

Concept of School effectiveness & its modern trends of Research

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a conceptual overview of school effectiveness. This includes concept of school effectiveness and modern trends of school effectiveness research. It further highlights the models and indicators of school effectiveness. It concludes that the school effectiveness is not only related to the academic achievement only; various external factors such as leadership, management, school-society relationship, school environment etc. must be considered.

1. Introduction

School is an organization where a child grows up with development of both personal and social aspects. It provides optimum learning environment where cognitive, emotional, psychomotor, social and aesthetic developments of a child takes place. An effective school is one which is mostly dedicated in development of students in all aspects and doing so is responsible for improvement of society and Nation.

During last 30-40 decades, numerous studies have been done on Effective schools, School effectiveness and their improvement. According to ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), 7,648 studies have been done on school effectiveness and related studies have touched to 74,160 till date. Therefore we feel the importance to make an overview of school effectiveness. Herein, we opt to conceptualize school effectiveness and some modern trends of research in this connection.

2. Conceptualizing School Effectiveness

School effectiveness is not only the achievement of students in their subject. It depends on other variables including the academic achievement. The responsiveness of the school to the community, school environment and activity of staffs must be considered. School effectiveness is the level of contemporary goal attainment of a school.

The concept 'effectiveness' refers to an organization accomplishing its specific objectives (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989). School effectiveness therefore means 'the school accomplishes its objectives'. School effectiveness can therefore be regarded as a distinct characteristic of an effective school. Bennet, Crawford and Cartwright (2003) defined an effective school as "a school in which student's progress further than might be expected". There are various definitions of School effectiveness in which some focuses on academic achievement of students while others on the relation of school with society, management, socio-economic background of learners etc.

a) Demarcation between School Effectiveness and Educational Effectiveness

The educational effectiveness is an integration of instructional effectiveness (related to class room activities), school effectiveness (refers to activities out of class room level) and system effectiveness (related to the research activities assessed by national or international level). Education effectiveness is used in a broader sense.

b) Demarcation between School Effectiveness and School Improvement

School improvement is the improved performance of a school over time. When school effectiveness is seen as a research activity; school improvement could be taken as the dynamic application of the research results, i.e. the active manipulation of the "process" conditions identified as correlates of educational outcomes.

3. Identifying Characteristics of Effective schools

Effective school is multi-dimensional and a complex concept. It has several features. Relating this features one can find the stand point of a school. Sammons et al. (1995) and Reynolds et al. (1996) identified eleven factors of effective schools:

1. *Shared leadership* (firm purposeful, participative - the leading professional);
2. *Shared vision and goals* (unity of purpose, consistency of practice, collegiality and collaboration);
3. *A learning environment* (an orderly atmosphere and attractive environment);
4. *concentration on teaching and learning* (maximization of learning time, academic emphasis, focus on achievement);
5. *High expectations* (all round, clear communication of expectations, providing intellectual challenge);

6. *Positive reinforcement* (clear and fair discipline, feedback);
7. *Monitoring progress* (monitoring pupil performance, evaluating school performance);
8. *Pupil rights and responsibilities* (high pupil self-esteem, positions of responsibility, control of work);
9. *Purposeful teaching* (efficient organization, clarity of purpose, structured lessons, adaptive practice);
10. *A learning organization* (school-based staff development);
11. *Home-school partnership* (parental involvement).

- IV. High expectations of pupil attainment;
- V. Frequent assessment of pupil progress.

In the literature this summarizing is sometimes identified as the “five-factor model of school effectiveness”.

4. Types of School Effectiveness Research

According to Schreens (2004), the elementary design of school effectiveness research is the association of hypothetical effectiveness enhancing conditions of schooling and output measures. There are five areas of effectiveness research associating outcomes of schooling described below:-

a) *School effectiveness in equal educational opportunity research*

This area of research focused at providing data on equality of opportunity. The overall results of these studies showed a relatively high correlation between socioeconomic and ethnic family characteristics and learning attainment, and very small or negligible influence from school and instruction characteristics.

b) *Economic studies on educational production functions*

The main focus of this approach is the question of what manipulative inputs can increase the outputs. If there was stable knowledge available on the extent to which variety of inputs is related to variety of outputs it would also be possible to specify a function which is characteristic of the production process in schools.

c) *The evaluation of compensatory programs*

This area demonstrates the importance of the school factor and in particular the conditions and educational provisions within it. The key question is: what results can be realistically expected from compensatory education given the dominant influence in the long run of family background and cognitive aptitudes on pupil's attainment level? Moreover, it has been demonstrated that it was the “moderately” disadvantaged in particular that benefited from the programs, while the most educationally disadvantaged pupils made the least progress.

