intellectual and personal skills and abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level in the organization</strong></td>
<td>It is commonly allocated in the mid and lower positions.</td>
<td>It is located in the highest position.</td>
</tr>
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Table 1. Differences among Administration and Management Adapted from Haimann & Scott, 1974.
Administration and management are not two separate areas but they concur at certain points. The hierarchy of a position in a given organization determines which one of them takes places broadly. As you can see in picture 3 higher levels of the organization would take more administrative elements, while lower positions would be making use of managerial strategies.

Figure 2. Involvement of Administration and Management according to hierarchical level.

It can be inferred from that that administration and management act as a set of strategies or instruments, but that doesn’t not mean they are exactly the same. Management as gestión can be taken as a process that allows the development of a product and whichever activity necessary for a company or enterprise in order to become sustainable. Administration on the other hand, has to do with the suitability and readiness of resources in order to reach an optimal development and therefore become profitable.

2.2 Educational Administration and Educational Management

Martínez (2012) states that administration in education refers to a very simplistic difference that resembles a company’s policy, where the relevance is based on the profits and not the service. The pedagogical value is not taken into account and the importance of the aims of the educational institution. It also expands on the need to correct the detour taken and educational management as gestión in Spanish “is oriented to realities and aims of the educational institution itself.” (page 17). This prior view, as adequate as it can be, seems a very simplistic attempt to clarify the term, at least from a personal perspective.

Cassasús (2000) who has been a point of reference when it comes to educational management, considers that the highlight of management in education is the interpretation and comprehension of the processes for human action in an organization (page 2). Then Educational management refers to the use and the practice of management and education principles. Therefore must be considered a practical discipline, which is accepted partially because there are principles in Science although management is not held as one as it was stated previously (whereas Education is). Nevertheless, the merge among Education and Management brings out a discipline or field of study which in Spanish at least in the Mexican context is known as gestión educativa which has been mention previously as educational management.

According to the same author, Management, interpreted and used as gestión in Spanish is a wider and generic field where Administration is a part of it. Thus, Administration as such, implies the execution and operation, whereas management/ gestión refers to a wider vision that covers the administrative process as a whole: planning, organizing, integrating, directing and controlling. Then, Cassasús’ concept results contradictory with the one stated from the Administrative Sciences as it was widely discussed previously.

On the other hand, Botero (2009, page 1) acknowledges that according to the theoretical principles of Administrative Science, since the 60’s the concept of gestión in Spanish has been associated to Management and overall to the actions related to managerial aspects applied to organizations, business, services and not to educational contexts. This argument proposes that gestión has a component that involves mainly the actions of people in an organization from a human labor perspective.

Another concept was proposed by The Department of Education in Mexico (SEP, 2009) as an attempt to come to a common place to normalize the concept as part of the program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Gestión/Business Management</th>
<th>Administración/ Administration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>Business exclusive</td>
<td>All kinds of organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Decisions are influenced by the values, beliefs and points of view of managers.</td>
<td>It is influenced by public opinion, public policies, focus groups, and costumes among others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work status</td>
<td>Managers are the employees in the organization who get compensation (wages and salaries).</td>
<td>Administrators are company owners that are recipients of the income that comes as a result of investments and profits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Escuelas de calidad / Quality Schools. Such term states that gestión/management in Education is characterized for a wide vision of the real possibilities of an organization in order to solve a situation or reach an established goal. It is defined as the main action of the administration and represents an intermediate step between planning and the concrete objectives set (page. 41).

According to this document there are three levels within educational management (Gestión educativa in Spanish) which are intertwined. They are institutional management, school management and pedagogical management. (See Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Educational management components.**
Adapted from SEP, 2009.

Institutional management includes those actions related to administrative and managerial matters, staff policies, budget, planning, programming, regulations and counseling among others (...) to promote the development of a better quality in education. (SEP, 2009, pág. 46). It is also set as the process that supports the leadership for projects, and the activities associated with them, that administrators embark on, in order to promote and sustain the achievement of pedagogical motives in, with and for educational actions. Therefore it is within institutional management where lays the structure of the organization and the resources through which educational activities are developed.

When we refer to gestión escolar or school management the term reflects an educational community that is formed by students, parents, teachers and school authorities. The implications of such community are the actions taken to create environments, contexts and necessary processes to achieve academic goals and objectives (SEP, 2009).

Finally pedagogical management expressed in Spanish as gestión pedagógica has to do with actions and resources that have to be put into actions by teachers to promote pedagogical and didactic processes in the classroom. “Teachers practice is then a step for learning” (Batista in SEP, 2009, page 48). Such classification of the two types of management as gestión in Spanish as a systemic approach that allows to establish in one or more of the dimensions that identify particular objectives, goals, strategies, plans and controls.

### III. - CONCLUSIONS.

The term Management has served as a reference to describe two areas that complement each other when we describe two terms in Spanish Administración and gestión that reflects the understanding of management as a field of study acknowledged in Spanish as Administración. It is a fact that the term has been taken to other fields like in this case pedagogy and education, but such incorporation hasn’t always been precise or even coherent.

Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude that non in the Management field of study, or in Educational Science, the two previously discussed concepts administración and gestión in Spanish taken indistinctively as management for practical purposes, are meant to describe the same area, yet it might be possible to use them as complementary.

Educational management or Administración educativa in Spanish may not be considered a Science or field of study; however it is the practical part of the principles taking place at a specific field such as institutions, systems, and organizations that create, model, coordinate and lead educational processes. It has a conceptual and slightly operational face.

On the other hand, Management seen as gestión in Spanish reflects practical, executive and operational steps to carry out educational processes in their distinctive dimensions: institutional, scholar and pedagogical. It implies a wide display of masterly applied skills, abilities and operative techniques with precision in order to get things done.
REFERENCES