International Studies in Educational Administration

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Contents

Editorial Note

THE 'community' of educational administration includes education practitioners, academics, educational leaders and policy-makers at all levels from school/university to national administration. Stimulating reflection on practice and the development of change in educational administration for the enhancement of student achievement and aspiration is a key aim of *International Studies in Educational Administration*, and we believe strongly that such reflection and development is essential for all in the educational administration community

This edition of *International Studies in Educational Administration* starts by asking some key questions about the changing nature of educational administration. Eugenie Samier's paper provides an insightful reflection upon the nature of theory and practice in the field by examining recent developments through the lens of the concept of 'kitschification'. While seeing such change as the product of the commercial and media-influenced environment, her critical analysis identifies a range of central issues for professionals, academics and policy-makers to consider.

There follow four papers that present research evidence on leadership in schools. The delegation of some degree of self-management is increasingly a feature of the administration of schools in most countries. However, the detail of the models of self-management that have been introduced is unique to each national system, and in some cases to local systems within a broader national framework. Self-management brings both opportunities to shape the direction and performance of the school but also challenges to school leaders and managers through the accountabilities and responsibilities that accompany it.

Haim Gaziel considers the development of school-based management in Israel, and concludes that the process has been broadly positively received in Israeli schools, which he suggests indicates that its success may be in part culturally determined. David Plowright looks at the process of school self-evaluation as practised by headteachers in England as part of their reflections on the development and achievement of the school. While the process is seen as helpful and contributive to school de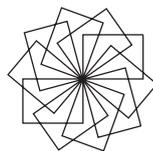velopment, establishing the exact nature of the relationships between data and school processes to enable the right actions to be taken is seen as problematic. Bonnie Stelmach and Jane Preston's paper looks at school leadership in Saskatchewan in Canada. Here the obligation to engage parents in consultation on school development is examined and is seen to bring some benefits but also a wide range of issues about what the role of parents realistically might be in such a process.

Maria Eliophotou Menon, Elena Papanastasiou and Michalinos Zembylas' research examines the significant issue of job satisfaction, in the context of schools in Cyprus. Job satisfaction is of significance in creating (or reflecting!) an environment that can enhance school achievement, and is an important element in the leadership of schools. This paper identifies a number of factors linked to job satisfaction, ranging from gender to school climate and the achievement of personal professional goals by teachers, and provides useful evidence for reflection on leadership in other operational settings.

The two final papers in this edition move the focus to leadership and administration in universities. The first is by Maimunah Ismail and Roziah Mohd Rasdi, who consider women professors in leadership roles in higher education in Malaysia, by examining their experience of developing, assuming and holding leadership roles. Their findings contribute substantially to our understanding of the issues and personal development needs and rewards for women faculty as they progress to senior roles in universities. The second, by Julie Rowney and Vasyl Taras, based in Canada, looks at a substantial administrative and leadership issue in universities, which is the cultural challenge emerging from internationalisation. Drawing on some 98 empirical studies, Rowney and Taras consider how managing issues of discipline and justice with students from diverse cultural backgrounds creates a set of administration challenges for teachers and leaders in the higher education sector, in particular the need to reflect on and understand issues of justice.

This edition of International Studies in Educational Administration, therefore, provides a range of perspectives on issues of leadership and administration, and draws from contrasting national settings and educational sectors. All, however, emphasise the dynamic nature of leadership in education and the need to respond to and reflect upon the character and impact of those changes – and all are essentially about responding to and managing cultural change.

Nick Foskett
Jacky Lumby
Southampton

Obituary

While preparing this edition of *International Studies in Educational Administration*, the Editors were saddened to learn of the death of Professor Nessan Ronan, a long-standing member of the Editorial Advisory Board and friend of CCEAM and the journal. Professor Ronan had been Professor of Accounting at the National University of Lesotho since 2004, but had previously held a Chair at The Copperbelt University in Zambia. Our condolences go to his family and friends.

On the Kitschification of Educational Administration: An Aesthetic Critique of Theory and Practice in the Field

Eugenie A. Samier

Abstract: *This paper explores the relevance of the kitsch critique to educational administration as it relates to knowledge theory, authority, power and ethics, drawing upon aesthetic theory and the kitsch critique in a number of social science fields, including politics. It first proposes a descriptive definition of kitsch including the characteristics of the kitsch artefact, the origins of kitsch in modern industrialised society (as the problem of modernity), the motivations of the kitsch producer, and the appeal to kitsch consumers. These are then applied to the kitschification of three aspects of educational administration: intellectual or scholarly material, graduate programmes, and professional practice.*

Kitsch, as a condensation symbol rooted in bad art, combines elements of history, cultural mythology, and syrupy emotionalism to shape the direction of the political environment and possible policy prescriptions. An appreciation for Kitsch is cultivated in a variety of educative sites: by schools, the mass media – including both the entertainment and news industries – and political elites (Lugg 1999: 118–119).

Introduction

Educational administration, like many other fields, is subject to fads and fashions affected by cultural, social and political developments shaping scholarship and professional practice, from the well-grounded to the most simplistic, superficial and, ultimately, morally problematic such as kitsch. These include on one hand uncritical adoptions of guru-type leadership literature – such as that produced by Covey, Peters and Waterman, and Senge, oriented to 'feel good' social relations – and on the other a market model for educational programme delivery, one of the many economically based public-sector practices spawned by the international New Public Management ideology originating in many English-speaking jurisdictions (see Edwards 1998). Both have been uncritically adopted as a panacea for the pedagogical, organisational and funding ills of education, and both have become effective perpetuators of kitsch in education.

But what is kitsch, and how does it relate to educational administration? The kitsch critique has an established history beyond the fine arts appearing recently in the social sciences in politics (e.g. Bartra 2002; Pieterse 2002) and religion (e.g. Pawek 1969; Klinghoffer 1996) as well as leadership and public policy in Catherine Lugg's (1999) *Kitsch: From Education to Public Policy*. The scholarly discussion of kitsch began as a critique of politics, strongly suggesting that it has important implications for administration, in terms of ideologies,

decision-making, policy activities, personnel policies (including professionalism), and interpersonal relations through sociocultural and political constructions, including education and its administration.

The purpose of this essay is to explore kitsch analysis, as a form of aesthetic critique for educational administration. The ability to distinguish kitsch from the real thing is an indication of judgement, discretion, and maturity of vision. Principles of the kitsch critique used in other sociopolitical and cultural fields are equally applicable to educational administration, including an analysis of knowledge theory, authority, power and ethics. One of the first distinctions to make in applying aesthetic judgement to administration is that between aesthetic form meeting the standards of art, whether good or bad, and an aesthetic masquerading as art – that is, kitsch. While this may appear at first to not be an important distinction, studies on the character of fascist and communist aesthetics suggest that administration may lend itself easily to kitsch, and that kitsch is potentially a dangerous form of administration. This paper first provides an overview of aesthetic analysis, of which kitsch is a form, then describes defining characteristics of a kitsch analysis, and finally applies them as a kitschification analysis of three aspects of educational administration: intellectual or scholarly material, graduate programmes and professional practice.

The Nature of Aesthetic Analysis

Aesthetic analysis is the most recent major movement in organisation theory, emerging in the late 1980s with the work of Antonio Strati (1989, 1992, 1996, 1999), Rafael Ramirez (1996), David White (1996), and Mauro Guillén (1997) oriented towards establishing an alternative to the traditional scientific discipline-based understanding of administration, management and leadership. The origins of an aesthetic critique are much older, appearing first in the social aesthetic as it informs governmental and administrative practice in the classical writings of Plato and Aristotle, establishing a tradition that was carried through to the Enlightenment period by Kant, Baumgarten and Schelling, and into later philosophies of Nietzsche, Hegel, the pragmatic school, Bourdieu, hermeneutics and critical theory. Aesthetic analysis also originates in the symbolic interactionism where imagination and creativity are regarded as foundational principles in our construction of the self, social roles, and organisations (see Collins 1994: 253–283 for an overview).

Opening the door to aesthetics brings a multitude of critical and conceptual possibilities in exploring the worlds of administration and their interrelationships. What underlies all is the study of form, in structured thought and action, in the physical environment, and sociopolitics. Other disciplines involved include all of the 'arts' disciplines – music, literature, sculpture, painting, interior design, architecture, theatre – as well as visual culture, semiotics, and the kitsch critique in political studies (e.g. Friedländer's *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* 1984), where aesthetic analysis is already developed, examining leadership style, rhetorical use, politics as a performative or theatrical display, the construction of political ideologies, and ethics (see Samier 2006 for a more detailed discussion).

The aesthetics of administration is less developed, but if one takes as a general definition that aesthetics is the study of form and formation, it applies on at least four levels consisting of the means by which organisations are created, shaping the world and mentality of administrators. First, the underlying aesthetic construction of ideas is traceable in the modern period to Kant's theory of *Bildungsvermögen* or formative faculty (see Makkreel 1990), carried into the social sciences through the neo-Kantians and Max Weber in their

theories of concept formation (see Burger 1987) applicable to the policy process, conceptions of organisational form, moral and practical constructions of social relations, and the social good to which administration in the public sector is oriented. A second level concerns the actual forms of social interaction including hierarchy, power and politics, roles and their authority, values systems and the moral boundaries or limits that can be established or exceeded, and promises a rich approach for comparative studies, examined in the context of political traditions (e.g. Ankersmit's *Aesthetic Politics* 1996). This is derived, in part, from the aesthetics of administrative culture exploring verbal and non-verbal performative expression: that is, theatrical aspects and the use of language through its literary or poetic qualities. This dimension affects role and identity construction, organisational design, the policy process, and processes of institutionalisation (see Light and Smith 2005). The third level is the creation and manipulation of physical reality through architecture (see Guillén 1997), the positioning of buildings in their urban settings, landscaping, furnishings (see Strati 1996 on the status significance of chairs), and office decoration, as well as attirement, a field once called 'dramaturgy', arising out of Goffman's (1959) symbolic interactionism.

Supporting these experiential dimensions is the use of aesthetic sources including literature in fictional and essay forms, film, art and biographical writings – all of which provide a means for critiquing administration. Of these, literary analysis is probably the most advanced, pioneered in 1924 by Humbert Wolfe and in 1968 by Dwight Waldo and coming into its own in the 1990s with work by Breischke (1993), Carroll and Gailey (1992), Czarniawska-Joerges and Guillet de Monthoux (1994) and Marini (1992), in which the more subtle, intangible and dilemma-ridden aspects of administrative life are captured. This includes sociopolitical, historical and cultural contexts that contribute to bureaucracy and its pathologies and ideologies: organisational culture; micropolitics including abuse of power and authority, corruption and covert activities; personality, identity and character including moral dimensions and dilemmas; and the poetics of government (see Samier 2005).

An aesthetic critique provides a new interdisciplinary and humanities-based approach. It extends from philosophical and theoretical critique to critical and interpretive investigations. More applied aesthetic theory focuses on the implications for professional practice: the ways ideas and ideals are created, how their expression is conveyed, the impact they have on interpersonal relationships, and the organisational environment that carries and reinforces them. In other words, the aesthetic provides the foundation and guidelines for leadership and administrative design and creativity. The aim of aesthetic analysis is understanding and the construction of meaning and values, as well as the insight and authenticity that this brings. It offers compelling views from a nascent movement in administrative studies that speaks to the higher goals of public service, the imagination, and critique and creativity that underpins the social good.

On the Nature and Scope of the Kitsch Critique

Kitsch is generally regarded as products that are cheap, trashy, crass, vulgar, saccharine, gaudy, ersatz or pseudo-art, and indicative of bad taste. Most often associated with kitsch are cheap souvenirs, sentimental greeting cards, tasteless advertising, happy pictures portraying anthropomorphised puppies and kittens, and Disneyfied figures such as Donald Duck. Included are pink flamingos, gnomes, and servants in black-face garden ornamentation, harlequin romances, soap operas, Muzak, and *American Gladiators*, a game show masquerading as sport. Most of these are low kitsch, poorly conceived and executed, mostly

produced from cheap materials. But what of higher kitsch – goods produced with greater skill and craft and of quality materials, the *objets d'art* that many of us own, but would not own up to. For, as Milan Kundera (1999: 256) reminds us, 'none among us is superman enough to escape kitsch completely. No matter how we scorn it, kitsch is an integral part of the human condition'. Dorfles (1969: 129) characterises kitsch as 'every ambiguous, false, tearful, emotional exaggeration [bringing] about that typically kitsch attitude which could be defined as "sentimentality"'. His definition points to a meaning for kitsch that applies to human need and interpersonal relations that are the stuff of administration, and which may pervade its authority, particularly that infused with charisma, the organisations it produces, the behaviour and thoughts it engenders, and the theories or models upon which it is built. The problem, though, of kitsch is not one of artlessness, but 'as a cultural category and [whose] strategy is primarily ethical, not aesthetic' (Saltzman 2001: 55).

While it is beyond the scope of this essay to consider a number of factors that would be useful in exploring kitsch internationally and crossculturally in more detail – such as gender, social class, ethnicity, religion and race – its pervasive nature carries it through any locale in which mass-production capitalism exists. There is a large varied literature across disciplines suggesting that kitsch is indiscriminate in its spread. Even a cursory survey locates articles on a wide range of countries, in addition to the North American and Western, Central and Eastern European countries referenced here: Singapore (Tan 2005), Puerto Rico (Indych 2001), Israel (Bartov 1997), Eqypt (Karnouk 1995) and Iraq (al-Khalil 1991).

A taxonomy of kitsch consisting of the following categories is presented here: characteristics of the kitsch artefact, reflected in intellectual kitsch; the historical and social origins of kitsch, as part of the problem of modernity; motivations of the producer, seen in ideological political aims of the educational institution subject to government policy; and its appeal to the 'consumer', the attractions of the educational 'consumers' such as administrators, staff, parents and students.

The Kitsch Artefact

Characteristics of the kitsch artefact include the following, all of which are as relevant to administration as art. First, it lacks basic criteria of aesthetic values: unity, balance or harmony comprised of an inner logic of structure and style; complexity, multidimensionality, repleteness, combinations of heterogeneous forms, and elaboration of structures and detail; and intensity as vitality, forcefulness and vividness of presentation (Kulka 1996: 46–50). It also lacks the artistic value of creative and innovative contribution to the history of art – that is, opening new possibilities and suggesting solutions to topical artistic problems (Kulka 1996: 55–56), presenting an 'original' concept. It does not enrich our associations relating to the objects or themes, but rather is parasitic in nature since it does not create a beauty of its own.

The critique of kitsch architecture has a direct bearing on educational buildings. Gregotti (1969: 268) observes of many modern middle-class suburban homes that 'a multiplicity of decorative treatments speak with a babel of tongues, and wealth and luxury are reflected in a despairing use of literary allusion in a desperate search for personal identity, and in a set pattern of materials compressed into far too small a dimensional space'. Its themes are devotional, erotic and patriotic, but are highly emotionally charged (Kulka 1996: 26–27), such as images of sentimental embraces in front of a full moon and sentimentalised religious iconography and political images. The tone strived for is pretty or cute.

It is for this reason that kitsch is predominantly figurative, drawing on the conventions of 19th-century romanticism or socialist realism rather than abstract or cubist styles. Kulka regards as one of its most characteristics traits its use of the most 'conventional, standard, well-tried, and tested representational canons' (1996: 29), rather than esoteric, idiosyncratic, original or innovative styles, since it must achieve an unchallenging, unconfusing and effortless identifiability. Kitsch is aesthetically conservative and stylistically reactionary. It is universally accessible, and therefore must be easily understood. It is explicit and one-dimensional, therefore lacking ambiguity, uncertainty or hidden meanings, and, by allowing for only one interpretation, is fundamentalist and dogmatic. For Greenberg it is pre-digested and pre-packaged 'art' for the spectator, sparing effort and providing a short cut to pleasure without having to deal with the interpretive difficulty of genuine art:

> Kitsch is mechanical and operates by formula. Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations. Kitsch changes according to style, but remains always the same. Kitsch is the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its consumers except their money – not even their time. (1985: 25)

Educational administration analogues are the countless leadership books that provide easy guidelines for becoming an effective leader, the many claims of leadership for all (reducing the qualifications to a mediocre level achievable by anyone), and superficial professional workshops that reduce complex moral theory to McNuggets of Kantianism, much like sound bites in political advertising. Essentially, kitsch artefacts lack provenance – they are disconnected from the original from which they are derived and lack considerations of sociohistorical context that in part add to their complexity but also their meaning. Intellectual kitsch combines all of these factors. Just as kitsch religion provides spirituality without the requirement of orthodox belief and action (Klinghoffer 1996: 259), kitsch administration gleans only the most superficial aspects of social reality. Organisationally it produces a *Gesamtkitschwerk* – a total or comprehensive kitschification.

Such principles pervade many teaching approaches aimed at making learning entertaining and effortless, including many of the learning organisation models promising a painless and conflict-free path to organisational improvement. For example, the teaching of educational politics substituting anecdotes and war stories for political theory and analysis produces a course lacking foundational theory and rigorous examination of empirical studies. Without a scholarly foundation even the more insightful and penetrating use of war stories as a complex and sophisticated form of narrative, phenomenological and hermeneutic source is lost – it requires no knowledge, understanding, critique or analysis.

Origins of Kitsch

Most authors claim that kitsch originated, or at least became pervasive, with the advent of modern industrial society providing the conditions for the mass production of inexpensive consumer products (e.g. Greenberg 1985; Calinescu 1987). Others, such as Broch (1969), locate its origins in romanticism although in debased form emphasising dramatic effects, pathos and sentimentality, 'a hackneyed form of romanticism' (Calinescu 1987: 240). While some authors dispute these modern origins – such as Koestler (1949), who points to the poor aesthetic taste of classical-period Roman merchants – the universal access to and proliferation of kitsch were only made possible by the economic conditions and mass culture of modern industrialism, making it part of the problem of modernity.

Kitsch, as a consequence of commodification, expresses problems inherent to high

capitalism. Rosenberg (1959: 267) claims that 'if art becomes an extension of daily life it loses itself; it becomes a commodity among commodities, kitsch'. For Simmel (1950: 644), the individual in a money economy 'become[s] a mere cog in an enormous organization of things and powers which tear from his hands all progress, spirituality and value'. Acquisition becomes one of the central motives of modern capitalist society, resulting in what Greenberg (1985) regards as a sensory numbing from mass production. Money, while serving to measure the relative value of objects, relegates human activity to an alienated margin:

> Cultural objects increasingly evolve into an interconnected enclosed world that has increasingly fewer points at which the subjective soul can interpose its will and feelings. And this trend is supported by a certain autonomous mobility on the part of the objects. … Both material and intellectual objects today move independently, without personal representatives or transport. Objects and people have become separated from one another. (Simmel 1978: 460)

In this manner, economic modes of interaction replace socially embedded ones, transforming every facet of life to fit into the logic of market exchange through commodification (Holmwood 2000: 32). It is also an effect of globalisation, as Greenberg (1985: 26) points out: 'Kitsch has not been confined to the cities in which it was born … Another mass product of Western industrialism, it has gone on a triumphal tour of the world, crowding out and defacing native cultures in one colonial country after another, so that it is now by way of becoming a universal culture, the first universal culture ever beheld'. This process also describes the kitschified version of public administration, the New Public Management (NPM), a private-sector-style managerial ideology for the public sector adopted in the 1980s internationally (regardless of its lack of relevance in many jurisdictions). The NPM subjects public organisations to market concepts and forces that both theoretically and practically have been criticised and deemed highly problematic if not a failure.

Ritzer (1996), applying Weber's rationalisation thesis of the 'iron cage', uses a McDonaldisation paradigm to critique commodification taken to its ultimate end. McDonaldised society, as a kitschified society, consists in four principles: efficiency, in other words the fastest way to satisfy a need; calculability, an emphasis on the quantitative aspects of products, thereby simplifying them; predictability, the universal standardisation of products and services resulting in utter routinisation of thought and action; and control, the technological substitution of the non-human for the human. It is these same underlying principles that are at the heart of the corporatisation and commercialisation of education, which at the university level has led to the transfer of authority from faculty to administration, conflict between Senates and Boards of Governors that erodes collegial governance, and a community of scholars based primarily on the vagaries of the intellectual market (see e.g. Soley 1995; Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Tudiver 1999; Turk 2000).

The Kitsch Producer

One motivation of the kitsch producer is to make something appear more valuable than it actually is. For some, such as Calinescu (1987: 229), it is essentially deceptive – an artistic imposter, camouflaged as art: 'the whole concept of kitsch clearly centers around such questions as imitation, forgery, counterfeit, and what we may call the *aesthetics of deception or self-deception*'; it is a *'specifically aesthetic form of lying'*. This concern underlies Schiffer's (1983: 9) observation of the over-dramatisation of authority: 'To most people … political figures …

are just like box-office attractions in the field of entertainment – this despite the fact that many politicians are often bearers of ideals and ideologies … We embrace images … popular actors, actresses, and musicians who, above and beyond their talents, have been given charismatic status despite – or perhaps because of – certain flaws in their character or theatrical skills'. As dogma it is used to distract from important underlying realities, particularly those of contradiction and conflict, producing compliance and maintaining the status quo. Unreflective and uncritical, kitsch lends itself easily to the injection of propaganda and groupthink. It is confused with entertainment, attractiveness or fame, camouflages personal flaws, and is used to ingratiate. Kitsch is contrived and inauthentic, found in organisational practices like creating mascots and company songs through executive decision rather than emerging naturally from the culture. For Kundera (1999: 248), kitsch sanitises sociopolitical reality: 'kitsch excludes everything from its purview which is essentially unacceptable in human existence'; a 'categorical agreement with being is a world in which shit is denied and everyone acts as though it did not exist'. In other words, it dilutes meaning.

Friedländer (1990: 203) distinguishes between two types: 'common' kitsch that tends toward universality, such as Disney characters that transcend sociopolitical boundaries, and 'uplifting' kitsch 'which is rooted, symbol-centred, and emotionally linked to the values of a specific group' (much like decontextualised or cohort-based leadership training programmes). He has in mind political symbols with the following four qualities that allow it to serve a mobilising function in totalitarian regimes. It:

    a. is easily understood

    b. calls for an unreflective emotional response

    c. handles core values of a political regime or ideological system as a 'closed, harmonious entity' endowed with beauty to make them more effective and

    d. links 'truth' and 'beauty' leading to a stylisation capturing mythical patterns.

The primary purpose of kitsch socially and politically, as Sabonis-Chafee (1999: 365) argues, is in creating and perpetuating ideology and power structures: 'kitsch becomes totalitarian kitsch when it is a state policy, an approved way of understanding reality – dangerous not to admire it, more dangerous still to view it with irony'. In this ideological context, kitsch takes on the status of dogma.

Even in non-totalitarian contexts, kitsch has affected public policy. Howard (2004: 297) examines the manner in which public arts policy was used in the USA by pragmatic liberals in the post-Sputnik period to recruit art to support individuality, freedom and 'the superiority of the American way of life'. Similarly, Hall (1989: 328–329) examines the public art policy of Detroit that resulted in 'easily assimilated' imitative works posing as art. The new public 'art' was accepted as unproblematic by the citizens of Detroit since it lacked the provocative character of art, kitsch having substituted 'user friendly' installations that are unnoticeable elements of the urban environment aimed at covering, protecting, relieving and consoling. In other words, the purpose of the policy was to 'beautify' and ornament rather than challenge, fitting Rosenberg's (1959: 267) definition of kitchification: 'if art becomes an extention of daily life it loses itself; it becomes a commodity among commodities'.

The Kitsch Consumer

The appeal of kitsch to consumers resides not in the artist (that is, producer), its provenance, its contribution to the development of the arts, or, as Kulka claims, even its social status. Kitsch

is purchased as an end in itself because it satisfies an immediate desire and does not disturb our basic sentiments and beliefs. It also aims at universal rather than individual emotions, in other words playing on the most common, or lowest, denominator. It is stirring but empty, serving primarily as a distraction. For Gregotti (1969: 276), kitsch, unlike art, 'does not accept the nature of things in the light of their critical or revelatory attributes, but to the extent which they cover and protect, relieve and console'. Kulka (1996: 97) presents a similar evaluation: 'kitsch must not question the basic metaphysical and moral assumptions of human existence … the meaningfulness of our endeavors, the accepted moral code, and the meaning of life as such'. It omits conflict and promises a happy ending, producing what Broch (1969: 15) calls the *Kitschmensch*, or kitsch-man. Saltzman (2001: 55) argues that kitschification, as an aesthetic defense against reality, 'normalizes' the more painful episodes in history, 'neutralizing that history, trivializing that history, commercializing that history, and exploiting that history' in such cases as Nazi history transformed into a consumable commodity. It consists, instead, in a sentimentalised unreflective emotional appeal (Kulka 1996) that manipulates emotions, distorts perceptions, reduces rationality and understanding, and avoids or suppresses unpleasant or disturbing aspects of reality. The argument being made here is that on sufficient scale, and with a sufficient permeation of societal sectors, kitsch not only disables people's capacity for aesthetic judgment, but also for political and moral judgement.

Solomon's (1997: 450, 452, 454) concern about kitsch lies in its evocation of sentimentality, since it produces superficial or excessive and immature emotion rendering one emotionally manipulable, distorting our perceptions and interfering with rational thought and understanding. Greenberg (1985: 30) has this point in mind as well, in commenting on the preference for kitsch exhibited by totalitarian regimes and, through extension, by authoritarian, top-down management styles. They can ingratiate themselves inexpensively with their subjects, and, unlike art, kitsch lends itself easily to the injection of propaganda. Freidin (2000: 134–135) examines 'socialist realism' as a state ideology of art from this perspective. It not only sanctioned but imposed kitsch, creating a 'perfect, fairy-tale world' of extravagant and socialist-realist rococo-style theme parks, spectacular military parades, organised rallies, banners, sports Olympiads, gala atmosphere of party congresses, and Potemkin Villages that are a Disney-like prototype. But capitalism, too, requires kitsch exemplified in advertising using 'class distinctions and status symbols to create artificial needs and illusions to foster the ideology of the consumer society'. Examples Kulka gives (1996: 104–105) are buildings that imitate objects of desire, such as McDonald's stands masquerading as hamburgers or gas stations as mushrooms, houses imitating the style of ancient Greece, the gothic or baroque, and buildings in gambling resorts modelled on the Taj Mahal or the great pyramid of Cheops.

The appeal to the consumer, or *Kitschmensch*, is that kitsch is easily understood, does not question sociopolitical reality (or vested interests) and therefore requires no great intellectual effort, reinforces our prejudices, avoids unpleasant conflicts, and promises a happy ending. In a consumer society predicated upon instant gratification – expectations of success without hard work or without facing resistance and conflict – educational administration is transformed into a practice that comforts and reassures its audience. Lugg describes leadership and policy kitsch's preferential characteristics as providing psychological comfort, reinforcing mythologies, predictability, and creating a sense of history, culture and reality that constitutes the 'beautiful lie' (1999: 4–5).

Educational Administration Kitsch

In administrative studies, kitsch can be seen in the many popular books on Machiavellian management and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* that lack historical or textual accuracy, rendering them irrelevant as pop management. Leadership manuals and workshops are now big business. Not only transformational but also charismatic, leadership is sold to the professional masses; however, it is *ersatz* goods, what Janice Beyer (1999) calls the 'taming of charisma' in which the distinctiveness of charismatic leadership is blurred by ignoring or reducing to insignificance the more radical aspects of charisma such as the precipitating crisis, the radical vision, and subsequent systemic change. Even more problematic is neglect of the negative, or dark, side of charisma that leads to damaging organisational politics and toxic cultures, and educational leadership literature and professional training that systematically avoid the moral damage charisma can wreak.

Kitsch requires the blurring of distinctiveness, rejecting the conceptual analysis and knowledge that discrimination requires. It is becoming commonplace to use the terms 'leadership' and 'administration' or 'management' synonymously in education, a consequence of title inflation and management fad. Following to some extent in the Weberian tradition, but also in the public administration tradition, the distinction ignored is that administrative roles are those that are formally structured and whose legitimacy and power are sanctioned through policy regimes that do not require acceptance of the person but the responsibilities of the office; leadership roles, on the other hand, are constructed in interpersonal relationships that are not necessarily formally sanctioned, whose legitimacy is conferred by followers on individuals for their personal qualities, and whose value is not bound by existing organisational or institutional purpose and policy regimes. In other words, administration is an organisationally constituted formal category, and leadership is a personally constructed political category. This view is taken by such authors as Edwards (1998: 557), who defines the difference as roles that are distinguishable by relation to the status quo and risk aversion on the part of administration and management or risk taking on the part of leadership, and Gronn (1999), in educational administration. One could also surmise that the reason people desire to subordinate themselves to a leader rather than administrator is for the more personal connection made in the former with the latter carrying the connotations of a bureaucratically dehumanised environment.

The sections following explore the kitschification of selected aspects of educational administration: intellectualism, graduate programmes and professional practices in the field at both the K-12 and university levels.

Intellectual Kitsch

Since kitsch is predominantly figurative, intellectual kitsch is primarily descriptive with little critique, analysis or abstraction. Micklethwait and Wooldridge have identified four major problems with current managerial fads that incorporate characteristics of kitsch intellectualism: 'it is constitutionally incapable of self-criticism; that its terminology usually confuses rather than educates; that it rarely rises above basic common sense; and that it is faddish and bedevilled by contradictions that would not be allowed in more rigorous disciplines' (1996: 15). The guiding literature is that of the leadership gurus who 'sell' their 'academic' wares like hawkers of elixirs, promising to cure all organisational ailments and create a smoothly functioning community. Some of the most well-known and influential are Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), Peters and Waterman's *In Search of*

Excellence (1982), and Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* (1990), serving as templates for their educational administration variants. English (2003a) has examined Covey's text in some detail, Covey being one of the gurus whose work has made a significant penetration into the educational field. His conclusions, after a detailed analysis of the text, is that the research base is largely mythical, and that it is driven by a disguised religious framework (Mormonism) that is ideological rather than scholarly: faith-based prophecy 'with the veneer of social science'.

An additional problem is the lack of provenance: theoretical sources are lacking, particularly those that clearly originate with major social and political thinkers such as Weber, Marx, Durkheim, Freud and Hegel. At most, kitsch texts present a simplistic version of these authors for mass consumption – short summaries without the critical and self-reflective character and historical context or moral implications of the original, alleviating readers of the effort and commitment necessary to a more comprehensive and complex understanding of the administrative phenomenon through these lenses. As with any other form of kitsch, administration is pre-digested, pre-packaged and sold as a largely unproblematic activity with a barely disguised 'how-to' training guide intent. As well, a problem inheres with administrative and leadership research using behaviour scales, reducing these roles to statistical representation in what Husserl (1970: 48–49, 59) called the 'ontological reversal'. This notion of taking the abstract mathematical models of phenomena as more real than the phenomena themselves is part of the underlying logic of kitsch – as substitutes for authentic experience.