5. Effective schools research

Research known under labels like “identifying unusually effective schools” or the “effective schools movement” can be regarded as the type of research that mostly touches the core of school effectiveness research. Effective school research is generally regarded as a response to the results of studies which it was concluded that schools did not matter very much when it came down to differences in levels of achievement. The results of the early effective schools research met more or less around five factors:-

- I. Strong educational leadership;
- II. Emphasis on the acquiring of basic skills;
- III. An orderly and secure environment;

6. Studies on instructional effectiveness

This area of research is influenced and inspired by Carroll's (1963) model of teaching and learning and off-springs of this model, such as the models of mastery learning (Bloom, 1976) and “direct teaching” (e.g. Doyle, 1985). These are “process-product studies”, and are the most relevant strands of research on teaching and classroom processes. This type of study also includes variables outside the classroom situation, like the student's relationships with peers, and the home environment.

7. Modern Trends of School effectiveness Research

The main point of school effectiveness research is “to find the factors of effective education that could be introduced or changed through school improvement” (Creemers & Reezigt, 2005). “School effectiveness is more directed to finding out ‘what works’ in education and ‘why’; school improvement is practice and policy oriented and intended to change education in the desired direction” (Creemers & Reezigt, 2005). Creemers and Reezigt (2005) contented that even though school effectiveness and school improvement have different roots they can be combined in view of promoting effective school improvement. Scott (2012) investigated four elementary school districts in Kansas (U.S.A.) and determined that their data could be used to improve the effectiveness of the school and teachers. The research supports the concept that conducting classroom walkthroughs leads to: increased student learning, instruction of higher quality, and more effective professional development. School principals must continue to monitor the use of research-based instructional strategies and the effectiveness of prior job-embedded professional development. Barber and Mourshed (2007) proposed that “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers”, therefore “the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction”. They also claim that “achieving universal high outcomes are only possible by putting in place mechanisms to ensure that schools deliver high-quality instruction to every child”. Accepting these views, the logical next step is to develop a system to oversee mechanisms and focus on instruction and teachers who are the front line people who can change student outcomes directly and daily (Starrett, 2015). The correct oversight mechanism(s) and the people implementing the oversight need to be doing this effectively. Teachers need to be coached, involved, and partners in the quest for effectiveness. Starrett (2015) adds, “an effective teacher provides students with positive outcomes-both socially and academically”. Several school-level investigations of teacher quality improvement noted that feedback and analysis are fundamental to improvement (Hattie, 2012). Burgess (2014) determined, that “teacher effectiveness is consistently recognized as the major within-school influence in student learning, exact estimates of teacher effectiveness are difficult to ascertain. There is also a need for clearer expectations about the role and responsibility of the school board and each

