

EFFECTS OF MANAGEMENT REFORMS ON
THE "SOCIAL RELATIONS OF INSTRUCTION" IN
EIGHT SRI LANKAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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The objective of this paper is to report on the preliminary findings of a multi-site qualitative study of the impact of policies for school improvement from the perspective of teachers and principals of rural and semi-urban primary schools in Sri Lanka. School quality and school management have recently become major priorities in developing countries, especially at the primary level. Among the reasons which account for this interest are: the higher returns to investments in primary schooling as compared with higher levels of education (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985; Colclough, 1980); established commitments to primary schooling and expansion of education (Williams, 1984; Porter, 1984); high social demand for schooling (Heyneman, 1984; Colclough, 1980); and recent evidence that investments to improve the quality of education can have a higher rate of return than investments to expand access or level of achieved education (Fuller, 1985; Behrman and Birdsall, 1983). This paper describes how school improvement policies have worked in eight primary schools, and it illustrates the positive contributions multi-site case studies can make to policy analysis.

Effects of the Management Reforms on the Social Relations of Instruction

Clearly, the ultimate test of the success of school reforms is improvement in what happens in classrooms. While much attention has been given to school effectiveness of late in the United States (e.g., Brookover et al., 1979; Cohen, 1983; Edmonds, 1978; Lezotte and Bancroft, 1984; Odden and Webb, 1979; Purkey and Smith, 1983, 1985; and Rowan et al., 1983), little of this literature asks the question, how do school improvement policies interact with the effectiveness of teachers in the

classroom? Instead, the typical approach has been to define, on the one hand, a set of student outcomes indicative of school effectiveness, and, on the other, a set of variables which describes schools. One then seeks to explain school effectiveness by identifying those "school policy" variables which are correlated with the effectiveness indicators. However, this "black box" approach has consistently failed to examine the relationship, if any, between the effectiveness indicators and what happens in the classroom.

In a comprehensive review of the literature conducted for the BRIDGES Project, Schwille et al. (1986) have concluded that the nature of school effectiveness depends primarily on improving the effectiveness of teachers in the school classrooms. Therefore, based upon this review, the approach adopted in our research in Sri Lanka has been to recognize that school improvement policies must be studied from the perspective of the degree to which such policies affect the "social relations of instruction," i.e., what happens in classrooms as influenced by the organizational context of the school. The "social relations of instruction" as the focal point for this research includes: the knowledge and training of teachers; the methods of instruction and the use of aids; the implementation of the curriculum; the commitment of teachers; the relations among the staff; the quality of supervision and assistance received by teachers and the principal; the manner in which decisions are made in the school; the position of the school in the overall flow of communication and authority at higher levels; and the characteristics of the community in which the school is located, especially the background of the students (see Navarro et. al., 1987 for a review of the literature and more comprehensive discussion of these). Before discussing the research, we will briefly

describe some of the intended effects of the management reforms on the social relations of instruction in the schools.

In addition to the broader organizational changes reflected in the school clusters and district decentralization policies described elsewhere, there were a number of policies which directly effected the structure of the primary cycle, roles of teachers and principals, content of the curriculum, and nature of support and assistance accorded to teachers. For instance, the White Paper and subsequent circulars called for a revision in the primary cycle and with it a revision in the method of awarding the grade five bursary awards. The naming of classes was changed from kindergarten, grade one, grade two, etcetera, to year one, year two, and so on. The primary span was reduced from six to five years and, a revised syllabi for each year was implemented gradually from 1985 to 1987. The instructional time for years one and two was to be twenty hours, twenty and a half for year three, and twenty-seven and a half hours for years four and five.

Another area effected by the new reforms was the methods of teaching and the availability and use of instructional materials. Prior to the reforms, an integrated approach to teaching the curriculum had been introduced in the primary grades. Textbooks for use in all grades were provided by the Ministry of Educational Services and the Educational Publications Department, and the syllabi and teachers guides were prepared for all grades by the Curriculum Development Centre. As for teaching aids, only the chalk was supplied by the MOE to the schools. Since 1981, the integrated curriculum was not only continued, but expanded from seven to twenty-six themes in the primary grades. The distribution of free textbooks was undertaken by the Ministry of Education Services. And, the

curriculum was organized to enable children to express their personality through such natural gifts as miming, acting, dancing, singing, drawing, and observing nature and natural phenomena. In addition, the introduction of beginning science for years four and five was begun in 1985 and 1986.