Essentially kitsch is ideology, no less so in administrative studies. English examines this property as it has come to dominate educational administration, expressed in many forms, including the 'pursuit of standards' which 'was never a pursuit of truth, it was a pursuit of power, privilege and position within a community of practice … it has been and continues to be an exercise in normative political policing. It is an example of an ideology posing as science' (2005: 86). And it is also, as English argues, a political economy ideology substituting a market theory of leadership for democracy and a service ethic, 'a mindset that looks at all situations, interactions and potentialities as an economic exchange … in the pursuit of profit one examines any means to reduce variance' (2005: 94). Ultimately, kitschification of this kind has reduced educational administration to what English refers to as 'educational leadership [that] has been grounded in the principles of educational consumerism' (2005: 97) resulting in accreditation that does not even include the term 'social justice' in its standards, effectively perpetuating the beliefs and practices that produce inequality and social injustice. Commodification has for a long time now, Ritzer (1996: 86–87) argues, affected the textbook culture of North American universities – books designed and packaged to emulate the best-selling model in content sections and format, and thereby producing predictable content, and predictable conformity in course structures organised on the text content rather than following the principles and logic of the scholarly material.

Kitsch is also carried easily in globalised political economy. As an extension of his semiotic and aesthetic presentation of work, war and politics – in which language, image and style play a large role – Pieterse defines globalisation kitsch as 'the corporate gloss and marketing babble of globalization – and underneath there is glaring inequality, misery and conflict' (2002: 24). He also includes privatisation attempts among others to link the free market and democracy (2002: 10), and the 'general purpose snake-oil' of technology (2002: 7) in curing societal ills.

Graduate Programmes

Binkley provides a valuable approach that assists in discriminating between authentic professional degree programmes and those that are kitschified. The primary qualities he focuses on are: 'the thematics of repetition over innovation, a preference for formulae and conventions over originality and experiment, an appeal to sentimental affirmation over existential probing – a unique and quite 'healthy' sensibility that can rightly be called kitsch' (2000: 133, 134). Translated into terms that are even more applicable to administrative practice is a definition of kitsch as cultural artefacts that cultivate 'continuity, conformity and routine, which celebrate sentiment and banality'. Re-creation is also a critical trait of kitsch for Binkley, as its 'symbols and meanings [are] not invented, but imitated', producing an 'imitative cultural system' (2000: 138) that renders it a forgery. This aspect applies particularly to graduate programmes that are cloned into multiple cohort delivery units, causing many changes to be made in programme and course design for mass use, supervision and teaching, particularly where programmes are designated as high revenue generation due to premium tuition levels.

English has critiqued the diminution of the field in a number of articles for just such qualities as kitschification. In 'Cookie-cutter Leaders for Cookie-cutter Schools' he questions the legitimacy of a teleology of standardisation that has overtaken graduate educational administration programmes, carried out primarily through 'ruthless homogenisation of university curricula and the debasement of the role of theory' (2003b: 27). Drawing from Foucault's notion of political apparatus, taking shape when 'a group of institutions develop an interlocking agenda around what they consider to be the essential "facts" or truth about something', he concludes that knowledge bases become 'cleansed' of variance or difference, that the doctrine of efficiency (namely standardisation) is inculcated, and power over a contested terrain is installed. Consequences English sees inevitable in this process are that 'once the university based program has been discredited by de-emphasizing or ridiculing the unique aspects of the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, accompanied by denigrating the role of theoretically prepared professors, then the shift of site from the university to alternatives for profit can occur' (2003b: 41). In many cases, this can take place through stages or a transition in which 'master practitioners' are recruited for university programmes to deliver much of the teaching and supervision. As English observes, where experience (however limited or superficial) is most highly valued 'that posture is ideal to pave the way to replace professors with management consultants and other persons who would not otherwise be qualified to prepare practitioners in university controlled settings' (2003b: 41).

In Ritzer's (1996: 42, 64–68) analysis of the 'McUniversity', a quest for efficiency has spawned the multiple-choice examination and pre-produced teaching, assignment and examination materials in texts, and quantifiability is reflected in high student output levels, popular rankings for universities, professorial credentialling, student course evaluations, and the establishment of publishing records for personnel purposes. The result is an approach to graduate programmes reinforcing replicability, standardisation and mediocrity necessary in creating a mass appeal for marketing. Ironically, educational leadership is touted as a humanised discipline built, however, upon bureaucratic principles of design and delivery, and entrepreneurial values. This recent preference shown for cohort-based programmes, often justified as a necessary support for student success, is also ironic in leadership programmes where presumably individual action, initiative and independence would be promoted.

Professional Practice

In the area of professional practice, kitsch affects a number of aspects, from working relations, through communication, to administrative oversight, and finally the construction of policy. The first, collegial relations, often takes the form of teamwork, preferably with everyone their own leader. It is also based on a kitschified notion of democracy and consensus. Bartra raises this criticism of reaching agreement by unanimity whereas true consensus is an agreement on general principles, values or ends; 'a social and political situation' rather than a way of reaching an agreement as a decision-making mechanism. In contrast, agreement through unanimity 'almost always indicates a lack of democracy and an authoritarianism hidden beneath a populist veil' (2002: 32). Pospiszyl (2003) emphasises the importance of 'teamwork' in contrast to individualism as a primary work method of socialist realism, since it can ensure cultural planning and implementation that is subject to ideological control over the rules of practice and a mechanical reproduction of cultural artefacts.

Simmons introduces into the kitsch discussion the political use of posters in 1910s Germany that raise interesting features in promotional advertising, referred to by him as 'hurrah kitsch, various types of patriotic emblems and war mementos' (1998: 19). The posters appealed to emotionalism that shaped ideas and agendas for recruitment. An important feature of many of these posters was the 'absorption of the individual into the anonymous rigidity and licensed violence of the fighting unit' (1998: 25), images that 'burrow into our nerves and lodge in our imagination' (1998: 26). Advancing the sentimental character of kitsch is the use of clichéd or 'idiotic tautology' of insignia (logos) such as the 'happy face', 'have a nice day' T-shirts, and other trivial images (Binkley 2000: 146), or what Bourdieu (1984: 379) has referred to as 'the taste for trinkets and knick-knacks', characteristic of the coaching style of leadership heavily promoted in school districts, and increasingly in post-secondary institutions as accoutrements of mission statements that are heavily clichéd and accompanied by logos and crests. One sees these amply displayed in superficial professional workshops for which more emphasis is placed on the packaging than the substance: for example, in one leadership ethics package I examined, more resources were spent on colour-coding, name tags, logos and cute decorative drawings than developing the substance of moral theory relevant to schools and their administration. In this case, also, the machine metaphor was invoked by the image of interlocking gears as a logo on name tags in direct contradiction to the humanistic values alluded to in the text. Organisational culture is often treated in this manner as well, as a surface ornament, instead of being shaped in its full complexity and growing out of the life of the organisation.

Reviewing other political commentators on kitsch, Lugg concludes that 'kitsch play[s] an instrumental propaganda role by providing the masses with a mythology – a shared image of the leaders, the goals, the desired self' and that it 'should be understood as an particularly favoured marketing strategy' (1999: 366). Policy – consisting of slogans, exhortations, logos and other sorts of packaging –is aimed at having a wide appeal, managed as a product for the mass media, reducing it to what Lugg (1999: 53–54) calls 'PRolicy'.

Conclusion

One can kitschify anything, reducing it to decontextualised, uncritical and popularised stereotypes or clichés. Walter Benjamin, although directing his critique at surrealism, provides an image that has broad application to any sociocultural practice that reduces the

human experience to a formulaic, banal and superficial treatment: '… in kitsch, the world of things advances on the human being; it yields to his uncertain grasp and ultimately fashions its figures in his interior … [producing] a creature who deserves the name of "furnished man"' (1999 [1927]: 4–5). The effects on the educational establishment – from a kindergarten classroom, to district administration, faculties of education and government departments – are much the same: the denigration of educational and scholarly standards, including the potential compromise of academic freedom, the commercialisation of education, and a potential platform for authoritarian administration. One important modernist feature is the substitution of bureaucratic positional authority for disciplinary authority.

Politically, kitsch promises the image of a perfect society, whether on a nation-state, organisational or group level. But it is a chimeral construction, driven by sentimentality and removed from rational and critical analysis. A vibrant organisational culture and civil politics suffer, replaced by damaging practices from which only a slow recovery is possible, and at a high professional cost.

Probably the most important negative effect of the kitschification of educational administration is ethical. Moral reasoning and principles are neutralised in kitschification, due in part to their replacement by commodification of both the object and subject, but also a retreat into emotionalism. Ontologically one eliminates that which is necessary for ethics to deal with: the full and complex human being; metaphysically, simplistic rules or authoritarian codes substitute for higher-order values. Broch defined kitsch as 'the element of evil in the value system of art' (1969: 63–64) because a kitsch system is closed, providing only conventional rules by which to function, rather than an open system in which one may appeal to principles of ethics in order to evaluate the rules by which one operates. In effect, a kitsch educational administration is an imitation of life, imposing an inauthentic convention on reality.

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Site-based Management: Emergence and Effects: The Case of Israel

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Abstract: *The present study was designed to investigate the effects of site-based management (SBM) in Israel, which is traditionally known as having a centralised educational system. It considers the effects upon teachers' attitudes (job satisfaction and work burnout) and upon student achievement. In response to the inconsistent results of previous studies, the study investigated whether SBM schools differ in their features from non-SBM schools as perceived by teachers, whether SBM school teachers differ in their job satisfaction and work burnout from non-SBM school teachers, and whether SBM schools perform differently in the national state exams from the non-SBM schools. A teachers' survey related to perceptions of SBM school features, teachers' job satisfactions and work burnout were completed by 750 teachers from 100 SBM schools, and by 480 teachers from 60 non-SBM schools chosen randomly. Additionally, results from the 2004 national state exams in mathematics, Hebrew literacy, English and science were collected from the schools. Results reveal that SBM schools differ from non-SBM schools in all aspects characterising an SBM school. There are no differences between SBM and non-SBM schools in teacher's job satisfaction. Teachers in SBM schools experience less burnout on the alienation burnout subscale. No differences were found between teachers of both categories in the powerlessness and fatigue burnout subscales. The results of this study support the idea that SBM in its administrative form is less effective in ameliorating teachers' job satisfaction and burnout and in improving students' achievement.*

Introduction

One of the promising legacies of the education reform movement has been the concept of empowered and shared decision-making, according to Caldwell (2005), one of the mega-trends in education. The idea was founded on the industrial model, which showed the benefits of involving factory workers in changing their work roles (Conway & Calzi 1995). Policy makers began to believe that improving educational quality demanded more focus on the level of school organisation than on the classroom level and therefore reform was needed in the structural system and the management style of schools. They also argued that decentralising power to the school level would not guarantee that schools would use power effectively to enhance education quality, and therefore that both school responsibility-bearers and education service receivers should share in school-level decision-making (Cheng 1996; Gok, Peterson, Warren & Valli 2005).

By the early 1990s, site-based management (SBM) had become the centrepiece of restructuring public education in many parts of the world, including Eastern Europe and

Latin America. Whereas in the West, the decentralisation of control was imposed by political leaders seeking to achieve improved educational productivity and economic growth, in some countries of Eastern Europe, the initiative was bottom-up (Abu-Duhou 1999).

Although the professional literature has focused extensively on SBM in recent years, there is no consensus as to its definition (Fullan & Watson 2000; Rodriguez 2000). Some writers suggest a narrow definition of SBM, which stresses a single aspect. For example: Levacic (1995) sees SBM as an administrative issue that makes management more efficient. Her focus is mainly managerial. Candoli (1995) stresses the professional side of SBM. He sees SBM as a way of forcing individual schools to take responsibility for what happens to children under their jurisdiction. Gaziel (2002), who takes an organisational perspective, defines SBM as decentralisation within the organisation to empower those closest to students in the classroom (principals, teachers and parents).

A broader and more comprehensive definition has been suggested by Caldwell (2005). He defined SBM as a form of decentralisation that identifies the school as the primary unit of improvement and relies on the redistribution of decision-making authority as the primary means of stimulating and sustaining improvement. Site-based management can be defined in numerous ways, but typically it incorporates the same components: delegation of authority to individual schools, a model of shared decision-making involving various stakeholders, and facilitative leadership at the school level.

The present study set out to understand the background to the emergence of SBM in Israel (traditionally a centralised system), and to determine how the new managerial pattern affected teacher job satisfaction, defined as characteristics of the job that satisfy teachers' needs (Taylor & Tashakkori 1999), teacher burnout, defined as a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors (Malach-Pines & Keinan 2005), and student achievement.

SBM Emergence and Effects: A Theoretical Framework

There are numerous views regarding the emergence of SBM:

Functionalist assumptions

Functionalist assumptions conceive SBM as a means to a defined end: it might be a management strategy for the achievement of excellence (Seddon, Angus & Poole 1991); it might be a way to increase community involvement (Beck & Murphy 2000); or it might stem from the desire to push intractable problems downward, while ensuring that central agencies no longer carry the political burden of confronting those who accuse them of ineffectiveness and inefficiency (Kirst 2003). Murphy (1991) went even further and conceived the emergence of SBM as reflecting a desire to transfer billions of dollars from the public sector to the private sector.

The political approach assumes that education reform, and in particular the decentralisation issue, has become a politic issue regarding the authority and legitimacy of various institutional arrangements and is divorced from any serious treatment of whether these arrangements can be expected to have an impact on what the student learns in schools. The stakes of structural reform are largely reckoned by who gains and who loses in terms of influence with the new governance structure, and not in terms of whether structural change leads to changes in the conditions of teaching and learning (Elmore 1993; Martina, Hursh, Markowitz, Hart & Debes 2003).

Contrary to the previous approaches, the ***professional approach*** assumes that SBM emerged because it provided a means to enhance student learning and enable professionals to make the important decisions. Despite the different approaches to the emergence of SBM, it became almost an article of faith that greater freedom from the effects of centralised bureaucracy, hierarchy, and administrative rules would serve the interests of improving schools (Briggs & Wohlstetter 2003). But if this is true, the question is: What does research show in terms of the impact of SBM on teachers and students?

Regarding teacher job satisfaction, the few studies in this direction have not been clear cut and the evidence is mixed. Several case analyses conducted by Iverson (2001) and by Amar (2006) revealed that SBM did have a positive effect upon teachers' work; teachers reported greater work satisfaction, increased cooperation with colleagues, and less inclination to quit their job. Robertson and Briggs (1996) analysed data collected from teachers' and principals' interviews in American schools, and found that SBM school teachers were more involved in decision-making processes, which had a positive effect upon their work satisfaction, school commitment and openness to adopt new teaching methods, and showed an improvement in teachers' professional self-image. Contrary to those findings, Cheng (1996) analysed data from surveys of teachers in Hong Kong, and found that teachers reported greater dissatisfaction and burnout in SBM schools than non-SBM schools. These findings are explained by the additional demands (such as more school meetings, more bureaucratic duties) made of teachers in SBM schools. Few studies have examined SBM effects upon teacher burnout, and their results are not clear cut. Trusman (1989) and Nir (2002) found that SBM led to increased feelings of burnout among teachers – in SBM schools, teachers had more bureaucratic duties, more interpersonal conflicts over resources, and felt greater responsibility regarding their performance results, leading to greater feelings of burnout. However, Lichtenstein, McLaughlin & Knusden (1991) reached the opposite conclusion – SBM improved teachers' professional self-image, which had a positive effect upon teachers' feelings and reduced burnout.

When SBM effectiveness was measured in terms of student satisfaction and by student attendance and achievements, the findings were even more confusing. Based on Australian school samples, Caldwell (1997) reached the conclusion that SBM does indeed make a difference to student achievement. Fullan and Watson (2000) reached the same conclusion, using Canadian samples. They explained their findings in terms of the teamwork and open organisational climate that developed in SBM schools. Nevertheless, van Langen & Dekkers (2000) and Nobbs (2006) found no correlation between SBM schools and student achievement. Based on his analysis of the international experience, De Grauwe (2005) concluded that SBM had little impact on educational practice, in some cases even inhibiting improvement in schools that adopted it. Whitty, Power & Halpin (1998) found that the correlation between SBM schools and student achievement is mediated by students' backgrounds. Leithwood and Menzies (1998) reviewed 83 studies in this direction and found that only SBM schools that adopted the professional model (where power for decision-making is mostly in teachers' hands) showed positive relationships between the SBM pattern and student achievement. They found that schools that adopted the administrative model (where most power was in the principal's hands) or the community SBM pattern (where power was mostly in parents' hands) showed a negative correlation between SBM adoption, and student satisfaction and achievement. Walberg and his colleagues (2000) tested the relationships between centralised and decentralised school systems and school effectiveness,

when the dependent variable was student achievement in mathematics and science. They concluded that planning and control needed to be carried out by central government and that policy implementation had to be devolved to schools. Gomez (2000) used Brazilian school samples to examine the link between the SBM school model and school effectiveness. He found that the SBM model had a significant positive effect upon student achievement. Beck & Murphy (2000) looked for the factors explaining why some schools perform beyond expectations, and found that such schools had four characteristic commitments:

    a. to student's learning

    b. to the involvement of the community in school life

    c. to leadership and accountability, and

    d. to staff professional development.

Briggs & Wohlstetter reached the same conclusion (2003).

To summarise, most of the studies reviewed that examine the effects of SBM on teachers' feelings at work provide clear-cut results: namely, that introducing SBM patterns into schools has a positive impact upon teachers' work attitudes. However, the findings regarding the effect of SBM on student attitudes and achievement are confusing and not clear cut. Fullan and Watson (2000) have already written that SBM did not fulfill expectations because it was perceived as an end and not as a mean to improving school performance. Following the same logic, Gaziel (2003) found, on reviewing the relevant literature, that only a few schools (internationally) implemented SBM in all its aspects.

Because of the variation in the studies' results regarding the effects of site-based management on teachers and particularly on student achievement, the following research questions were formulated:

- Do the management patterns of SBM schools differ from non-SBM schools (as perceived by teachers)?

- Do teachers in SBM schools differ significantly in their job satisfaction and job burnout from teachers in traditional schools?

- Do SBM schools perform differently in SATs (State Achievement Tests) from non-SBM schools?

The Setting: The Israeli Educational System and the Emergence of the SBM Model

Since adopting its 'melting pot' policy in the 1950s and early 1960s, Israel's education system has been through two comprehensive reforms: the 'Social Integration' reform of 1968 and a gradual reform, which began in 1990: the decentralisation of power and the self-managing school reform (Inbar 1990).

The 1968 reform changed the school structure and content. Instead of 8 years of elementary school and 4 years of secondary school, the reform called for 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of middle school and 3 years of high school. In addition, the social structure of each school was required to be integrative. Thus, all students were thrown together in a single school system regardless of ethnic origin, socioeconomic status, intellectual talent, or areas of interest. In short: they were mixed together in heterogeneous schools and integrated classrooms. The main purpose was to develop social cohesiveness among different ethnic

groups and to raise the low academic achievement of weaker students, who were mainly of Asian and African origin. It was believed that this would facilitate the entry of the lower-status ethnic groups into the mainstream of Israeli society.

As for the educational system itself: its structure remained centralised and its control even grew in an attempt to guarantee policy implementation (Iram & Schmida 1998). Despite the general consensus regarding the social integration reform, it was only implemented in half the local authorities in Israel, while the rest lagged behind. This was due to political, social and financial pressures. Furthermore, studies revealed (Gaziel, Marom & Elazar 2003) that the social integration policy failed to reach its goals of integration between students from the different social strata and improvement of student achievement from poor areas. Following the failure of the social integration reform (partial implementation and, where it was implemented, failure), the Israeli government opted for a multicultural approach. The new policy was given a great boost as a result of the changes in Israel's political climate in 1977, which ushered the right wing into power and with it a more liberal economic policy. The immediate effect of this policy on the educational system was the advent of privatisation through the back door. Other developments were also achieved through devolution of the Ministry's traditional basic authority to direct national and social values. The SBM programme was a key policy in the effort to try to achieve this. It is important to note that prior to the new programme a limited degree of school autonomy existed, but it was not framed in any official, legal or formal legislation, and implementation was uneven. Some schools acquired a degree of independence as a result of being distinguished community schools, while others gained different degrees of autonomy because the local inspector was just too busy to be involved in the nitty gritty operation of the school (Volansky & Friedman 2003). However, a constellation of factors came together, fuelling the emergence of SBM and pushing the Israeli ministry of education to jump on the bandwagon.

Public budgets for education kept growing while schools achievement kept falling in terms of student results in national exams in maths, literacy, English and science. In international exams (PIZA) Israel fell from the top to the middle of the echelon. There was also a high percentage of drop-out from schools. Public interest (particularly the media) criticised the education system for performing ineffectively.

Directors of major corporations (the business sector) were concerned by the implications for the Israeli economy, and feared that in the long and short term the education system could not supply high-quality personnel for the economy. Some education economists, basing their views on assumptions regarding the linkage between schooling and the economy, and the poor showing by the educational system, heaped the blame on schools. The media criticised teachers for being drawn from the bottom of the intellectual barrel, and for being poorly trained and unmotivated, and fumed at principals for lacking the necessary leadership skills. Teachers' unions blamed the government for budget cuts and teachers' work conditions, including salaries; the academics blamed the rigidity of the educational bureaucracy for 'killing' educational innovations coming from the schools and undermining the teacher's authority (Nir 2003a). So it is no wonder that in this negative climate decentralisation strategies reflecting utilitarian assumptions of human capital theory and a political algorithm that viewed participation in terms of productivity have gained increasing acceptance (Lavy 1999).

Decentralisation policy and SBM reform were also promoted strongly by Dr Volansky, the then deputy director general of the ministry of education, whose doctoral thesis was on decentralisation reform in the British education system. Volansky was so enthusiastic about

the local management system (LMS) reform in Britain that he decided to import it to Israel under the label of site-based management (SBM). With this in mind, he organised a three-day conference in the Kfar Hamacabia Hotel (near Tel Aviv), and invited school superintendents, school inspectors, school principals, teachers, parents, academics, and the press and a selection of international professors of education known to support the implementation of the SBM model. These included the dean of the school of education of the University of Melbourne, Australia; a professor from the London Institute of Education, Britain; a professor from the Hong Kong Institute of Education; and a professor of education from Stanford University, USA. Their task was to convince the Israeli educational leaders how implementation of the SBM in Israel could improve the quality in schools. The effort paid off (Volansky & Friedman 2003). A steering committee established by the then minister of education, Mrs Aloni, headed by Dr Volansky, published a report (Israel, Ministry of Education and Culture 1993) in which they strongly recommended the creation of self-managing schools. The report described SBM as a model capable of serving national goals by responding to the declared needs of students and the community as a whole. The committee recommended that schools should operate as closed financial systems with budgets based on a per capita pupil allocation formula. It stressed that SBM would improve student achievement and enhance teacher motivation and professional status, thereby increasing the efficiency of the system (by saving money). Moreover, it argued that involving parents in school policy-making would reduce their alienation from what happens at the school. The committee recommendations drew rigorous opposition from the teachers' unions, which feared that parents' involvement might undermine their professional authority. The public accused the committee of eroding the concept of equal opportunities for students, and SBM was suspected of privatisation by the back door. School inspectors concerned about the loss to their power began sabotaging it. The main support for the SBM project came from Ministry of Education officials and the business sector. Despite the opposition, four education ministers since 1992 (Aloni, Rubenstein, Levy & Livnat) have been determined to implement the SBM project. In ten years, the project which started with nine schools in 1995, had reached 350 schools nationwide. Principals whose schools joined the project received a one-year in-service training programme with workshops in marketing, financing and budgeting, running meetings, teacher assessment, and stakeholder participation, but nothing in any pedagogical subject. Ministry of education officials continued to widen the circle of SBM schools, convincing local education officers about the project's contribution to the efficiency and effectiveness of local education standards.

However, now, after ten years of SBM project implementation, some questions need to be asked, namely: has the project made a difference to teachers' job satisfaction and sense of burnout, and has it affected student achievement, one of the main reasons for its implementation?

Method

Process

Twenty-five full-time teachers from 50 SBM primary schools (administrative form) and from 60 non-SBM schools from all parts of Israel were chosen randomly as follows. All of the SBM schools in each of the six educational districts in Israel were given a numeric identifier. A number of SBM schools were chosen randomly. Non-SBM primary schools in each educational district with the same student numbers and a similar ethnic composition were

identified. Because of the difficulties of finding the same number of non-SBM schools similar to the SBM ones in each district, the schools making up the non-SBM sample were chosen on a national basis. Teachers in each school were requested to complete three questionnaires:

a. teachers' perception of SBM features (existing or not) in their school

b. teachers' work satisfaction and

c. teachers' feeling of burnout.

The completed questionnaires were collected during assembly. Questionnaires that had only been partially completed were invalidated. Finally, 60 per cent of the teachers at the SBM schools (N=750) and 72 per cent of teachers from the non-SBM (N=330) schools provided completed questionnaires (N=1080). Additionally, student achievement results in mathematics, Hebrew literacy, English and science at the 4th and at the 6th grades in the State Assessment Tests during 2004 were collected from the schools in the sample.

Instruments

The provenance of the survey instruments are:

a. Teachers' perception of SBM features at his/her school (place of work) was adapted from Friedman, Brama & Torn (1998). This had been utilised by the authors in a previous study relating to the perceptions of teachers and principals of the SBM features. The questionnaire includes 25 items. The instrument was validated in the present study. The Alpha Cronbach reliability test yielded a range from .76 to .90.

b. Teachers' feeling of work burnout was adapted from Friedman & Lotan (1985). It includes 10 items. It also validated in the present study. Alpha Cronbach yielded a range from .85 to .93.

c. Teachers' job satisfaction was adapted from Bahl & Ansari (1996). It includes seven items. The instrument was translated into Hebrew. Two lecturers from the school of education bilingual in English and Hebrew checked the translation and then the instrument was given to a group of 30 teachers in an in-service training course for validation. The Alpha Cronbach reliability test yielded a range from .67 to .85.

d. State test scores in mathematics, Hebrew literacy, English and science in 4th and 6th grades during 2004. Data was received from the Department of Evaluation at the Ministry of Education.

The unit of analysis is the school.

Findings

Table 1 refers to the first research question: Do SBM schools differ from non-SBM schools in their management patterns, as perceived by the school teachers?

Table 1: Factor analysis on SBM questionnaire

S.N	Item	Vision	Educational programmes	Control & assessment	PDM	Pedagogical autonomy	Financial autonomy
1	School faculty support school vision.	**0.740**	0.261	0.103	0.198	0.320	0.082
2	Our school has a clear vision.	**0.706**	0.270	0.184	0.155	0.205	0.039
3	School vision stems from school goals.	**0.698**	0.342	0.147	0.111	0.221	0.084
4	School programmes stem from school vision.	**0.621**	0.380	0.182	0.115	0.105	0.054
5	Our school regularly assesses students' work.	0.107	0.263	**0.760**	0.079	0.137	0.060
6	We measure student satisfaction from school performance.	0.258	0.194	**0.678**	0.184	0.113	0.010
7	We monitor school student personal growth.	-0.029	0.237	**0.668**	0.061	0.087	0.030
8	Teachers are assessed systematically.	-0.302	0.018	**0.562**	0.080	-0.201	0.090
9	Students' feedback is used for school improvement.	0.234	0.125	**0.560**	0.054	0.109	0.030
10	Teachers' evaluation is usually done by colleagues.	0.096	0.212	0.657	**0.067**	-0.090	0.101
11	Teachers evaluation is done only by the principal.	0.357	0.356	**0.580**	-0.090	-0.229	0.325
12	Teachers take part in the most school decisions.	0.310	0.360	0.156	**0.755**	0.131	0.330

13	In our school parents and other stakeholders participate regularly in SDM.	0.290	0.235	0.116	**0.430**	-0.280	0.280
14	School faculty decisions are available for every teacher at school.	0.118	0.207	0.160	**0.410**	0.310	0.090
15	Students participate in school decision-making.	0.151	0.090	0.170	**0.320**	-0.210	0.030
16	Students take part in the elaboration of school programmes.	0.190	0.310	0.128	**0.420**	-0.340	0.010
17	Students take part in schools committees.	0.186	0.312	0.187	**0.440**	-0.228	0.050
18	Teachers have autonomy in budget allocation.	0.035	0.370	0.110	0.685	0.010	**0.555**
19	Teachers are involved in financial decisions.	0.230	0.348	0.040	0.147	0.310	**0.482**
20	The budget is enough to cover school programmes.	0.184	0.280	0.277	0.276	0.115	**0.410**
21	A financial plan is attached to any school programme.	0.290	0.310	0.266	0.146	0.290	**0.422**
22	Teachers feel that they have enough power to change pedagogical programmes.	0.119	0.761	0.080	0.380	**0.570**	0.310
23	Teachers feel that they have enough power to change financial programmes.	0.162	0.713	0.060	0.270	0.214	0.208

24	School administrative team has the power to hire, to promote and to fire eachers.	0.080	0.202	0.290	0.090	0.900	0.359
25	At our school only a few teachers have a say in the school policy elaboration.	0.190	-0.547	-0.289	-0.110	**-0.497**	0.009

Table 1 reveals that the factor analysis of the questionnaire items with varimax rotation yielded six factors (factor loading of items up to 0.40): school has unique vision (four items), explaining 13 per cent of the variance; school has developed educational programmes (3 items), explaining 4 per cent of the variance; school has a system of control and internal assessment (7 items), explaining 9 per cent of the variance; school involves stakeholders in decision-making (6 items), explaining 8 per cent of the variance; school has pedagogical autonomy (2 items), explaining 10 per cent of the variance; and school has financial autonomy (4 items), explaining 7 per cent of the variance.

Table 2 compares SBM and non-SBM schools in terms of the six factors characterising a site-based management school identified in Table 1.