employee. One important observation in research concerning school improvement was noted by Thessin, (2015): When data used as part of an ongoing improvement cycle that involves regular collection and systematic analysis of evidence, teachers can change their instructional practice to improve student achievement. To achieve this goal, the school leader must share leadership with teachers in leading a school wide improvement process.. Effective leadership cannot and should not be overlooked in any attempt to improve effectiveness. Mulford (2013) concluded that “effective principals influence student outcomes indirectly through teachers’ work with students in their classrooms and school”. Since the late 90s it has been understood that “teacher effectiveness, and ultimately student performance, will improve when administrators spend more time observing, coaching, and conferencing with teachers” (Frase, Downey, & Canciamilla, 1999). Harris (2008) proposed the concept of distributed leadership, which suggests leadership is neither an event nor individual (singular). Leadership results from multiple interactions at different places in an organization. While it is true that the type of leadership needs to suit a particular context within each unique learning institution, leadership adaptability is a strategic construct. An educator can always get better by investing time in Professional Development. Building teacher professional capital can be understood as creating a school of effective teachers. It does not mean providing financial incentives. Research has shown that paying teachers to improve student performance did not lead to increase in student achievement and did not change what teachers did in their classrooms. In addition to being of questionable effectiveness, incentive schemes often result in unintended and undesirable behaviours on the part of teachers and schools (Masters, 2014). Investment can be in terms of time, attention, programming, support, coaching, partnering, research efforts and the like to realize high-quality teachers and teaching that builds teacher professional capital within the district, region, or province (Grissom et al., 2013; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Instead, effective teaching is the best means towards a major positive influence in student learning improvement. This is more effective than ability grouping, class sizes (Hattie, 2009); or funding (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). However, despite some studies linking improved teacher effectiveness and student learning with schools organized around professional learning communities (Leithwood & Strauss, 2008) the reality of establishing collaborative teacher learning is complex (Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010) and not easily achieved within the current timetable challenges. However, Kalule, and Bouchamma (2013) advise that the importance of providing teachers with the opportunity to reflect on strengths and weaknesses via guided questioning by a skilled instructional leader is perhaps the best investment a school can make. Iachini, Pitner, Morgan, and Rhodes (2016) recently completed a mixed-methods case study to elicit principals’ perspectives on teacher, school staff, and student needs. The researchers attempted to uncover whether these perspectives are reflective of priorities emphasized in currently expanded school improvement models, such as mental health, family engagement, out-of-school time opportunities, and other youth development and learning supports. Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, and Luppescu (2010) emphasized the importance of a shared vision, goals, and clarification of values as a means

to improve schools. Professional learning for self and others is required to realize a shared vision, goals, and values in any school. While the development of teacher expertise is desired, need of students achievement is also important. School administrators must lead academic improvements for all students. In doing so, leadership must embrace supervision and set out to improve teachers by providing occasions for educators to be learners (Mulford, 2013). Loertscher & Koechlin (2015) recommended two approaches that may offer school improvement and promote participation within the school. The first is the transformation of the school library into a learning commons, and the second is the strategy of co-teaching between school specialists and classroom teachers. Harris et al. (2013) stated that “many school improvement researchers and practitioners stay away from classrooms and schools and deeper into policy generation and system reform”, from the outside via government initiatives. What is certain is that “it is the dynamic interaction between research, policy and practice that matters most of all. Therefore, we need more practitioner-led research, more policy-directed research, more research-led policy and more researched practice to generate a true community of expertise” (Harris et al., 2013). Farrell (2015) looked into the use of data in schools and concluded: Human capital, technology and tools, and organizational practices need to be aligned in order to increase knowledge flow. Human capital resources, such as dedicated support positions (e.g., coaches) and professional development, are critical for collaboration, co-construction of new ideas, and joint work. These social interactions help establish social norms around information sharing and provide opportunities for shared sense-making. Accountability is a driving force behind school improvement and educational change. As systems become more effective, the challenge is to identify meaningful evidence beyond the traditional test data and define a mode or approach that may lead to these desired outcomes.

8. Models for Measurement of Effective Schools

Dos (2014) suggested different models for measurement of effective schools. In these models, effectiveness of effective schools along with effectiveness degree can be determined. The models for measuring school effectiveness are described below:-

a) Ethic model

To what extent students possess the pre-determined ethical values expected from them and how often they reflect these values to their behaviors can be accepted as indicators of school’s effectiveness. It is important that the values expected to be observed in students should be acceptable behaviors in society because environment expect students to show behaviors that are not rejected by society and expect schools to fulfill this duty. Teaching programs and school aims should give importance to society’s value judgment, supervise general ethical principles and focus more on character education and socialization. The aims of the course in this model is one step behind ethical education and the emphasis is on to what extent students gain education in ethical aspect rather than their success on science, mathematics and social fields. This model can be more appropriate for educational institutions that make efforts in the fields of common-public

education, leisure time education, extracurricular and social activities.

b) Basic Acquisition Model

A school can be considered as an effective one if its students acquire basic skills that will meet their needs in social life. This model can be more suitable for elementary schools. These basic skills can be basic skills for computer use, four operations, price calculation while shopping, writing petitions and expressing one's problems. This model mostly includes necessary behaviors that students in basic education level should acquire.

