

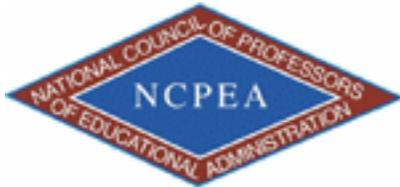
THEORIES OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT*

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Abstract

Educational management is a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of educational organizations. The present author has argued consistently (Bush, 1986; Bush, 1995; Bush, 1999; Bush, 2003) that educational management has to be centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education. These purposes or goals provide the crucial sense of direction to underpin the management of educational institutions. Unless this link between purpose and management is clear and close, there is a danger of “managerialism . . . a stress on procedures at the expense of educational purpose and values” (Bush, 1999, p. 240). “Management possesses no super-ordinate goals or values of its own. The pursuit of efficiency may be the mission statement of management – but this is efficiency in the achievement of objectives which others define” (Newman & Clarke, 1994, p. 29).



NOTE: This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

The process of deciding on the aims of the organization is at the heart of educational management. In some settings, aims are decided by the principal, often working in association with senior colleagues and perhaps a small group of lay stakeholders. In many schools, however, goal setting is a corporate activity undertaken by formal bodies or informal groups.

School aims are strongly influenced by pressures from the external environment. Many countries have a national curriculum and these often leave little scope for schools to decide their own educational aims. Institutions may be left with the residual task of interpreting external imperatives rather than determining aims on the basis of their own assessment of student need. The key issue here is the extent to which school managers are able to modify government policy and develop alternative approaches based on school-level values and vision. Do they have to follow the script, or can they ad lib?

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1 Distinguishing Educational Leadership and Management

The concept of management overlaps with two similar terms, leadership and administration. “Management” is widely used in Britain, Europe, and Africa, for example, while “administration” is preferred in the United States, Canada, and Australia. “Leadership” is of great contemporary interest in most countries in the developed World. Dimmock (1999) differentiates these concepts whilst also acknowledging that there are competing definitions:

School leaders [experience] tensions between competing elements of leadership, management and administration. Irrespective of how these terms are defined, school leaders experience difficulty in deciding the balance between higher order tasks designed to improve staff, student and school performance (leadership), routine maintenance of present operations (management) and lower order duties (administration). (p. 442)

Administration is not associated with “lower order duties” in the U.S. but may be seen as the overarching term, which embraces both leadership and management. Cuban (1988) provides one of the clearest distinctions between leadership and management.

By leadership, I mean influencing others actions in achieving desirable ends Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organisational arrangements I prize both managing and leading and attach no special value to either since different settings and times call for varied responses. (p. xx)

Leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. “Leading and managing are distinct, but both are important The challenge of modern organisations requires the objective perspective of the manager as well as the flashes of vision and commitment wise leadership provides” (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. xiii-xiv).

The English National College for School Leadership.

The contemporary emphasis on leadership rather than management is illustrated starkly by the opening of the English National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in November 2000. NCSL’s stress on leadership has led to a neglect of management. Visionary and inspirational leadership are advocated but much less attention is given to the structures and processes required to implement these ideas successfully. A fuller discussion of the NCSL may be found in Bush (2006).

1.1 The Significance of the Educational Context

Educational management as a field of study and practice was derived from management principles first applied to industry and commerce, mainly in the United States. Theory development largely involved the application of industrial models to educational settings. As the subject became established as an academic field in its own right, its theorists and practitioners began to develop alternative models based on their observation of, and experience in, schools and colleges. By the 21st century the main theories, featured in this chapter, have either been developed in the educational context or have been adapted from industrial models to meet the specific requirements of schools and colleges. Educational management has progressed from being a new field dependent upon ideas developed in other settings to become an established field with its own theories and research.

2 Conceptualising Educational Management

Leadership and management are often regarded as essentially practical activities. Practitioners and policy-makers tend to be dismissive of theories and concepts for their alleged remoteness from the “real” school situation. Willower (1980, p. 2), for example, asserts that “the application of theories by practicing administrators [is] a difficult and problematic undertaking. Indeed, it is clear that theories are simply not used very much in the realm of practice.” This comment suggests that theory and practice are regarded as separate aspects of educational leadership and management. Academics develop and refine theory while managers engage in practice. In short, there is a theory/ practice divide, or “gap” (English, 2002):

The theory-practice gap stands as the Gordian Knot of educational administration. Rather than be cut, it has become a permanent fixture of the landscape because it is embedded in the way we construct theories

for use . . . The theory-practice gap will be removed when we construct different and better theories that predict the effects of practice. (p. 1, 3)

3 The Relevance of Theory to Good Practice

If practitioners shun theory then they must rely on experience as a guide to action. In deciding on their response to a problem they draw on a range of options suggested by previous experience with that type of issue. However, “it is wishful thinking to assume that experience alone will teach leaders everything they need to know” (Copland et al, 2002, p. 75).

Teachers sometimes explain their decisions as just “common sense.” However, such apparently pragmatic decisions are often based on implicit theories. When a teacher or a manager takes a decision it reflects in part that person’s view of the organization. Such views or preconceptions are coloured by experience and by the attitudes engendered by that experience. These attitudes take on the character of frames of reference or theories, which inevitably influence the decision-making process.

Theory serves to provide a rationale for decision-making. Managerial activity is enhanced by an explicit awareness of the theoretical framework underpinning practice in educational institutions. There are three main arguments to support the view that managers have much to learn from an appreciation of theory, providing that it is grounded firmly (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in the realities of practice:

1. Reliance on facts as the sole guide to action is unsatisfactory because all evidence requires interpretation. Theory provides “mental models” (Leithwood et al, 1999, p. 75) to help in understanding the nature and effects of practice.

2. Dependence on personal experience in interpreting facts and making decisions is narrow because it discards the knowledge of others. Familiarity with the arguments and insights of theorists enables the practitioner to deploy a wide range of experience and understanding in resolving the problems of today. An understanding of theory also helps reduce the likelihood of mistakes occurring while experience is being acquired.

3. Experience may be particularly unhelpful as the sole guide to action when the practitioner begins to operate in a different context. Organizational variables may mean that practice in one school or college has little relevance in the new environment. A broader awareness of theory and practice may be valuable as the manager attempts to interpret behaviour in the fresh situation.

Of course, theory is useful only so long as it has relevance to practice in education. Hoyle (1986) distinguishes between theory-for-understanding and theory-for-practice. While both are potentially valuable, the latter is more significant for managers in education. The relevance of theory should be judged by the extent to which it informs managerial action and contributes to the resolution of practical problems in schools and colleges.

3.1 The Nature of Theory

There is no single all-embracing theory of educational management. In part this reflects the astonishing diversity of educational institutions, ranging from small rural elementary schools to very large universities and colleges. It relates also to the varied nature of the problems encountered in schools and colleges, which require different approaches and solutions. Above all, it reflects the multifaceted nature of theory in education and the social sciences: “Students of educational management who turn to organisational theory for guidance in their attempt to understand and manage educational institutions will not find a single, universally applicable theory but a multiplicity of theoretical approaches each jealously guarded by a particular epistemic community” (Ribbins, 1985, p. 223).

The existence of several different perspectives creates what Bolman and Deal (1997, p. 11) describe as “conceptual pluralism: a jangling discord of multiple voices.” Each theory has something to offer in explaining behaviour and events in educational institutions. The perspectives favoured by managers, explicitly or implicitly, inevitably influence or determine decision-making.

Griffiths (1997) provides strong arguments to underpin his advocacy of “theoretical pluralism.” “The basic idea is that all problems cannot be studied fruitfully using a single theory. Some problems are large and complex and no single theory is capable of encompassing them, while others, although seemingly simple and straightforward, can be better understood through the use of multiple theories . . . particular theories are appropriate to certain problems, but not others” (Griffiths, 1997, p. 372).