Table 2: T tests between SBM and non-SBM schools regarding SBM characteristics

SBM features	SBM schools (n=50)	Non-SBM schools (n=60)	T	df	P
A unique vision	3.49 (.31)	3.36 (.40)	1.97	148	.05
Educational programmes	3.50(.26)	3.30 (.37)	4.00	148	.0001
Pedagogical autonomy	2.78 (.46)	2.58 (.50)	2.20	148	.05
Feelings of empowerment	1.80 (.32)	2.00 (.33)	2.28	148	.005
Participative decision-making	3.36 (.41)	3.20 (.41)	2.78	148	.005
Financial autonomy	2.50 (.59)	1.95 (.47)	3.00	148	0.01
Internal assessment	1.70 (.49)	1.74 (.37)	2.10	148	.05

Table 2 shows that, in all six factors characterising SBM, the schools that implemented site-based management differed significantly from their counterparts. In other words, SBM schools developed more educational programmes than their counterparts (M for SBM = 3.50,

for non-SBM = 3.30; t = 4.00, p<.0001); had greater pedagogical autonomy (M for SBM = 2.78, for non-SBM = 2.58; t = 2.20, p<.05); had shared decision-making (M for SBM = 3.36; for non-SBM = 3.20, t = 2.78, p<.005); had greater financial autonomy (M for SBM = 2.50, for non-SBM = 3.00; t = 3.00, p<.01); and developed a unique vision (M for SBM = 3.49, for non-SBM = 3.36; t = 1.97, p<.05). However, teachers in SBM schools reported having less empowerment (M for SBM = 1.80, for non-SBM = 2.00; t = 2.28, p<.005) and less internal assessment (M for SBM = 1.70, for non-SBM = 1.74; t = 2.10, p<.05).

Table 3 compares SBM schools and non-SBM schools regarding their effect on teachers' feelings of job satisfaction and burnout.

Table 3: MANOVA of SBM effects on teachers in SBM and non-SBM schools

Feelings of empowerment	SBM schools (N=50)	Non-SBM schools (N=60)	F	P
Participative decision-making	2.87 (0.17)	2.80 (0.18)	3.969	P<0.01
Professional development	3.52 (0.15)	3.25 (0.18)	5.641	P<0.01
Self-efficacy	3.38 (0.15)	3.35 (0.17)	1.671	N. S
Influence	3.28 (0.17)	3.26 (0.18)	0.773	N. S
Job satisfaction				
Extrinsic	3.51 (0.18)	3.52 (0.18)	0.054	N. S
Intrinsic	3.30 (0.18)	3.24 (0.23)	2.511	N. S
Burnout				
Powerlessness	1.93 (0.23)	1.92 (0.24)	0.686	N. S
Fatigue	2.18 (0.23)	2.19 (0.26)	0.019	N. S
Alienation	1.87 (0.25)	2.15 (0.24)	4.112	P<0.01

Table 3 reveals no significant differences between SBM and non-SBM schools with regard to job satisfaction: either extrinsic job satisfaction (M for SBM = 3.51, for non-SBM = 3.52; F = 0.054,p = n. s) or intrinsic job satisfaction (M for SBM = 3.30, for non-SBM = 3.24; F = 2.511, p = n. s). In terms of job burnout, the sole significant difference between both school categories is the feeling of alienation, which is stronger in non-SBM schools than in SBM schools (M for SBM = 1.87, for non-SBM = 2.15; F = 4.11, p<.01). No significant differences were found for the two remaining factors of the burnout scale: powerlessness and fatigue.

Table 4 compares SBM and non-SBM schools with regard to student achievement in state assessment tests at the end of 2003 in mathematics 4th and 6th grades, Hebrew literacy 4th and 6th grades, English 4th and 6th grades, and science 4th and 6th grades.

Table 4: Differences between schools in SAT results (2004)

Subject and grade	SBM schools	Non-SBM schools	df	T	P
Mathematics (4th)	61.56 (17.69)	78.65	57	-2.44	P<0.05
Mathematics (6th)	72.01 (18.81)	62.74	59	1.59	P<0.10
Literacy (4th)	68.94 (16.82)	66.74	57	0.56	N. S
Literacy (6th)	79.65 (20.83)	72.31	59	1.34	P<0.10
English (4th)	60.12 (25.71)	59.75	57	0.07	N. S
English (6th)	55.00 (22.72)	60.73	59	-0.06	N. S
Sciences (4th)	74.58 (16.26)	66.91	57	0.91	N. S
Sciences (6th)	66.19	58.31	59	0.95	N. S

Table 4 indicates that whereas the mathematics scores in both grades showed a significant difference between the two school categories: for the 4th grade (M for SBM = 61.56 and for non-SBM = 78.65; t = -2.44, p<.05), and 6th grade (M = 72.01 and 62.74 respectively; t = 1.59, p<.10), only a small difference in exam scores was found in the other disciplines. Regarding literacy scores in the 6th grade (M = 79.65 and 72.31 respectively; t = 1.34, p<.10), while no significant differences found in the state examination scores either in literacy at the 4th grade or in English and science in both grades.

Discussion

The present study was designed to examine the emergence and impact of SBM on the Israeli education system, and its effect on teachers' work-related feelings (job satisfaction and professional burnout) and student achievement. In order to clarify the mixed results regarding SBM effects found in previous studies a number of research questions were formulated.

The first question looked for differences in managerial patterns between SBM schools and non-SBM schools. The results revealed that SBM schools differ significantly from non-SBM schools across all dimensions characterising SBM schools. That is to say, they developed more educational programmes, they had greater pedagogical and financial autonomy. Despite the adoption of the administrative form by most of the schools in the sample, schools received a lot of autonomy from their inspectors in allocating their budgets and in initiating pedagogical innovations and making instructional improvements; however, in the majority of the schools in the sample, the initiative remained at school principal level. This was not the case in non-SBM schools, which had to implement decisions made by their inspectors. These results are in line with findings by Briggs & Wohlstetter (2003) and Gamage (2003).

However, teachers reported less empowerment and less internal assessment culture in SBM schools than teachers in non-SBM schools. This could be explained by the fact that SBM schools in Israel adopted the administrative SBM form (powers remained in the principals' hands) (Nir 2003b). Finally, we may say that SBM features were well integrated in schools defined by the Ministry of Education as schools that implemented the SBM pattern.

When we look at the SBM effects upon teachers and students, results are more surprising. Contrary to most of the literature findings (Iverson 2001; Amar 2006), in the present study no difference was found between implementing SBM and teachers' job satisfaction. Teachers' mean scores on the job satisfaction scale were higher in both group categories (SBM and non-SBM schools). The residual benefit for teachers' job satisfaction in SBM schools does not exist. This finding could be explained by previous studies to determine the factors attached to Israeli teachers' job satisfaction, which showed that teachers' job satisfaction is mainly related to work conditions and particularly rewards (Wasserstein-Warnet 2005).

Teachers at non-SBM schools (hierarchical schools) reported stronger feelings of alienation than their SBM counterparts. This finding is not surprising. The Employee Job Alienation hypothesis is very emphatically proved for bureaucratic organisations (Crozier 1964). However, in terms of the present study, non-significant differences were found between teachers' reported feelings of fatigue in SBM and non-SBM schools. This finding differs from what is known from previous studies (Farber & Ascher 1991). It seems that in SBM schools that adopted the administrative model (which is the case in Israeli SBM schools), most of the decisions are still made by the school principal and teachers are less involved in decision-making processes, which places less burden upon teachers. These facts might explain the lack of differences in the professional burnout-fatigue subscale.

As regards the effect of SBM on student achievement, the results of this study offer no support for SBM policy implementation. Earlier studies have offered mixed results as to the effect of SBM on student achievement: some studies found no correlation between SBM and student achievement (van Langen & Dekkers 2000), and other studies did find positive correlations between them (Caldwell 1997; Fullan & Watson 2000; Gomez 2000).

However, this study found a negative correlation between the two. Students at non-SBM schools obtained higher scores on national maths tests administered in the 4th grade than their peers in non-SBM schools. No significant results were found for Hebrew literacy, English or science, on the other hand. The findings of this study may be explained by the fact that Israeli schools adopted the SBM in its administrative form, which according to Leithwood and Menzies (1998) has negative effects on student achievement, and positive effect upon the student dropout rate, although Walberg et al. (2000) argue that because of tight control patterns schools governed by centralised systems do better than their counterparts in maths and science. Therefore, we may say that schools which fell outside the SBM project and remained traditional in their organisational pattern (greater school inspection and control) did better in the national maths test than the SBM schools. The residual effect of SBM on student achievement is either negative (as in maths in the 4th grade) or had no significance (as in the other disciplines).

Nevertheless, our explanation would be more powerful if the same results persist in the national exams expected for the 2007 school year.

Conclusions

Although SBM reform policy and implementation were initiated by central government (top-down approach), the idea was well integrated at the Israeli school system (more than 350 schools joined the project), which is contrary to what is known from the literature about reform implementation (Datnow, Hubbard & Mehan 2002). It may be hypothesised that reform implementation is culturally dependent. The results of this study suggest that SBM in its administrative form is not enough to yield better teachers' work attitudes or better student achievement (Nobbs 2006).

Acknowledgements

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School Self-evaluation: Can Head Teachers Meet the New Challenge?

David Plowright

Abstract: *School self-evaluation is now being used in many international contexts in order to contribute to raising standards of pupil achievement. This paper narrows the focus down to secondary school leaders in England and how well they use the new Ofsted online self-evaluation form (SEF) to evaluate their own leadership and management activities. More controversially, it investigates how well they understand the impact of leadership and management on raising standards and contributing to school improvement. Findings indicate that a number of positive features were seen in how head teachers completed the online SEF. However, a number of limitations were identified that reduced the SEF authors' effectiveness in making accurate judgements. The latter included the problems associated with demonstrating cause and effect links between leadership and pupil outcomes, an issue that many experienced academic researchers have struggled with for a considerable amount of time.*

Introduction

In England, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) has been responsible for inspecting schools since 1992, with the first inspection framework produced in 1993 (Ofsted 1993). Evolution of the inspection process since then has included three major revisions of the inspection framework (Ofsted 1999; 2003a; 2005b). The latest, a radical new regime introduced in September 2005 (Ofsted 2005b), is intended to give key stakeholders, particularly parents, better information about the performance of their children's schools. It will come as no surprise that self-evaluation is a major focus of this new Ofsted inspection process. Its aim 'is to help schools raise standards through a sharper, more focussed and less bureaucratic approach that will provide more information for parents' (Ofsted 2004a: 3).

School self-evaluation is now being used across many international locations in order to contribute to raising standards of pupil achievement (see, for example, Leung 2005; MacBeath 2006; McNamara & O'Hara 2006). This has come about through increasing decentralisation and a larger degree of devolved decision-making power to school managers (Barzano 2002; MacBeath, Schratz, Meuret & Jakobsen 2000). Meuret & Morlaix point out that 'school self-evaluation is on the educational agenda in all European countries' (2003: 53). In Belgium, for example, as a result of a decentralised educational policy, the inspectorate promotes a self-evaluation culture to help protect the quality of education (Devos & Verhoeven 2003). Further, Barzano (2002) has explored how a number of European countries have developed self-evaluation projects supported by an international in-service training activity. Hofman, Nynke, Dukstra & Hofman (2005) reported that many types of instruments for school self-evaluation are available for use in the primary school self-evaluation process in Dutch education.

In England, the new framework recently introduced by Ofsted includes the recommendation that schools will complete an online self-evaluation form (SEF) (Ofsted 2004b). This

document will be central to the inspection process. In fact, Ofsted point out that 'The SEF, as the summary of a school's process of self-evaluation, is at the heart of the new inspection arrangements; it serves as the main document when planning the inspection, and provides crucial evidence in evaluating the quality of leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve' (Ofsted 2005a: 3). The production of their first online SEF will be a new experience for school leaders. Although schools have previously completed documentation as part of their preparation for inspection, the SEF marks a major development in expectation. The new arrangements require school leaders to shift their mindset from providing a pre-inspection document recording factual information about policies and practice, to a well-articulated summary of the outcomes of the school's own ongoing self-evaluation.

The research reported here examines how well school leaders use the SEF to evaluate their own leadership and management activities. More controversially, it investigates how well they understand the impact of their leadership on raising standards of pupil outcomes. The research should be seen as a preliminary study of a small number of early SEFs produced for an impending external Ofsted inspection. Although further work is planned, we felt it important to report these early analyses to highlight the issues that the head teachers reported here experienced during the early stages of this new initiative.

The focus of the research is firmly on the inspection system and procedures in England, but a number of the issues it raises have implications, both practically and conceptually, for school leaders whatever their location.

Context

School self-evaluation is not just a 21st-century phenomenon: it has been a recurring theme of the last 30 years. Gray, Hopkins, Reynolds, Wilcox, Farrell & Jesson (1999: 24) maintain that 'School self-evaluation was popular as an agent of school improvement in the late 70's and early 80's'. Earley (1996: 158) associated the early introduction of evaluative frameworks by local education authorities with the need to respond to the issues raised by Callaghan's 'great debate' in 1976 (Callaghan 1976). In the mid-1980s, many schools used self-evaluation materials from the Guidelines for Review and Internal Development (GRIDS) project promoted by the Schools Council for Curriculum and Exams (McMahon, Bolam, Abbot & Holly 1984). Ellett & Teddlie (2003) point out that, in the USA, evaluating teachers is as old as the education system itself and that teacher effectiveness, teacher evaluation and school effectiveness are inextricably inter-related.

Currently, the UK government's 'New Relationship with Schools' (DfES/Ofsted 2004b) initiative has unequivocally reinforced the close link between self-evaluation and school improvement, at least in the view of policy-makers. The DfES Implementation Review Unit has reminded school leaders that 'There is widespread agreement that school improvement depends on good self evaluation' (DfES/IRU, November 2005: 1). The significantly higher profile given to self-evaluation in the 2005 inspection framework supports this claim.

Further, Ofsted (2006b: 2) has confirmed that 'the new 2005 inspection arrangements place the school's self-evaluation at the centre of the process of inspection'. Embedding effective self-evaluation in the realities of school practice may, however, prove to be a greater challenge. The inability of many schools to integrate such processes into their routines has been recognised for some time. Brighouse and Woods (1999: 19) point out that 'Most schools find it difficult to establish a virtuous cycle of self-review and then to sustain it'.

Much of the early self-evaluative activity occurred prior to the introduction of school development planning in the early 1990s. Consequently, the lack of strategies to respond to the findings of the evaluation, now regarded as a central element of the evaluative cycle, was a significant limitation. This is perhaps not too surprising, since Fidler, Russell & Simpkins (1997: 63) have argued that 'teachers are better at identifying improvement rather than bringing about improvement'. Failure to embed self-evaluative activity still remains as a limiting factor in some schools. However, the Ofsted report *Best Practice in Self-evaluation* (Ofsted 2006a: 2) found that 'institutions are at very different stages of development, but all are raising their self-evaluative systems to cope with change'.

Accountability versus Development

Self-evaluation is 'a process of reflection on practice, made systematic and transparent, with the aim of improving pupil, professional and organisational learning' (MacBeath 2005: 4). It is a process that is performed by the school's stakeholders, compared to external evaluation where the judgement on the school is delivered by external agents (Meuret & Morlaix 2003).

MacBeath (2005: 10) describes a resurgence of interest in the mid–1990s in formative, developmental self-evaluation. This was a response to the perceived austerity of the then national inspection system. It resulted in a range of alternative models provided by local authorities and businesses and professional associations. MacBeath's (1999) *Schools Must Speak for Themselves*, followed later by *Self-evaluation: What's in it for Schools*? (MacBeath & McGlynn 2002) were significant contributions to this development. These initiatives intensified the realisation that increasingly autonomous schools were able to take greater responsibility for evaluative processes, and, further, that self-evaluation should be mainly initiated by the school (Devos & Verhoeven 2003). Although it is clear that no school can afford to neglect the practice of self-evaluation (Ofsted 1998; 1999) there are still a number of unresolved issues associated with the part it plays in the inspection process.

A longstanding and continuing debate has centred on the dilemma of self-evaluation being part of the *accountability* agenda, compared with its potential as a *developmental* strategy (see, for example, Livingston &McCall 2005). This distinction is mirrored in the earlier writings of Scriven in the USA in the 1960s (Scriven 1967). He was the first author to propose using the terms 'formative' and 'summative' evaluation. Worthen & Sanders (1987: 34) point out that as a result of Scriven's early work, 'the terms have become almost universally accepted in the field' and reflect the different roles that evaluation can play in education, based, respectively on the drives for development and accountability. However, Scriven later argued that it was a fallacy to suppose that 'formative and summative evaluation are intrinsically different types of evaluation' (Scriven 1991: 20). In other words, the same procedures can be used for different purposes.

Therefore, it would seem that whatever the source of evaluation, either internal school self-evaluation or external Ofsted inspection, 'Performance measurement [or performance monitoring] can serve both formative and summative evaluation purposes' (Wholey 1996: 3). Davies & Rudd (2001: ii) maintain that 'During the mid–1990's … external inspection was seen as the main driving force in terms of the evaluation of school and pupil performance' and therefore having a summative function. However, it was also an unsatisfactory experience due to it being seen as primarily about accountability rather than development (for example, Coopers & Lybrand 1994; Dean 1995; Chapman 2001). Indeed, it is arguable whether or not these twin aims can sit comfortably together (Earley 1996) given the different

focus of the protagonists and the associated high stakes. Kyriakides & Campbell (2004: 24) believe that 'The role of SSE [school self-evaluation] is unclear where accountability is seen as primarily a summative reporting exercise but where school improvement is involved SSE may have a role'.

Ouston & Davies believe that 'Ofsted's aim of accountability is clearly being achieved' (1998: 24) but they argue that it is not so clear that development or 'improvement through inspection' has been so successful. If any improvement does result from externally driven inspection, then it may eventually prove to be only cosmetic (Saunders 1999). But trying to demonstrate a causal link between inspection and improvement is too simplistic, since 'improvement through inspection should not be misinterpreted as a claim of direct "improvement by inspection"' (Matthews & Sammons 2004: 18).

Lonsdale and Parsons (1998) go further in their criticisms, arguing that inspection disempowers and subordinates professionals and polices the work undertaken. Therefore, as long as the process is still seen as punitive, teachers and head teachers will (still) have little, if any, trust in Ofsted. This is reflected in Vanhoof & Petegem's (2007: 109) concerns, when they argue that:

> When the function of external evaluation is in large measure summative, using self-evaluation for both accountability purposes as well as school improvement becomes more complicated. When schools are aware of the summative nature of an evaluation or self-evaluation, side-effects arise which immediately reduce the chances of the successful achievement of formative functions. Summative functions and obligation always involve the danger that the justification and account-rendering aspect may predominate at the expense of desire for improvement.

The arguments here raise the question as to whether or not head teachers will feel comfortable and confident enough to provide an honest response to undertaking ongoing, formative self-evaluation that will be used as the basis of an external, summative inspection. Further, it highlights the difficulties of head teachers being expected to provide an evaluation of their own leadership and management achievements and their impact on raising standards and improving pupil outcomes.

Leadership and Management

Ofsted's (2003a) third inspection framework explicitly linked self-evaluation to a greater emphasis on the implementation of strategies for effective leadership and management in schools. Also, recent annual reports of the chief inspector of schools tend to imply that inspection contributes in no small way to school improvement and the raising of standards (for example, Ofsted 2005f, 2006d). Further, Ofsted's (2003b) report on what inspection says about leadership and management indicates the clearly held view that strong leadership and management bring about improvement in schools.

A number of experienced academic authors in the field have pointed out that providing evidence for the link between leadership and student achievement is problematic (see for example, Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis 1996; Witziers, Bosker and Krüger 2003). To undertake 'effects studies' that demonstrate *direct* causality is even more of a challenge. The random allocation of participants to experimental and control groups, together with researcher control of variables, are the minimum requirements of undertaking research to identify cause and effect (Torgerson and Torgerson 2001; Coolican 2004). However, Cook

(2002: 177) points out that 'random assignment is relatively rare in educational research, especially for assessing the impact of educational interventions of obvious policy-relevance'.

Leva_i_ (2005: 205) believes that experimental research designs are inappropriate for investigating the causal relationship between leadership and student outcomes, and argues that 'educational leadership … is not readily represented as a treatment that can be applied or not applied to schools and the consequences compared'.

Teddlie (2005) raises a number of methodological issues associated with causal studies of leadership. These include the need to examine the indirect and reciprocal links between educational leadership and school outcomes as well as any direct links that may exist. The author argues that this is particularly true concerning the causal pathway between educational leadership, teacher practices and student outcomes. He also makes the point that:

> The study of the relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness is a complex, contextualized one that requires the skillful blending of several methodological approaches. (Teddlie 2005: 216)

Undertaking a review of 40 published journal articles, dissertation studies and papers presented at peer-reviewed conferences, all carried out between 1980 and 1995, Hallinger & Heck (1998) revealed the complexities and pitfalls of linking principal leadership and student achievement. They concluded that 'The results of *direct* effects studies of leadership … are surprisingly clear. Researchers adopting this model have been unable to produce sound or consistent evidence of leadership effects on student outcomes' (1998: 166). The authors discovered that even studies using a mediated – that is, *indirect* – effects model produced evidence that was either mixed or showed positive effects of principal leadership on school outcomes (167). Such a model is based on the proposition that leaders achieve their results primarily through other people. There was no evidence of the use of a *reciprocal* effects model being employed in any research, where leaders respond to and adapt to the school in which they work, changing their thinking and behaviour over time.

It is clear from the above that demonstrating the link between leadership processes and pupil outcomes is problematic and difficult. Despite this, head teachers are expected to evaluate the leadership and management of their school by taking into account their impact on the outcomes for learners. As will be clear from the results of the research reported here, identifying cause and effect was, not surprisingly, particularly challenging for the authors of the SEFs examined in this study.

Methodology

The research was carried out during the first year of new Ofsted inspections between March 2005 and March 2006. Self-evaluation forms (SEFs) from ten different secondary schools were scrutinised. All the SEFs came from schools within a single, average-sized, English local authority that was established during the 1997 local government reorganisation. The reorganisation resulted in the formation of the current 151 local authorities across England. The total number of secondary schools in the target authority was 27.

The main factor in determining the selection of the schools in the sample was the availability of a completed SEF. The selection of the schools could therefore be described as based on both convenience sampling (Bryman 2004) and purposive sampling (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000; Robson 2002). Access to the schools' SEFs was gained by the author, working with the local authority as an independent consultant. Each of the SEFs examined was the

first to be prepared by the schools and had been written primarily for the purpose of informing an Ofsted inspection.

The schools anticipated that they would be inspected at an early stage in the inspection programme and the SEFs were developed to meet Ofsted's expectation that they would be accessible on the electronic database for September 2005. These perceptions proved to be well founded, as eight of the sample schools were inspected during the research period and a further seven of the authority's remaining schools by the end of January 2006. Another sample school was inspected in March 2006.

Use of these early drafts of 'live' SEFs provided a unique opportunity to examine schools' initial attempts at completing these documents. As the research took place when leaders were still at early stages of engaging with this new form of inspection document, use of these initial attempts of SEF writing was negotiated with each school. Consequently, there was an element of self-selection involved since only SEFs from schools willing to allow scrutiny at this early stage were included. Despite this, we felt there was an opportunity here to look closely at an example of how a small sample of head teachers were coping with the early stages of this new and important initiative.

Characteristics of the Schools

Just over a third (approximately 37 per cent) of all the secondary schools within the local authority was included in the sample. This sample provided a range of basic characteristics that were representative of schools in the chosen local authority. All the schools in this authority are non-selective and fully comprehensive. Schools from rural, semi-rural and urban settings were included in the sample. The range of socioeconomic backgrounds of the sample schools also reflected the mixed circumstances across the local authority. Although there are areas of considerable economic advantage there are others, particularly in the east of the county, that have marked levels of social and economic disadvantage. The three most advantaged schools were single institutions serving relatively affluent market towns. Schools from the most deprived areas included the two smallest schools, both serving rural catchments, and two schools in the same costal town. The remaining three schools were located in mixed socioeconomic situations, two in another costal town. Table 1 outlines the characteristics of the sample schools.

Table 1: Characteristics of schools in the SEF sample

School	Size, gender & age range	School specialism	Location	Socioeconomic context
SEF 1	Average-sized, mixed, 11–16.	Performing Arts	Medium-sized seaside town (one of 6 schools)	Mixed
SEF 2	Average-sized, mixed, 11–16	No specialism	Large coastal town (one of 5 schools)	Deprived
SEF 3	Large, mixed, 11–18	Sports and Business & Enterprise	Semi-rural market town (only school)	Mixed
SEF 4	Large, mixed, 11–18	Visual and Performing Arts	Semi-rural market town (only school)	Favourable
SEF 5	Large, girls only, 11–18	Performing Arts	Large coastal town (one of 5 schools)	Deprived
SEF 6	Average-sized, mixed, 11–16	Performing Arts	Medium-sized seaside town (one of 6 schools)	Mixed
SEF 7	Small, mixed, 11–16	Maths and Computing	Rural small town (only school)	Deprived
SEF 8	Small, mixed, 11–18	No specialism	Rural small coastal town (only school)	Deprived
SEF 9	Large, mixed, 11–18	Technology and Languages	Semi-rural market town (only school)	Favourable
SEF 10	Average-sized, mixed, 11–18	Technology and Humanities	Semi-rural market town (only school)	Favourable

Although ten SEFs represent a relatively small sample, this was considered sufficient to be both feasible within our timescale and resources, whilst at the same time providing an appropriate level of information. The sampling strategy devised, therefore, ensured that a manageable but purposeful evidence base was available to inform the study. As official school documents, the SEFs 'tell a story about what is possible or desirable to achieve through education policy' (Ozga 2000: 95).

Method of Data Analysis

The Self-Evaluation Form

The SEF is in three parts:

- Part A: Self-evaluation
- Part B: Factual information about the school
- Part C: Information about compliance with statutory requirements.

Part A, the self-evaluation section, contains seven subsections:

     1. Characteristics of the school

     2. Views of learners, parents/carers and other stakeholders

     3. Achievement and standards

     4. Personal development and well-being

     5. The quality of provision

     6. Leadership and management

     7. Overall effectiveness.

For the purposes of the research reported here, only the leadership and management sections of the selected SEFs were analysed. The increased emphasis placed on leadership and management is one of the most significant shifts within the revised inspection arrangements and therefore this section was chosen because of its centrality to the inspection process.

As a result of scrutinising the available guidance documentation (DfES/Ofsted 2004a; Ofsted 2005c, 2005d, 2005e, 2005h, 2005j, 2006b) ten characteristics were identified that Ofsted appears to expect should be evident in a good-quality SEF. These are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Characteristics of an effective SEF

	Characteristic
1	Linked to an evaluative framework
2	Criterion referenced
3	Includes clear judgements
4	Evidence based
5	Evaluatively written
6	impact through a clear link with pupil outcomes
7	Identifies both strengths and weaknesses in provision
8	Prioritises the key actions to secure the necessary improvement
9	Succinct and well focused
10	Accurate and honest

These characteristics provided a framework for the analysis of the leadership and management sections of the selected SEF extracts. The data analysis was undertaken in three stages.

Stage 1: Characteristics 1 to 4

In the first stage of the analysis, a proforma was developed. It allowed the comparison of extracts from the leadership and management section of each school's SEF with the evaluation criteria of the Ofsted 2005 Inspection Framework (Ofsted 2005b). Table 3 provides an example of how this was carried out.

The grade descriptors are shown in the 'Ofsted 2005 criteria' column. Each statement from the SEF was linked to the grade descriptor that it appeared to match most closely. The final column was used to record an evaluation of each statement. Statements were evaluated as a description, an assertion or a judgement.

Table 3: Matching of SEF statements to Ofsted 2005 Evaluation Schedule for

Leadership and Management

SEF prompt: How effectively performance is monitored and improved to meet challenging targets through quality assurance and self-assessment				
Ofsted 2005 criteria			**Extract from the school SEF**	**Evaluation**
Grade	**Differentiation – grade descriptors**		*'An annual governors' review of the work of departments has been developed providing a robust monitoring system that focuses on raising standards whilst allowing professional debate and negotiation (Departmental Reviews).'*	The SEF extract is an example of: " Description ● Assertion ● *Judgement* ✓ What is the evidence source? *(Departmental Reviews undertaken by governors)*
1	Evaluation is embedded into the school's practice at all levels, and is open, frank and accurate.			
2	*Effective self-evaluation, takes into account the views of all major stakeholders.*	✓		
3	Quality assurance follows agreed procedures but is not incisive enough to get to the root of all problems.			
4	The quality of the school's self-evaluation is inadequate.			

In the example in Table 3, the extract is given a grade 2: 'Effective self-evaluation, takes into account the views of all major stakeholders'. The evaluation indicates that the extract is an example of a *Judgement* and the source of evidence is *Departmental Reviews undertaken by governors*.

Table 4 shows the brief criteria used to determine whether a statement was a description, assertion or judgement and its link with use of evidence.

Table 4: Evaluation of statements

	Evaluation	Use of evidence
Description	A descriptive or a narrative account of a leadership/ management decision or action.	A list of sources of evidence.
Assertion	An 'opinion' about a leadership/ management decision or action.	No evidence provided.
Judgement	Evaluative comment about a leadership/management decision or action.	Appropriate supporting evidence, about how well the school's provision matches the expectation of the evaluative Ofsted criterion.

'Description' provided a narrative account of a leadership/management decision or action. If reference was made to any evidence, this identified its sources, often by simply listing them. A statement that offered an 'opinion' about a decision or action but which lacked reference to any evidence was recorded as an assertion. A 'judgement' is an evaluative comment that is a finding or a conclusion, substantiated by appropriate evidence, about how well the school's provision matches the expectation of the Ofsted criterion.

The use made of evidence to support and substantiate judgements was also considered as a factor contributing to the efficacy of the SEF. Judgements that were well supported by evidence were considered to have a greater degree of authenticity and could be used to test the 'honesty' of the school's own evaluation.

Stage 2: Characteristics 5 and 6

Stage 2 consisted of examining the SEF comments in order to establish if:

- writing was evaluative and attempted to link cause with effect; and
- the impact of leadership was established through a clear link with pupil outcomes.

Stage 3: Characteristics 7 to 10

During stage 3 of the analysis an overview of the SEF writing was used to evaluate the last four characteristics listed in Table 2. A colour coding system was used to identify content that referred to strengths or weaknesses and action identified to bring about improvement. Further, the length of the sample SEFs was compared with the Ofsted guideline of around 20 pages for the evaluative section of the SEF (Ofsted 2005i: 2).