c) Program Model

Depending on school type, the extent that students can adopt the behaviors which schools try to provide can be an indicator of school's effectiveness. This model is often more useful for technical and vocational high schools and special education. Change in behaviors in washing hands, eating, basic reading, etc. of a student receiving special education can also be an indicator of effectiveness of schools. This model includes special behaviors that students are expected to adopt. Students are observed to understand to what extent they have gained the behaviors they are expected to acquire at the end of their education.

d) Comparison Model

If the school has significant differences (success of students) from other school in its socio-economic environment and if it is preferred by parents, this school can be considered as an effective one. Cities have different socio-economic environments and there is more than one school in these environments. Although each school is situated in a similar area, they draw different success graphics. These differences in success may arise from factors such as school administration, teachers, school atmosphere and culture, availability of students, socio-economic levels of schools, etc. It can be a natural perspective to see schools that show different success levels in the same environment as successful and effective. In this sense, the factors affecting schools that differ from others in a positive way can be employed for the development of other schools.

e) Dedication (Commitment) School Model

A school whose teachers and administrators are dedicated to their jobs and have high motivation, who love their jobs, who do not leave school as soon as lessons are over and who likes spending time with students can be regarded as an effective school. What leads teachers and administrators to behave in this way can be factors such as school culture, administration style, vision, dedication, etc. Schools where the personnel love students and contribute to the development of school by devoting themselves are happy ones. Students love their schools and want to spend most of their time in these schools as well. There is no pressure on students in success in their courses, but the aim is to increase their motivation by making them love the courses and the school.

f) Learner Student Model

If students can reach the information they need whenever they want, use means to reach information and solve their problems, it can be said that students have received an effective education. The purpose here is to help students learn the ways to access to information and improve their skills to find solutions to their own problems. When a student accomplishes the given tasks on his own without being given any stimulus, it can be an indication that the main purpose is fulfilled. Student's doing their homework, participation in projects, and acquisition of research skills are important indications for this model.

g) Absence Model

A school where there is no absence or where the absence rate is below the national average can be considered as an effective one. If there is no absence, parents and students are generally content with the school because it means students like their school, they have good time at school and their parents motivate them to go to school. Schools where there is no or low absence are the ones which satisfy their students and meet their needs. Absence is an important problem and schools that can solve this problem can be regarded as successful schools.

h) Happiness Model

Schools where most of the students are happy and adopt their school and also see it as their home can be described as an effective school. In other words, the abundance of students who are content with their schools can be an indicator of an effective school. Happy schools are the ones where students are happy. Accordingly, students who like being at school will involve in more interactions in a positive way during school time and their learning rate will increase.

i) Employment Model

Schools whose students find jobs in a short period of time after they graduate and which create awareness in the neighborhood about its graduate student's employments can be considered as effective schools. This model can be a suitable model especially for vocational schools. If the school can train a good number of personnel that have the characteristics which business world and businessmen demand, it means the school is an effective one. The recruitment rates of graduate students from these schools can be accepted as indicators of school effectiveness.

j) Social Life Model

If students give importance to social life, play their own roles in their social lives and adapt to social rules, the school that educates these students can be considered an effective one. In other words, a school is effective as much as it socialize its students. For this purpose, schools which educate individuals who have high communications skills, who can establish social networks, who take part in organizations providing social benefits, who are sensitive to individual and environmental problems, can be accepted as effective schools.

k) Decision Implementation Model

The implementation rates of decisions taken in school committee determine the effectiveness of schools. The

implementation of decisions taken with a participatory approach can be regarded as an indicator of togetherness, democracy and respect among individuals. It can be said that teachers have high motivations, are committed to their jobs and internalize their jobs in schools which function with this approach. School committees are communities such as parent-teacher association, group teachers group, board of teachers, board of students and disciplinary boards. The implementation rates of decisions taken in these committees can be considered as indicators of effectiveness.

l) Family Participation Model

The effectiveness of a school depends on the extent of activities done by parents at that school or that school can involve parents in the activities. The number of activities arranged by parents at school (trips, meetings, visits, etc.) and the participation rate can be indicators of interest in schools. This situation will strengthen the idea that the school has support from the environment and can reach its aims by taking decisions together with parents.