3.2 The Characteristics of Theory

Most theories of educational leadership and management possess three major characteristics:

1. Theories tend to be normative in that they reflect beliefs about the nature of educational institutions and the behaviour of individuals within them. Simkins (1999) stresses the importance of distinguishing between descriptive and normative uses of theory. “This is a distinction which is often not clearly made. The former are those which attempt to describe the nature of organisations and how they work and, sometimes, to explain why they are as they are. The latter, in contrast, attempt to prescribe how organisations should or might be managed to achieve particular outcomes more effectively” (p. 270).

2. Theories tend to be selective or partial in that they emphasize certain aspects of the institution at the expense of other elements. The espousal of one theoretical model leads to the neglect of other approaches. Schools and colleges are arguably too complex to be capable of analysis through a single dimension.

3. Theories of educational management are often based on, or supported by, observation of practice in educational institutions. English (2002, p. 1) says that observation may be used in two ways. First, observation may be followed by the development of concepts, which then become theoretical frames. Such perspectives based on data from systematic observation are sometimes called “grounded theory.” Because such approaches are derived from empirical inquiry in schools and colleges, they are more likely to be perceived as relevant by practitioners. Secondly, researchers may use a specific theoretical frame to select concepts to be tested through observation. The research is then used to “prove” or “verify” the efficacy of the theory (English, 2002, p. 1).

Models of Educational Management: An Introduction

Several writers have chosen to present theories in distinct groups or bundles but they differ in the models chosen, the emphasis given to particular approaches and the terminology used to describe them. Two of the best known frameworks are those by Bolman and Deal (1997) and Morgan (1997).

In this chapter, the main theories are classified into six major models of educational management (Bush, 2003). All these models are given significant attention in the literature of educational management and have been subject to a degree of empirical verification. Table 1 shows the six models and links them to parallel leadership models. The links between management and leadership models are given extended treatment in Bush (2003).

Management model	Leadership model
Formal	Managerial
Collegial	Participative
Political	Transactional
Subjective	Post-modern
Ambiguity	Contingency
Cultural	Moral

Figure 1: Typology of management and leadership models (adapted from Bush and Glover 2002)

Formal Models

Formal model is an umbrella term used to embrace a number of similar but not identical approaches. The title “formal” is used because these theories emphasize the official and structural elements of organizations:

Formal models assume that organisations are hierarchical systems in which managers use rational means to pursue agreed goals. Heads possess authority legitimised by their formal positions within the organisation and are accountable to sponsoring bodies for the activities of their organisation (Bush, 2003, p. 37).

This model has seven major features:

1. They tend to treat organizations as systems. A system comprises elements that have clear organisational links with each other. Within schools, for example, departments and other sub-units are systemically related to each other and to the institution itself.

2. Formal models give prominence to the official structure of the organization. Formal structures are often represented by organization charts, which show the authorized pattern of relationships between members of the institution.

3. In formal models the official structures of the organization tend to be hierarchical. Teachers are responsible to department chairs who, in turn, are answerable to principals for the activities of their departments. The hierarchy thus represents a means of control for leaders over their staff.

4. All formal approaches typify schools as goal-seeking organizations. The institution is thought to have official purposes, which are accepted and pursued by members of the organization. Increasingly, goals are set within a broader vision of a preferred future for the school (Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan, 1989).

5. Formal models assume that managerial decisions are made through a rational process. Typically, all the options are considered and evaluated in terms of the goals of the organization. The most suitable alternative is then selected to enable those objectives to be pursued.

6. Formal approaches present the authority of leaders as a product of their official positions within the

organization. Principals' power is positional and is sustained only while they continue to hold their posts.

1. In formal models there is an emphasis on the accountability of the organization to its sponsoring body. Most schools remain responsible to the school district. In many centralised systems, school principals are accountable to national or state governments. In decentralised systems, principals are answerable to their governing boards.

(Adapted from Bush, 2003, p. 37-38).

These seven basic features are present to a greater or lesser degree in each of the individual theories, which together comprise the formal models. These are:

- structural models;
- systems models;
- bureaucratic models;
- rational models;
- hierarchical models.

A full discussion of each of these sub-models appears in Bush (2003).

4 Managerial Leadership

The type of leadership most closely associated with formal models is "managerial."

Managerial leadership assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviours and that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the organisation will be facilitated. Most approaches to managerial leadership also assume that the behaviour of organisational members is largely rational. Authority and influence are allocated to formal positions in proportion to the status of those positions in the organisational hierarchy. (Leithwood et al, 1999, p. 14)

Dressler's (2001) review of leadership in Charter schools in the United States shows the significance of managerial leadership: "Traditionally, the principal's role has been clearly focused on management responsibilities" (p. 175). Managerial leadership is focused on managing existing activities successfully rather than visioning a better future for the school.

4.1 The Limitations of Formal Models

The various formal models pervade much of the literature on educational management.

They are normative approaches in that they present ideas about how people in organizations ought to behave. Levacic et al (1999) argue that these assumptions underpin the educational reforms of the 1990s, notably in England:

A major development in educational management in the last decade has been much greater emphasis on defining effective leadership by individuals in management posts in terms of the effectiveness of their organisation, which is increasingly judged in relation to measurable outcomes for students . . . This is argued to require a rational-technicist approach to the structuring of decision-making. (p. 15)

There are five specific weaknesses associated with formal models:

1. It may be unrealistic to characterize schools and colleges as goal-oriented organizations. It is often difficult to ascertain the goals of educational institutions. Formal objectives may have little operational relevance because they are often vague and general, because there may be many different goals competing for resources, and because goals may emanate from individuals and groups as well as from the leaders of the organisation.

Even where the purposes of schools and colleges have been clarified, there are further problems in judging whether objectives have been achieved. Policy-makers and practitioners often rely on examination performance to assess schools but this is only one dimension of the educational process.

2. The portrayal of decision-making as a rational process is fraught with difficulties. The belief that managerial action is preceded by a process of evaluation of alternatives and a considered choice of the most

appropriate option is rarely substantiated. Much human behaviour is irrational and this inevitably influences the nature of decision-making in education. Weick (1976, p. 1), for example, asserts that rational practice is the exception rather than the norm.

3. Formal models focus on the organization as an entity and ignore or underestimate the contribution of individuals. They assume that people occupy preordained positions in the structure and that their behaviour reflects their organizational positions rather than their individual qualities and experience. Greenfield (1973) has been particularly critical of this view (see the discussion of subjective models, below). Samier (2002, p. 40) adopts a similar approach, expressing concern “about the role technical rationality plays in crippling the personality of the bureaucrat, reducing him [sic] to a cog in a machine.”

4. A central assumption of formal models is that power resides at the apex of the pyramid. Principals possess authority by virtue of their positions as the appointed leaders of their institutions. This focus on official authority leads to a view of institutional management which is essentially top down. Policy is laid down by senior managers and implemented by staff lower down the hierarchy. Their acceptance of managerial decisions is regarded as unproblematic.

Organizations with large numbers of professional staff tend to exhibit signs of tension between the conflicting demands of professionalism and the hierarchy. Formal models assume that leaders, because they are appointed on merit, have the competence to issue appropriate instructions to subordinates. Professional organizations have a different ethos with expertise distributed widely within the institution. This may come into conflict with professional authority.

5. Formal approaches are based on the implicit assumption that organizations are relatively stable. Individuals may come and go but they slot into predetermined positions in a static structure. “Organisations operating in simpler and more stable environments are likely to employ less complex and more centralised structures, with authority, rules and policies as the primary vehicles for co-ordinating the work” (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 77).

Assumptions of stability are unrealistic in contemporary schools. March and Olsen (1976, p.21) are right to claim that “Individuals find themselves in a more complex, less stable and less understood world than that described by standard theories of organisational choice.”

