

03/2013

Improving schools through more professional management



The doctoral thesis read by Marita Navarro at the Applied Pedagogy Department of the UAB, falls into one of the classic areas of organization: management as a key to the improvement of schools. This work seeks a better understanding of professional development within educational management practice, so as to attract and empower managers who can improve this practice, the organization itself, and the whole educational system.

The research presented includes four different blocks. The first block focuses on the approach of the research problem: the school management as a key element for the development and improvement of schools. The research seeks to understand the professional development of school management.

The second block review and analyzes the theoretical approach which allows the study into context: management in the context of educational institutions; the review, through classic literature, of the professional development stages; also describes the professional school

management stages through organic laws and decrees, the study allows to characterize the management public schools model as elected, renewable and non-professional, although laws walk towards a model more professional as occurs in countries that belong to OECD and it is corroborated by international studies. It is included in this block the declarations of professional associations of school management and latest research and publications from school management.

The third block specifies a general overview of the research orientation under the symbolic-interpretative paradigm, which aims to provide new knowledge through observation and analysis of the situation. The positioning methodology of this research is, in its general consideration, qualitative. Includes interviews with management, former management, inspectors, local administration and families, but using the survey, quantitative, as a method to obtain the information that will be provided to school teachers regarding topics under study. Total information collected is from 275 people among six different cases.

The multiple cases study allows the approach to reality in its own context, by accepting the limitations of this strategy for the generalization; sources triangulation and rigorous treatment of the data, besides the continuous research revision and adjustment, seeks to alleviate them, underlining the interpretative aspect to understand the reality under study.

Finally fourth block, link together obtained results with the theoretical research, also conclusions based on each different set of goals. It highlights how current rules could lead to a more professional school management model. Summarizing, the school management should be provided with training and basic functions for the flexible operation of the school, especially regarding human resource management and evaluation. In general, there is too much rules and very little room left for real decisions capacity.

The end of this block offers new perspectives for school management research. In the six cases reported, the three male directors and three female directors have different profiles and management models with specific characteristics. Do we need to find a single model? Could two different models coexist as pointed out in the research: the renewable returning to classroom, and the professional skilled who seeks to follow a higher development?

Maria Navarro Casanoves

Maria.Navarro@uab.cat

References

Marita Navarro Casanoves read, on the 8 of February 2013, the doctoral thesis "Desenvolupament professional de la direcció: Un estudi de casos múltiple" supervised by Dra. Carme Armengol and related to the Department of Applied Pedagogy of the UAB and to the research group EDO (Estudis de Desenvolupament Organitzacional) leaded by Dr. J. Gairin.

[View low-bandwidth version](#)