m) Dynamic Model

This model is proposed by Creemers and Kyriakides (2006) and is the recent model on educational effectiveness. It has been argued that the dynamic model should take into account the new goals of education and related to this their implications for teaching and learning. This means that the outcome measures should be defined in a more broad way rather than be restricted to the achievement of basic skills. It also implies that new theories of teaching and learning can be used in order to specify variables associated with the quality of teaching. The model is designed in a way that takes into account the possibility that the relationship between the factors and the outcomes may not be linear. Each factor which refers to the classroom, school, and system can be measured by taking into account the following five dimensions: frequency, focus, stage, quality, and differentiation. Frequency is a quantitative way to measure the functioning of each effectiveness factor, whereas the other four dimensions examine the qualitative characteristics of the functioning of each effectiveness factor at the system, school, or classroom level.

9. Assessment approaches to school effectiveness

Botha (2010) has pointed out many assessment approaches to school effectiveness. It is clear that the formulation, definition and measurement of school effectiveness are complex issues. The question remains: what category of school effectiveness (what school inputs and outputs) should be measured, and how should school effectiveness be correctly defined? There are many different approaches for the conceptualization, formulation and measurement of school effectiveness. The following seven indicators form the framework of the first assessment approach.

a) The goal indicator

This indicator assumes that there are clearly stated and generally accepted goals, relevant and important both to teachers and the school, for measuring school effectiveness,

and that a school is effective if it can accomplish its stated goals within given inputs. These goals are quantifiable and are set by the school authorities and can be measured against predetermined criteria such as the objectives in academic achievement in tests and/or examinations. This indicator is widely used in schools for evaluation purposes due to the fact that goals and tasks assigned to teachers are clear and specific, outcomes of teachers' performance are easily observed and the standards upon which the measurement of teacher effectiveness is based are clearly stated. A limitation of this indicator is its dependence on the quantifiable, which is often impossible to ascertain.

b) The external resource indicator

This indicator assumes that because scarce and valued resource inputs are needed for schools to be more effective, the acquisition of resources replaces goals as the primary criteria of effectiveness. An example of this indicator is financial support from outside the school. This indicator is limited by its overemphasis on the acquisition of inputs from external sources and its failure to look at the efforts made by the school itself to maintain its effectiveness.

c) The internal process indicator

This indicator assumes that a school is effective if its internal functioning is effective. Internal school activities are often taken as criteria for school effectiveness. This indicator includes aspects such as leadership, communication channels, participation, adaptability and social interactions in the school. Some of the disadvantages of this indicator are that it is difficult to monitor and that it overemphasizes the means of obtaining school effectiveness.

d) The satisfaction indicator

This indicator defines an effective school as one in which all the stakeholders are at least minimally satisfied. It assumes, therefore, that satisfying the needs of the principal, teachers, governing body learners and the public is the school's main task. Satisfaction is, therefore the basic indicator of effectiveness. This indicator may, however, not be appropriate if the demands of the stakeholders are in conflict with each other.

e) The legitimacy indicator

According to this indicator, a school is effective if it can survive undisputed and legitimate marketing activities. This indicator is applicable only if the school has had to strive for legitimacy in a competitive environment.

f) The organizational indicator

This indicator assumes that environmental changes and internal barriers to school functioning are inevitable and that a school is effective if it can learn how to make improvements and adaptations to its environment.

g) The ineffectiveness indicator

This indicator assumes that it is easier for stakeholders to identify and agree on the criteria of school ineffectiveness than on those of effectiveness. It is easier to identify strategies for

improving school effectiveness by analyzing school ineffectiveness rather than by analyzing school effectiveness. This means that a school is effective if there is an absence of characteristics of ineffectiveness. This indicator includes aspects such as conflicts, problems, difficulties, weaknesses, poor performance and poor results.

10. Conclusion

The school effectiveness is a dynamic and complex concept. It tells about the contemporary stand point of a school. It is goal-oriented and depends on the available resources. Schools require an optimum usage of available sources,

features such as school type, availability of students, personnel sources, socio-economic status of students, physical opportunities and equipment of schools and socio-cultural environment for its effectiveness. Human resources are also important factor for school effectiveness. Efficient teachers and responsible school authorities have profound influence on school effectiveness. Society and effective schools are interrelated. Schools are indeed to fulfill the social goals and needs. These goals and needs are changed according to time and place. So the research on school effectiveness is always progressive.

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