4.2 Are Formal Models Still Valid?

These criticisms of formal models suggest that they have serious limitations. The dominance of the hierarchy is compromised by the expertise possessed by professional staff. The supposed rationality of the decision-making process requires modification to allow for the pace and complexity of change. The concept of organizational goals is challenged by those who point to the existence of multiple objectives in education and the possible conflict between goals held at individual, departmental and institutional levels. “Rationalistic-bureaucratic notions . . . have largely proven to be sterile and to have little application to administrative practice in the “real world” (Owens & Shakeshaft, 1992, p. 4)

Despite these limitations, it would be inappropriate to dismiss formal approaches as irrelevant to schools and colleges. The other models discussed in this chapter were all developed as a reaction to the perceived weaknesses of formal theories. However, these alternative perspectives have not succeeded in dislodging the formal models, which remain valid as partial descriptions of organization and management in education. Owens and Shakeshaft (1992) refer to a reduction of confidence in bureaucratic models, and a “paradigm shift” to a more sophisticated analysis, but formal models still have much to contribute to our understanding of schools as organisations.

Collegial Models

4.3 Central Features of Collegial Models

Collegial models include all those theories that emphasize that power and decision-making should be shared among some or all members of the organization (Bush, 2003):

Collegial models assume that organizations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. Power is shared among some or all members of the organization who are thought to have a shared understanding about the aims of the institution. (p. 64)

Brundrett (1998) says that “collegiality can broadly be defined as teachers conferring and collaborating with other teachers” (p. 305). Little (1990) explains that “the reason to pursue the study and practice of collegiality is that, presumably, something is gained when teachers work together and something is lost when they do not” (p. 166).

Collegial models have the following major features:

1. They are strongly normative in orientation. “The advocacy of collegiality is made more on the basis of prescription than on research-based studies of school practice” (Webb & Vulliamy, 1996, p. 443).

2. Collegial models seem to be particularly appropriate for organizations such as schools and colleges that have significant numbers of professional staff. Teachers have an authority of expertise that contrasts with the positional authority associated with formal models. Teachers require a measure of autonomy in the classroom but also need to collaborate to ensure a coherent approach to teaching and learning (Brundrett, 1998, p. 307). Collegial models assume that professionals also have a right to share in the wider decision-making process. Shared decisions are likely to be better informed and are also much more likely to be implemented effectively.

3. Collegial models assume a common set of values held by members of the organization. These common values guide the managerial activities of the organization and are thought to lead to shared educational objectives. The common values of professionals form part of the justification for the optimistic assumption that it is always possible to reach agreement about goals and policies. Brundrett (1998, p. 308) goes further in referring to the importance of “shared vision” as a basis for collegial decision-making.

4. The size of decision-making groups is an important element in collegial management. They have to be sufficiently small to enable everyone to be heard. This may mean that collegiality works better in elementary schools, or in sub-units, than at the institutional level in secondary schools. Meetings of the whole staff may operate collegially in small schools but may be suitable only for information exchange in larger institutions.

The collegial model deals with this problem of scale by building-in the assumption that teachers have formal representation within the various decision-making bodies. The democratic element of formal representation rests on the allegiance owed by participants to their constituencies (Bush, 2003, p. 67).

5. Collegial models assume that decisions are reached by consensus. The belief that there are common values and shared objectives leads to the view that it is both desirable and possible to resolve problems by agreement. The decision-making process may be elongated by the search for compromise but this is regarded as an acceptable price to pay to maintain the aura of shared values and beliefs. The case for consensual decision-making rests in part on the ethical dimension of collegiality. Imposing decisions on staff is considered morally repugnant, and inconsistent with the notion of consent.

(Bush, 2003, p. 65-67).

4.4 Participative Leadership

Because policy is determined within a participative framework, the principal is expected to adopt participative leadership strategies. Heroic models of leadership are inappropriate when influence and power are widely distributed within the institution. “The collegial leader is at most a “first among equals” in an academic organisation supposedly run by professional experts . . . the collegial leader is not so much a star standing alone as the developer of consensus among the professionals who must share the burden of the decision.” (Baldrige et al, 1978, p. 45)

While transformational leadership is consistent with the collegial model, in that it assumes that leaders and staff have shared values and common interests (Bush, 2003, p. 76), the leadership model most relevant to collegiality is “participative leadership,” which “assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group” (Leithwood et al, 1999, p. 12). This is a normative model, underpinned by three criteria (Leithwood et al, 1999):

- Participation will increase school effectiveness.

- Participation is justified by democratic principles.
- Leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder. (p. 12)

Sergiovanni (1984) claims that a participative approach succeeds in “bonding” staff together and in easing the pressures on school principals. “The burdens of leadership will be less if leadership functions and roles are shared and if the concept of leadership density were to emerge as a viable replacement for principal leadership” (p. 13).

4.5 Limitations of Collegial Models

Collegial models have been popular in the academic and official literature on educational management since the 1980s. However, their critics point to a number of limitations:

1. Collegial models are so strongly normative that they tend to obscure rather than portray reality. Precepts about the most appropriate ways of managing educational institutions mingle with descriptions of behaviour. While collegiality is increasingly advocated, the evidence of its presence in schools and colleges tends to be sketchy and incomplete. “The collegial literature often confuses descriptive and normative enterprises . . . The collegial idea of round table decision making does not accurately reflect the actual processes in most institutions” (Baldrige et al, 1978, p. 33).
2. Collegial approaches to decision-making tend to be slow and cumbersome. When policy proposals require the approval of a series of committees, the process is often tortuous and time consuming. Participants may have to endure many lengthy meetings before issues are resolved. This requires patience and a considerable investment of time. Several English primary school heads interviewed by Webb and Vulliamy (1996) refer to the time-consuming nature of meetings where “the discussion phase seemed to go on and on” (p. 445) and “I felt we weren’t getting anywhere” (p. 446).
3. A fundamental assumption of democratic models is that decisions are reached by consensus. It is believed that the outcome of debate should be agreement based on the shared values of participants. In practice, though, teachers have their own views and may also represent constituencies within the school or college. Inevitably these sectional interests have a significant influence on committees’ processes. The participatory framework may become the focal point for disagreement between factions.
4. Collegial models have to be evaluated in relation to the special features of educational institutions. The participative aspects of decision-making exist alongside the structural and bureaucratic components of schools and colleges. Often there is tension between these rather different modes of management. The participative element rests on the authority of expertise possessed by professional staff but this rarely trumps the positional authority of official leaders or the formal power of external bodies. Brundrett (1998) claims that “collegiality is inevitably the handmaiden of an ever increasingly centralised bureaucracy” (p. 313)
5. Collegial approaches to school and college decision-making may be difficult to sustain because principals remain accountable to various external groups. They may experience considerable difficulty in defending policies that have emerged from a collegial process but do not enjoy their personal support. Brundrett (1998) is right to argue that “heads need to be genuinely brave to lend power to a democratic forum which may make decisions with which the headteacher may not themselves agree” (p. 310).
6. The effectiveness of a collegial system depends in part on the attitudes of staff. If they actively support participation then it may succeed. If they display apathy or hostility, it seems certain to fail. Wallace (1989) argues that teachers may not welcome collegiality because they are disinclined to accept any authority intermediate between themselves and the principal.
7. Collegial processes in schools depend even more on the attitudes of principals than on the support of teachers. Participative machinery can be established only with the support of the principal, who has the legal authority to manage the school. Hoyle (1986) concludes that its dependence on the principal’s support limits the validity of the collegiality model.

4.5.1 Contrived Collegiality

Hargreaves (1994) makes a more fundamental criticism of collegiality, arguing that it is being espoused or “contrived” by official groups in order to secure the implementation of national or state policy. Contrived collegiality has the following features (Hargreaves, 1994):

- Administratively regulated rather than spontaneous.
- Compulsory rather than discretionary.
- Geared to the implementation of the mandates of government or the principal.
- Fixed in time and place.
- Designed to have predictable outcomes. (p. 195-196)

Webb and Vulliamy (1996) argue that collegial frameworks may be used for essentially political activity, the focus of the next section of this chapter (Webb & Vulliamy, 1996):

The current climate . . . encourages headteachers to be powerful and, if necessary, manipulative leaders in order to ensure that policies and practices agreed upon are ones that they can wholeheartedly support and defend. (p. 448)

4.6 Is Collegiality an Unattainable Ideal?

Collegial models contribute several important concepts to the theory of educational management. Participative approaches are a necessary antidote to the rigid hierarchical assumptions of the formal models. However, collegial perspectives underestimate the official authority of the principal and present bland assumptions of consensus, which often cannot be substantiated. Little (1990) following substantial research in the United States, concludes that collegiality “turns out to be rare” (p.187). Collegiality is an elusive ideal but a measure of participation is essential if schools are to be harmonious and creative organisations.

