

• Introduction •

There are several reasons for writing this book on the organization and management of schools.

In the last decade conceptualization, research and theory development on the functioning and management of schools has progressed. This has made it necessary to refine the picture of how school organizations operate and the results produced by different strategies. A problem with many school organization books is that they are biased regarding the literature and school systems to which they refer (e.g. a European, British or American bias). There was a need for a book based on international scientific literature that represents current scientific knowledge regarding the organization and management of schools across the typical features of specific school systems.

However, this book has not only been written to present a comprehensive overview of the school organization and school management knowledge base. What makes it different from other books in the field is that it attempts to connect school management theory with school effectiveness theory. So far, theory development with respect to the functioning and management of school organizations has barely inspired school effectiveness research. The latter has focused particularly on instructional variables promoting school effectiveness (e.g. structured teaching, effective learning time, teacher attitudes and expectations). At the same time, school organization and school management research has hardly benefited from the findings of school effectiveness research. Moreover, in the former line of research, the way different school organizational arrangements influence the effectiveness of schools in terms of student achievement is seldom analyzed.

In our attempt to close the gap between both branches of theory development we have divided the book into three major themes:

I. An introduction to school organization and school management, and to research into school effectiveness.

II. A discussion of five important organization and management aspects of schools. These are: the structuring of the primary process (i.e. the teaching-learning process) at school level; coordination and control; teacher motivation and commitment; school leadership; and the alignment of the organization to its environment. Moreover, because of the importance of human resource development in schools an analysis is made of human resource development within corporations to find out what we can learn from this.

III. An analysis of the actual and desired integration of school organization and school management theory, on the one hand, and school effectiveness research and theory on the other.

The contents of each chapter are now treated in more detail.

The first chapter introduces the organizational aspects of educational institutions. Organization perspective and organizational theoretical concepts like the structure, processes and culture of school organizations, and organizational alignment to the environment are reviewed. Moreover, categories of school management problems are discussed as well as structural constraints on the administration of schools.

Chapter two focuses on the school effectiveness perspective and method of inquiry. Various perceptions on school effectiveness (e.g. economic and organizational theoretical views) are discussed, and a choice made for the economic perspective, i.e. effectiveness as the quality and quantity of the outputs of the primary production process (for instance, in schools the teaching-learning process). Alternative effectiveness criteria like adapting to the environment; staff cohesion, satisfaction and motivation are considered significant, however, as supportive conditions for productivity. In this type of research an attempt is made to ascribe school output differences to differences in school characteristics. In this chapter a broad outline of the underlying model of school effectiveness research and an integral school effectiveness model are presented. Finally, two major theoretical propositions for explaining the findings of empirical school effectiveness research based on the integral model are discussed: evaluation-centered rational control and public choice theory.

The second chapter also presents the central perspective for subsequent chapters (3-8). In these a comprehensive, up-to-date overview of the organization theoretical knowledge base about the subject(s) central to that chapter is presented, and the question addressed on what is known about each subject as a school effectiveness enhancing condition.

The third chapter applies general organizational theoretical concepts to the school context to clarify the nature of the operations technology (the expertise and skills applied for transforming school input into school output). An analysis is made of the degree to which the so-called long linked, the mediating and the intensive technology are applicable to schools as well as to what extent the operations technology of schools is uncertain, complex and leads to interdependence between school staff. Finally, the implications of the nature of schools' operations technology and the possibilities and desirability of organizational control are analyzed as a 'leg up' to the next chapter.

In chapter four coordination is seen as the organizational 'glue' that holds together all different organizational tasks, activities and elements, and directs them to the goals of the organization. Six coordination mechanisms are explained and translated to the school context, while their coordination potential in schools is discussed. The major part of the chapter is devoted to analyzing the explanatory power of three major theories on school organizational coordination: classic bureaucratic, loosely coupled systems (including institutional theory, and organized anarchy theory) and Mintzberg's professional bureaucracy theory. Empirical evidence for each theory is also reviewed.

It was human relations theory that pointed to the value of motivated and committed staff within organizations. This is also an extremely important precondition for the functioning

of schools, especially motivation and commitment of those who work in the operating core of schools - the teachers. The fifth chapter therefore deals with this subject. Firstly, the features of the teaching job in terms of the skills and knowledge required, workload and teacher salaries in various countries are analyzed. There appears to be huge differences between countries on these points. Then, motivation and commitment as concepts are analyzed and various motivation and commitment theories presented. The demands on teachers which may influence teacher motivation and commitment are also described. Possibilities for improving teacher motivation and commitment are discussed and a plea made for a more professional school organization, providing teachers with good support, better working conditions and task differentiation to increase their mobility.

Chapter 6 moves to the school leader level, portraying the responsibilities of school leaders, distinguishing between managing and leading a school, and reviewing the features of those teachers who lead schools, and the relationship between their working situation and their leadership style. The chapter also analyzes whether leadership is something that is only represented by the activities of a school leader or that substitutes for leadership can also occur.

The seventh chapter focuses on the relationship between school organization and its environment. School environments have become dynamic and as such imply threats and opportunities. School environmental variation and the factors influencing school environmental uncertainty are identified, and strategies for aligning the school to its environment are presented.

Job related skills and the expertise of teachers, managers and other school employees have a strong impact on what school staff and schools achieve. Human resource development has received considerable attention in the corporate world. The experience gained there can serve as a valuable source of inspiration for how human resource development should be dealt with in schools. Chapter 8 describes the features of human resource development in corporate training departments from an organizational viewpoint and identifies what schools can learn from this.

The concluding chapter attempts to draw together the various aspects related to the theme of the book - the link between school management theory and school effectiveness research - by first summarizing the outcomes of the preceding chapters and then reflecting on the way school effectiveness is conceptualized and studied. Conclusions are then drawn regarding our insight into the school organizational factors influencing school effectiveness. Finally, the contents of the book are synthesized and a proposal made to further integrate research on school management and school effectiveness.

The contributors to this book work in the department of educational administration of the Faculty of Educational Science and Technology at the University of Twente in the Netherlands. The department is well known for its school effectiveness research program, which is aimed at determining school characteristics that positively contribute to school

effectiveness in terms of student achievement as well as the models and theories that explain the operation of these conditions.

Although the target readers of this book include the international academic community in the field of school management and school effectiveness, university and higher education students, and decision makers at various levels within education systems, practitioners may also find the contents inspiring in their attempts to allow schools to become (more) satisfying work environments and (more) productive institutions, by adopting new ways of coordination, leadership, human resource developmental strategies and so on.

It is our hope that this book is a step forward for the integration and cross-fertilization of the school management and school effectiveness line of inquiry, and that it will lead to a better understanding of how schools function and how we can make them as effective as possible. As this is the first edition of this volume there will certainly be room for improvement. We would therefore like to invite all readers to offer any constructive feedback that will enable us to optimize the content of any future editions.

Adrie J. Visscher

Department of Educational Administration

Faculty of Educational Science and Technology

University of Twente, The Netherlands

e-mail: Visscher@edte.utwente.nl