Findings

Self-evaluation of Leadership and Management: Characteristics 1 to 4

Table 5: Characteristics 1 to 4

	Rarely	**Sometimes**	**Frequently**
1 Linked to an evaluative framework	1	4	5
2 Criterion referenced	1	4	5
3 Includes clear judgements	3	3	4
4 Evidence based	0	3	7

(Raw data can be found in the Appendices in Table A: Self-evaluation of leadership and management: characteristics 1 to 4 identified in all ten SEFs)

1 Linked to Evaluative Framework

Table 5 indicates that **all** of the SEF samples were linked to the Ofsted evaluative framework. This was, in part, a consequence of authors following guidance in the SEF proforma to help them organise their writing. **Nine** of the SEFs analysed had used the prompts provided in the leadership and management section as headings to structure their responses. Consequently, there was a common approach within the 'evaluative' summaries when responding to the overarching prompt question: 'What is the overall effectiveness of

leadership and management?' (Ofsted 2005e: 13). However, where the SEF author relied solely on such prompts, the writing was almost entirely descriptive, as for example:

> The overall effectiveness and efficiency of leadership and management begins with a clear statement of aims and values contained within the School Development Plan, Staff Handbook and School Prospectus. (SEF1)

2 Criterion Referenced

Criterion referencing is an essential component of SEF writing. The evaluative criteria establish the 'standard' by which an aspect of the school's work is judged.

Five SEF authors frequently referred to the criteria, while four sometimes and one rarely drew links with the criteria indicated in the guidance.

Failure to establish definitive links with the criteria reduced a SEF author's ability to make judgements about quality and standards, thereby increasing the dependence on description. For example, in response to the prompt 'how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve their potential (i.e. inclusion)', one SEF focused on descriptions of curriculum provision:

> At Key Stage 3 equality of opportunity is afforded to all students who follow the same broad, balanced curriculum with allowances for personal circumstances. In Key Stage 4 a common curriculum is augmented by an open option system which includes entry level qualifications, vocational qualifications and A/S level. All pupils receive an entitlement to guidance and support which applies to curriculum and pastoral issues. (SEF 1)

The response did not meet the expectation of the grade 2 criterion of identifying how barriers to pupil engagement were overcome, particularly for more vulnerable learners.

While SEFs 2 to 10 made some reference to the criteria for leadership and management the quality of responses varied. In some instances the SEF statement simply reiterated the criterion, for example repeating the grade 3 criterion for the effectiveness of self-evaluation:

> Quality assurance follows agreed procedures but is not incisive enough to get to the root of all problems. (SEF 10)

The most frequently reiterated criterion was 'resources are deployed effectively and efficiently', which occurred in SEFs 2, 3, 5 and 8. In other instances, the SEF statement was formulated around the criterion. For example, a descriptor for an outstanding grade 1 is: 'There is a culture where performance is constantly challenged and improved'. One SEF included the statement:

> This has resulted in a culture where performance is constantly challenged and improved. (SEF 8)

For a grade 2, good, the descriptor is: 'The leadership of the school is successfully focussed on raising standards'. In one SEF this was modified to:

> The leadership … is clearly focussed on the need to maintain and improve standards in achievement and attainment, behaviour and morale. (SEF 6)

The analysis also provided feedback about the coverage of the criteria by identifying the number of leadership and management criteria addressed within the SEF. Some criteria, such as those relating to self-evaluation, performance management and staffing and resources were comprehensively covered whilst others were not addressed as fully.

Significant omissions were identified. For example, none of the SEFs addressed the criterion: 'Vetting procedures for adults who work with learners are robust'.

3 Includes Clear/Accurate Judgements

The quality of the evaluative judgements contained in the SEF plays a central part in determining the quality of the document. **Only four SEFs in this sample frequently included clear and accurate judgements; three sometimes achieved this and three rarely included such judgements.**

In order to reach clear and accurate judgements, a SEF author needs to refer to evidence that meets the evaluative criteria. However, authors varied in their ability to distinguish between assertion, description and critical evaluation in their writing. This variation was shown in responses to the SEF prompt: 'How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money'. For example, one effective SEF offered a judgement (good) and identified appropriate evidence about standards to justify the statement: 'Overall, the school provides good value for money, standards are above average on an average per capita budget' (SEF 5). On the other hand, an SEF that simply described its approach to achieving value for money, without reaching a judgement, stated:

> Value for money is a key objective which informs curriculum decisions and deployment of resources and is under constant scrutiny. (SEF 6)

In another SEF, the statement 'We provide good value for money' (SEF 3) was not supported by any further comment. Without evidence to substantiate the judgement (good), the comment was simply an assertion. This also applied to the following, where no evidence accompanied the statement:

> Senior leadership is innovative, self critical and articulates a clear vision for the college which is easily and readily understood by students and parents. (SEF 6)

The general failure to use evidence to corroborate claims meant that many potential judgements became unsubstantiated opinions or assertions. The DfES guidance is adamant that 'assertion is not good enough' (DfES/Ofsted 2004b: 12, para 37).

All of the SEFs examined included a grade for leadership and management. As part of the analysis, the grade was compared with the content of the leadership and management section. The lack of clear judgements in many SEFs made it difficult to identify how each grade had actually been determined.

4 Evidence Based

In order to avoid arriving at premature conclusions, judgements need to be supported by appropriate evidence. **All SEFs referred to evidence.** However, striking the right balance between providing excessive amounts of evidence and evidence that is too limited is obviously crucial. Ofsted advises that SEF authors need only 'provide the detail to substantiate their judgements' (Ofsted 2006b: 20). This use of evidence to confirm judgements was another area of varied quality in the SEFs examined. To facilitate an assessment of a SEF author's application of evidence, three distinct categories of use of evidence were identified. These were:

- listing evidence sources;
- using evidence to inform statements; and
- using appropriate amounts of evidence to corroborate judgements.

Seven SEFs referred to evidence frequently while three sometimes referred to sources to support their claims. One SEF provided seven 'evaluative statements' that were a mixture of description and assertion, including, for example:

> The school has a good standard of financial management to optimise value for money and maximise efficiency. (SEF 10)

This was followed by a general list of 24 sources of evidence, including items such as strategic plans, audit report, budget papers and monthly statements sent to fund managers. None of this evidence, however, could be used to support the 'judgement' made in the SEF. Providing extensive lists of evidence, rather than identifying key pieces of particularly pertinent and explicit supportive evidence meant that the evidence could not be linked explicitly with the judgement.

The way in which the evidence is used in the evaluation determines the robustness of the judgement. The SEF proforma advises authors 'to reach accurate judgements' (Ofsted 2005e: 4). 'Accuracy' of judgement is partly determined by how well evidence is used to substantiate evaluative claims made. Although **all** the SEFs identified evidence sources, **only six** attempted to apply this evidence to substantiate judgements made. An example, below, of better practice used evidence from benchmarking to identify comparability:

> The college has used financial benchmarking to demonstrate that expenditure on staffing, curriculum and maintenance compares favourably with other schools. (SEF 7)

Writing a SEF that Works recommends that writers 'should make sharp judgements and find factual evidence to support them' (NCSL 2005: 2). Neither NCSL nor Ofsted offers clarification about how to make judgements 'sharp'! Ofsted (2006b: 4) explains that SEF authors 'need to be in a position to provide convincing evidence'. It could be that a 'sharp judgement' is one that is well focused and is substantiated by just the right amount of appropriate evidence. Such judgements, however, were not evident in the samples of early SEF writing. They represent a high level of challenge and remain elusive to many of the SEF writers discussed here. Improving the robustness of judgements is an area requiring significant further development.

Self-evaluation of Leadership and Management: Characteristics 5 to 6

Table 6: Characteristics 5 to 6

	Rarely	**Sometimes**	**Frequently**
5 Evaluatively written	3	3	4
6 Demonstrates impact through a clear link with pupil outcomes	7	3	0

(Raw data can be found in the Appendices in Table B: Self-evaluation of leadership and management: characteristics 5 to 6 identified in all ten SEFs)

5 Evaluatively Written

The prime function of the SEF as a summative document recording the key findings of the school's self-evaluation processes was made explicit from the outset of the revised arrangements. Guidance is emphatic: 'The SEF is meant to be evaluative' (Ofsted 2005i: 2). In practice this requires clear links, demonstrating 'cause and effect', to be created between

different parts of the document. Ofsted guidance makes this explicit stating that '[inspectors] will expect to see a link between the progress pupils make, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership and management' (Ofsted 2005i: 1).

Four of the SEFs frequently used evaluative writing. Three sometimes and three rarely included writing that could be considered evaluative, based on Ofsted's expectations (Table 6)**.**

The raised profile of leadership and management, described by DfES/Ofsted (2004a: 19) as 'the central nervous system of the school', is another factor that should be taken into account in evaluative writing. The SEF should therefore include well-evidenced judgements that demonstrate how the leadership and management have contributed to bringing about improvement.

Although **four** SEF authors **frequently** made some attempt to write evaluatively, considerable variation was evident in the quality of this writing. Where evaluative writing was of relatively poor quality, **in six of the SEFs sampled**, this was a consequence of insufficient linkage between evidence and the judgement. In one example, an unsuccessful attempt to link leadership capacity with improvement failed because of imprecision about the contents of the plan.

> Leadership and management of the college, including governance, are good and well placed to improve through the College Improvement Plan. (SEF 9)

A simple evaluation, appropriately supported by evidence, was:

> The school is managed effectively with procedures and protocols clearly laid out in the staff handbook. (SEF 10)

Only **three** of the SEFs included any evidence that supported claims for 'cause and effect'. In one of these SEFs (SEF 7), the judgement 'although the quality of subject leadership varied widely, it was satisfactory overall' was supported by reference to the following evidence:

> Some departments, e.g. mathematics, P.E. and SEN, evaluate their work well and plan for improvement whilst others, e.g. art, ICT and MFL, rely on support. (SEF 7)

Four examples recognised the need to establish a link between leadership activity and outcomes. The author of SEF 5 established a clear link between leadership and standards, stating that:

> our improved monitoring processes (described in adjacent text) have contributed to the improvement in standards by ensuring greater consistency between subject areas and a clearer focus on expectations. (SEF 5)

6 Impact on Outcomes

Possibly the most challenging requirement of the new accountability regime is that it expects evaluation to 'explain impact' (Ofsted 2006b: 21). This dimension, more than any other, demonstrates the magnitude of the shift in expectations and practice that is implicit in the new inspection arrangements and that has important implications for leadership and management.

Guidance is emphatic that schools should 'focus self-evaluation specifically on the impact of provision on the outcomes for children and young people' (Ofsted 2006a: 3) and SEF authors are reminded to 'Think about the outcomes for pupils' from the outset of their writing (Ofsted 2005i: 1).

Only **three** of the SEFs scrutinised **sometimes** revealed any attempt to demonstrate the impact of leadership through a clear link with pupil outcomes, including pupils' personal development and well-being. **Seven rarely achieved this level of evaluation and none included frequent reference to links between leadership and pupil outcomes.**

One SEF author's attempt to establish the link between leadership and standards revealed a misunderstanding of application in practice:

> Overall leadership and management are good; would be outstanding had not recent (2005) exam results been lower than expected. (SEF 4)

However, not all SEF authors misunderstood the requirement to demonstrate the impact of leadership on standards, as the two examples below indicate:

> Behaviour in class and around the site is very good and our behaviour management system has had the impact of reducing incidents of misbehaviour, for example the number of referrals from class has fallen and both fixed term and permanent exclusions are very low in comparison to the local authority average. (SEF 8)

> Appropriate training and development of leaders has raised awareness of and increased the levels of accountability at all levels. As evaluation is becoming embedded in the college its use by governors and leaders at all levels has successfully led to more accurate identification of aspects needing improvement. The main consequence has been a marked upturn in the rate of improvement in both standards and learners' achievement, as for example is evident in the 2005 outcomes of national tests and examinations. (SEF 3)

Overall, however, demonstrating impact on pupil outcomes was the weakest aspect of the SEFs examined. This significant shortcoming needs to be addressed as a matter of some urgency, since the SEF will be used as evidence of the school's leadership and management. Failure to demonstrate the impact of leadership on securing improvement in the school, therefore, has major implications for the inspection judgements about the capacity of the school's leadership.

Characteristics 7 to 10

Table 7: Characteristics 7 to 10

	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
7 Identifies both strengths and weaknesses in provision	0	2	8
8 Prioritises the key actions to secure the necessary improvement.	0	2	8
9 Succinct and well focused.	3	2	5
10 Accurate and honest	1	2	7

(Raw data can be found in the Appendices in Table C: Self-evaluation of leadership and management: characteristics 7 to 10 identified in all ten SEFs)

7 Identifies both strengths and weaknesses in provision

Eight of the SEFs examined made frequent reference to stronger and weaker aspects of their provision (Table 7). **Only two sometimes referred to this aspect of the evaluation.**

School leaders were more willing to identify positive aspects, which tended to be described in considerable detail. Where weaknesses were identified, they were commonly linked to the identification of contributory factors, as shown in the statement:

> Recruitment and staffing difficulties, particularly in English and mathematics, have adversely affected progress in art, business studies, English, history and languages. (SEF 3)

However, generally speaking, there appeared to be a reluctance to draw weaknesses to the direct attention of inspectors, and these were often referred to as 'areas needing development'.

8 Prioritises the key actions to secure the necessary improvement

The SEF proforma contained a section requiring SEF authors to record their 'key priorities for development' (Ofsted 2005e). This ensured that all schools identified actions to be taken to address any weaknesses or areas needing development.

Eight authors frequently achieved this throughout the leadership and management section of the SEF while only two sometimes included such priorities. Four authors (SEFs 3, 5, 6 and 10) identified a large number of actions. However, when these were added to the numerous actions identified in other sections of the SEF, the result was an unmanageable list of tasks to be undertaken. The best examples followed the guidance to identify a few priorities that 'should be … recognisable to staff, governors and other stakeholders' (Ofsted 2005i: 2). Ensuring coherence between the priorities identified in each section of the SEF meant that these schools were well placed to develop a well-focused 'improvement plan'.

9 Succinct and well focused

Guidance makes clear that SEFs are expected to be 'short and to the point' (Ofsted 2005i: 3). **Five SEFs frequently appeared to be succinct and well focused while two sometimes and three rarely managed to be written in this kind of style.** The majority of these early SEFs were over-lengthy, exceeding the expected 20 pages. Table 8 provides a summary of the length of the self-evaluation forms identified in the sample. The main contributory factor was the over-use of description, particularly with regard to evidence that should be included to substantiate the judgements. This resulted in a loss of focus, making the judgements less convincing.

Table 8: Summary of length of SEFs

	Total	Mean
Length of evaluative section of all SEFs	357 pages	35.7 pages
Length of leadership and management section of all SEFs	36 pages	3.6 pages
Proportion of evaluative section of SEF devoted to leadership and management	10.1%	

(Raw data can be found in the Appendices in Table D: Length of each individual SEF)

10 Accurate and honest

Seven SEF authors frequently, two sometimes and one rarely achieved what was interpreted as being an accurate and honest evaluation.

The tension between self-evaluation for both developmental and accountability purposes has already been identified (see p. 00) as a potential influence on the accuracy and honesty of the SEF. The inspection context may well have introduced bias into the content of the SEFs sampled. Resolution of the issues about 'audience' is likely to pose one of the greatest challenges to school leaders, especially as pressure from external sources increases.

Discussion

The completion of the SEF has been described as 'a challenging but worthwhile process' (DfES/Ofsted 2004b: 11, para 31). Evidence from the research reported here indicates that initial responses have only partially met this challenge, despite claims from Ofsted that the 'increased emphasis on self-evaluation as part of the process of inspection has helped to promote improvement in self-evaluation and, in turn, in leadership and management' (Ofsted 2006c: 13).

This increased emphasis on self-evaluation has, understandably, stimulated activity in schools, some of which has been based on 'moderated school self-review' (MSSR). Supported by local authorities, this has been a popular approach aimed at developing local evaluative frameworks that are closely aligned with the Ofsted inspection framework. These criterion-referenced documents provide school leaders with clear statements and expectations to enable judgements to be made about various aspects of a school's provision. The school's judgements are subsequently moderated by their local authority link advisers.

The local authority where this research was carried out introduced MSSR in 2003. All of its schools participated in this self-evaluative procedure during the academic year 2003–04 and again in 2004–05. The MSSR framework actively encouraged school leaders to develop activities that generated evidence to inform their evaluations. A limitation of the MSSR approach, however, was that it over-emphasised evidence-gathering at the expense of developing the evaluative skills of analysing the evidence and applying criteria that would enable evaluative judgements to be made. To compensate for this shortcoming, courses on evaluative writing were provided for the school leaders reported here during the summer term of 2005.

This type of support, together with an increasing range of guidance during the period of the research, appears to have had a relatively limited impact on the quality of SEF writing. Considerable variation was evident in the standard of the extracts examined. The SEF proforma itself ensured a link with the 2005 inspection framework. However, not all the authors followed the guidance encouraging them to make use of the evaluative criteria and the differentiated grade descriptors provided in the 'Guidance for Inspectors' (Ofsted 2005h).

A number of positive features were seen in this sample of SEFs, including:

● analysis and identification of strengths and weaknesses in provision; and

● inclusion of a range of actions to be taken in order to bring about the necessary improvement.

However, a number of limitations were identified that reduced the SEF authors' effectiveness in making accurate judgements. These included:

● insufficient use of the evaluative criteria as the benchmarks for reaching judgements;

● inadequate use of appropriate evidence to substantiate judgements;

● over-use of description and assertion, resulting in over-lengthy responses; and

● limited use of evaluative writing to identify 'cause and effect', particularly in showing how leadership had influenced pupil outcomes.

In particular, school leaders under-estimated the requirement to demonstrate the impact of leadership and failed to show how action taken to address shortcomings had improved pupil outcomes. It is intuitive that good leadership and management will have an important impact on school improvement, but providing evidence to support such a claim is another matter. However, this is a particularly contentious issue, as we pointed out in the introductory sections to this paper. It leaves us with the question: is the task of completing this element of the SEF asking too much of head teachers? They work in relative isolation, inevitably unaware of the substantive and methodological issues that many academic researchers have struggled with for some time. Perhaps Ofsted is asking head teachers to undertake an impossible task and achieve the unachievable?

School leaders need to ensure that everyone involved in the preparation of the SEF understands its purpose and is clear about who and what the document is for. The prime purpose of the SEF is for internal school purposes, enabling clear self-diagnosis of strengths and areas needing development, as well as indicating the key actions that will be taken to secure improvement. However, an increasing array of external audiences – including Ofsted inspectors, local authority officers, advisers and consultants – has the potential to influence the preparation of the SEF. The newly appointed School Improvement Partners (SIPs), acting as a school's 'critical friend' will, in the future, be expected to use the SEF to challenge the effectiveness of a school's improvement strategies. The extended use of the SEF raises important questions, too, therefore about how knowledgeable and informed these different stakeholders are about the methodological and substantive issues associated with investigating and measuring the impact of leadership and management on pupil outcomes.

As the predicted use of the SEF increases, both within and beyond the school, leaders will need to demonstrate clearly that they have made the conceptual leap from what was expected under the previous accountability regime to what is expected now and in the future. The same level of awareness will also be expected from members of this wider audience. The SEF is a much more reflective document than the previous inspection form S4. Therefore, there is now considerable potential for the developmental dimension of self-evaluation to be enhanced, with school leaders, governors and teachers being the main beneficiaries of the new expectations. Most important of all, its function as an accountability document for external use by Ofsted, the SIPartner and the local authority will merely become a by-product.

Conclusions

In a small-scale study of this nature inevitably there will be limitations to what can be achieved. In this case, this is due to a number of factors. The small sample of self-evaluation forms analysed, and the fact that these came from schools in only one local authority, means it is difficult to generalise from the findings. However, completing the self-evaluation form is an activity that most, if not all, school leaders in England will be using to contribute to school improvement and to the inspection process. The findings reported here will be understood by practitioners and academics alike, and hopefully also to policy-makers with responsibility for the governance of our schools. The political and educational contexts within which all schools in England work are driven by the same accountability agenda and are subject to the same or similar pressures to improve and raise pupil standards.

This research, although based on a small sample, can be used to further develop our understanding of both these agendas.

A further limitation of the study lies with the nature of the analysis. This relied on a combination of analysing information both quantitatively and qualitatively. The latter required a method that was relatively subjective in its approach. This particularly applied to the simplistic rating scale that was used to categorise the assessment of the evaluations included in the SEFs. We are fully aware of the issues associated with this strategy but we feel justified in taking this approach since it provided a relatively straightforward method of categorising a large database of information. What was lost to objectivity was gained through employing an easy-to-use method aimed at developing an overall view of the nature of the SEFs. This, we believe, was achieved in the study.

The New Relationship with Schools envisages that the range of initiatives within the strategy will 're-energise' school improvement. Effective self-evaluation, embedded in schools' routine practice, is seen as central to the realisation of this intention. Raising awareness of changes in inspection resulting from the New Relationship, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) pointed out that 'As often with major change in the education system, head teachers have to understand its implications first' (Ofsted 2005g: 9).

The nature of this change, which David Bell (HMCI) described as 'raising the bar of expected performance' (Ofsted 2005g: 12–13) represents significant challenges for school leaders. Consequently, the production of the SEF cannot simply be regarded as a bureaucratic exercise. It demands a clear understanding of the shift from external inspection to a self-evaluation that draws on integral procedures requiring systematic action on a regular basis. A good-quality SEF, therefore, will need to demonstrate that school leaders are fully aware of the magnitude of the shift in expectations. Both Leung (2005) and Plowright (2007) have argued that school self-evaluation should be used for both accountability *and* school development. The new online SEF may herald, at long last, the start of that much-needed opportunity for reconciling both agendas. It may prove to be a welcome development, not only in the English school system, but also in those countries where school leaders are also struggling to make sense of the conflicting demands on their professionalism as educators.

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Appendices

Table A: Self-evaluation of leadership and management: characteristics 1 to 4 identified in all ten SEFs

Characteristic	Self-evaluation Form (SEF) from sample									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Linked to an evaluative Framework	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2 Criterion referenced	S	S	F	S	F	R	F	F	F	S
3 Includes clear judgements	R	R	F	S	S	R	F	F	F	S
4 Evidence based	S	S	F	F	F	S	F	F	F	F

Table B: Self-evaluation of leadership and management: characteristics 5 to 6 identified in all ten SEFs

Characteristic	Self-evaluation Form (SEF) from sample									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5 Evaluatively written	R	R	F	S	S	R	F	F	F	S
6 Demonstrates impact through a clear link with pupil outcomes	R	R	S	R	R	R	S	S	R	R

Table C: Self-evaluation of leadership and management: characteristics 7 to 10 identified in all ten SEFs

Characteristic	Self-evaluation Form (SEF) from sample									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7 Identifies both strengths and weaknesses in provision	S	F	F	F	F	S	F	F	F	F
8 Prioritises the key actions to secure the necessary improvement.	S	F	F*	F	F*	S	F	F*	F	F*
9 Succinct and well focused.	R	S	F	F	S	R	F	R	F	F
10 Accurate and honest	S	S	F	F	F	R	F	F	F	F

Key:
R = Rarely   S = SometimesF = Frequently
* Over lengthy lists with insufficient prioritisation

Table D: Length of each individual SEF

	Self-evaluation form (SEF)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Number of pages									
Overall length of evaluative section of SEF	36	30	30	35	36	32	38	54	37	29
Length of leadership and management section of SEF	3	3	4	3	4	3	5	4	4	3
Proportion of evaluative section of SEF devoted to leadership and management (%)	8.3	10	13.	8.6	11	9.4	13	7.4	11	10

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Cake or Curriculum? Principal and Parent Views on Transforming the Parental Role in Saskatchewan Schools

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Abstract: *Based on a qualitative case study of two rural schools located in Saskatchewan, Canada, this article reports thematic interpretations of parents' and principals' perspectives on new expectations for parents to contribute directly to school improvement planning as mandated by School Community Council Policy. Data were collected through principal focus groups and semistructured individual interviews with two principals and six parents. Constructed themes point to: 1) ambiguity regarding the place of parents in school improvement planning; 2) a persistent, traditional division of labour between parents and principals within School Community Councils; and 3) recognition of parents' role as predominantly that of community liaison. Spillane, Reiser and Reimer's (2002) work on the role of cognitive schema in local interpretations of policy was used to reflect on these themes. Implications are extended beyond the Saskatchewan context to account for a global trend in educational policy-making that centralises parents in children's academic performance.*

Introduction

I will stay up until 1:00 a.m. and make brownies to sell at hot lunch for my kids because there's a goal, there's gain at the end. (Parent)

Western educational systems are making appreciable attempts to transform parents from bulletin board artists to executives of school reform. Statutes and strategies purportedly create opportunities for parents to contribute 'beyond the bake sale' (Henderson 1986). In this article we report thematic interpretations of parents' and principals' perspectives on Saskatchewan, Canada's 2006 School Community Council Policy, which requires parents to become more directly involved in school improvement planning (Saskatchewan Learning[1] 2005b). Based on a qualitative case study of two rural schools, we found: (a) identity confusion around the new parental role created by School Community Councils (SCCs), (b) persistent division of labour between parents and principals that prevented a reconceptualisation of the parental role in terms of the School Community Council, and (c)

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1. On 7 November 2007 Saskatchewan Learning was renamed the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.

interpretations of parents as liaisons to the community, rather than key constituents in school operations. We used Spillane, Reiser & Reimer's (2002) work on the role of cognitive schema in local interpretations of policy to reflect on our data. In the following we outline the policy context that has emphasised parents' roles in education, both globally and in Saskatchewan; provide an overview of the methodology; and describe and discuss the themes we constructed. Implications and potential contributions of this research culminate the article.

The Research Questions and Context

Policies such as President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act (US Department of Education 2001) and the United Kingdom's White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* (Department for Education and Skills 2005) invoke a metaphor of partnership that casts parents as 'powerful driver[s]' (p. 3) in helping students reach excellence. Asian schools throughout Korea (Ho 2006) and in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Education Department 2000) promote broad school community involvement through structures such as school councils, as do those in Europe (Dom & Verhoeven 2006) and Australasia (Boylan 2005; New Zealand Ministry of Education 2005). In Canada the scene is similar: Saskatchewan's revision of the Education Act in 2006 (Saskatchewan Learning 2005a) to legislate School Community Councils punctuated a trend in which all provinces and territories developed formal and/or informal structures for parental participation in school planning and governance (Young & Levin 2002). The responsibility for providing students with excellent educational opportunities, experiences and outcomes is no longer solely attributed to educators and policy-makers.

Driving this trend toward whole-school community collaboration is research that links students' academic performance with parent and community participation (Epstein 2001; Henderson & Mapp 2002). Parents are increasingly asked to contribute to educational decisions that historically were beyond the purview of nonprofessionals. Formal structures such as school councils are mechanisms intended to transform parents' engagement beyond traditional ways. While encouraging from a democratic point of view, the centralising of parents and other non-educators in school reform through councils or similar structures has achieved momentum through the assumption that creating a space for parents through policy or programmes necessarily or automatically confirms for them that educational decision making is their *place*. We questioned this assumption. There is rhetorical agreement about the importance parents and community members have in helping all children succeed, but there is ambiguity about how these nonprofessionals (re)construct their role vis-à-vis educators within an educational reform context. With this concern in mind, Saskatchewan's new legislation of SCCs (Saskatchewan Learning 2005b) served as the backdrop for examining the following:

  a. How do school principals and parents perceive the role of parents in improving student achievement?
  b. How do principals' and parents' conceptualisations of a changing role for parents through structures such as SCCs lead or not lead to a change in their interactions?

Given the human and capital resources spent on formalising parent and community involvement, we felt a deeper understanding of whether/how such approaches were perceived by principals and parents who traditionally occupy extreme points on a policy implementation continuum would be beneficial to policy-makers, educational practitioners,

researchers, and the public who have entrusted the aforementioned with our educational institutions.

Much research on parents seeks to confirm the benefits of involving them in schools (Epstein 2001). These predominantly postpositivist studies have given rise to parent involvement practices that have been challenged from the perspectives of gender, socioeconomic standing and ethnicity (Lareau 1996; de Carvalho 2001; David 2004). In this vein, others have examined mechanisms such as school choice and governance purporting to give parents voice and choice in their children's schools (McKenna & Willms 1998; Beck & Murphy 1999; Caines 2005). A particular focus on governance structures such as school councils (Beck & Murphy 1999; Benson 1999; Parker & Leithwood 2000; Caines 2005) has been useful for describing the nature and extent of parents' engagement in these opportunities in terms of parents' socioeconomic and cultural differences, as well as teacher–parent dynamics in school council contexts. The field has not, however, paid attention to non-educators' views of their role or influence as school council members in decisions regarding student achievement, or how educators and non-educators understand the transition from parent volunteerism to authentic collaboration through the organisation of school councils.

Saskatchewan's Policy Context

Saskatchewan boasts a 'proud tradition of cooperation and community' (Saskatchewan Education 1999, frontispiece); much emphasis has been placed on the importance of local voice in education (Noonan, Hallman & Scharf 2006). The genealogy of the School Community Councils Policy is linked to a spate of other policy initiatives that reflect this philosophy (for example, Saskatchewan Education 1999; Saskatchewan Learning 2001 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b; Government of Saskatchewan 2002; Saskatchewan Association of School Councils 2007).

Until the 2006 mandate of School Community Councils (Saskatchewan Learning 2005a), however, parents' roles in their children's learning were largely external to school improvement planning. The revision of the Education Act in that year was a watershed, for it entrenched in law parents' role and responsibility in developing Learning Improvement Plans with their children's schools (Saskatchewan Learning 2005b). Along with serving cake, parents were also decreed to survey achievement data to become direct participants in curricular goals and outcomes. This was the backdrop against which our research was conceptualised.

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

Since the objective of our study was to document the perspectives of principals and parents regarding the role of parents in improving student learning, we believed casting a constructivist (Denzin & Lincoln 2005) light upon our research questions would help us understand in particular the views of parents, typically penumbral to educators' and policy-makers'. Using collective case study (Stake 2005), two rural schools (K–5 and K–12) within a newly structured Saskatchewan school division were selected. Most schools in this division had started to implement the SCC policy. Data were collected during the first year of implementation of the SCC policy (2007) through two focus-group interviews with school division principals (Noonan 1997) conducted in March and May, and individual semistructured interviews (Fontana & Frey 2005) with two principals and six parents. Using purposeful (Mertens 2005) and snowball (Wellington 2000) sampling to achieve in-depth

interpretation (Stake 2005), we selected a cross-section of rural and urban[2] parents who had children in a range of grades. Principals described these parents as having various levels of involvement with the school and the new SCC. Interviews were audio-taped for the purpose of returning transcripts for member check (Lincoln & Guba 1985). During the second interview, we also provided our oral and written interpretations of the participants' responses for a member check. Interview data were augmented with analysis of Ministry and school-based documents, SCC meeting attendance, and field notes.