Political Models

4.7 Central Features of Political Models

Political models embrace those theories that characterize decision-making as a bargaining process. Analysis focuses on the distribution of power and influence in organizations and on the bargaining and negotiation between interest groups. Conflict is regarded as endemic within organizations and management is directed towards the regulation of political behaviour (Bush, 2003):

Political models assume that in organizations policy and decisions emerge through a process of negotiation and bargaining. Interest groups develop and form alliances in pursuit of particular policy objectives. Conflict is viewed as a natural phenomenon and power accrues to dominant coalitions rather than being the preserve of formal leaders. (p. 89)

Baldrige’s (1971) research in universities in the U.S. led him to conclude that the political model, rather than the formal or collegial perspectives, best captured the realities of life in higher education.

Political models have the following major features:

1.They tend to focus on group activity rather than the institution as a whole. Ball (1987) refers to “baronial politics” (p. 221) and discusses the nature of conflict between the leaders of subgroups. He adds that conflict between “barons” is primarily about resources and power.

2.Political models are concerned with interests and interest groups. Individuals are thought to have a variety of interests that they pursue within the organization. In talking about “interests,” we are talking about pre-dispositions embracing goals, values, desires, expectations, and other orientations and inclinations that lead a person to act in one way rather than another (Morgan, 1997, p. 61).

3.Political models stress the prevalence of conflict in organizations. Interest groups pursue their independent objectives, which may contrast sharply with the aims of other subunits within the institution and lead to conflict between them. “Conflict will always be present in organisations . . . its source rests in some perceived or real divergence of interests” (Morgan, 1997, p. 167).

4.Political models assume that the goals of organizations are unstable, ambiguous and contested. Individuals, interest groups and coalitions have their own purposes and act towards their achievement. Goals

may be disputed and then become a significant element in the conflict between groups (Bolman & Deal, 1991):

The political frame . . . insists that organisational goals are set through negotiations among the members of coalitions. Different individuals and groups have different objectives and resources, and each attempt to bargain with other members or coalitions to influence goals and decision-making process. (p. 190)

5.As noted above, decisions within political arenas emerge after a complex process of bargaining and negotiation. “Organisational goals and decisions emerge from ongoing processes of bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position among members of different coalitions” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 186).

6.The concept of power is central to all political theories. The outcomes of the complex decision-making process are likely to be determined according to the relative power of the individuals and interest groups involved in the debate. “Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved. Power influences who gets what, when and how . . . the sources of power are rich and varied” (Morgan, 1997, p. 170-171).

Sources of Power in Education

Power may be regarded as the ability to determine the behaviour of others or to decide the outcome of conflict. Where there is disagreement it is likely to be resolved according to the relative resources of power available to the participants. There are many sources of power but in broad terms a distinction can be made between authority and influence. Authority is legitimate power, which is vested in leaders within formal organizations. Influence depends on personal characteristics and expertise.

There are six significant forms of power relevant to schools and colleges:

1.Positional power. A major source of power in any organization is that accruing to individuals who hold an official position in the institution. Handy (1993, p. 128) says that positional power is “legal” or “legitimate” power. In schools, the principal is regarded as the legitimate leader and possesses legal authority.

2.Authority of expertise. In professional organizations there is a significant reservoir of power available to those who possess appropriate expertise. Teachers, for example, have specialist knowledge of aspects of the curriculum. “The expert . . . often carries an aura of authority and power that can add considerable weight to a decision that rests in the balance” (Morgan, 1997, p. 181).

3.Personal power. Individuals who are charismatic or possess verbal skills or certain other characteristics may be able to exercise personal power. These personal skills are independent of the power accruing to individuals by virtue of their position in the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

4.Control of rewards. Power is likely to be possessed to a significant degree by individuals who have control of rewards. In education, rewards may include promotion, good references, and allocation to favoured classes or groups. Individuals who control or influence the allocation of these benefits may be able to determine the behaviour of teachers who seek one or more of the rewards.

5.Coercive power. The mirror image of the control of rewards may be coercive power. This implies the ability to enforce compliance, backed by the threat of sanctions. “Coercive power rests on the ability to constrain, to block, to interfere, or to punish” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 196).

1. Control of resources. Control of the distribution of resources may be an important source of power in educational institutions, particularly in self-managing schools. Decisions about the allocation of resources are likely to be among the most significant aspects of the policy process in such organisations. Control of these resources may give power over those people who wish to acquire them.

Consideration of all these sources of power leads to the conclusion that principals possess substantial resources of authority and influence. However, they do not have absolute power. Other leaders and teachers also have power, arising principally from their personal qualities and expertise. These other sources of power may act as a counter-balance to the principal’s positional authority and control of rewards.

4.7.1 Transactional Leadership

The leadership model most closely aligned with political models is that of transactional leadership. “Transactional leadership is leadership in which relationships with teachers are based upon an exchange for some

valued resource. To the teacher, interaction between administrators and teachers is usually episodic, short-lived and limited to the exchange transaction” (Miller & Miller, 2001, p. 182).

This exchange process is an established political strategy. As we noted earlier, principals hold power in the form of key rewards such as promotion and references. However, they require the co-operation of staff to secure the effective management of the school. An exchange may secure benefits for both parties to the arrangement. The major limitation of such a process is that it does not engage staff beyond the immediate gains arising from the transaction. Transactional leadership does not produce long-term commitment to the values and vision promoted by school leaders.

The Limitations of Political Models

Political models are primarily descriptive and analytical. The focus on interests, conflict between groups, and power provides a valid and persuasive interpretation of the decision-making process in schools. However, these theories do have four major limitations:

1. Political models are immersed so strongly in the language of power, conflict and manipulation that they neglect other standard aspects of organizations. There is little recognition that most organizations operate for much of the time according to routine bureaucratic procedures. The focus is heavily on policy formulation while the implementation of policy receives little attention. The outcomes of bargaining and negotiation are endorsed, or may falter, within the formal authority structure of the school or college.

2. Political models stress the influence of interest groups on decision-making. The assumption is that organizations are fragmented into groups, which pursue their own independent goals. This aspect of political models may be inappropriate for elementary schools, which may not have the apparatus for political activity. The institutional level may be the center of attention for staff in these schools, invalidating the political model’s emphasis on interest group fragmentation.

3. In political models there is too much emphasis on conflict and a neglect of the possibility of professional collaboration leading to agreed outcomes. The assumption that teachers are engaged in a calculated pursuit of their own interests underestimates the capacity of teachers to work in harmony with colleagues for the benefit of their pupils and students.

4. Political models are regarded primarily as descriptive or explanatory theories. Their advocates claim that these approaches are realistic portrayals of the decision-making process in schools and colleges. There is no suggestion that teachers should pursue their own self-interest, simply an assessment, based on observation, that their behaviour is consistent with a political perspective. Nevertheless, the less attractive aspects of political models may make them unacceptable to many educationists for ethical reasons.

4.8 Are Political Models Valid?

Political models provide rich descriptions and persuasive analysis of events and behaviour in schools and colleges. The explicit recognition of interests as prime motivators for action is valid, as are the concepts of conflict and power. For many teachers and school leaders, political models fit their experience of day-to-day reality in schools. Lindle (1999), a school administrator in the United States, argues that it is a pervasive feature of schools.

Subjective Models

4.9 Central Features of Subjective Models

Subjective models focus on individuals within organizations rather than the total institution or its subunits. These perspectives suggest that each person has a subjective and selective perception of the organization. Events and situations have different meanings for the various participants in institutions. Organizations are portrayed as complex units, which reflect the numerous meanings and perceptions of all the people within them. Organizations are social constructions in the sense that they emerge from the interaction of their participants. They are manifestations of the values and beliefs of individuals rather than the concrete realities presented in formal models (Bush, 2003):

Subjective models assume that organizations are the creations of the people within them. Participants are thought to interpret situations in different ways and these individual perceptions are derived from their

background and values. Organizations have different meanings for each of their members and exist only in the experience of those members. (p. 113)

Subjective models became prominent in educational management as a result of the work of Thomas Greenfield in the 1970s and 1980s. Greenfield was concerned about several aspects of systems theory, which he regarded as the dominant model of educational organizations. He argues that systems theory is “bad theory” and criticizes its focus on the institution as a concrete reality (Greenfield, 1973):

Most theories of organisation grossly simplify the nature of the reality with which they deal. The drive to see the organisation as a single kind of entity with a life of its own apart from the perceptions and beliefs of those involved in it blinds us to its complexity and the variety of organisations people create around themselves. (p. 571)

Subjective models have the following major features:

1. They focus on the beliefs and perceptions of individual members of organizations rather than the institutional level or interest groups. The focus on individuals rather than the organization is a fundamental difference between subjective and formal models, and creates what Hodgkinson (1993) regards as an unbridgeable divide. “A fact can never entail a value, and an individual can never become a collective” (p. xii).
2. Subjective models are concerned with the meanings placed on events by people within organizations. The focus is on the individual interpretation of behaviour rather than the situations and actions themselves. “Events and meanings are loosely coupled: the same events can have very different meanings for different people because of differences in the schema that they use to interpret their experience” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 244).
3. The different meanings placed on situations by the various participants are products of their values, background and experience. So the interpretation of events depends on the beliefs held by each member of the organization. Greenfield (1979) asserts that formal theories make the mistake of treating the meanings of leaders as if they were the objective realities of the organization. “Too frequently in the past, organisation and administrative theory has . . . taken sides in the ideological battles of social process and presented as ‘theory’” (p. 103) , the views of a dominating set of values, the views of rulers, elites, and their administrators.
4. Subjective models treat structure as a product of human interaction rather than something that is fixed or predetermined. The organization charts, which are characteristic of formal models, are regarded as fictions in that they cannot predict the behaviour of individuals. Subjective approaches move the emphasis away from structure towards a consideration of behaviour and process. Individual behaviour is thought to reflect the personal qualities and aspirations of the participants rather than the formal roles they occupy. “Organisations exist to serve human needs, rather than the reverse” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 121).
5. Subjective approaches emphasize the significance of individual purposes and deny the existence of organizational goals. Greenfield (1973) asks “What is an organisation that it can have such a thing as a goal?” (p. 553). The view that organizations are simply the product of the interaction of their members leads naturally to the assumption that objectives are individual, not organizational (Bush, 2003, p. 114-118).

4.10 Subjective Models and Qualitative Research

The theoretical dialectic between formal and subjective models is reflected in the debate about positivism and interpretivism in educational research. Subjective models relate to a mode of research that is predominantly interpretive or qualitative. This approach to enquiry is based on the subjective experience of individuals. The main aim is to seek understanding of the ways in which individuals create, modify and interpret the social world which they inhabit.

The main features of interpretive, or qualitative, research echo those of the subjective models:

1.They focus on the perceptions of individuals rather than the whole organisation. The subject’s individual perspective is central to qualitative research (Morrison, 2002, p. 19).

2.Interpretive research is concerned with the meanings, or interpretations, placed on events by participants. “All human life is experienced and constructed from a subjective perspective” (Morrison, 2002, p. 19).

3.Research findings are interpreted using “grounded” theory. “Theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be “grounded” on data generated by the research act. Theory should not proceed research but follow it” (Cohen et al, 2000, p. 23).

4.10.1 Postmodern Leadership

Subjective theorists prefer to stress the personal qualities of individuals rather than their official positions in the organization. The subjective view is that leadership is a product of personal qualities and skills and not simply an automatic outcome of official authority.

The notion of post-modern leadership aligns closely with the principles of subjective models. Keough and Tobin (2001, p. 2) say that “current postmodern culture celebrates the multiplicity of subjective truths as defined by experience and revels in the loss of absolute authority.” They identify several key features of postmodernism (Keough & Tobin, 2001):

- Language does not reflect reality.
- Reality does not exist; there are multiple realities.
- Any situation is open to multiple interpretations.
- Situations must be understood at local level with particular attention to diversity.

(p. 11-13)

Sackney and Mitchell (2001) stress the centrality of individual interpretation of events while also criticising visionary leadership. “Leaders must pay attention to the cultural and symbolic structure of meaning construed by individuals and groups . . . postmodern theories of leadership take the focus off vision and place it squarely on voice” (p. 13-14). Instead of a compelling vision articulated by leaders, there are multiple voices, and diverse cultural meanings.

4.10.2 The Limitations of Subjective Models

Subjective models are prescriptive approaches in that they reflect beliefs about the nature of organizations. They can be regarded as “anti-theories” in that they emerged as a reaction to the perceived limitations of the formal models. Although subjective models introduce several important concepts into the theory of educational management, they have four significant weaknesses, which serve to limit their validity:

1.Subjective models are strongly normative in that they reflect the attitudes and beliefs of their supporters. Willower (1980) goes further to describe them as “ideological.” “[Phenomenological] perspectives feature major ideological components and their partisans tend to be true believers when promulgating their positions rather than offering them for critical examination and test” (p. 7).

Subjective models comprise a series of principles rather than a coherent body of theory: “Greenfield sets out to destroy the central principles of conventional theory but consistently rejects the idea of proposing a precisely formulated alternative” (Hughes & Bush, 1991, p. 241).

2.Subjective models seem to assume the existence of an organization within which individual behaviour and interpretation occur but there is no clear indication of the nature of the organization. Organizations are perceived to be nothing more than a product of the meanings of their participants. In emphasizing the interpretations of individuals, subjective theorists neglect the institutions within which individuals behave, interact and derive meanings.

3.Subjective theorists imply that meanings are so individual that there may be as many interpretations as people. In practice, though, these meanings tend to cluster into patterns, which do enable participants and observers to make valid generalizations about organizations. “By focussing exclusively on the ‘individual’ as

a theoretical . . . entity, [Greenfield] precludes analyses of collective enterprises. Social phenomena cannot be reduced solely to ‘the individual’” (Ryan, 1988, p. 69-70).

4. Subjective models they provide few guidelines for managerial action. Leaders are expected to acknowledge the individual meanings placed on events by members of organizations. This stance is much less secure than the precepts of the formal model.

4.10.2.1 The Importance of the Individual

The subjective perspective offers some valuable insights, which act as a corrective to the more rigid features of formal models. The focus on individual interpretations of events is a useful antidote to the uniformity of systems and structural theories. Similarly, the emphasis on individual aims, rather than organizational objectives, is an important contribution to our understanding of schools and colleges.

Subjective models have close links with the emerging, but still weakly defined, notion of post-modern leadership. Leaders need to attend to the multiple voices in their organisations and to develop a “power to,” not a “power over,” model of leadership. However, as Sackney and Mitchell (2001) note, “we do not see how postmodern leadership . . . can be undertaken without the active engagement of the school principal” (p. 19). In other words, the subjective approach works only if leaders wish it to work, a fragile basis for any approach to educational leadership.

Greenfield’s work has broadened our understanding of educational institutions and exposed the weaknesses of the formal models. However, it is evident that subjective models have supplemented, rather than supplanted, the formal theories Greenfield set out to attack.