The Cases

The Elementary School (K–5[3]) and The Composite School (K–12) were situated in communities of over and under 1,000 inhabitants, respectively (Statistics Canada 2006a). Based on Huling's (1980) definition, these were small schools, serving fewer than 200 students. In characterising their communities, these principals reported a homogeneous population primarily of Caucasian, working-class status. Both also used hybridism to describe their towns' agricultural roots and increasingly non-agrarian commuter character, suggesting that though the towns were 'predominantly rural by numbers, a large part of [them] aren't rural by nature' (Focus Group, 6 March 2007). At the time these data were collected, Saskatchewan was experiencing economic prosperity; hyper-escalation of real estate in urban centres encouraged families to seek more affordable housing in rural communities (Statistics Canada 2006b), resulting in what these principals opined was a mixture of 'traditional' families committed to quality of life in the community, and a new cadre who worked in other cities and were 'disengaged from the social aspect of the community' (Focus Group, 6 March 2007).

The Participants

We were pleased to obtain a gender balance in the principal sample. Sophie, the principal of The Elementary School, and Ryder had more than ten years of school administration experience but had spent less than five years in their current posts.

The parents we interviewed for this study considered Sophie and Ryder hard-working and effective principals. One mother used 'gift' to describe her children's school principal.

All six parents (five mothers and one father) had more than one child. Half of them had children spanning elementary and secondary grades. Four of the parents maintained rural residences, and, of those four, only one parent did not participate in her/his children's school's SCC. All these parents lived in two-parent households. Three were stay-at-home parents, although two conducted business from their homes. Additionally, four parents experienced temporary lone-parenting because their spouses (husbands in most cases) had shift work, educational pursuits, or employment that required long, irregular hours, and/or extended periods away from home.

It was not useful to categorise these parents according to school because their descriptions of the parental role seemed to emerge more from their philosophies of education and community. The school itself did not seem to factor into these parents' responses. Furthermore, we were cognisant that literature on parent involvement tends to homogenise elementary parents as more 'involved' and secondary parents as less so (Epstein 2001), and

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2. Urban parents were those who reported residence in the community in which their children attended school.

3. Pseudonyms are used throughout for the purposes of anonymity and confidentiality.

we questioned this dichotomy after our conversations with these parents. Our strategy, then, was to seek similarities and differences based on individual responses, and to discuss these in relation to school sites when statements warranted.

In the next section we introduce themes constructed from our interviews with these eight participants.

Presentation and Discussion of Themes

Following Stake (2005), we manually coded the data in three phases to construct themes that reflected principal and parent perceptions of the role of parents with respect to the SCC policy. This process was supported by the use of NVivo qualitative software. Based on our research questions we constructed three themes:

a. the transition to SCCs was equivocated by previous parent bodies that overshadowed the SCC policy;

b. an entrenched division of labour between educators and parents prevailed, interfering with these principals' and parents' ability to reconceptualise a parental role in terms of curricular matters; and

c. these parents and principals emphasised the SCC's role in bridging the school and the community, but were ambiguous about how or whether parents could participate in school improvement planning.

Spillane, Reiser & Reimer's (2002) notions of the way cognitive schema function in policy implementation was useful in guiding our interpretations.

Identity Confusion

Previous to the SCCs The Elementary School and The Composite School engaged parents through what were known as Local Boards and Home and School Associations. As members of the former, parents had jurisdiction over policies such as transportation of students and the hiring of teachers; the latter primarily involved parents in noncurricular support. According to policy, Local Boards were dissolved, and though the Home and School Associations were not meant to be replaced by the SCCs, this was the case in both schools. It appeared that SCCs operated within the framework of the Home and School Associations. The SCC transition occurred in name only. In our analysis, the identity confusion was explained by parents' confusion or incomplete understanding about the purpose of the SCC. Principals, however, focused on the administrative aspects of establishing the SCC, and were uncertain about how parents would contribute to students' learning. Both groups created an SCC identity from the historical precedent of Home and School Associations or other traditional forms of parent involvement.

Parents: 'The policy, I don't really understand.' There was lack of consensus among parents about the SCC policy, as exemplified by the following comments:

Apparently we have to approve such things as field trips and school trips. All of that kind of stuff has to be approved through the Council. (Bernadette)

I would hope that they can build this school's spirit back up to where it was before. (Margaret)

I think that on the most basic level would be that extra little bit of fundraising that we can do. (Louise)

Regardless of whether or not these parents were SCC members, the policy purpose eluded them. The principals reported that they made efforts to communicate the new policy either through school newsletters that were delivered to all community members, or by hosting division-sponsored information nights before the legislation was finalised. We also noticed that division materials about the SCC policy had been photocopied, enlarged, and pinned to a bulletin board in The Elementary School. The principals seemed confident that their school communities were informed, yet, when we cited the purpose of the SCCs as defined in the policy document, these parents either rhetorically agreed that parents should play a role in the Learning Improvement Plan or they were incredulous about engaging parents in learning-specific goal setting.

Given that the SCC policy was in the beginning stages, a clear understanding of its purpose would perhaps have been unrealistic. However, even the parents who were SCC members and had received the handbook that outlined the policy did not feel informed, telling us that the handbook 'created a whole huge amount of questions' (Louise) or was 'overwhelming' (Bernadette). This begs the question of whether parents can be expected to decode education-specific information as a prerequisite for participating in such discussions. Furthermore, how parents interpret policy documents may differ from educators and policy makers (Stelmach 2005). Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) argued that without structured opportunities for stakeholders to construct policy meaning and understand its implications for their own behaviour, they will interpret policy according to individual values, beliefs and prior experiences. Though the division provided such a structure, one principal during the focus group interview explained, 'It [SCC policy public meeting] was very well done, but it just so happened that the audience at that meeting did not come forward to be on the SCC' (Focus Group, 18 May 2007). Targeted and ongoing training for parents seemed inconsistent at best, although division-level personnel such as superintendents periodically attended information sessions sponsored by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association.

Historical context influences individuals' sense-making of policy (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002). The default for most of these parents was to define the SCC in terms of the previous parent bodies. The principals also claimed that some parents thought the SCC was like the 'old school board' and that 'some members [were] continuing … with their Home and School Association identity' (Focus Group, 6 March 2007). The parents we interviewed confirmed this.

Parents' reasons for joining or opting out of the SCC in their children's schools gave us further insight into how they understood its purpose and potential. The variation of comments emphasised that these parents defined the SCC in terms of personal frameworks. Curiosity brought some parents to the SCC meeting:

> I thought this is new so I would go and see what it was all about … I joined for me. (Bernadette)

> I hemmed and hawed about it for a little while … But I weighed the pros and cons and said I wouldn't mind to find out what it's about and what we're looking into. (Pauline)

These parents seemed to be seeking information for themselves. Parents who did not join the SCC perceived it as time-consuming and beyond their current interests. Clarence and Fleur, for example, were supportive of the SCC philosophy, but prioritised other community and/or family commitments. One parent joined because of strong faith in the principal; another declined membership because of an opposite feeling about the principal. Personal values and biases were at the core of how these parents perceived the SCC policy (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002).

Louise's reasons for joining the SCC perhaps most closely resembled its underlying aim of benefiting children:

> This is about the children. It's not about the school building, it's not about the teachers, it's not about any personal advancement. It's simply about those children, and so I came into it with that attitude that it was basically going to be a glorified Home and School [Association]. (Louise)

Because the previously existing Home and School Association basically performed a social function, Louise's identifying the SCC with it suggested that for her the SCC was an officiated network of parents interested in putting on 'the little extras' for the children. She preserved an historical tradition of parents filling in social gaps. Interestingly, Louise punctuated the above statement with, 'I was wrong,' indicating that her conceptualisation of the SCC had been challenged, yet she did not identify with what Saskatchewan Learning had proposed for the SCCs. In fact, she was adamant that the focus remain on doing things that 'if they were to stop, it would be a loss for those children'. Preserving traditional roles in times of uncertainty was a point raised by Dom and Verhoeven (2006) in their study of legislated parent involvement in Belgium. This sentiment seemed to be shared among these parents, making it difficult for the SCC to be understood as anything other than an SCC dressed up in Home and School Association clothes.

Principals: 'It may take a long time before we're there.' The principals' reported understanding of the policy aligned with the government documents. We learned, however, that how principals identified with SCCs on paper and how they saw them in terms of their educational practice were quite different. There was an obvious tension between the principle and the practice (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002). Theoretically, Ryder and Sophie connected the SCC to the Learning Improvement Plan:

The role of the SCCs is that they are to advise the school – according to the new language – to advise and participate in developing that school level plan. (Ryder)

> Our SCCs, their purpose is school improvement, and so the opportunity is there for a changing role. (Sophie)

In practice the principals did not strongly identify with the policy vision of having parents directly contribute to the Learning Improvement Plan. Timing seemed to be one of the issues, for the deadline for schools to submit their plans to the division was set before SCCs were established at the schools. As a result, some principals explained that they were only able to share their schools' goals. In the same vein, one principal expressed scepticism about the scheduled roll-out of the SCC policy: 'I think we are just too rushed … They needed to have [all] SCCs up and running before a critical date' (Focus Group, 18 May 2007). The perceived push was related to organisational restructuring, which resulted from school division amalgamation in that same year. Howlett & Ramesh (2003) describe the policy process as a firestorm, which was a central issue in these cases. The Elementary School and The Composite School demonstrated the need for an imperfect implementation.

Time for administrators to attend to SCC development was also raised as an issue. Ryder recognised that 'the school council does create another thing for me to do'. He and Sophie both facetiously wondered if the SCC policy was a 'make-work' project. Principals who attended the focus group clarified some of the ways in which SCCs overwhelmed their schedule. For example, principals felt responsible for (re)creating a vision around parent involvement and providing parents with the necessary skills to take up a new role. Consider the following:

> The effectiveness of the SCC is dependent upon the skill, attitude and aptitude of its members. Some members don't understand what they are supposed to do. For example, I need to explain or train them about our school's reading plan before they can be of assistance. (Focus Group, 6 March 2007)

Now, essentially your staff of 24 becomes a staff of 37. You have to provide PD [professional development] for all these people … That's a lot of work. (Focus Group, 18 May 2007)

Another high-maintenance aspect about them [is] if you lose a couple of members, you have to train new members how to be meaningfully and genuinely involved. (Ryder)

Most principals felt the school division should have allowed more time for preparing principals and parents for the transition to the SCCs. This speaks to the disjuncture between reform clocks (Lodge & Reed 2003). Whereas meso-level personnel march to bureaucratic time, micro-level implementers operate on practitioner time (Lodge & Reed 2003). The perceived insufficiency of time to understand the policy was perhaps one reason why, in practice, the principals could not identify with the SCC as a mechanism for improving student learning.

Division of Labour

The SCC mandate attempts to blur a professional and non-professional boundary, but researchers conducting studies on teachers' perceptions about involving parents have made it clear that an impermeable boundary persists in the collective voice of the profession (Davies 1993; Sarason 1995; Walsh 1995; Casanova 1996; Vincent 1996; Allen et al. 1997; McKenna & Willms 1998; Crozier 2000). In a study of a new parent participation law in Belgium, Dom and Verhoeven (2006: 588) characterised the parents' function as 'domain-specific', which corresponds to Lawson's (2003) notion of schoolcentric parent participation. Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) argued policy is never inert, but rather it is filtered through an individual's prior knowledge, values and beliefs. Importantly 'new information is always interpreted in light of what is already understood' (2002: 394). We found this helpful for interpreting these participants' dichotomisation of duties.

Parents: 'It's not our place.' When we asked these parents to describe the SCC's role in students' learning, we faced a continuum of opinions. At one extreme parents said, 'It's not our place,' (Clarence); at the other end parents were ready with ideas. Margaret offered:

> As a parent, if I would be given the choice to help decide academically what should happen at the school, we'd go back to the elementary school and go back to the basics. We would reinforce those basics.

Similarly, Fleur spoke about a perceived need to improve basic skills such as penmanship. Margaret and Fleur were exceptional in that they agreed without hesitation that parents had a role to play in curricular decisions; however, we noted that their suggestions for improvement indexed their own educational experiences. 'Basic skills' and handwriting were educational outcomes they recalled and related to.

Most of these parents appreciated the idea of parents contributing to student learning decisions, but were unable to envision it. We asked parents, 'Do you see the School Community Council having a role in academic achievement?' to which these parents replied:

> I think it depends on what area we're talking about. If we're talking about curriculum, I don't ever see the SCC having a part in that. I really don't. (Louise)
> Concept-wise, it's probably a good thing. (Clarence)

The primary barrier to successfully transforming the parental role into one that

approximated teachers' was that parents were not confident about what they perceived as teachers' knowledge. This is consistent with parent perceptions reported in the literature (Lawson 2003; Stelmach 2005). To what extent, then, should parents be expected to acquire the information necessary to participate in school improvement planning? Additionally, in what ways might principals make this kind of information accessible while maintaining student confidentiality and without overburdening parents?

Clarence and Louise provided some insight into the aforementioned questions, and shed light on an angle of parent involvement that tends to be overlooked. Clarence and Louise emphasised that parents are *volunteers*. In their minds, this circumscribed their role in certain ways. For example, they both raised the issue of parents being ill-equipped to make decisions that normally fell within the teachers' domain. Clarence said:

> Other than supporting the decisions that are made and curriculum choices and stuff like that, I can't see my wife or me actually steering those decisions, doing the research … I don't think that's our place.

Clarence suggested parents had a role to play when it came to 'soft' or 'life' skills, but decisions that impacted the classroom seemed beyond a volunteer's role. We made this interpretation based on his reference to the previous Local Board's responsibility for hiring teachers: 'I wouldn't want to be charged with hiring. I don't think so as a quote-unquote "volunteer".' Even though SCCs no longer had influence over hiring, other parents' comments about teacher professionalism suggested to us that these parents delineated roles according to a set of credentials. In this regard, Louise' comments were instructive and are worth quoting at length:

> I would need to have that specific information of what an average expectation is before I could ever say that [the school] is lacking. I don't know. To me that's going beyond volunteer work. If that comes to the point where that expectation is there that we have to make those decisions, how am I going to make the decision if I don't feel like I have the information for it? If I have to spend five hours getting the information before I can make that decision, now we're talking about a job.

Tied to the notion of parents being volunteers was the perception that this status denied them a strong voice. As Margaret said, 'They'll listen to parents' voices but not necessarily take it anywhere'. Louise experienced what seemed to her like perfunctory gestures made by administrators claiming to be interested in parents' opinions. She felt that on some issues the SCC had 'absolutely no control' even though they were invited to get involved. For this reason, Louise claimed, 'Parents will only jump a few times and then they'll stop because there was no gain'. The notion of personal gain or fulfilment is intricately related to volunteerism; therefore, it was easy to understand why Louise would 'stay up until 1:00 a.m. and make brownies'.

Principals: 'I think school councils will evolve … at least I'm hoping.' Studies on educator perceptions of parents have pointed to educators' desires to preserve a traditional professional–parent relationship (McKenna & Willms 1998; Dom & Verhoeven 2006), but in our study we found divergence between Ryder and Sophie's views about the SCC role. Ryder's statement that principal–parent interactions '[depend] largely on [principals'] philosophy of education … and leadership and management style' seemed pivotal to the way a division of labour was interpreted by Sophie and Ryder.

Ryder felt it was important to focus on the 'intent and spirit of the law' rather than get caught up in the 'nuts and bolts of it'. His SCC members were 'shoulder-tapped' rather than elected

as the policy dictated. His reason for side-stepping the legalities was that his 'goal was to get as many people as [he could] involved'. He also overlooked membership quota, claiming, 'You can't make it meaningful and then turn them away'. Ryder hoped that the SCCs would 'evolve' into groups that were self-managed and comfortable making decisions about the school plan. He was resigned, however, to the possibility that 'we may never get there' because of fluctuation in membership, multiple interpretations of what the SCC was supposed to do, and parents' comfort zone around educational issues. His lament was that the SCC policy took away parents' power over hiring. His describing SCCs as 'neutered' suggested to us that he was in favour of parents having some control over educational matters. The difference in his relationship with the former Local Board compared to the new SCC reinforced this. For example, he described himself as a 'guest' at Local Board meetings; whereas, he understood he had to be the leader at the SCC meetings. In this way, Ryder agreed with the parents who emphasised that parents were volunteers. He stated:

> People will not volunteer to go to another meeting just for the sake of going to another meeting. They have to feel like they're accomplishing something, like they're contributing something, that they're making a difference.

Areas that seemed to be important to parents were related to extracurricular functions, school facilities and teacher appreciation, according to the discussion at the SCC meeting at The Composite School. Even though Ryder knew that the SCC was supposed to be discussing school improvement, he seemed to allow the identity slip to the Home and School Association as a means to get the group going. His hope, however, was that the group would evolve into its intended purpose.

Sophie took a different approach to establishing the SCC in her school. She followed the policy 'by the book', though she admitted that she also specifically asked certain parents who she thought would be interested or effective to join. Her management approach possibly explains why her more rigid division of labour between parents and educators was more consistent with the literature (McKenna & Willms 1998; Dom & Verhoeven 2006). She was supportive of the move to take away Local Boards and their ability to hire teachers, citing that 'involvement in hiring … is the professionals' job'. Unlike Ryder, she was concerned with the legalistic aspects of the policy and mentioned that 'my role as a professional [is] to ensure that data that is confidential is not shared with our SCC'. She appreciated what she perceived as a clear separation of roles for parents and teachers. This did not preclude, however, her 'excitement' about parents being transitioned to a role that connected them more closely with learning. What was less clear was in what areas Sophie would invite parents to participate. To illustrate:

> The most meaningful role for parents is what they do on a daily basis at home with their kids … What can parents do to support our math goal? … My dream is that the SCC organises math nights: what you can do at home. Those kinds of things.

Unequivocally, Sophie was interested in parents participating in their children's learning, and in her mind a traditional supportive role was appropriate, at least at the early stage of SCC development. She believed the SCC provided an 'opportunity for a changing role' and that it was 'very ambiguous'. A factor that Sophie raised illuminated her views on the division of labour in a way that the literature does not. Her own comfort level was an important element in how she approached the SCC involvement in improvement planning:

> I think I'd have to have confidence that the SCC understands their role, and differentiates their role as SCC versus professional. I have to have in my mind for my

> own comfort level a framework – and it isn't in my mind yet – how do you facilitate that discussion and put parameters on it that will be helpful … I have a June meeting coming up and I'm planning to do an overall review of some of the goals we set as a school – I don't feel comfortable at this point involving our SCC in that discussion, … that ground-level, background work. Maybe in a year I'll be comfortable with that.

While other principals cited lack of professional development and support from the division as potential barriers to transforming the SCC into what is was intended to become, Sophie personalised the desire to preserve traditional roles, giving us a new way to understand administrators' perspectives on parent involvement policy. This desire might be framed as a desire to maintain self-image (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002) as a competent, strong leader. This points to the importance of leadership education and training that prepares educational administrators to be self-reflective and reflexive, and to understand the philosophical underpinnings of their leadership practices.

Points of Convergence: Community Bridging as a Hopeful Role for SCCs

Up until this point we have been concerned with explicating from these parents' and principals' points of view the difficulty with reconstructing the parental role in terms of academic goal-setting and learning outcomes. On this point, a principal's statement sums up well the inherent challenge to transforming parental roles in education:

> I think the SCCs are floundering a little but as to what is the theory behind this all. They can't identify what their internal motivation is, what their role is, and in what direction they should be going. (Focus Group, 18 May 2007)

These principals and parents, however, did find convergence on one particular role for the SCC: bridging the school and the community. It is in this regard that we interpreted the rural nature of the schools to bear on their perspectives about the SCC. Overwhelmingly, these principals and parents placed the SCC's role on maintaining a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between the school and the community. In fact, when we first posed to them the question of how they perceived the role of the SCC, parents responded as follows:

> I just know the School Community Councils are supposed to be there to kind of bridge a gap, to bring the school and community closer together and to work towards what's best for our kids. (Fleur)

> I think they have been brought in to help the school be part of the community, to continue to be part of the community, or be more so part of the community. (Margaret)

> One of the most important things they can learn [to do] is to be an advocate of public relations, communication experts of the community, the voice, of not only the community, but also for the parents in general. (Focus Group, 18 May 2007)

We interpreted the rural characteristic of the communities as a central reason why these parents focused on community well-being rather than student academic achievement. All these parents reported helping out the school in various ways in addition to being active members on community boards and organisations. Their response to our query about why they engage in the community in that way was, 'That's what you do'. Rural schools may have something to offer regarding parent and community involvement because of this prevailing attitude. They recognised, however, that not all community members shared this attitude; thus, we interpreted the SCC as facing the challenge of soliciting interest in

membership in the same way that educators complain that the same group of parents volunteer to help the school. Ryder, in fact, used the metaphor of a forced marriage to suggest that policy alone could not bring community together. This does not discount the optimism that these parents and principals maintained about the cohesiveness the SCCs could bring to their school communities.

The principals looked at the school-community as a mechanism of communication and as a network. SCCs were perceived as channelling information both away and to the school. Though Sophie did not yet see how non-educators would participate in school improvement planning, she indicated that it was important for the school community to be aware of the school's goals:

> Our SCCs can be that liaison in the community, getting that word out that the school is working on these areas of improvement, this is what's happening, this is what's going on. So I think they are a very informal voice in the community. (Sophie)

Ryder illustrated how the communication could work in the opposite direction by saying, '[SCCs] give you another opportunity to get a sense of how you're doing as a school in relation to your community and how they perceive you'. Pauline agreed that sometimes ideas get crossed, and so she viewed the SCC as a place to receive accurate information.

The SCC also served as a resource. The principals spoke about the benefit of involving community members who had access to human or material resources that the school could utilise. The two-way flow was less fluid on this matter, though, because while we heard at an SCC meeting at The Composite School that community members were interested in accessing the school after hours, the principal explained to us later that logistics such as insurance and wear and tear of school equipment was an issue that may prevent such reciprocity. However, the possibility for the SCC to enhance the school–community relationship was obvious to these participants.

Additionally, the principals saw the SCCs as a 'testing ground' (Sophie) for strategies or a place to 'bounce things off' (Ryder). Although indirect, this seemed to us to be a form of involving parents and community in school improvement, which appeared to be critical to these principals. Consequently, Ryder's opinion that the SCC's legislated advisory capacity devalued its role as stated earlier, somewhat contradicted his claim that the SCC would be an important second glance at educational planning and practice. Though the advisory role of parents is cast as problematic from an equity point of view (Morgan & Morgan 1992), what we heard from these principals and parents suggested a potential way to reframe this role, particularly because these parents did not favour the idea of being held responsible for curricular decisions.

From Cake to Curriculum? Final Thoughts and Implications

In this article we reported interpretations derived from parents' and principals' perception of a changing parental role brought about by the legislation of School Community Councils (SCCs) based on a case study of two rural schools in Saskatchewan, Canada. Three themes were our focus. First, we characterised the transition from parents' traditional involvement to a quasiprofessional one as identity confusion. For the most part, we did not see that the parents' role had changed, nor that parents and principals were ready to or certain about how to make a change. These parents and principals relied on previous practices, and therefore could not envision the SCC fulfilling a role in supporting the development of the schools' Learning Improvement Plans. Our second theme indicated that the transition was

further thwarted by an entrenched division of labour between parents and professionals. Third, somewhat resolving the identity confusion of the SCCs, these parents and principals identified the SCCs as a bridge between the school and community as its central role. From these themes, we suggest two ways in which our study potentially cleaves existing literature on parent involvement.

First, studies on school councils have been primarily insightful about the impact of parents' socioeconomic or ethnic status on equal opportunities (Beck & Murphy 1999; de Carvalho 2001; Caines 2005). These studies have shown that a dichotomy between professionals and parents has been maintained. This division of labour was upheld in our study; however, we interpreted a new way to understand parents' place on the educational landscape. By placing priority on the SCC's role in the community, these parents and principals suggested to us that parents identify more strongly with their respective communities, rather than with a more narrowly perceived school community. Boylan (2005) argued that rural school councils must focus on training parents because they tend to lack formal education. We challenge this by suggesting rural administrators and their communities might benefit from training in collaborative decision-making, community building, and inclusive engagement. These principles talked about SCC development as a task, but underlying their dilemma about how to make SCCs effective was a philosophical question about how to be collaborative with different sectors of the school community. Considering the increasing recognition of the ecological nature of schools and the necessity for pooling resources (Decker, Decker & Brown 2007) we suggest that schools in all contexts of engaging parents require support in learning how to build relationships, and are optimistic that rural school councils could model the kind of community ethos that our schools require.

Second, a distinction is regularly made between parents and professionals (McKenna & Willms 1998; Dom and Verhoeven 2006), but we argue a more apt distinction in the realm of parent involvement is between *volunteers* and *employees*. Although parents may be happy to be a checkpoint for school improvement decisions, it may be unrealistic to expect them to contribute beyond that. As we learned in this study, the responsibility for information involved in making intelligent decisions for the benefit of children exceeds that expected of a volunteer. Furthermore, what we heard from these parents was that they were not interested in the responsibility. Rather, they wanted to be part of activities and opportunities that gave to the school added educational value. This is not to say that there is no place for an organisation such as a School Community Council. Indeed, these principals and parents expressed enthusiasm for their potential. Instead, our contention is that principals must understand parents and create opportunities for them to be involved in their children's education in whatever way they feel comfortable and capable. Importantly, none of the parents we interviewed could have been labelled 'disengaged' from their children's education even though some of them did not set foot in the school often or at all. Thus, the conceptualisation of the parental role must be broadened.

We concluded that the SCCs in these two schools had not yet undergone a transformation that the policy envisioned. To be fair, the first year of implementation would not reasonably have allowed for that. Our concern in this study was to understand how the principals and parents viewed the transition, how or whether their perceptions of the parental role evolved, and how the policy would affect their interactions. Based on this study, we know that the transition process is slow, and that it takes what many described as 'baby steps'. Further study is required into what those baby steps look like and to understand the catalytic events

that may transform parents' roles into curricular decision-making. How educational administrators can be supported to lead such processes is yet to be clarified. Questions may include:

    a. What values and assumptions about collaboration undergird educational administrators' professional development and practice?

    b. What conditions are necessary for parents and principals to readjust their identities in relation to each other and school reform processes?

    c. Can policy transform the parental role?

Exploring these questions may yield a better understanding of how parents may choose to contemplate curriculum and/or serve cake.

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Examining the Relationship of Job Satisfaction to Teacher and Organisational Variables: Evidence from Cyprus

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Abstract: *The study aims to investigate the relationship of organisational and teacher variables to job satisfaction among teachers in Cyprus. Data were collected through a questionnaire used in the 'Teacher 2000 Project', which examined teacher job satisfaction in several countries including Australia, England, New Zealand and the USA. A logistic regression model was employed to investigate the link between several variables and job satisfaction. According to the findings, four variables were found to have a significant effect on the likelihood of teacher job satisfaction. These were: (a) gender – men reported higher satisfaction than women; (b) school level – teachers working at lower education levels reported greater satisfaction than their higher-level counterparts; (c) satisfaction with the school climate; and (d) satisfaction with the degree to which the teacher had attained his/her professional goals. Pay was found to be weakly associated with job satisfaction. The implications of the findings for policy initiatives aimed at increasing job satisfaction in education are discussed.*

Introduction and Aims of the Study

Over the last three decades, many studies have attempted to identify sources of teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction for elementary and secondary school teachers (for example, Grassie & Carss 1973; Kyriacou 1987; Garrett 1999; Dinham & Scott 2000, 2002). According to the majority of these studies, teacher satisfaction is clearly related to levels of intrinsic motivation associated with entering the profession because of the love for teaching and the love for children. In contrast, teachers viewed job dissatisfaction as principally contributed to by work overload, poor pay and perceptions of how teachers are viewed by society. In general, though, studies have found variations in the job satisfaction levels of teachers, depending on certain individual and school characteristics (Spear, Gould & Lee 2000).

One reason for these variations is the lack of consensus on the definition of job satisfaction (Nias 1989; Evans 1998). There is no agreed definition of the term, with different authors emphasising different aspects of job satisfaction. Locke (1976), for instance, considers job satisfaction to be the pleasure derived from a positive assessment of job experiences, while

Cranny, Smith & Stone (1992) view job satisfaction as an emotional reaction to the comparison of actual to expected outcomes. As noted by Evans (1998), Herzberg – whose dual-factor theory (see Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman 1959) has been widely used as the basis for investigation of the concept – does not provide a definition of job satisfaction in his work. The lack of clarity on what constitutes job satisfaction has meant that different authors have used different definitions and different operationalisations of the concept, leading to findings that are thus not comparable.

It is also suggested that the adoption of Herzberg's model by the majority of researchers has limited the scope of investigation on the topic. According to Herzberg, two distinct categories of factors are linked to a worker's job satisfaction. The first category includes factors that are intrinsic to the work itself such as achievement and recognition. The presence of these factors, which were called 'motivators', can lead to positive attitudes on the part of workers. The second category (named 'hygiene' factors) consists of factors linked to the extrinsic aspects of work, such as working conditions, supervision and pay. While motivators result in positive job attitudes, dissatisfaction does not occur in their absence. The reverse is the case for hygiene factors: they can cause dissatisfaction if absent but their presence will not lead to high levels of satisfaction.

Herzberg's model has been widely criticised in the literature on several grounds with criticisms addressing both conceptual and methodological issues (see, for example, Locke 1976). It has been suggested that Herzberg fails to take into account the role of individual characteristics in motivation, which could relate to differences in values and attitudes. In addition, it has been proposed (Dinham & Scott 2000) that Herzberg's model should be modified to include a third group of factors, which include variables associated with the school's wider environment (for example, the critical stance of government and society towards teachers and their work). Based on the findings of international surveys, Dinham and Scott arrived at a more complex model of job satisfaction than the dual-factor framework posited by Herzberg.

The research presented in this study is based on the survey instrument developed by Dinham and Scott (1998) and subsequently used in several countries, including Cyprus. In this study, we use the data collected from Cyprus to investigate the link between two main groups of variables and teacher job satisfaction in the country. Specifically, we focus on school organisational factors and individual teacher characteristics. The choice of organisational and teacher variables is supported by the available research findings, which point to a link between the former and teacher job satisfaction. Organisational factors reported to be linked to job satisfaction in the literature include leadership style (Bogler 2001), the openness of the organisational climate (Grassie & Carss 1973; Miskel, Fevurly & Stewart. 1979), and the degree of teacher participation in decision-making (Imber, Neidt & Reyes 1990; Rice & Schneider 1994). Organisational problems such as the lack of administrative support, low pay, and limited opportunities for advancement have been found to have a negative effect on job satisfaction (Litt & Turk 1985; Clarke & Keating 1995).