Ambiguity Models

4.10.3 Central Features of Ambiguity Models

Ambiguity models stress uncertainty and unpredictability in organizations. These theories assume that organizational objectives are problematic and that institutions experience difficulty in ordering their priorities. Sub-units are portrayed as relatively autonomous groups, which are connected only loosely with one another and with the institution itself. Decision-making occurs within formal and informal settings where participation is fluid. Ambiguity is a prevalent feature of complex organizations such as schools and is likely to be particularly acute during periods of rapid change (Bush, 2003):

Ambiguity models assume that turbulence and unpredictability are dominant features of organizations. There is no clarity over the objectives of institutions and their processes are not properly understood. Participation in policy making is fluid as members opt in or out of decision opportunities. (p. 134)

Ambiguity models are associated with a group of theorists, mostly from the United States, who developed their ideas in the 1970s. They were dissatisfied with the formal models, which they regarded as inadequate for many organizations, particularly during phases of instability. The most celebrated of the ambiguity perspectives is the “garbage can” model developed by Cohen and March (1986). March (1982) points to the jumbled reality in certain kinds of organization:

Theories of choice underestimate the confusion and complexity surrounding actual decision making. Many things are happening at once; technologies are changing and poorly understood; alliances, preferences, and perceptions are changing; problems, solutions, opportunities, ideas, people, and outcomes are mixed together in a way that makes their interpretation uncertain and their connections unclear. (p. 36)

The data supporting ambiguity models have been drawn largely from educational settings, leading March and Olsen (1976) to assert that “ambiguity is a major feature of decision making in most public and educational organizations” (p. 12).

Ambiguity models have the following major features:

1. There is a lack of clarity about the goals of the organization. Many institutions are thought to have inconsistent and opaque objectives. It may be argued that aims become clear only through the behaviour of members of the organization (Cohen & March, 1986):

The organization appears to operate on a variety of inconsistent and ill-defined preferences. It can be described better as a loose collection of changing ideas than as a coherent structure. It discovers preferences through action more often than it acts on the basis of preferences. (p. 3)

Educational institutions are regarded as typical in having no clearly defined objectives. Because teachers work independently for much of their time, they may experience little difficulty in pursuing their own interests. As a result schools and colleges are thought to have no coherent pattern of aims.

2. Ambiguity models assume that organizations have a problematic technology in that their processes are not properly understood. In education it is not clear how students acquire knowledge and skills so the processes of teaching are clouded with doubt and uncertainty. Bell (1980) claims that ambiguity infuses the central functions of schools.

3. Ambiguity theorists argue that organizations are characterized by fragmentation. Schools are divided into groups which have internal coherence based on common values and goals. Links between the groups are more tenuous and unpredictable. Weick (1976) uses the term “loose coupling” to describe relationships between sub-units. “Loose coupling . . . carries connotations of impermanence, dissolvability, and tacitness all of which are potentially crucial properties of the ‘glue’” (p. 3) that holds organizations together.

Client-serving bodies, such as schools, fit the loose coupling metaphor much better than, say, car assembly plants where operations are regimented and predictable. The degree of integration required in education is markedly less than in many other settings, allowing fragmentation to develop and persist.

4. Within ambiguity models organizational structure is regarded as problematic. Committees and other formal bodies have rights and responsibilities, which overlap with each other and with the authority assigned to individual managers. The effective power of each element within the structure varies with the issue and according to the level of participation of committee members.

5. Ambiguity models tend to be particularly appropriate for professional client-serving organizations. The requirement that professionals make individual judgements, rather than acting in accordance with managerial prescriptions, leads to the view that the larger schools and colleges operate in a climate of ambiguity.

6. Ambiguity theorists emphasize that there is fluid participation in the management of organizations. “The participants in the organization vary among themselves in the amount of time and effort they devote to the organization; individual participants vary from one time to another. As a result standard theories of power and choice seem to be inadequate.” (Cohen & March, 1986, p. 3).

7. A further source of ambiguity is provided by the signals emanating from the organization’s environment. In an era of rapid change, schools may experience difficulties in interpreting the various messages being transmitted from the environment and in dealing with conflicting signals. The uncertainty arising from the external context adds to the ambiguity of the decision-making process within the institution.

8. Ambiguity theorists emphasize the prevalence of unplanned decisions. The lack of agreed goals means that decisions have no clear focus. Problems, solutions and participants interact and choices somehow emerge from the confusion.

The rational model is undermined by ambiguity, since it is so heavily dependent on the availability of information about relationships between inputs and outputs – between means and ends. If ambiguity prevails, then it is not possible for organizations to have clear aims and objectives. (Levacic, 1995, p. 82)

9. Ambiguity models stress the advantages of decentralization. Given the complexity and unpredictability of organizations, it is thought that many decisions should be devolved to subunits and individuals. Weick (1976) argues that devolution enables organizations to survive while particular subunits are threatened (Bush, 2003):

If there is a breakdown in one portion of a loosely coupled system then this breakdown is sealed off and does not affect other portions of the organization . . . A loosely coupled system can isolate its trouble spots and prevent the trouble from spreading. (p. 135-141)

The major contribution of the ambiguity model is that it uncouples problems and choices. The notion of decision-making as a rational process for finding solutions to problems is supplanted by an uneasy mix of problems, solutions and participants from which decisions may eventually emerge. “In the garbage can model, there is no clear distinction between means and ends, no articulation of organizational goals, no evaluation of alternatives in relation to organizational goals and no selection of the best means” (Levacic,

1995, p. 82).

4.10.3.1 Contingent Leadership

In a climate of ambiguity, traditional notions of leadership require modification. The contingent model provides an alternative approach, recognizing the diverse nature of school contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation, rather than adopting a “one size fits all” stance. Yukl (2002) claims that “the managerial job is too complex and unpredictable to rely on a set of standardised responses to events. Effective leaders are continuously reading the situation and evaluating how to adapt their behaviour to it” (p. 234). Contingent leadership depends on managers “mastering a large repertoire of leadership practices” (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999, p. 15).

4.10.4 The Limitations of Ambiguity Models

Ambiguity models add some important dimensions to the theory of educational management. The concepts of problematic goals, unclear technology and fluid participation are significant contributions to organizational analysis. Most schools and colleges possess these features to a greater or lesser extent, so ambiguity models should be regarded primarily as analytical or descriptive approaches rather than normative theories. The ambiguity model appears to be increasingly plausible but it does have four significant weaknesses:

1. It is difficult to reconcile ambiguity perspectives with the customary structures and processes of schools and colleges. Participants may move in and out of decision-making situations but the policy framework remains intact and has a continuing influence on the outcome of discussions. Specific goals may be unclear but teachers usually understand and accept the broad aims of education.

2. Ambiguity models exaggerate the degree of uncertainty in educational institutions. Schools and colleges have a number of predictable features, which serve to clarify the responsibilities of their members. Students and staff are expected to behave in accordance with standard rules and procedures. The timetable regulates the location and movement of all participants. There are usually clear plans to guide the classroom activities of teachers and pupils. Staff are aware of the accountability patterns, with teachers responsible ultimately to principals who, in turn, are answerable to local or State government.

Educational institutions are rather more stable and predictable than the ambiguity perspective suggests: “The term organised anarchy may seem overly colourful, suggesting more confusion, disarray, and conflict than is really present” (Baldrige et al, 1978, p. 28).

3. Ambiguity models are less appropriate for stable organizations or for any institutions during periods of stability. The degree of predictability in schools depends on the nature of relationships with the external environment. Where institutions are able to maintain relatively impervious boundaries, they can exert strong control over their own processes. Popular schools, for example, may be able to insulate their activities from external pressures.

4. Ambiguity models offer little practical guidance to leaders in educational institutions. While formal models emphasize the head’s leading role in policy-making and collegial models stress the importance of team-work, ambiguity models can offer nothing more tangible than contingent leadership.

Ambiguity or Rationality?

Ambiguity models make a valuable contribution to the theory of educational management. The emphasis on the unpredictability of organizations is a significant counter to the view that problems can be solved through a rational process. The notion of leaders making a considered choice from a range of alternatives depends crucially on their ability to predict the consequences of a particular action. The edifice of the formal models is shaken by the recognition that conditions in schools may be too uncertain to allow an informed choice among alternatives.

In practice, however, educational institutions operate with a mix of rational and anarchic processes. The more unpredictable the internal and external environment, the more applicable is the ambiguity metaphor: “Organizations . . . are probably more rational than they are adventitious and the quest for rational procedures is not misplaced. However, . . . rationalistic approaches will always be blown off course by the contingent, the unexpected and the irrational” (Hoyle, 1986, p. 72).

Cultural Models

4.10.5 What Do We Mean By Culture?

Cultural models emphasize the informal aspects of organizations rather than their official elements. They focus on the values, beliefs and norms of individuals in the organization and how these individual perceptions coalesce into shared organizational meanings. Cultural models are manifested by symbols and rituals rather than through the formal structure of the organization (Bush, 2003):

Cultural models assume that beliefs, values and ideology are at the heart of organizations. Individuals hold certain ideas and value-preferences, which influence how they behave and how they view the behaviour of other members. These norms become shared traditions, which are communicated within the group and are reinforced by symbols and ritual. (p. 156).

Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan (1992) claim that culture serves to define the unique qualities of individual organizations: “An increasing number of . . . writers . . . have adopted the term "culture" to define that social and phenomenological uniqueness of a particular organisational community . . . We have finally acknowledged publicly that uniqueness is a virtue, that values are important and that they should be fostered” (p. 173).

5 Societal Culture

Most of the literature on culture in education relates to organizational culture and that is also the main focus of this section. However, there is also an emerging literature on the broader theme of national or societal culture. Walker and Dimmock (2002) refer to issues of context and stress the need to avoid “decontextualized paradigms” (p. 1) in researching and analyzing educational systems and institutions.

Dimmock and Walker (2002) provide a helpful distinction between societal and organizational culture:

Societal cultures differ mostly at the level of basic values, while organizational cultures differ mostly at the level of more superficial practices, as reflected in the recognition of particular symbols, heroes and rituals. This allows organizational cultures to be deliberately managed and changed, whereas societal or national cultures are more enduring and change only gradually over longer time periods. (p.71)

Societal culture is one important aspect of the context within which school leaders must operate. They must also contend with organizational culture, which provides a more immediate framework for leadership action.

6 Central Features of Organizational Culture

1. It focuses on the values and beliefs of members of organizations. “Shared values, shared beliefs, shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sensemaking are all different ways of describing culture . . . These patterns of understanding also provide a basis for making one’s own behaviour sensible and meaningful” (Morgan, 1997, p. 138).
2. The cultural model focuses on the notion of a single or dominant culture in organizations but this does not necessarily mean that individual values are always in harmony with one another. “There may be different and competing value systems that create a mosaic of organizational realities rather than a uniform corporate culture” (Morgan, 1997, p. 137). Large, multipurpose organizations, in particular, are likely to have more than one culture (Schein, 1997, p. 14).
3. Organizational culture emphasizes the development of shared norms and meanings. The assumption is that interaction between members of the organization, or its subgroups, eventually leads to behavioural norms that gradually become cultural features of the school or college.
4. These group norms sometimes allow the development of a monoculture in a school with meanings shared throughout the staff - “the way we do things around here.” We have already noted, however, that there may be several subcultures based on the professional and personal interests of different groups. These typically have internal coherence but experience difficulty in relationships with other groups whose behavioural norms are different.

5. Culture is typically expressed through rituals and ceremonies, which are used to support and celebrate beliefs and norms. Schools are rich in such symbols as assemblies, prize-givings and corporate worship. “Symbols are central to the process of constructing meaning.” (Hoyle, 1986, p. 152).
6. Organizational culture assumes the existence of heroes and heroines who embody the values and beliefs of the organization. These honoured members typify the behaviours associated with the culture of the institution. Campbell-Evans (1993, p. 106) stresses that heroes or heroines are those whose achievements match the culture: “Choice and recognition of heroes . . . occurs within the cultural boundaries identified through the value filter . . . The accomplishments of those individuals who come to be regarded as heroes are compatible with the cultural emphases” (Bush, 2003, p. 160-162).

6.1 Moral Leadership

Leaders have the main responsibility for generating and sustaining culture and communicating core values and beliefs both within the organization and to external stakeholders (Bush, 1998, p. 43). Principals have their own values and beliefs arising from many years of successful professional practice. They are also expected to embody the culture of the school or college. Schein (1997) argues that cultures spring primarily from the beliefs, values and assumptions of founders of organizations. However, it should be noted that cultural change is difficult and problematic. Hargreaves (1999) claims that “most people’s beliefs, attitudes and values are far more resistant to change than leaders typically allow” (p. 59-60).

The leadership model most closely linked to organizational culture is that of moral leadership. This model assumes that the critical focus of leadership ought to be on the values, beliefs and ethics of leaders themselves. Authority and influence are to be derived from defensible conceptions of what is right or good (Leithwood et al, 1999, p. 10).

Sergiovanni (1984) says that “excellent schools have central zones composed of values and beliefs that take on sacred or cultural characteristics” (p. 10). The moral dimension of leadership is based on “normative rationality; rationality based on what we believe and what we consider to be good” (Sergiovanni, 1991):

Moral leadership is consistent with organizational culture in that it is based on the values, beliefs and attitudes of principals and other educational leaders. It focuses on the moral purpose of education and on the behaviours to be expected of leaders operating within the moral domain. It also assumes that these values and beliefs coalesce into shared norms and meanings that either shape or reinforce culture. The rituals and symbols associated with moral leadership support these values and underpin school culture. (p. 326)

6.1.1 Limitations of Organizational Culture

Cultural models add several useful elements to the analysis of school and college leadership and management. The focus on the informal dimension is a valuable counter to the rigid and official components of the formal models. By stressing the values and beliefs of participants, cultural models reinforce the human aspects of management rather than their structural elements. The emphasis on the symbols of the organization is also a valuable contribution to management theory while the moral leadership model provides a useful way of understanding what constitutes a values-based approach to leadership. However, cultural models do have three significant weaknesses:

1. There may be ethical dilemmas because cultural leadership may be regarded as the imposition of a culture by leaders on other members of the organization. The search for a monoculture may mean subordinating the values and beliefs of some participants to those of leaders or the dominant group. Morgan (1997, p. 150-51) refers to “a process of ideological control” and warns of the risk of “manipulation.”

2. The cultural model may be unduly mechanistic, assuming that leaders can determine the culture of the organization (Morgan, 1997). While they have influence over the evolution of culture by espousing desired values, they cannot ensure the emergence of a monoculture. As we have seen, secondary schools and colleges may have several subcultures operating in departments and other sections. This is not necessarily dysfunctional because successful subunits are vital components of thriving institutions.

3. The cultural model's focus on symbols such as rituals and ceremonies may mean that other elements of organizations are underestimated. The symbols may misrepresent the reality of the school or college. Hoyle (1986, p. 166) refers to "innovation without change." Schools may go through the appearance of change but the reality continues as before.

6.1.1.1 Values and Action

The cultural model is a valuable addition to our understanding of organizations. The recognition that school and college development needs to be preceded by attitudinal change is salutary, and consistent with the maxim that teachers must feel "ownership" of change if it is to be implemented effectively. "Since organization ultimately resides in the heads of the people involved, effective organizational change always implies cultural change" (Morgan, 1997, p. 150).

Cultural models also provide a focus for organizational action, a dimension that is largely absent from the subjective perspective. Leaders may adopt a moral approach and focus on influencing values so that they become closer to, if not identical with, their own beliefs. In this way, they hope to achieve widespread support for or "ownership" of new policies. By working through this informal domain, rather than imposing change through positional authority or political processes, heads and principals are more likely to gain support for innovation. An appreciation of organizational culture is an important element in the leadership and management of schools and colleges.

Conclusion

6.2 Comparing the Management Models

The six management models discussed in this chapter represent different ways of looking at educational institutions. Each screen offers valuable insights into the nature of management in education but none provides a complete picture. The six approaches are all valid analyses but their relevance varies according to the context. Each event, situation or problem may be understood by using one or more of these models but no organization can be explained by using only a single approach. There is no single perspective capable of presenting a total framework for our understanding of educational institutions. "The search for an all-encompassing model is simplistic, for no one model can delineate the intricacies of decision processes in complex organizations such as universities and colleges" (Baldrige et al, 1978, p. 28).