The incidence of job dissatisfaction is considered to be the main reason for the high attrition rate among newly appointed teachers in Western countries (Murmane, Singer, Willet, Kemple & Olsen 1991; Wise, Darling-Hammond & Berry 1987). A study of American leavers from the teaching profession reported that the main reasons for turnover were problems in the areas of school administration, student motivation and discipline (Whitener, Gruber, Lynch, Tingos, Perona & Fondelier 1997). Likewise, a study of job satisfaction among

American teachers (NCES 1997) found administrative support and leadership, school atmosphere and teacher autonomy to be strongly associated with teacher satisfaction. Similar findings have been reported in recent studies (NCES 2002; NEA 2003; Belfield 2005). According to Belfield (2005), teacher dissatisfaction in the US can be partially explained by the modest earnings of teachers. An NEA (National Educational Association) study found salary and working conditions to be the main factors that would cause American teachers to leave teaching (NEA 2003). Such findings suggest the need for further investigation of the link between job satisfaction and organisational variables in an educational context. In addition to organisational factors, individual teacher variables are also examined in the paper as factors associated with job satisfaction. As previously mentioned, Herzberg's dual-factor model has been criticised for failing to take into account individual differences in employee motivation and satisfaction. It is thus considered important to investigate the role of teacher variables in an attempt to identify the effect of individual differences in teacher job satisfaction.

The present study examines specific organisational and teacher variables commonly associated with job satisfaction. The organisational variables include satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with school climate, satisfaction with opportunities to assume a leadership role at the school, and satisfaction with the degree of teacher participation in school decision-making. Teacher variables include personal/demographic characteristics (gender, postgraduate qualifications), school level (pre-primary, primary, secondary-lower, secondary–higher), and individual/psychological variables (satisfaction with ability to influence student learning, satisfaction with degree of attainment of professional goals). In the present study, a statistical model is used to examine the relationship between these factors and teacher job satisfaction.

The investigation of the variables associated with teacher job satisfaction can be expected to provide the basis for planning and policy decisions aimed at enhancing teacher work commitment and reducing turnover. Unlike some demographic and school-level variables, organisational variables can be influenced in the framework of a school restructuring and/or improvement plan. For instance, if teacher participation in decision-making is found to be linked to job satisfaction, it is possible for school management to take measures at the school level in order to increase the input of teachers in decisions. Consequently, the investigation of the impact of organisational variables on teacher job satisfaction is likely to be useful in identifying ways of minimising job dissatisfaction among teachers.

The Background

Unlike the research reported so far, the cultural context in which this study is undertaken differs from other Western countries. An important aspect that differentiates the Cypriot context is that teaching in general, and specifically elementary school teaching, is an especially popular destination for high school graduates. The reason for this popularity is believed to relate to the terms of employment and work incentives offered to primary school teachers upon their appointment (Zembylas & Papanastasiou 2004). Until recently, primary education graduates were offered a post immediately after the completion of their studies whereas secondary teaching posts were available only after a significant waiting period, which could range from a few years to one or two decades. Other reasons for the popularity of teaching as a career include an attractive working schedule with short working days and long vacations, and the relatively high status of the teaching profession. Finally, and more importantly perhaps, a highly competitive salary is offered to appointed teachers, with a

starting salary of approximately $17,450, which is higher than the per capita income of $14,342 (Zembylas & Papanastasiou 2005). Thus, primary education teaching is an attractive option for many secondary school leavers, who value the employability and security it offers. However, at the same time, there is evidence of job dissatisfaction among in-service teachers, especially in relation to the current evaluation and reward system (Pashiardis 1996; Menon & Christou 2002; Zembylas & Papanastasiou 2004). Nevertheless, this has not led to high attrition levels, as practically all appointed teachers choose to remain in their posts due to the lack of more promising career opportunities outside teaching.

In the case of Cyprus, motivation and job satisfaction in education have been investigated in a small number of recent studies. The main findings of available research on the topic show teachers to be largely motivated by extrinsic factors in the choice of teaching as a career (Papanastasiou & Papanastasiou 1997; Zembylas & Papanastasiou 2004). This pattern of extrinsic motivation applies to higher education candidates in general (Menon 1998). A study of the perceptions of teachers on the organisation of primary schools in Cyprus found teachers to be generally satisfied with the organisation of their workplace (Menon & Chistou 2002). In agreement with previous findings, areas of lower satisfaction/dissatisfaction included evaluation and promotion practices. Taken together, the available evidence points to the influence of organisational factors on Cypriot teachers' choice of teaching as a career, which calls for further investigation of the impact of organisational variables on teachers' subsequent job satisfaction.

An attempt was made to examine the variables associated with teacher job satisfaction in Cyprus using the questionnaire from the International Teacher 2000 Project, an international study on teacher satisfaction, motivation and health (Dinham & Scott 2000, 2002). In the framework of this project, data were collected from different countries including large countries such as Australia, England, New Zealand and the USA, and small countries such as Malta and Cyprus. Overall, this series of studies found that teachers obtain their greatest satisfaction through a sense of achievement in reaching and affecting students, experiencing recognition, and feeling responsible, as well as through a feeling of personal power and motivation. On the other hand, teacher dissatisfaction was found to be associated with increasing work responsibilities stemming from social change and disruption. Moreover, teachers reported dissatisfaction with the perceived low status of their profession, and with low levels of pay in particular.

Given that the previous findings of the International Teacher 2000 Project in Cyprus pointed to the importance of several variables as influences on teacher job satisfaction, it was considered useful to further examine the role of different factors, including organisational ones.

Methodology

Surveys were used to collect primary data for the study. A questionnaire developed and used by Dinham and Scott (1996, 1998, 2000, 2002) was adapted to the Cypriot context. More specifically, certain modifications were made to the original instrument in order to ensure a high response rate and to adapt its content to the educational and cultural context of Cyprus. As a result, the third part of the original questionnaire that dealt with the teacher's general health, and the open-ended questions were removed from the Cyprus version of the instrument. These sections were removed for three reasons. First, the section on teacher's health was beyond the scope of the questionnaire. Second, due to the large number of questionnaires administered to teachers in Cyprus, response rates tend to decline when

open-ended questions are included in the questionnaires. Therefore, to secure a higher response rate by the participants, the open-ended questions that asked the teachers to list other sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction were removed from the questionnaire. Third, specific questions were also deleted to ensure that all questions were relevant to the cultural and background characteristics of Cyprus. For example, there was no reason to ask teachers in Cyprus whether they became teachers because they had no other choice (which was included in the original questionnaire). As previously mentioned, teaching is a popular choice of a profession for many high school graduates. In addition, some of the questions of the original questionnaire were only related to the Australian reality and were also deleted. Such questions included, 'How satisfying do you find recent changes to curricula?', 'How satisfying do you find recent changes to school responsibilities, e.g. social welfare and vocational education?'

In the questionnaire, teachers were asked to answer a number of demographic questions including gender, school type and higher qualification obtained. Respondents were also asked to use a seven-point scale ranging from No Satisfaction (1) to Very High Satisfaction (7) to rate several aspects of the teaching profession, generally associated with teacher job satisfaction. Important aspects for the purposes of the present study included pay, the school climate, the ability of the teacher to influence the performance of students, the degree to which the teacher had achieved his or her professional goals, the opportunities of assuming a leadership role at the school, and the degree of teacher participation in school decision-making. In addition, respondents were asked to rate their overall job satisfaction also using a seven-point scale.

The questionnaire was translated into Greek and pilot tested in September 2002. The final version was administered to teachers in October 2002 and was completed by a total of 459 teachers. A judgement sample was used, which covered all geographical districts of the Republic of Cyprus.

The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis, which involved both descriptive and inferential statistics.[1] Based on the responses to the overall job satisfaction question, respondents were divided into two groups, those who were satisfied with their job and those who were dissatisfied. A dichotomous job satisfaction variable was thus created. This was used as the dependent variable in regression analysis, while the previously mentioned individual and organisational variables were used as independent variables. The dichotomy of the dependent variable (respondents divided into satisfied and dissatisfied individuals) called for the use of the logistic regression model. Under this model, the predicted value of the dependent variable is interpreted as the probability that an individual will be classified in a certain category (in this case, the category of individuals satisfied with their job), given his or her demographic and individual characteristics (the independent variables). Consequently, the model can be used to identify the characteristics most likely to be associated with job satisfaction. Overall, the analysis employed in the present study can

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[1]The first analysis of the findings provided a general overview of teacher job satisfaction in Cyprus Following the publication of this overview (see Zembylas & Papanastasiou 2004), more specialised analyses of the findings were carried out in order to further investigate the role of specific variables and their link to job satisfaction. The methodology of the present study was considered to provide the basis for this additional investigation.

provide the framework for a better understanding of the variables associated with job satisfaction, thus allowing for policy measures aimed at enhancing work satisfaction and commitment in education.

Results

Women made up 70 per cent of the sample, while the average age of the teachers participating in the study was 37.04 years. As regards school level, the majority were primary school teachers (67.2 per cent). The remaining were secondary school teachers (15.9 per cent lower secondary and 11.5 per cent higher secondary), with a small number (5.5 per cent) of kindergarten teachers. The majority of teachers (85.3 per cent) had a university diploma or equivalent, while 14.7 per cent had postgraduate qualifications.

The majority of respondents (86.7 per cent) reported satisfaction with their work, with 13.3 per cent indicating that they were dissatisfied. Despite being low, the percentage of dissatisfied respondents constitutes a source of concern in the case of Cyprus. This is because teacher turnover is virtually non-existent in the country, with dissatisfied teachers forced to remain in their job due to the lack of alternative career opportunities.

Table 1 presents the results of the logistic regression equation, which was estimated in order to examine the effect of several characteristics on the teacher's job satisfaction. Thus, job satisfaction was viewed as a function of the following variables: GENDER (male/female), EDUCATION (postgraduate degree/no postgraduate degree), SCHOOL LEVEL (preprimary, primary, lower secondary, higher secondary), and the extent of satisfaction with the following (1–7 scale): 'Ability to influence the performance of one's students' (PERFORMANCE INFLUENCE); 'Remuneration' (PAY); 'Work climate at the school' (SCHOOL CLIMATE); 'Degree of attainment of professional goals' (GOAL ATTAINMENT); 'Opportunities for undertaking a leadership role at the school' (LEADERSHIP DUTIES); 'Opportunities for participation in the decision-making processes at the school' (PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING).

Table 1: Standardised regression coefficients, standard errors, and Wald statistics

Independent variables	B	SE	Wald
Gender	-1.23	0.38	10.31**
Education	-0.38	0.42	0.82
School level	-0.43	0.20	4.41*
Performance influence	0.02	0.17	0.01
Pay	0.22	0.13	2.96
School climate	0.34	0.13	6.79**
Goal attainment	0.48	0.17	8.49**
Leadership duties	0.07	0.16	0.18
Participation in decisions	-0.17	0.16	1.15
N	459		

*p<0.05; **p<0.01

The results of the logistic regression indicated that the overall chi-square test for the logistic model was significant I^2_9=277.66 (p=0.000), which indicated that there were differences between the two groups on the dependant variables of interest. More specifically, as seen in Table 1, of the nine independent variables, four had a significant effect on the likelihood of reporting job satisfaction. The logistic coefficients (*B*) are interpreted as the change in the logarithm odds of the dependent variable associated with a one-unit change in the independent variable. Thus, gender, school level, school climate and goal attainment had a significant effect on the respondents' job satisfaction.

As regards to the first significant variable (gender), it is interesting to note that men were more likely to be satisfied than women. This is not in agreement with some previous research findings, according to which women are more likely to report job satisfaction than men (see, for example, NCES 1997). However, other studies have found women to be less satisfied with their job than men are, especially in higher education (Hagedorn 1996; Tang & Talpade 1999).

The second significant variable is the level of the school, with respondents more likely to report satisfaction at lower levels (as suggested by the negative B coefficient). This finding has been reported in previous studies of job satisfaction (Choy, Bobbitt, Henke, Medrich, Horn & Lieberman 1993; NCES 1997). In Cyprus, public secondary education has been linked to a number of problems, including that of pupil discipline and teacher control over the classroom environment. Numerous cases of violent student behaviour have been reported in the local press in the last few years. Consequently, secondary school teachers may experience more difficulties in working with children compared to their primary school counterparts. This could account for the lower job satisfaction levels reported by the former.

The school climate also exerts a significant effect on teacher job satisfaction: respondents with higher satisfaction on this variable were also more likely to report greater overall job satisfaction. This is shown by the regression coefficient, which indicates that the school climate is significantly linked to teacher job satisfaction. The importance of a healthy school climate has been frequently highlighted in the literature, which links the quality of the institutional climate and culture to school effectiveness (see, for example, Deal & Peterson 1990). Thus, the present study provides evidence that supports the reported link between a positive evaluation of the school climate and teacher job satisfaction. Finally, the fourth variable found to have a significant effect on job satisfaction is that of the perceived degree of professional goal attainment on the part of the teacher. As expected, teachers who were satisfied with the degree to which they had attained their professional goals were more likely to report higher overall job satisfaction.

In terms of the remaining variables, it is interesting to note the fact that satisfaction with pay does not have a significant influence on teacher job satisfaction. This is in agreement with previous research findings, according to which teacher satisfaction is clearly related to levels of intrinsic empowerment (Choy et al. 1993; Dinham & Scott 2002; NEA 2003). In a large previously mentioned US study, a weak relationship was found between teacher satisfaction, on the one hand, and salary and benefits on the other (NCES 1997). This appears to be the case in Cyprus, as the remuneration variable is only marginally nonsignificant, suggesting that pay is of some importance to the job satisfaction of school teachers.

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[2]The Hosmer and Lemeshow test was non-significant with a chi-square ⁻28=6.40 (p=0.602), which indicated that there was a good model fit since the data did not significantly deviate from the model.

In the present study, higher educational qualifications are not associated with an increase in job satisfaction. Thus, teachers with postgraduate qualifications were not found to be more satisfied with their job. This has been reported in previous research (NCES 1997). The two remaining variables – namely, the opportunities for undertaking a leadership role at the school and the opportunities for participation in decision-making – also have no significant effect on job satisfaction. These variables have been reported to have a positive association with job satisfaction in other countries. This is not the case in Cyprus, where the highly centralised education system may prevent teachers from gaining an awareness of the benefits of involvement in the school managerial processes.

Discussion and Implications of the Study

The findings of the present study point to the importance of several predictors of teacher job satisfaction. The results of the logistic regression analysis applied to the primary data of the International Teacher 2000 project suggest that job satisfaction is affected by a number of variables, which include teacher and organisational characteristics. Of the former, gender and school type are both positively linked to job satisfaction, with men and teachers of lower education levels reporting greater satisfaction than their female and higher-level counterparts, respectively. Of the organisational variables, the school climate was found to have a significant effect on teacher job satisfaction. Given that the school climate is a broad concept referring to the set of internal characteristics used to distinguish one school from another (Hoy & Miskel 2005), it appears that the teachers' perceptions of the totality of school environmental factors have a significant impact on the way teachers rate their work satisfaction. The final significant variable is an individual characteristic, referring to the degree to which the teacher believes that he or she has attained his or her professional goals.

Of the four variables found to be linked to job satisfaction, three belong to the category of individual teacher variables. This renders some support to the criticism of Herzberg's dual-factor model, which does not take into account the role of individual variables in employee motivation and satisfaction. The findings of this study also support the data collected from other sites in which the International Teacher 2000 project has been implemented and highlight the importance of the cultural situational context in relation to individual teacher characteristics. It thus appears that models of job satisfaction should include an individual/situational component in order to acknowledge that individual characteristics may affect job satisfaction. The extent to which a specific model successfully captures the main factors linked to job satisfaction may depend upon the individual teacher's characteristics. For instance, one model may be applied more successfully to men than to women. Moreover, as shown by the present study, the individual characteristics that appear to be important as predictors of job satisfaction are not restricted to demographic variables (such as age and gender) but include psychological/attitudinal characteristics as well.

In relation to organisational variables, the weak association between pay and job satisfaction found in the present study has also been reported in previous research. In the case of Cyprus, the job satisfaction of teachers who report having been influenced by extrinsic motives in choosing teaching as a career was not found to be strongly associated with remuneration as their teaching experience increases. It is interesting to note that the decrease in the importance of pay as a satisfaction-contributing factor is not necessarily linked to an increase in the importance of intrinsic variables, such as the satisfaction resulting from the ability of the teacher to influence student learning. The latter was not found to have a significant impact on overall job satisfaction among teachers in Cyprus.

The findings have important implications for educational policy aimed at enhancing the levels of job satisfaction of school teachers in Cyprus. Specifically, they point to the need for identifying and implementing measures that can increase job satisfaction and minimise dissatisfaction based on the results of the analysis employed in this paper. Policy-makers in a centralised educational system, such as that of Cyprus, have the main responsibility for enhancing the job satisfaction of teachers, and thus need to be aware of organisational and personal/individual variables as factors that may positively influence the quality and effectiveness of teachers' work life (Buchmann & Hannum 2001).

First, in relation to gender and school level, it is necessary to investigate the reasons for which female and higher-level teachers are less likely to report satisfaction. Possible reasons for the dissatisfaction of women could include their lower positions in the hierarchy, the initial higher expectations on their part, and the greater pressures they encounter in their attempt to successfully cope with work and family responsibilities. Likewise, higher-level teachers may face serious difficulties in coping with increasing discipline and control problems and more administrative work.

In addition, it is also necessary to examine the role of school climate, which, unlike gender and school level, is open to manipulation by policy-makers. The importance of the work climate as a satisfaction-contributing factor has been reported in previous studies of job satisfaction in Cyprus and Greece (Menon & Christou 2002; Menon & Saitis 2006). Given that the school climate has several dimensions, it is important to identify those dimensions more likely to be associated with job satisfaction and design policy measures accordingly. Such measures could include greater opportunities for cooperation and communication among teachers through team projects (such as school improvement initiatives) and greater support for teachers facing problems with students and/or parents (for example, parent–teacher conferences).

At a policy level, the importance of teacher satisfaction with the degree of attainment of professional goals should also be acknowledged. Teachers should be encouraged to set realistic and attainable goals, the attainment of which will result in greater job satisfaction. In this context, it is important to offer teachers more opportunities for in-service training in that changing conditions in the teaching profession may often prevent them from accomplishing their objectives in cases where they lack up-to-date information and training. Mentorship programmes could be especially useful to newly appointed teachers, who may face difficulties in their transition from the university to the work environment. Moreover, career ladder programmes could be used in an attempt to set targets for both new and experienced teachers. In this context, the jobs of teachers could be gradually enlarged to include work on special projects, possibly allowing for additional compensation. At high levels, master teachers could undertake additional responsibilities such as involvement in research, supervision of new teachers and the design and/or modification of curricula. In this context, it is important to also address recent changes in the role of teachers (Esteve 2000; Dinham & Scott 2002) and examine the effect of these changes on teacher motivation and satisfaction.

The remaining variables could also be further investigated in an attempt to design measures for improving teacher job satisfaction. For instance, the distribution of leadership responsibilities and the participation of teachers in decision-making have been reported to have a positive effect on job satisfaction in other countries. In Cyprus, the centralisation of the educational system may have prevented teachers from gaining an awareness of the benefits of such dimensions of their work environment. However, within each school,

educational administrators and teachers can explore better ways of increasing teachers' involvement in decision-making and enriching the responsibilities of the teacher community as a whole. Finally, it is also necessary to consider the role of additional variables in an attempt to arrive at a more comprehensive model of job satisfaction.

Taken together, the present findings point to the need for further research on the topic. Different types of research should be considered as qualitative research can be useful in investigating further the reasons for which teachers are satisfied or dissatisfied with their work. The reported findings have revealed certain patterns that may be due to reasons different from the ones commonly assumed to hold true. Moreover, the degree to which these patterns persist over time should be investigated through longitudinal research. Overall, the present study provides important information about the levels of teacher satisfaction and motivation in social contexts in which the demands of teachers for better salaries seem to be satisfied.

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Leadership in an Academic Career: Uncovering the Experience of Women Professors

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Abstract: *This paper discusses the leadership experience of a group of women professors in the journey to reach their present career positions. The paper starts by describing the established public universities in Malaysia with emphasis on the distribution of professors by gender, followed by salient features of academic career. It then outlines the research procedures, using career-history data of 31 women professors from eight Malaysian universities. Themes generated from the data are as follows: leadership contributing to one's visibility at the university, leadership as a factor in academic promotion, women leaders as role models, leadership in international networking, leadership's role in professional training and consultancy, and the challenges of being a woman leader. The study concludes that among the three-in-one functions of teaching, research and services, leadership roles at universities are very meaningful to an academic's career development. Recommendations for organisational development and future research are highlighted.*

Introduction

The status of women in high leadership positions in institutions of higher learning has created much interest among researchers, interested in discovering how women have coped with various challenges, and have managed to move up the vertical career hierarchy. The literature argues that leadership and career are gendered (Astin 1984; Gottfredson 1996; Isaacson & Brown 2000), and yet nothing much is known about the dynamics of leadership and career among Malaysian academics according to whether they are male or female. Hence, this paper, which is based on a larger study among women professors, attempts to answer the following research questions:

  a. What is the profile of the group of women professors in terms of leadership position? and

  b. How can their leadership experience be explained in relation to their present career position?

This paper first highlights the background of public higher-education institutions in Malaysia with an emphasis on the distribution of professors by gender, followed by the salient features of academic careers worldwide and in Malaysia. It then discusses the research procedures, using a career history data of 31 women professors to answer the

research questions. Subsequently, results are presented in the form of themes of women's leadership experience in relation to their professorial position.

Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia: The Study Context

Table 1 presents Malaysian universities in 2004 and the distribution of professors by gender. There are 17 public universities in Malaysia and each has its own historical background. The oldest institution is the University of Malaya, founded in 1949 in Singapore and later established in Kuala Lumpur as an autonomous campus in 1959. It remained the only university at the time Malaysia was formed in 1963. Two more public universities were established to cater the needs of tertiary education in the country. They were the University of Science Malaysia (USM), founded in 1969, and the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, UKM), founded in 1970. Two more universities were set up during 1970 to coincide with the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) (1971–1990), namely the University of Agriculture (UPM), founded in 1973 and later renamed the Universiti Putra Malaysia in 1996, and the University of Technology Malaysia (UTM), which was founded in April 1975.

The International Islamic University (IIU) was set up in May 1983, the Northern University of Malaysia (UUM) in 1984, the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) in December 1992, and University of Malaysia Sabah (UMS) in November 1994. An interesting development of recent years has been the upgrading of the MARA Institute of Technology (which was founded in 1959), to university status in 1998. In the same year, there was also the upgrading of the Sultan Idris Teachers' College (SITC) to university status (University of Sultan Idris Teachers' Training, UPSI

More new public universities were formed in 2004 as university colleges in the states of Trengganu, Johore, Malacca, Perlis, Pahang and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. Their main objective is to upgrade the development of education, emphasising the usage of information and technology in its academic function.

The creation of more public universities could have several implications. First, it shows that the country is serious about the role of tertiary education in providing qualified human resources in nation-building. Second, the universities could now absorb the ever-increasing number of qualified candidates for tertiary education because the country can not afford to continue to send students abroad for higher education. Third, the country is taking the initiative to prepare Malaysia as a higher educational hub in the Asian region. Finally, in terms of human resource development of the academics, there is an increased demand for highly qualified teaching staff; hence, it is obvious that academics' career development has become more dynamic, and one aspect of that is the attainment of the status of professorship. A phenomenon observed in the population of public universities' campuses is the larger number of girls compared to boys, with a percentage of 65 for the former and 35 for the latter. This has an implication in the employment opportunities of educated women, including within the institutions of higher education. This study is, therefore, an initiative to look at the last implication (among women professors) because there are an increased number of women lecturers in the public institutions of higher learning, of which a number have attained a professorial position.

Table 1 also shows that the Malaysian public universities that have the most number of professors for both genders are those with a long history of establishment (in other words, which were founded before the mid-1970s). The University of Malaya has the most number

of professors: 153 men and 79 women. Next is the National University of Malaysia, which has 131 men professors and 57 women professors. Universiti Putra Malaysia also indicates encouraging statistics for both genders in the professorial position: 102 men and 31 women. Other universities – particularly the new ones such as Universiti Teknologi MARA, University of Malaysia Sarawak, University of Malaysia Sabah, University of Sultan Idris Teachers' Training and Northern University of Malaysia – display small numbers of women professors, in the range of one to 11. The newly emerging universities, founded at the beginning of the 21st century, that were recently awarded college university status also have professors, but the numbers are still very low.

Table 1: Malaysian universities and the distribution of professors by gender in 2004

University	Men (n)	Women (n)	Total (n)
University of Malaya	153	79	232
National University of Malaysia	131	57	188
Universiti Putra Malaysia	110	31	141
University of Technology Malaysia	89	9	98
International Islamic University	75	7	82
University of Science Malaysia	55	11	66
Universiti Teknologi MARA	44	8	52
University of Malaysia, Sarawak	24	2	26
University of Malaysia, Sabah	19	4	23
University of Sultan Idris Teachers' Training	14	4	18
Northern University of Malaysia	11	1	12
Islamic University College of Malaysia	12	2	14
Total	**737**	**215**	**952**

Source: Maimunah and Roziah (2006: 22).

Salient Features of an Academic Career: A Global and Malaysian Perspective

Literatures by Baruch (2004), and DeFillippi & Arthur (1994) show that there is dynamism in the theory and practice of an academic career, including the leadership role. This is due to some salient features of an academic career that make it different from careers in other types of organisation. Some of the features are explained as follows.

Expectation of a High Level of Competence

Academia has been traditionally known as a source of wisdom. The university has been labelled as a centre for knowledge generation, and it is generally thought that those who want to increase knowledge must pursue a university education. Pursuance of higher education means continuing academic learning beyond the primary and secondary levels. Various terms have been used to associate the noble nature of a university as a source of knowledge for the wellbeing of society. Examples of such terms are 'university as an ivory tower' and the image of the 'Ivy League' universities such as those in the USA and the *grandes écoles,* the term used in France (Conferences des grandes écoles 2003). In Malaysia, there is no such demarcation among the universities, but those establishments with a long history and long-standing relationships with society with regards to both nation-building

and knowledge creation are considered as having the characteristics of elite universities. Bearning in mind the above characteristics, it is therefore concluded that to be admitted to a university, particularly as a member of staff, one is expected to have a higher level of academic qualification than those in non-academic institutions.

Multiple Academic Responsibilities

An academic has to perform various responsibilities on a daily basis. These pluralistic roles make an academic function particularly demanding. It is often said that an academic wears different 'hats': a lecturer, professor, supervisor, researcher, consultant, administrator, coordinator and an editor, to name a few. Those responsibilities emerge from the three universal functions in academia: teaching, research and services (Poole & Bornholt 1998; Eggins & Macdonald 2003; Baruch & Hall 2004). There may be some overlaps among those responsibilities – sometimes many do them quite simultaneously, whereas at other times they are mutually exclusive. The academic positions in Malaysia follow a hierarchy, thus: tutor, lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, and professor. It is worth noting the relative emphasis placed on the three academic functions of teaching, research and service, which ranges from 10 per cent to 50 per cent for each function. The variation is dependent on many factors, such as seniority, academic position, leadership appointment and academic specialisation.

It is also well understood that while teaching is the core business of an academic, it must be supplemented with scholarly work or research. Scholarly work is needed in order to remain current and effective as an educator in any specialisation. Moreover, Poole & Bornholt (1998) point out that the academic reward structure is biased toward research and publications. This shows that research should end up with publication, and that most importance is given to the use of that knowledge by society or through commercialisation. Research-related activities – as opposed to community service, and the intellectual and social development of students – are highly valued in assisting academics' career advancement. But in many Malaysian universities the focus is on an equal weighting of the three functions of teaching, research and services.

Another factor affecting the magnitude of teaching, research and service functions of academics is the type of the university. 'Research status' universities have a higher emphasis on scholarly work compared to 'teaching status' universities. Research status universities are expected to integrate the results of their research with their teaching. Certainly, it needs longer time for a university to achieve research status. In Malaysia, four established public universities were awarded research status in 2006: they are the University of Science Malaysia, the Universiti Putra Malaysia, the National University of Malaysia, and the University of Malaya.

Participation in governance structures is another essential feature of academic function. It is broadly categorised under the service function. This is to ensure that programmes and curricula are of high quality and are academic in nature. Governance structure is related to the formal administrative structure of a university: Malaysian universities comprise faculties or schools and institutes, which are headed by deans and directors, assisted by deputy deans and heads of department. The individuals in the structures are all academics who function as leaders in the running of the faculties or schools and institutes. They are assisted by administrative staff, also known as managerial and professional staff in the higher category, and general support staff in the lower category. The indirect impact of participation in the

governance is one's visibility at a university. According to Kram & Hall (1996) and Kloot (2004), visibility in any corporate governance is important in the process of managing human resources, specifically in monitoring one's performance.

An additional facet of the service function is the mandate given to the faculty members to share their knowledge with the community outside the campus. This includes providing economic advice to industrial institutions and development agencies at federal or state levels, as well as to community organisations in terms of extension services in order to disseminate knowledge and good practices related to community development in urban and rural areas. The purposes of the service functions are to bridge the gap between university and society as a whole, to make the university curriculum practically oriented, and to create opportunities for students' practical work. By having university–society–industry linkages, technology transfer functions are facilitated. Specifically, academics act as consultants, subject-matter specialists, extension agents, providers of resources, or general adult educators. Towards this aim, the established public universities in Malaysia in 2007 set up a new portfolio led by a deputy vice chancellor called the Division of Industry and Community Relations.

An academic career is highly regarded, and thus it is said that the contribution made by an academic is not only to a university where he or she belongs, but also to the field of specialisation. Because of this, Bailyn (2003) strongly believes that the academic career is a profession with a great deal of overload. She defines overload not only as the amount of demands that are made on a person, but also the time taken to see the results of a certain project. For instance, conducting a field study, supervising a graduate student and writing a book are all work for which the results cannot be seen overnight, and once the task is completed it is indeed a life-fulfilling experience.

Academics are, therefore, expected to know their multiple roles and responsibilities right from the beginning of their career. It is inappropriate if an academic is to concentrate on only one function: for example only on teaching (which will be equated with the focus of a college or polytechnic), research (the mission of a research institute) or service (the function of public service organisations). In a nutshell, Malaysian academics do a three-in-one function, a characteristic that distinguishes them from pure educators, researchers and service providers of other corporate and public organisations.

Degree of Independence

Another salient feature of an academic career is the degree of independence that explains the behavioural functions within the boundary of academic freedom. According to Wicks (2004), academic freedom is therefore confined by the rules and regulations in the curriculum, scope of the field of specialisation, and the vision and mission of the university in terms of the three functions (that is, teaching, research and services). Similarly, Bailyn (2003) refers to an academic career as providing more freedom and autonomy than most high-level professions do.

There are strengths and weaknesses to the independence characteristic of academia. Baruch & Hall (2004) argue that this feature makes the academic profession attractive because of the free flow of thoughts and the areas of research on which one can embark. However, if the independence is misperceived and abused, academics may not be able to clearly delineate their roles in the three functions of teaching, research and services. One of the ways for career-identity development is the establishment of a niche area in teaching and research that, by all means, should be developed early in one's career.

Independence is related to flexibility and both may lead towards intellectual freedom and academic scholarship (Baruch & Hall 2004; Wicks 2004). This is based on the philosophy that the pursuance of knowledge knows no border, be it in terms of time, place, depth and breadth of the field, or methodology.

In terms of time limit, academic freedom has always enabled academics to view their career as boundaryless. Services of academics are still needed even when they reach retirement age (in Malaysia this is up to 56 years; the USA has no age limit). In certain cases, an academic is given the position of Emeritus Professor at a university because of his or her vast contribution to academia.

The degree of independence and flexibility in an academic career may be a plus to women academics as they may capitalise on this fact in terms of balancing career and domestic demands. These academic features encourage women academics with a family to becoming career-oriented rather than job-oriented, which forces them to adapt to the limited opportunities. Therefore, the degree of independence and flexibility offer a kind of accommodation to the career of women academics.

The Intelligent Career in Academia

The concept of the intelligent career in academia was first used by Arthur, Claman & DeFillippi (1995), followed by Baruch (2004). This idea was inspired by previous work on the subjective side of the career reflecting the meaning that people ascribe to their own career situations, in contrast to the objective career reflecting the normative roles and sequences of roles suggested by the occupational structures (Parker & Arthur 2002). The intelligent career is based on three intrinsic elements of work in academia: knowing why, knowing how, and knowing whom. In essence, the intelligent career refers to the fact that one knows how to work 'smart' in academia.

Knowing why is the mental ability to explore, to be scientific, and to use innovative ideas. This is especially relevant to tasks in research. Knowing how is the competencies that involve emotional intelligence and the ability to develop strategic procedures in conducting teaching and research, especially regarding long-term endurance and effectiveness. Teaching and research are two separate activities but, in reality, an academic should be smart and make the two complement each other. Certainly, one should know how to make use of research results in teaching or to make teaching interesting by continuously updating the contents with latest knowledge.

Knowing whom is associated with the ability to network and establish connections. This professional relationship with the right person at the right time can occurs locally (such as within an organisation) as well as inter-organisations and internationally. It is believed that the latter has more impact on career and it essentially takes time to develop unless one has already been involved in some networking activities during a graduate or postgraduate programme abroad.

The three ways of knowing also illustrate the underlying core competencies that every academic must possess for a successful career. Those who can put these into practice early in their careers can also get a head start on their professorial track.

Intellectual Capital

Many universities in the world, including those in Malaysia, have adopted the principles of acknowledging the knowledge creation of an individual in the form of intellectual capital.

This means that any new knowledge in the form of a research breakthrough or innovation is the property of the researcher or inventor, with a certain per centage going to the university. This concept of intellectual capital is one of the academic features similar to those in research and development institutions, and makes both types of institution very attractive to researchers or scientists.

It is therefore felt that there is an unexplored link between the salient features of the academic career and the career development of women academics. Furthermore, the academic literature has suggested that there is a need for women academics to voice their experiences not only of their role expectations, issues related to gender accessibility to management, promotions and career mobility (Forster 2000; Bailyn 2003) but also on questions about their leadership experience and how this experience is meaningful to their career. This is important, as Morley & Walsh (1995) argue that women academics should demonstrate how the individual and organisational climate of academia influences their dynamism as leaders, and how this knowledge is shared with others. Hence, this paper is an attempt to highlight the leadership profile of a group of Malaysian women professors, and is based on their leadership experience and how it relates to their professorial careers.

This article adopted Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown & Hackett 1994, 1996) as the basis to explain the relationship between women professors' leadership experience and career development.

Theorising Women Professors' Career Development

The complex phenomenon of women professors' career development is explained by Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent, Brown & Hackett 1994, 1996). SCCT, which forms the foundation of this study, postulates that human functioning is the product of a dynamic interplay of (a) personal factors in the form of cognition, affection and biological events, and (b) behavioral and (c) environmental influences. The theory is an application of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory to career development.

In this study context, SCCT specifically outlines the processes whereby career interests develop sociocognitive mechanisms that promote career-relevant choices, and the attainment of career performance and persistence. The theory also takes note of the development of leadership traits that further influence career development. The particular cognitive mechanisms by which individuals develop, pursue and modify their career-related interests over time are: self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Self-efficacy beliefs play a key role in motivating behaviour and reflect an individual's confidence in performing career decision-making tasks (Betz & Hackett 1986). Outcome expectations refer to beliefs regarding the long-term consequences of success in career decision-making behaviours. Personal goals reflect an individual's decision to perform specific activities or to act so as to achieve a desired outcome (Bandura 1997).

In SCCT, besides the three cognitive factors, personal inputs, such as gender, intelligence and individual predisposition are also incorporated, as are proximal and distal contextual factors, such as cultural and gender role socialisation, which are also critical sources of influence on career development. Lent et al. (2000) further posit that contextual influences such as career supports and barriers can be crucial in the development of career beliefs. Contextual factors affect women professors' learning experiences, through which their career-relevant efficacy and outcome expectations develop. According to SCCT, contextual and personal factors, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal-setting behaviour all

influence each other in complex, reciprocal ways. These interactions shape the individual's career-related actions and performance. Through repeated activity, modelling and feedback from significant others, individuals also develop specific skills, set their own performance standards, develop varying levels of confidence in specific types of activities and tasks, and form expectations about the future outcomes of their performance.

One of the contextual factors found to be uniquely relevant to the development of leadership skill and career achievement in women professors is support from parents, siblings and family members. Additionally, the right environment either at school or in the family, where leadership attributes are groomed and trained, has significant effects on personality, which then contributes to their career achievement.

The Career-history Study

The data generated from this study were based on a career-history method. Career history is essentially the description and meaning of career activities resulting from an inter-play between life and career events. The data were obtained through in-depth interviews with respondents. The respondents of the study were women professors from seven established public universities and one private university in Malaysia, representing various fields of specialisation in the fundamental and applied sciences, as well as social sciences. A criterion used for selection was that each professor had held (or was currently holding) a leadership post at her respective university. The names and information of the respondents were obtained from the registrar office and website of the universities. A total of 78 respondents were selected from a population of 215 women professors. The respondents were then contacted by ordinary mails, emails and telephone calls to invite them to participate in the study. Thirty-one women professors were interviewed, as the data obtained were believed to reach saturation point. A recorder-cum-transcriber was used to facilitate the interviews and the transcribing processes. Each interview lasted one to two hours and addressed topics related to the research questions. A total of 42 hours of recorded interviews were later transcribed verbatim. Constant comparative analysis of data (Ritchie & Lewis 2003) was conducted to generate themes as they relate to respondents' leadership experience at the universities and its contribution to their current position as professors. This method involved deriving themes from one part of the data and testing them on another by constant checking and comparison across different respondents.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents

The respondents' average age was 49.6 years, 41 being the youngest and 60 the oldest. The average age at which they were promoted to the position of professor was 44.5 years with a mode of 45 years. All respondents were married, with one respondent being a single mother due to the death of her husband and another respondent being separated. The average family size was 5.6, with 18 respondents (58.1 per cent) having 1–3 children, 7 respondents (22.6 per cent) having 4–5 children, and 6 respondents (19.4 per cent) having 6–8 children. Twenty-four of the respondents were specialists in the fields of technical sciences and only seven respondents were in social sciences. Their detailed breakdown according to the specialisation in technical and social sciences is shown in Table 2. The majority of the respondents studied in single-sex or girls-only schools during their primary or secondary education. All respondents were full-time staff of the universities.

Table 2: Respondent by field of specialisation

Field of specialisation	Number of respondents	Percentage
Pure science (chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology, taxonomy and ecology, environmental biology and aquatic ecology)	9	29.0
Applied science (engineering, food science, solar energy, veterinary science, agriculture and pharmacy)	9	29.0
Social science (education, Malay studies, social and town planning management, psychology and economics)	7	22.6
Medicine	6	19.4
Total	**31**	**100.0**

Table 3: Respondent by leadership position at the university

Leadership position	Number	Percentage
Deputy vice chancellor	1	3.2
Dean	3	9.7
Director of centre	6	19.3
Deputy dean	8	25.8
Head of department	7	22.6
Coordinator of programme	3	9.7
Head of unit/discipline	3	9.7
Total	**31**	**100.0**

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents by current leadership positions at the universities. The three most important positions they held were deputy dean (25.8 per cent), head of department (22.6 per cent) and director of centre (19.3 per cent). There was one respondent as the deputy vice chancellor and three others as the faculty dean. The study also noted that five of the respondents had multiple leadership positions previously.

This study generates themes based on the respondents' leadership experiences in academia and how the experiences related to their present career position.

Leadership contributing to one's visibility at the university

A salient feature of multiple academic functions is the likelihood of an academic to become a leader. Most respondents mentioned that they had held at least a leadership position before being promoted to a professor, such as a programme coordinator, head of department, or deputy dean. They said it was important to be in a leadership position in order to be more visible in the academic structure. It was also an important factor for their recognition at the university. Hoschette (1994) points out that the value of good visibility is accelerated career advancement. Therefore, he strongly suggests the need to have good visibility, especially with upper levels of management, as visibility could also be associated with power. However, leadership alone does not guarantee that a person will go higher in the academic

hierarchy, because intellectual development is a function of one's scholarly enhancement, making it necessary for an academic to become involved in knowledge creation through research and publication. It has been observed that once an academic is identified as a high achiever in a department, that person will be quickly picked up by the faculty or university to become an important management asset of the institution. Being in the leadership position is also a kind of university recognition. Respondents had this to say:

> When he (the former director) was leaving, he called me up and said, 'I think it is time for you to be a director…' I accepted the post but I told him that there will be some changes. I am not a person who likes to follow what other people have done. He conceded that I can be creative as long as it is good. So I took the challenge. Actually, now we are professors, having this kind of post is good when we go out… Because when people introduce me, they always introduce me as the director of an institute. To me, that was good. Though we were accomplished in our research area, but if we didn't hold any top post at the university, I think it was sort of unusual. It is the university recognition of us.

> Of course by being in that leadership position, you become more visible and have a lot of things to do. You have to deal with people outside your place and you have to prove yourself that you can do the deals. When you are in the leadership position, there is something good that you have done more than anybody else in the faculty or university.

According to the signal theory, the visibility mechanism suggests that individuals may not necessarily intentionally send information signals to higher management reflecting their potential and differentiating them from other individuals, which may be used in making selection and promotion decisions (Spence 1973). The ability and potential capability that lead to their visibility and differentiate them from other academics serve as a mechanism to their leadership appointment. A respondent in economics had this to report:

> Our vice chancellor called and talked on the phone. The first thing he said to me was: 'I need your help… You have to lead the faculty' (I am leading now). Even the staff members at the department and faculty level had submitted my name. So the decision for my appointment was also from here… from the former dean and heads of department. However, at that time, I was heading one of the new institutes.

For some respondents, they were given leadership duties as soon as they came back from their doctoral study. Being new, therefore, they had to juggle their limited time doing research and publication. A respondent in education shared the following experience:

> When I came back from my PhD, I was entrusted with a leadership function. So I took the assistant head position straight away. They created that position since they didn't have it before. I was an assistant head for two years… I guessed they were testing me. So, following that, the head of department position was on my shoulders.

Leadership as a factor in academic promotion

Respondents never failed to mention that the leadership experience was an important aspect in their promotion. A professor is considered as an all-round individual. Therefore the person has to prove his or her ability to manage certain roles in the organisation and to lead the organisation to a greater height. Moreover, he or she has to show his or her capacity to translate ideas into action. As such, taking on leadership responsibilities on top of other tasks in teaching and research is challenging, transformative and empowering. Respondents in management, biochemistry and education each reported the following, respectively:

> My promotion was based on two things. Like everybody else, one of these was my contribution to the leadership aspect of the Management School of the university. I was the coordinator of management, involved in coordinating teaching in the subject of management at the university and all its branches. So that made a lot of travelling. Secondly, in 1989 to 1990, I started writing when I was in a state in Malaysia. Although I had done some minor writing before, this was the point where I decided to write my first book. Furthermore, they recognised that in the market there was no suitable textbook for management students. I was teaching business students but the books were written by law lecturers or those in industrial relations with legal backgrounds. Our business students who were using English as a medium could not certainly cope with those books written by lawyers. So that was where I decided to fill up the 'vacuum' in the market by starting to write.

> … And I felt that if somebody were to read my CV, even though it is just a line… or just a bullet… you know what it entails as a deputy dean. It is a position with lots of work. I don't have to explain further the tasks of a deputy dean and the things that I have to do.

> I held holding a leadership post since my early working years. I was the head of department, the deputy dean and the dean… three times. In that sense, my academic experience was more in the leadership function of this faculty. I experienced hardship being in those positions. In a way, the positions make me work harder and always struggle for time.

When it comes to leadership experience, the respondents felt that through it they were able to contribute to the development of the university. It is not an easy task, but the respondents were optimistic despite the heavy loads they had to shoulder. Being among the university leaders, they actually felt that they grew with the university and learned the system more than the other academics. Respondents in food science and engineering highlighted:

> I believe my leadership function was my biggest contribution to the university. I had developed two dietetic programmes in Malaysia. It was very difficult to start a new thing and it needed lots of effort to convince people. With a good proposal, I managed to convince the ministry. I think the programmes changed the perspective of nutrition in this country. Other than that I developed the postgraduate programme of course work. Looking back, I think my workload at that time was terrible. However, since the university had given me so much, I felt that I must give back worth of effort to the university.

> Being a dean, I have about 300 staff, 100 lecturers, and 4,500 students of whom I have to take charge. I supposed my general readings had helped me a lot in taking this position. Sometimes I cannot make the right decision for everybody even though it was the best decision at that time. Therefore, I had to let it go because I knew that I could not make everyone happy. I think this job is very operational and it is my contribution to the university.

Women leaders as role models

A highly visible female leader in academia would provide encouragement and support for other women academics to participate in management. It would also signal that the university is serious about improving gender equity in terms of leadership in higher education. Kloot (2004) relates this to the expected cascade effect: in other words, as the

organisation provides support and encouragement to women academics holding leadership position, they would become role models to other junior women academics.

It has also been observed that many respondents received awards during the establishment and maintenance stages of their career. This is a testimony to their outstanding performance. These respondents in molecular medicine and psychology said:

> Now, I am the role model in the university… So far, I have received 35 awards at national and international levels. They are many types of awards including the national inventor and best woman inventor awards. To date, I have 25 patents but it doesn't stop there. So most people say that I am a tough example to follow.

> I received awards such as the recent 'Young Investigator' award at the international medical conferences, which I didn't expect. It came as a real surprise to me although my name was nominated. It was because I am not a medical doctor and my research methodology was very different from them who only wanted percentages and significant levels in their analysis…

Leadership in international networking

As asserted by Baruch (2004), networking with the right person and purpose and at the right time is a manifestation of an intelligent career, as mentioned earlier. Richardson & McKenna (2003) are strongly of the opinion that international experiences are becoming more valuable in building and sustaining a reputation through networking, writing and research. They further assert that the internationalisation of academic function brings benefit in terms of new skills and good practices, better research networks and enhanced communication skills. A respondent in theatrical studies explains her experience:

> You need to project yourself internationally. There is no point in you being known here, but not known outside. For me, I'm more known outside as well in the field of social culture, not a theatre person per se. Here, it is more on theatre… Because my overseas mission is more on cultural elements surrounding theatre and theatrical arts. So I project a lot of the country's image. Last year I was in Russia presenting a paper. I also went to Hungary and New Zealand. As for the international organisation, I am the secretary general for the Eastern-Asia region. I am also involved in nongovernmental organisations.

Almost all respondents mentioned that international networking was a crucial effort in consolidating their academic career and leadership functions in the field. The respondents strongly felt that involving themselves in local and international networking was to let others know of their expertise and capabilities. A respondent from taxonomy and ecology emphasised her idea of being in the leading role in international networking:

> I believe international recognition is one of the core activities in academic building. We met people at the conferences and began to network… And then my networking became stronger and I started to collaborate. So far, I had collaborated with an institute in Denmark and managed to get a 4.4 million dollar project. Again I managed to get a 40 million dollar project to set up a museum for taxonomic study, but this time from Japan. I believe that with strong international linkages I have bargaining power.

Active engagements in conferences, meetings and collaborative projects abroad have been part of the respondents' agenda in promoting their names and credibility. An initial network

would lead to larger circles of networks. The following narrations show how international networking has given them the cutting edge in developing collaborative projects abroad:

> Because I spent a long time in Australia for my first and specialised degrees, I have been able to maintain collaboration and international networking. I probably have a higher profile in terms of international collaboration because I already had one foot there and that really helps, rather than if you were trained here, even though you are doing fantastic work. You know what it is like when doing networking... Because of that I have been on several international research and consultancy steering committees.

The areas that I am working on... for instance I was a member of the academy of management... I am also a member of one institute in Canada. According to a Dutch professor, for people in Holland, my name is well known in this particular field... But I don't just work on that area alone... I am also involved in other areas. Furthermore, if they have something on such as conferences, they would let me know and would invite me to present papers. So I was always sponsored because I went by invitation of the organisers.

In this study most of the networking activities took place between respondents with institutions abroad. It is clear that being ahead than the rest in international networking is very meaningful to the respondents in their career development.

Leadership's role in professional training and consultancy

Academic work has also allowed respondents to be involved in professional training and consultancy. Undertaking such services has many advantages, such as a mechanism for respondents to get relevant inputs to be used in the lecture and, thus, to become more visible among the practitioners. A respondent from management stresses her idea on the importance of being active in professional training:

> I did a lot of training services. It is an area that requires energy; despite that, it also helps my teaching. It is the only way of contacting people out there. When the training participants shared their stories with me, I adapted them and used them in my lectures. It helps the students to have a realistic picture and I found that this element was lacking in many lecturers.

Another respondent, from engineering, echoes the same idea:

> Currently, I am the chairperson for a committee of lady engineers. It is a subcommittee for a big organisation. Besides that, I was chosen as one of the council members for this organisation. I was given a three-year term and I am into my second term now. All these are voluntary work and I like doing it.

The challenges of being a woman leader

The leadership function is not without its challenges, most of which are related to managing people and about human relations. The challenges are felt more by women leaders. However, the respondents dealt with the issues wisely by relying on certain principles. They demonstrated an effective leadership that blended both masculine and feminine styles of management. In relation to this, Powell and Mainiero (1992) assert that psychological theories show that women leaders become more masculine in middle age, because at this age they recognise the multiple crosscurrents that abound in organisations. A respondent in an applied science had this to say:

> As the head, my principle is... I will approach people if I have to and I will put aside any personal feelings. It is because I wanted to do the best that I could. In whatever I

> did, I went by consensus. It is not because of my position as the head with authority. Even until today, whatever I did was based on consultation and consensus. My aim is to bring this organisation to the height that I really want it to be. Therefore, I introduced the new system. However, in order to do that, I cannot do it alone. I realised that it is not easy to bring about change to people…

Gender is also a pervasive factor in organisational management. Academia is one of the places where gender would affect the relations between men and women, and, thus, the way they behave. Sex role expectations were that women have limited abilities and therefore they are not capable of being leaders. This belief had affected the way the respondents were perceived by their male colleagues, particularly when they were managing their organisation.

The career-history data further showed that most of the respondents' leadership qualities were accompanied with challenges as results of courage, confidence and hard work. Their actions were based on what they believed to be right for the image and future of the section/faculty they were leading. It seems that recognitions, awards and challenges come almost naturally at this establishment stage. Some respondents mentioned that when it came to leadership functions they had to work beyond the gender challenge. Respondents from food science and education commented:

> Being a woman leader, I have to be prepared all the time. I read a lot about how to be a good administrator and leader. I found out from a book that, as a woman, I have to be a good listener. So I tried to do that and it worked. To manage people, I have to know about my staff; therefore, I organised an open meeting with them. I also think that reading and reflection of experience are two different ways of learning.

> My target was to uplift the status of the department, so that it is as reputable or better than other faculties. It was my target, so I worked very hard in that sense. They called me iron lady but I couldn't care less. I have my aspiration of what I want to do with my department. So I was working hard in leading the department at that point of time. There was a great deal of brushing shoulders with the men. In research, I was also writing and presenting papers like any other academic that was not in a leadership position.

Other respondents have proven that gender is not the factor that sets a limit on their advancement, though many studies have shown that gender is associated with the glass-ceiling phenomenon (Davidson & Burke 1994; Powell & Graves 2003). Surely these respondents possess certain qualities that made them on a par with their male counterparts, and have shown beyond doubt their abilities and determination. The following expressions further show the gender challenges:

> As a woman, my principle is that I am equal to anybody when it comes to work. I admit that, in terms of physical strength, I am weaker than men. But I think God has given me strengths in other forms. So in the ways and means of how to get things done, gender shouldn't be the factor. I just work my way up regardless of my gender. In order to develop my self-confidence, I just take whatever that comes by… I just want to prove that I could deliver the job.

> I noticed that this university is not a place for women. But, of course, the university has criteria for promotion. If I could manage the criteria, I don't see why not. Though I am a woman, if I have met all the criteria, how could the university deny me? To me, it doesn't matter where you are from, but it is our individual self actually.

This group of women professors seemed to agree that their leadership role has made a significant contribution to their career excellence. The three-in-one function of teaching, research and services made the academic career a life enriching experience, and they saw students and society as the beneficiaries. However, the respondents did vary in their principles and conducts of teaching because of their diverse specialisations. It was very clear that respondents' leadership experience together with their active involvement in research and publication were the elements that differentiated them from the rest of the academics.

The leadership position held was found to be very important as a service function in the university. This included leadership in various capacities such as programme coordinator, head of department, deputy dean and dean. This was not to mention the various committees on which they served at the various levels of department, faculty, university and outside the university. It has been observed that many respondents received awards during their career in academia. This is a testimony to their outstanding performance besides being leaders at various levels.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The academic career that was perceived as exciting to this group of women leaders in academia requires initiative, strategy, stamina and strong determination. The academics have the knowledge and skills to enable them to get along with their peers, to balance research, teaching and services, and to manage their time wisely. They strongly believed that academia is a place for them not only to exercise their roles in teaching, research and publication, but also to demonstrate their ability in various leadership positions. All of the respondents had significant experience as a head of department, programme coordinator, deputy dean or dean during their tenure as a professor or in the years before their professorial appointment. They were able to take leading roles in the activities provided by the universities for career development purposes such as international networking through participation at conferences and workshops as well as involvement in professional training and consultancies. Their aspiration towards moving to a greater height in their career guided them throughout their career development. They consciously acknowledged that multiple functions in academia including leadership spurred them on in their career journey.

The study recommends that the experience of women professors should be tapped by other academics, particularly junior members of staff, through various knowledge-sharing sessions or by being built into various research projects that encourage team work. This is necessary to counterbalance the notion that there are numerous career barriers faced by women academics (Forster 2000; Bailyn 2003).

From the gender perspective, the group of women professors has challenged the traditional organisational structure characterised by the domination of men at the higher organisational rank. The academic career has enabled them to integrate work and nonwork functions in a balanced manner. This further strengthens the notion that teaching or generally academia is a suitable ground for women to develop their career and leadership, as common wisdom has always maintained. It is also concluded that the women professors have, to certain extent, rejected the typical pattern of women's careers of being spiral, flexible, transitory and temporary in nature, because they did not experience such a career pattern as argued by Driver (1994). It is believed that this group of high-performing women academics has improved the image of working women in academia, proving that they, too, are able to perform like men, to use Wajcman's (1998) words. It could be inferred that to be in a high-

ranking position in academia, women have to work like men without giving up their feminine characteristics because they are still perceived to exercise their normal duties as mothers, wives and professionals.

Future research should be conducted among men professors in order to make comparative analysis. Since there is a preponderance of men academics in high-ranking positions in academia, relevant questions follow for future research to take up: 'How do they perceive gender equality in the academia?' 'What do they consider to be the future organisational role of women in academia considering that many women researchers are outstanding in the various fields of basic and applied sciences as well as social sciences?' Another line of research worth following in the future is, 'What are the career aspirations of high-performing junior man and woman academics?'

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Crosscultural Differences in Perceptions of Justice: Consequences for Academia

Julie Rowney and Vasyl Taras

Abstract: *Most universities around the world have experienced an increase in international student enrolment. Cultural diversity may be greatly beneficial, but if not managed properly it may lead to problems in the classroom and beyond. The challenges associated with cultural diversity – such as differences in languages, management styles, protocols and traditions – have been widely discussed in the literature. This article focuses on a less obvious issue, crosscultural differences in perceptions of justice and their consequences for academic settings. Depending on their cultural background, students' opinions about the fairness of academic rewards, punishments and procedures may differ substantially. Our arguments and recommendations are based on generalisation of findings from 98 empirical studies that explored relationships between culture and issues of justice. We support our discussion with a series of examples typical for the college environment. The study may be of interest to a wide range of readers, including teachers, educational administrators, students and business practitioners.*

Introduction

The effects of differences in perceptions of justice have been broadly discussed in the literature. It has been found that perception of justice significantly influences productivity (e.g. Giacobbe-Miller, Miller & Victorov 1998), preferences for pay and bonus systems (e.g. Marin 1981), work satisfaction (e.g. Janssen 2001), pay satisfaction (e.g. DeConinck & Stilwell 2003), motivation (e.g. McFarlin & Sweeney 2000), organisational commitment (Johnson, Korsgaard & Sapienza 2002), conflict resolution styles (e.g. Tyler, Lind & Huo 2000), organisational citizenship behaviour (Moorman 1991), teamwork dynamics (Kirkman & Shapiro 2000), and many other aspects of organisational life. At the same time, it has been well documented that one's cultural background greatly affects one's opinion about what constitutes fair decisions and decision-making procedures (e.g. Leung & Morris 2000; Sama & Papamarcos 2000). With the rapid growth in the number of companies going international and diversification of the local labour force, issues involving crosscultural differences in perception of justice are becoming more salient.

Globalisation has touched not only the business sector but also academia. The composition of the student body in institutions of higher education around the world has become increasingly diverse. American, Canadian, Australian and Western European colleges and universities have experienced the highest international student enrolment. With more than 500,000 international students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the USA, and

around 250,000 in each of Europe, Canada and Australia, the percentage of foreign students varies between roughly 20 and 30 per cent, with the numbers much higher for technical majors and those in graduate programmes (AUCC 2005; IIE 2005). Moreover, the number of students in Western European and North American colleges and universities who come from distant and more culturally different regions such as Asia and the Middle East is increasing rapidly (Breem & Thierry 2004; Rowney 2006). The larger cultural distance (Kogut & Singh 1988) further intensifies the effects of cultural diversity on student group dynamics (Thomas 1999; Thomas, Ravlin & Au 2005).

International students benefit institutions of higher education in many ways. First, through worldwide recruitment universities can attract and retain the best available human talent. Second, one of the goals of modern education is to prepare students for work in the global environment. Opportunities to interact with classmates from different countries allow students to obtain first-hand experience of work in multicultural settings. Furthermore, diversity of experiences and backgrounds in the classroom alleviates groupthink (Janis 1982; Aldag & Fuller 1993). As a result, more ideas are generated and more opinions are voiced, enriching in-class discussions and project group meetings. Finally, international students are a significant source of revenue for institutions as well as for host societies in general. For example, according to the Association of International Educators, overseas students bring over $13 billion dollars to the US economy annually (AIE 2005).

While the benefits of diversity are numerous, crosscultural diversity also poses various challenges. Differences in learning styles (Braman 1998; Anakwe, Kessler & Christensen 1999; Franchi 2002), languages and nonverbal communication (Taras & Rowney 2007), conflicts due to stereotyping (Stephan, Ageyev, Stephan & Abalakina 1993; Sakata 1995), and representation and status inequalities (Blau 1977; Toh & Denisi 2003) are some of the most obvious obstacles confronting international groups, and there are many more issues to consider. This paper deals with a less commonly discussed consequence of culture, that is, crosscultural differences in perceptions of justice and their effects on processes in the classroom and on student project teams.

Traditionally, justice has been studied exclusively in the workplace context. It may appear that the issue of crosscultural differences in perceptions of fairness is irrelevant to the university environment. Unlike employees, students do not receive salary or perks; they do not compete for promotions, more convenient schedules, and vacation in high season; and generally students are not subject to the rewards and punishments that are common in the workplace. Nevertheless, the issues of justice are as salient in academic settings as in the workplace. For instance, depending on cultural background, students may have radically different opinions about what constitutes a fair grade, who should receive a scholarship, how one should be punished for cheating on an exam, or how a conflict between a student and a professor should be resolved.

This article analyses the consequences of crosscultural differences in perceptions of justice in academic settings. Although our study did not involve data collection and hypothesis testing, the existing large body of literature on crosscultural differences in perceptions of justice provides a highly consistent set of findings in this area. Our arguments are built upon findings from 98 empirical studies that addressed issues of justice in crosscultural contexts (see Table 1 for a summary). Due to space restrictions, the complete list of reviewed studies cannot be provided in this paper; however, it can be obtained from the authors upon request.