The formal models dominated the early stages of theory development in educational management. Formal structure, rational decision-making and "top-down" leadership were regarded as the central concepts of effective management and attention was given to refining these processes to increase efficiency. Since the 1970s, however, there has been a gradual realization that formal models are "at best partial and at worst grossly deficient" (Chapman, 1993, p. 215).

The other five models featured in this volume all developed in response to the perceived weaknesses of what was then regarded as "conventional theory." They have demonstrated the limitations of the formal models and put in place alternative conceptualizations of school management. While these more recent models are all valid, they are just as partial as the dominant perspective their advocates seek to replace. There is more theory and, by exploring different dimensions of management, its total explanatory power is greater than that provided by any single model.

Collegial models are attractive because they advocate teacher participation in decision-making. Many principals aspire to collegiality, a claim that rarely survives rigorous scrutiny. The collegial framework all too often provides the setting for political activity or "top-down" decision-making (Bush, 2003).

The cultural model's stress on values and beliefs, and the subjective theorists' emphasis on the significance of individual meanings, also appear to be both plausible and ethical. In practice, however, these may lead to manipulation as leaders seek to impose their own values on schools and colleges.

The increasing complexity of the educational context may appear to lend support to the ambiguity model with its emphasis on turbulence and anarchy. However, this approach provides few guidelines for managerial action and leads to the view that "there has to be a better way."

The six models differ along crucial dimensions but taken together they do provide a comprehensive picture of the nature of management in educational institutions. Figure 2 compares the main features of the six models.

Elements of management	Formal	Collegial	Political	Subjective	Ambiguity	Cultural
Level at which goals are determined	Institutional	Institutional	Sub-unit	Individual	Unclear	Institutional or sub-unit
Process by which goals are determined	Set by leaders	Agreement	Conflict	Problematic May be imposed by leaders	Unpredictable	Based on collective value
Relationship between goals and decisions	Decisions based on goals	Decisions based on agreed goals	Decisions based on goals of dominant coalitions	Individual behaviour based on personal goals	Decisions unrelated to goals	Decisions based on the goals of the organisation or its sub-units
Nature of decision process	Rational	Collegial	Political	Personal	Garbage can	Rational within a framework of values
Nature of structure	Objective reality Hierarchical	Objective reality Lateral	Setting for sub-unit activity	Constructed through human interaction	Problematic	Physical manifestation of culture
Links with environment	May be "closed" or "open" Principal accountable	Accountability blurred by shared decision-making	Unstable external bodies portrayed as interest groups	Source of individual meanings	Source of uncertainty	Source of values and beliefs
Style of Leadership	Principal establishes goals and initiates policy	Principal seeks to promote consensus	Principal is both participant and mediator	Problematic May be perceived as a form of control	May be tactical or unobtrusive	Symbolic
Related leadership model	Managerial	Participative	Transactional	Postmodern	Contingent	Moral

6.3 Attempts at Synthesis

Each of the models discussed in this volume offers valid insights into the nature of leadership and management in schools and colleges. Yet all the perspectives are limited in that they do not give a complete picture of educational institutions. "Organizations are many things at once! They are complex and multifaceted. They are paradoxical. That's why the challenges facing management are so difficult. In any given situation there may be many different tendencies and dimensions, all of which have an impact on effective management" (Morgan, 1997, p. 347).

The inadequacies of each theory, taken singly, have led to a search for a comprehensive model that integrates concepts to provide a coherent analytical framework. Chapman (1993) stresses the need for leaders to develop this broader perspective in order to enhance organizational effectiveness: “Visionary and creative leadership and effective management in education require a deliberate and conscious attempt at integration, enmeshment and coherence” (p. 212).

Enderud (1980), and Davies and Morgan (1983), have developed integrative models incorporating ambiguity, political, collegial and formal perspectives. These syntheses are based on the assumption that policy formation proceeds through four distinct phases which all require adequate time if the decision is to be successful. These authors assume an initial period of high ambiguity as problems, solutions and participants interact at appropriate choice opportunities. This anarchic phase serves to identify the issues and acts as a preliminary sifting mechanism. If conducted properly it should lead to an initial coupling of problems with potential solutions.

The output of the ambiguous period is regarded as the input to the political phase. This stage is characterized by bargaining and negotiations and usually involves relatively few participants in small, closed committees. The outcome is likely to be a broad measure of agreement on possible solutions.

In the third collegial phase, the participants committed to the proposed solution attempt to persuade less active members to accept the compromise reached during the political stage. The solutions are tested against criteria of acceptability and feasibility and may result in minor changes. Eventually this process should lead to agreed policy outcomes and a degree of commitment to the decision.

The final phase is the formal or bureaucratic stage during which agreed policy may be subject to modification in the light of administrative considerations. The outcome of this period is a policy which is both legitimate and operationally satisfactory (Bush, 2003, p. 193).

Theodossin (1983, p. 88) links the subjective to the formal or systems model using an analytical continuum. He argues that a systems perspective is the most appropriate way of explaining national developments while individual and subunit activities may be understood best by utilizing the individual meanings of participants:

Theodossin’s analysis is interesting and plausible. It helps to delineate the contribution of the formal and subjective models to educational management theory. In focusing on these two perspectives, however, it necessarily ignores the contribution of other approaches, including the cultural model, which has not been incorporated into any of the syntheses applied to education

The Enderud (1980), and Davies and Morgan (1983), models are valuable in suggesting a plausible sequential link between four of the major theories. However, it is certainly possible to postulate different sets of relationships between the models. For example, a collegial approach may become political as participants engage in conflict instead of seeking to achieve consensus. It is perhaps significant that there have been few attempts to integrate the management models since the 1980s.

6.4 Using Theory to Improve Practice

The six models present different approaches to the management of education and the syntheses indicate a few of the possible relationships between them. However, the ultimate test of theory is whether it improves practice. There should be little doubt about the potential for theory to inform practice. School managers generally engage in a process of implicit theorising in deciding how to formulate policy or respond to events. Facts cannot be left to speak for themselves. They require the explanatory framework of theory in order to ascertain their real meaning.

The multiplicity of competing models means that no single theory is sufficient to guide practice. Rather, managers need to develop “conceptual pluralism” (Bolman & Deal, 1984, p. 4) to be able to select the most appropriate approach to particular issues and avoid a unidimensional stance: “Managers in all organizations . . . can increase their effectiveness and their freedom through the use of multiple vantage points. To be locked into a single path is likely to produce error and self-imprisonment” (p. 4).

Conceptual pluralism is similar to the notion of contingent leadership. Both recognize the diverse nature of educational contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation rather

than adopting a “one size fits all” stance. Appreciation of the various models is the starting point for effective action. It provides a “conceptual tool-kit” for the manager to deploy as appropriate in addressing problems and developing strategy.

Morgan (1997, p. 359) argues that organizational analysis based on these multiple perspectives comprises two elements:

- A diagnostic reading of the situation being investigated, using different metaphors to identify or highlight key aspects of the situation.

- A critical evaluation of the significance of the different interpretations resulting from the diagnosis.

These skills are consistent with the concept of the “reflective practitioner” whose managerial approach incorporates both good experience and a distillation of theoretical models based on wide reading and discussion with both academics and fellow practitioners. This combination of theory and practice enables the leader to acquire the overview required for strategic management.

While it is widely recognized that appreciation of theory is likely to enhance practice, there remain relatively few published accounts of how the various models have been tested in school or college-based research. More empirical work is needed to enable judgements on the validity of the models to be made with confidence. The objectives of such a research programme would be to test the validity of the models presented in this volume and to develop an overarching conceptual framework. It is a tough task but if awareness of theory helps to improve practice, as we have sought to demonstrate, then more rigorous theory should produce more effective practitioners and better schools.

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