Table 1: Summary of findings of 98 empirical studies that explored relationships between culture and issues of justice

	Individualism			Power distance			Masculinity avoidance			Uncertainty		
	+	ns	-	+	ns	-	+	ns	-	+	ns	-
Distributive justice (total number of reviewed papers: 47)												
Preference for												
equity rule	35	5	3	3	4	5	8	4	1	1	4	2
equality rule	3	4	15	2	4	6	1	1	4	—	—	—
need/generosity rule	1	0	9	3	0	0	0	0	2	—	—	—
seniority rule	1	1	4	3	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	0
°Procedural justice (total number of reviewed papers: 52)												
Sensitivity to fairness of decision-making procedures	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	—	—	—
Preference for												
more involvement in decision-making/participative management	8	1	1	2	1	15	4	1	0	0	0	5
less involvement/directive management	0	0	22	18	1	0	0	0	11	8	1	0
Conflict avoidance	1	2	16	4	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	1
Tendency to compromise	0	4	14	1	1	1	1	1	2	—	—	—
Preference for third-party involvement (mediation)	1	1	8	4	1	0	1	3	2	—	—	—
Likelihood of confrontational conflict resolution style	3	1	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	—	—	—
Concern for maintaining good interpersonal relationships	1	2	13	1	3	1	0	0	4	—	—	—
Retributive justice (total number of reviewed papers: 18)												
Support for more severe punishment overall	1	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Support for more severe punishment for in-groups	0	0	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ethical sensitivity	11	2	1	2	2	6	1	1	2	6	3	3
Internal failure attribution bias (as opposed to external)	12	2	1	0	1	5	4	0	0	—	—	—
Preference for universal application of rules/punishment	3	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	—	—	—
Reaction to injustice (total number of reviewed papers: 4)												
loyalty/acceptance	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	—	—	—
neglect	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	2	—	—	—
voice	2	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	—	—	—
exit	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	—	—	—

+ Number of studies that found a statistically significant positive relationship;

ns Number of studies that found no statistically significant relationship;

- Number of studies that found a statistically significant negative relationship.

Note: Many studies addressed multiple aspects of justice, and therefore the total number of recorded findings is greater than the number of reviewed studies.

We first offer a brief overview of the theoretical framework of culture that will be used in our discussion. Then we analyse the effects of crosscultural differences on perceptions of distributive, procedural and retributive justice. Built around a series of examples describing situations that are typical in academic settings, our discussion provides insights into what could cause misunderstandings and negatively affect group dynamics and how the issues should be managed. While there is no 'right' way to handle such challenges, our discussion offers suggestions for minimising the negative and maximising the positive effects of cultural diversity in academic settings. It may be of interest to educators, academic administration staff and policy-makers, and students, as well as corporate managers.

Theoretical Framework for Analysing Effects of Culture

Hofstede (1980) was one of the first to offer a scientifically founded model of culture, although attempts to quantify various aspects of culture can be traced further back in time (e.g. Kuhn & McPartland 1954; Ghiselli & Porter 1966; England 1967; Haire, Rokeach 1973). Hofstede's work was based on a large dataset representing over 50 countries, and identified four bipolar dimensions of national culture: power distance, individualism–collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity–femininity. Later, long–short-term orientation (also known as Confucian dynamism) was added to the set as the fifth dimension (Hofstede & Bond 1988).

Hofstede's dimensions are defined as follows. Power distance is 'the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions … accept that power is distributed unequally' (Hofstede & Bond 1988: 10). In other words, people from high power-distance cultures are more comfortable with a larger status differential than those from low power-distance cultures. According to Hofstede (1980, 2001), Asian and Latin American countries score high on power distance, whereas countries of Western Europe and Northern America are characterised by low power-distance cultures.

Individualism is the degree to which people prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of groups (Hofstede 1994: 6). In individualist cultures, it is assumed that any person looks primarily after his or her own interest and the interest of his or her immediate family (husband, wife and children). Collectivist cultures assume that any person, through birth and possible later events, belongs to one or more tight 'in-groups' from which he or she cannot detach. The in-group (whether extended family, clan or organisation) protects the interest of its members, but in turn it expects their permanent loyalty (Hofstede 1986: 307). It is important to highlight the existence of clear differentiation between in-group and out-group membership in collectivist cultures. Collectivists are highly loyal to their in-group (such as family or immediate friends), but they may completely ignore interests of their out-group members or other groups. According to Hofstede (2001), Western countries tend to score high on individualism, while Eastern cultures are mainly collectivist.

Masculinity–femininity indicates 'the relative importance of … earnings, recognition, advancement, and challenge' (Hofstede 1983: 55). People in masculine cultures value such behaviours as assertiveness, achievement, and acquisition of wealth. However, for people in feminine cultures, caring for others, social support and the quality of life are important. As with individualism, masculine values prevail in Western industrialised societies, while Eastern countries are typically characterised by feminine cultures (Hofstede 2001).

Uncertainty avoidance refers to how comfortable people feel in regards to ambiguity. Representatives from high uncertainty-avoidance cultures prefer formal rules and clear guidelines and indicate low tolerance for the unknown. Based on Hofstede's (2001) indexes,

Western Europe and Northern America are characterised by low to moderate levels of uncertainty avoidance, while Asian and Latin American cultures tend to be oriented to high uncertainty avoidance.

Finally, people with a short-term orientation expect 'quick results [and] consider "persistency" not an important personality trait' (Hofstede 2001: 360). They like to spend and rarely experience a sense of shame. In contrast, cultures with a long-term orientation emphasise persistence and perseverance; a sense of shame is common, and the ability to save and be thrifty is valued. Hofstede and Bond (1988) describe Eastern cultures as long-term oriented and Western societies as generally short-term oriented. Of note, we were unable to find any study that explored the effects of long–short-term orientation dimension on perceptions of justice. While this dimension is excluded from our analysis, it warrants further attention.

Following Hofstede's study, dozens of alternative models of culture have been offered by scholars from around the world (for a summary see Taras 2007). Of these, the models by Trompenaars (1993), Schwartz (1994), Maznevski and DiStepfano (1995), Inglehart (1997) and the GLOBE team (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta 2004) are the most widely recognised. Nevertheless, despite a number of limitations of his IBM study (Roberts & Boyacigiller 1984; Schwartz 1990; McSweeney 2002; Voronov & Singer 2002), Hofstede's theoretical framework has remained popular, and his cultural dimensions are present in one form or another in virtually all subsequent models (Taras & Rowney 2006), albeit often supplemented with several additional cultural factors, such as gender egalitarism (House et al. 2004), relationship to nature (Maznevski & DiStefano 1995), hedonism and securing (Schwartz 1994), or universal–particular and affective–neutral (Trompenaars 1993).

Given the huge body of literature that has been based on Hofstede's model, as well as a generally universal support for the model's validity and utility, our discussion revolves mainly around Hofstede's cultural framework. Moreover, most of the alternative constructs have been shown to be empirically related to Hofstede's dimensions (Hofstede 2001). Since additional cultural constructs are not likely to explain much additional variance in the perceptions of justice, we decided in favour of brevity and parsimony and limited our predictive cultural constructs to those from Hofstede's model.

Effects of Cultural Values on Perceptions of Justice[sara]

Models of justice and fairness typically differentiate between *distributive*, *procedural* and *retributive* justice (e.g. Deutsch 1985; Folger & Konovsky 1989). Distributive justice addresses the perceived fairness of resource allocation. The decision-making process and the implementation of decisions are captured by models of procedural justice. Retributive justice is concerned with the perceived fairness of punishment and sanctions. Reaction to injustice is usually discussed separately, although this concept closely relates to procedural and retributive justice. We analyse the effect of differences in cultural values on each of these constructs separately.

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice relates to the perceived fairness of reward allocation. The typology of allocation rules is as follows:

- *equity rule* – rewards are distributed proportionally to individual contributions;

- *equality rule* – everyone's reward is identical regardless of individual contributions;
- *seniority rule* – outcomes are distributed proportionally to seniority (age, position in the hierarchy, or number of years in the group);
- *need rule* – outcomes are distributed proportionally to individual needs;
- *generosity rule* – one's own outcome should not exceed that of others (Deutsch 1985).

We found 47 papers that explored effects of culture on perceptions of distributive fairness. As summarised in Table 1, numerous earlier empirical studies have fairly consistently shown that, compared to their counterparts, people from individualist and masculine cultures tend to favour equity rule (e.g. Ramamoorthy 1997; Chen, Meindl & Hui 1998). On the other hand, collectivist and feminine cultures emphasise equality (e.g. Leung & Iwaki 1988; He, Chen & Zhang 2004) and need/generosity rules (e.g. Murphy-Berman, Berman, Singh, Pachauri & Kumar 1984; Giacobbe-Miller et al. 1998), especially with in-group members (e.g. Hui, Triandis & Yee 1991). Cultures that are characterised by high power distance, often in combination with collectivism, as for example in Japan, typically prefer seniority rule (e.g. Ramamoorthy & Carroll 1998; Parks, Conlon, Ang & Bontempo 1999). As shown in Table 1, the findings on other possible relationships are either inconclusive or conflicting.

Crosscultural differences in relation to distributive justice can come into play in various academic situations. First, cultural differences may affect perceptions about grade fairness. Based on the assumption that collectivists tend to favour equality and individualists prefer equity (Murphy-Berman et al. 1984; Ramamoorthy 1997; Chen et al. 1998), it can be expected that, compared to students from individualist societies, students from collectivist cultures will be more comfortable with little variation in grades among individuals, even if some students do noticeably better on assignments than others. In contrast, individualists are expected to favour a grade system that clearly reflects an individual's quality of work, even if it means that some students will receive grades significantly lower or higher than those of other students. In addition, it can be expected that collectivists, who favour generosity rule, may experience a sense of guilt if their marks are substantially higher than those of their peers (Miller 2002). Moreover, being accustomed to the generosity rule in resource allocation, students from collectivist and/or feminine cultures are more likely to expect a slight grade increase, if the final mark falls between grades, for example A- and B+.

Given that in collectivist and feminine cultures the need rule is commonplace (Murphy-Berman et al. 1984; Giacobbe-Miller et al. 1998), it is more likely that students from these cultures who do not do well on a test (and need a better grade) will expect to be given a make-up test option so that they can improve their grades. For example, in schools and universities in the countries of the former Soviet Union, which are characterised by a collectivist orientation and need-based resource allocation, a make-up exam is frequently not an option but a requirement. After failing an exam, students are expected to write it again, frequently several times, until they receive a passing grade. At least in their first years of education in Western countries, students from the former USSR frequently find it very unfair that they are not given a chance to take the exam again to improve their grade.

The same patterns of behaviour can be expected in peer evaluations of individual contributions to team project assignments, often used by professors as a component of the final grade for a course. Generalising the findings from earlier studies that explored crosscultural differences in distributive justice (e.g. Leung & Iwaki 1988; Ramamoorthy

1997), it may be proposed that, compared to students from individualistic cultures, those from collectivist cultures are more likely to provide similar evaluations to their team members, regardless of variations in individual input. In contrast, evaluations provided by students from individualist cultures are more likely to vary depending on individual contribution. In other words, collectivists are more likely to favour equal grades for each team member, whereas individualists tend to prefer that the grades vary in proportion to the individual contribution of each team member. It can be further hypothesised that students from collectivist countries are likely to favour the equality and generosity rules in evaluations only for their in-group members, but the equity rule for their out-group members (Murphy-Berman, Cukur & Berman 2002).

Based on the earlier findings that interpersonal relations (Matsumoto, Weissman, Preston, Brown & Kupperbusch 1997), group harmony (Kwan, Bond & Singelis 1997; Constantine, Gainor, Ahluwalia & Berkel 2003), and generosity (Hui et al. 1991) are emphasised in collectivist and/or feminine societies, it can be expected that students from these cultures are less likely to provide negative feedback in peer evaluations. In the same vein, students from collectivist and feminine cultures are more likely to expect favourable evaluations from their peers and in letters of recommendation obtained from their professors or research supervisors.

Given the persistent empirical evidence that cultural collectivism and femininity relate to higher support for the need-based allocation of rewards (e.g. Hundley & Kim 1997; Giacobbe-Miller et al. 1998), it can be expected that students from collectivist and/or feminine cultures are more likely to support decisions based on the need rule regarding distribution of scholarships, research grant allocation, opportunities to assist a professor for added income, or competition for a summer internship or job provided through the university. However, students from individualist cultures are more likely to believe that merit-based selection is appropriate (Murphy-Berman et al. 1984). Lastly, representatives from cultures characterised by high power distance and collectivism, such as Japan, may favour the seniority rule and believe that preference in resource allocation should be given to students who are older, are more advanced in the programme, or have a higher social status (Rusbult, Insko & Lin 1995; Schuler & Rogovsky 1998).

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice relates to the perceived fairness of the decision-making process. We found 52 studies that addressed the relationship between culture and procedural justice (Table 1). According to the literature, preferences for modes of decision making (e.g. Ali, Taqi & Krishnan 1997; Leung 2003), extent of involvement (e.g. Sopachitwattana 1999; Nyambegera, Sparrow & Daniels 2000), conflict resolution style (e.g. Gabrielidis, Stephan, Ybarra, Pearson & Villareal 1997; Leung & Morris 2000) and interpersonal treatment (e.g. Blader, Chang & Tyler 2001) vary across cultures.

When people of different ranks are involved in the decision-making process, the most salient cultural construct in the analysis of procedural justice is that of power distance. First of all, it has been consistently found that, compared to representatives from low power-distance cultures, those with high power-distance orientation are, on average, less sensitive to the fairness of decision-making procedures (James 1993; Tyler et al. 2000). Furthermore, high power-distance orientation has been shown to relate to higher preference for directive management style (Dorfman & Howell 1988; Offermann & Hellmann 1997), and avoidance

of conflict and confrontation in general and with superiors in particular (Ohbuchi, Sato & Tedeschi 1999), as well as higher respect for decisions made by higher authorities (Tinsley & Brett 2001). On the other hand, low power-distance orientation relates to preference for participative management and decision-making (Sopachitwattana 1999; Klinsontorn 2002) and propensity to voice disagreement and challenge higher authorities in the decision-making and conflict-resolution processes (Brockner, Ackerman, Greenberg, Gelfand, Francesco, Chen et al. 2001; Morris, Williams, Leung, Larrick, Bharnagar, Li et al. 1998). A similar pattern has been consistently found for uncertainty avoidance, although fewer studies have explored the effects of this cultural construct. An interesting observation about the effect of power distance on preferred level of involvement in the decision-making process is that people with high power-distance orientation are reluctant to provide input only when a higher authority makes the decision. When the decision is being worked out among peers, active participation is also common in high power-distance cultures (Leung 2003).

Generalising these findings to academic settings, it can be expected that students from high power-distance cultures would be more willing to accept decisions made by professors or by university administration and would not expect to be consulted and involved in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, when working with peers on team assignments, students with a high power-distance orientation may display a high level of involvement in decision-making unless a formal team leader has been appointed by the class instructor or elected by the team members. In contrast, students with a low power-distance orientation are more likely to attempt to influence a professor's decisions about, for example, assignment distribution, the grading system, or the date for a rescheduled class meeting. They are also less likely to accept a decision by university administration about, for example, a tuition increase or scholarship distribution unless they have had a say. This proposition is supported by findings from studies that analysed the effects of students' cultural origin on, among others, the probability of their participation in student protests and movements (Rhoads 1998; Van Dyke 1998).

The cultural constructs of collectivism–individualism and masculinity–femininity have been shown to be relevant in explaining procedural justice perceptions when decisions are worked out amongst peers. Earlier empirical studies have consistently shown that individualists and people with masculine orientation prefer higher involvement in the decision-making process (e.g. Ramamoorthy & Carroll 1998; Lam, Chen & Schaubroeck 2002), are more likely to aggressively defend their position (e.g. Leung 1988; Gabrielidis et al. 1997), and often are ready to sacrifice interpersonal relationships to ensure a desired outcome (Leung & Lind 1986; Kwan et al. 1997). Finally, research has consistently indicated that in the decision-making process individualists are comparatively more likely to pursue personal goals, whereas collectivists are more oriented towards group interest (e.g. Mann, Radford & Kanagawa 1985; Kashima, Yamaguchi, Kim & Choi 1995).

Generalising these empirical findings to the academic context, it can be expected that students from individualist cultures are more likely to be willing to assume leadership roles in student organisations, project teams, or informal groups, as doing so may increase their chances to affect the decision-making process. Similar behaviour may be observed along the masculine–feminine culture dimension. People from achievement-oriented masculine cultures tend to prefer close involvement in decision-making, which they see as a way to achieve personal goals. On the other hand, in feminine cultures, the need for group harmony and interpersonal relations overweighs egoistic interests, leading to a less aggressive compromise-oriented style of decision-making.

Furthermore, compared to feminine cultures, masculine societies are characterised by a much higher degree of formalisation (Leung & Lind 1986; Tse, Francis & Walls 1994). This would suggest that project team members who are from masculine cultures will insist on developing and following formal decision-making procedures and fixed deadlines. In contrast, students from feminine cultures are likely to prefer an informal and more relaxed work style. Along the same line, students from masculine cultures will expect their professors to develop and strictly follow a detailed syllabus containing clear information regarding course structure, assignment requirements and grading procedures; those with a feminine orientation will be more comfortable with a working-out-the-plan-along-the-way approach.

Conflict Resolution

When individuals find themselves in a conflict situation, their cultural background may affect their preference for conflict resolution. Based on the earlier studies that explored the relationship (Table 1), a preference for adversary procedure is stronger in individualist than in collectivist societies (e.g. Leung 1988; Gabrielidis et al. 1997). Collectivists, in contrast, tend to seek animosity reduction and prefer mediation and negotiation (e.g. Leung, Au, Fernandez-Dols & Iwawaki 1992; Gire 1995). Thus, in a conflict situation, the project team members from individualist cultures are likely to attempt to resolve the conflict 'right now and right here', possibly using an insistent style. Students from collectivist cultures are likely to avoid direct confrontation and may appeal to other team members or the course instructor for mediation.

Several studies have found (e.g. Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988; Tinsley & Brett 2001) that individuals in high power-distance cultures prefer to consult higher authority when faced with a conflict. They expect the supervisor to make the final decision, which the parties involved in the conflict are unlikely to question. In contrast, people from low power-distance cultures are accustomed to 'talking over' the points of dispute between the opposing sides. Thus it can be expected that, in a conflict situation, students with low power-distance orientation will attempt to express their opinion directly and try to find a solution by discussing the problem with the opponent. In contrast, students from high power-distance cultures would probably like the professor to be involved in the matter; however, they would expect the instructor not to mediate but to make the ultimate decision.

This difference will be even more pronounced in a conflict between a student and a professor. The student from a low power-distance culture is likely to be more comfortable about presenting his or her point of view directly to the professor. Moreover, if the attempt to resolve the issue with the professor is unsuccessful, the student is unlikely to hesitate to present the issue to the dean or other administrator. Conversely, the student used to a high power distance would probably tolerate unfair treatment and avoid direct confrontation with the professor.

In addition, earlier findings indicate that masculine cultures are characterised by extensive use of formalised procedures and documented guidelines, in contrast with feminine cultures in which emotions and personal beliefs are emphasised (Bierbrauer 1992). In conflict resolution, people from feminine cultures are more likely to rely on traditions and religious norms rather than on state laws (Fontaine & Severance 1990). Thus, in a conflict situation, students with feminine cultural backgrounds are likely to use personal feelings and 'common sense' to define what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'. Conversely, students with a masculine cultural orientation are likely to rely on the syllabus, student organisation bylaws, or other official documents to support their arguments.

Retributive Justice

Retributive justice relates to individuals' perception of the fairness of punishment and sanctions. In academic settings, punishment can take various forms; for example, grade deduction for late assignment submission, late registration/payment fees, unfavourable feedback from professors or peers, or disciplinary actions such as expulsion from the university. Students' perception of grades is somewhat circumstantial. They may perceive a grade to be a reward if it is higher than expected, but a punishment if it is lower. In addition, students' perception of the fairness of grades can depend on the way in which assignments are graded. There are two basic grading systems. Under the first, the grader starts at zero and awards certain points for every correct answer. The final grade is the sum of all awarded points. Under the second grading system, the grader starts at 100 per cent and subtracts points for each mistake. The final grade equals 100 per cent minus the sum of subtracted points. Although the choice of grading system does not usually affect the final grade, students are more likely to perceive their grades as punishment if the latter grading system is used.

Definition of Wrongdoing

Definition of wrongdoing has a crucial effect on individuals' perception of fairness and their reaction to perceived injustice. What may be regarded as legitimate action in one culture may be considered as highly illegitimate and deserving punishment in another culture. Therefore, the same punishment can be perceived as fair from one cultural perspective but as totally unjust from another. To avoid the problem of differences in crosscultural perceptions of (in)justice, cultural experts have been used in legal proceedings to interpret the action of the defendant from the perspective of the defendant's cultural background (Zhang 1984).

Crosscultural differences in the definition of wrongdoing are inevitable in academic settings. For example, helping a peer on the exam could be interpreted as cheating in one culture, but as being a good friend in another culture. Also, being late for a class could be considered trivial by individuals from one cultural background, yet regarded as delinquency deserving punishment by those from another. Consequently, opinions about the fairness of punishment may also differ.

Perception of Fair Punishment

According to Leung & Morris (2000), the purpose of punishment, and consequently the perception of appropriate injunction, may be viewed differently by representatives from different cultures. For example, in individualist cultures, punishment is usually seen as direct retribution. It usually involves making the wrongdoer suffer in order to compensate the victim's suffering or to pay back the value of the damage. Serious misconduct frequently leads to incapacitation, removal of the individual from the group to preclude his or her breaking the rule again. In collectivist societies, on the other hand, punishment is typically justified as a route to rehabilitation or as denunciation of the act as wrong. Frequently the wrongdoer is required to restore the relationship with the victim or to publicly acknowledge guilt and ask for forgiveness. Giving the individual a second chance or an opportunity to improve is customary. In addition, punishment of the entire group for a misconduct of a single group member is common in collectivist cultures.

While it may appear that, compared to individualists, collectivists will tend justify a lighter form of punishment, this is not the case. Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that collectivists tend to be 'soft' only on their in-group members. When dealing with out-group individuals, collectivists are likely to display the judgement patterns typical of

individualists (e.g. Leung 1988; Gomez, Kirkman & Shapiro 2000). In other words, a collectivist's perception of fairness appears to vary depending upon the subject.

Numerous studies have explored crosscultural differences in attribution styles and perceived locus of control (e.g. Krull, Loy, Lin, Wang, Chen & Zhao 1999; Carpenter 2000). The findings typically indicate that, in individualist cultures, a failure is usually attributed to an individual's internal properties, such as lack of skills or insufficient preparation. In collectivist cultures, however, a failure is usually believed to be caused by external, uncontrollable factors (Table 1). Generalising these findings to the academic context, we suggest that students with an individualist orientation would perceive a low grade to be unfair if they had put considerable effort into preparing for the test but still scored low. When discussing the grade with the professor, individualists are likely to argue that they deserve a better grade because they worked very hard. On the other hand, collectivists would blame external societal factors such as poor teaching, ambiguous requirements, or lack of help in preparation for the test. If appealing for a better grade, collectivists are likely to argue that they misunderstood the expectations and requirement, or that the test covered some material that was not adequately delivered in class.

Another cultural construct that is important in analysis of perceptions of injustice, but not included in Hofstede's crosscultural model, is that of universalism–particularism. Universalists believe that all individuals falling under a rule should be treated the same. In contrast, particularists may vary their treatment depending on who the person is and what the circumstances are (Trompenaars 1993). It has also been shown that individualism is closely related to universalist orientation, while collectivists are often willing to make exceptions from rules for their in-groups (e.g. Roeder & Hannover 2002; Vitell, Paolillo & Thomas 2003).

Based on these assumptions, it can be hypothesised that students from universalistic cultures are likely to accept, for example, grade deductions for late submission or higher fees for late payment, regardless of the reason for the delay. On the other hand, students from particularistic cultures are likely to perceive the penalties as unjust if exceptional circumstances caused the delay.

Reaction to Injustice

What happens when, after going through multiple stages of conflict resolution, those involved still perceive the final decision as unfair? According to numerous studies, if individuals believe a verdict to be unfair, their response to the perceived injustice may be greatly affected by their cultural background (e.g. Blader et al. 2001; Brockner et al. 2001). Basically, the response to perceived injustice may be either psychological (being upset, feeling angry) or behavioural (taking an overt action). Further classifications of responses to perceived injustice usually differentiate between loyalty, neglect, voice and exit (Hirschman 1970). In the academic context, a loyal reaction to perceived injustice would be acceptance of the decision. A reaction of neglect would involve decreased diligence, effort and particiapation. An example of a voice reaction would be active protest or student strike. Finally, those choosing the exit reaction might either drop out or transfer to another course, programme or institution.

The relationship between culture and reaction to injustice has been explored in a few studies – we found only four. However, the findings of the empirical studies have been quite consistent (Table 1). To summarise, high power distance has been found to relate positively

to a loyal or accepting reaction to perceived injustice, and negatively to a reaction of neglect or voice. The relationship between power distance and exit seems to be insignificant. Individualism and masculinity have been found to relate to a higher probability of reaction by exit and voice, and a lower probability of reaction by neglect, while findings for loyalty or acceptance are inconclusive. Unfortunately, we found no studies that empirically tested the effects of uncertainty avoidance on reaction to injustice. In addition, it has been found that behavioural and often violent reactions are comparatively more common in cultures scoring high on tradition of honour (Perisiany 1965; Bourgois 1995).

Generalising these findings to the university environment, students from a high power-distance culture will be less likely to question grades or challenge decisions, even if they consider them unjust. However, although students from high power distance are unlikely to react overtly in response to perceived unfair treatment, they may reduce their effort and lose interest in participating in class and extracurricular activities. On the other hand, students from individualist and masculine cultures are less likely to tolerate perceived injustice; they would be more comfortable with asking the professor to review a grade or a decision that they perceive to be unfair. They can also be expected to tolerate a professor's critical remarks and negative feedback, even if they perceive them to be unjust. Although perceived unfairness may decrease the satisfaction of students from individualist and masculine cultures with their professors or institutions, it is unlikely to affect their diligence adversely. Instead they are more likely to actively challenge the decisions that they perceive to be unfair. When they perceive the final resolution to be unjust, students from individualistic and masculine societies are most likely to actively question the decision, even to the point of organising student protests. They are also more likely to drop out or transfer to another institution, either overtly as a form of protest or simply to avoid the need to accept the situation that is perceived as unjust. Furthermore, given that feminine cultures emphasise interpersonal harmony and relations (Hofstede 1980), it could be expected that students from these cultures would try to maintain a friendly relationship with the professor even if they failed the course. For students from masculine, achievement-oriented cultures, low grades or failure could result in hatred of the professor.

In some Latin cultures, the code of honour prescribes a response of violence to affronts to self or in-group members (Perisiany 1965). Similar behaviour can be observed in some subcultures in the USA (Bourgois 1989, 1995). Students who grew up with these values could be expected to react overtly to perceived unjust punishment imposed by the class instructor or university administration or to negative evaluations by educators or peers.

Conclusions

Students in universities and colleges that have a high percentage of internationals have a unique opportunity to obtain first-hand experience as members of an international team. Cultural diversity in the classroom prevents groupthink, enriches discussion through the generation of more original ideas, and ultimately should increase the quality of the educational process. However, groups that involve international students and/or faculty members are likely to face numerous challenges stemming from language differences, varying learning and working styles, stereotypes, and many more. Such challenges can hinder the group dynamics and learning process and lead to misunderstandings and conflicts.

This paper addresses several possible consequences of crosscultural variations in perceptions of justice in academic settings. We have discussed how cultural differences in interpreting and perceiving fairness can affect the emotional and behavioural responses of students in situations that involve the distribution of rewards and punishments.

When dealing with conflict, it is tempting to accuse one's opponent of being 'wrong'. However, thinking in terms of 'right' and 'wrong' is usually inappropriate when a conflict involves people of different cultural backgrounds. What seems 'wrong' in one culture may appear perfectly 'right' in another, not because one culture is 'wrong' and the other one is 'right', but because they are simply different.

This paper does not provide specific prescriptions for dealing with crosscultural differences in perceptions of justice. Instead, we have focused on increasing awareness about the causes and possible consequences of crosscultural differences in opinions about fairness. Most conflicts are caused by a failure to understand the opponent's point of view on the subject. Dealing with a crosscultural conflict is much more complex, as the differences are not only in attitudes but also in definitions of fairness and appropriateness of procedures, outcomes and responses to perceived injustice.

The following recommendations are directed to educational administrators, teachers and educational policy-makers. To prevent prejudice and a narrow-minded approach to handling disagreement and conflict, educators need to increase awareness of crosscultural differences in perceptions of justice. These issues should be included not only in orientations for international students and faculty, but also in those for locals. Dispute resolution is a two-way street, and joint effort is required to minimise losses and benefit the learning process. It is important to note that, because newcomers are usually overwhelmed with information, discussions about possible future misunderstandings and conflict included in their initial orientations may appear less relevant and thus may not be taken seriously. Additional training may be required later in the school year. The more appropriate time for such awareness training would probably be closer to the end of the semester, when exam stress, and consequently conflict, is more frequent.

Communication is always vital to those handling any conflict situations. Communication is even more critical to those handling a crosscultural conflict, as it may not only involve differences in opinions about the subject of the conflict, but also differences in values and preferences for how the dispute should be handled. Thus schools should develop policies that facilitate communication between conflicting sides. It is important to help the conflicting parties recognise that it may not be that one or the other party is wrong, but that they define 'wrong' differently.

Finally, some decisions may not satisfy everyone. Depending on their cultural backgrounds, people may react differently to solutions that they believe to be unfair. It is vital to promote awareness of crosscultural differences in reactions to perceived injustice. Understanding that reactions may be different will help develop policies and procedures that minimise undesired reactions and prevent further misunderstanding and conflict escalation due to misinterpretation of responses to dispute resolution.

In conclusion, we note that predictions about an individual's behaviour made on the basis of that person's nationality must be made with caution. Although many scholars have pointed out significant within-country variation in cultural values (e.g. Huo & Randall 1991; Lau & Ngo 1996; Lenartowicz & Roth 2001), crosscultural studies have usually been based on a

nation as a unit of analysis. In a review of 210 crosscultural studies published between 1995 and 2001, Schaffer & Riordan (2003) found that 79 per cent used nationality or country of origin as a proxy for culture. Unfortunately, assumptions about individuals' cultural values are also too common among practitioners. We frequently encounter labelling of, for example, Chinese students as collectivists and American students as individualists. While such labelling may generally be accurate, exceptions are certainly numerous, since age, level of education, religion, socioeconomic status and other factors may significantly affect individual cultural values (Taras & Steel 2006). Furthermore, personal cultural values are likely to change over time as a person is exposed to new environments and circumstances; acculturation is especially salient in the case of students (Rosenthal, Bell, Demetriou & Efklides 1989; Khairullah & Khairullah 1999; Shih & Brown 2000). Thus we would like to emphasise the danger of making blind assumptions about expected behaviours and reactions of international students based solely on their nationality.

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