The Curriculum Development Centre continued to be responsible for the preparation of teachers guides, but they were revised to include evaluation practices for which teachers and principals were to be trained. In order to reduce the "knowledge gap" between the deprived groups of children and those with access to reading materials, the reforms called for the development of supplementary reading materials at the school level. Finally, the principal, in his role as supervisor, was expected to organize demonstration lessons and to undertake pupil evaluation and developmental activities.

One important effect intended with the new reforms was the improvement of the training and knowledge of teachers as well as principals. For teachers, the White Paper called for preservice training for new recruits to the teaching service prior to being posted to schools. To provide principals with the capacity to take on the responsibility of first line managers, District Management Centres were established. An important part of the training was to identify and provide for the training needs of the teachers in the school. Therefore, principals were seen as central to upgrading the standards within individual schools and among the existing staff.

Closely related to increasing teacher knowledge through on-going training was supervision. Again changes focused on the role of the principal in this regard. Prior to 1981, schools were subject to inspection once a year by the supervisory officers of the district.

departments. In addition, surprise inspections were required at least twice a year. The officers given primary responsibility for supervision of instruction were the Circuit Education Officers. They were also responsible for collecting annual returns, supervising the administration and organization of the school, identifying shortages in the teaching staff, assessing progress achieved, supervising the distribution of work, etc. Following the White Paper reforms in 1981 and especially the Report on the Management Reforms of 1984, the role of the principal with regards to supervision was greatly enhanced. As the "first line managers" of the schools, principals were charged with:

- (a) helping teachers with problems and checking their schemes of work, time tables, notes of lessons, and taking the appropriate corrective action;
- (b) visiting classes to observe teaching;
- (c) giving or arranging demonstration lessons;
- (d) giving tests to classes;
- (e) interviewing students and parents on educational problems and rendering advice;
- (f) attending meetings of the curriculum development group of the school and work on curriculum development projects;
- (g) ensuring that the programme of supervision by supervisors and the self-evaluation projects by teachers themselves are being implemented satisfactorily;
- (h) identifying training needs of the staff and designing a programme of remedial training and supervise its implementation;
- (i) preparing an evaluation report of supervisors and teachers;
- (j) establish management groups responsible for curriculum development, teacher supervision, and pupil evaluation.

In addition to training at the District Management Centres to carry out those functions, principals were also expected to devote approximately 12 hours per week to supervision.

Prior to the management reforms, the principal of the school was solely responsible for education administration in the school and hence was solely responsible for all decisions made. School problems were tackled by him. The community members, as represented through the PTA and later the

School Development Societies (SDS) and the staff accepted the principal's leadership and his decisions went unquestioned. The management changes since 1984 spelled out a different role for the principal that implied a more participatory approach to decision making. In the development of student and parent linkages, the principal was expected to develop a system for consulting parents on curriculum development matters. The enhanced authority of the principal as first line manager was to be recognized and implemented by giving him additional power such as to raise funds or to punish teachers and other employees. Management groups in each school were expected to be formed and assist the principal in such matters as student discipline and evaluation, teacher supervision, and curriculum development. Finally, the principal was expected to delegate authority for curricular, extra-curricular, and co-curricular activities.

Prior to the management reforms, teacher absenteeism was a serious problem in most schools. The involvement of principals in curriculum management was also limited and teachers were reluctant to serve in remote rural areas. To address these problems, the system of recruiting and assigning teachers was changed to implement a "District Teachers Service System" whereby a teacher would be assigned to a district as opposed to a particular school and changes within the district were delegated to the RDE as opposed to the MOE. In addition, teachers working in schools classified as difficult and very difficult according to their access and the availability of services such as post office, hospital, stores, transport and so forth, were to be paid an additional 10% and 15% respectively above their regular salaries. In addition, teachers' salaries were revised (five times since 1981).

Summary

The objectives of school improvement policies in Sri Lanka since 1981 have been to promote a "developmental orientation" to school improvement at the local and regional levels as opposed to the national level. The reorganization of the management system from a two-level structure of circuits and districts, to a four-level structure of schools, clusters, divisions, and regions, was intended to foster a more effective articulation of MOE policies for school improvement on the one hand and the identification of school problems and development of effective strategies for their resolution without total dependence on the centre for leadership, on the other. At the school level the new management system has translated into different roles for teachers and principals, a new way of organizing the school and the curriculum. And, it has meant a revision in the nature of support and assistance for teachers and principals. The remainder of this paper will address the question, how do management reforms affect the social relations of instruction? This question will be addressed in the context of the findings from a multi-site qualitative analysis of the implementation of these and related school improvement policies in Sri Lanka.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

It would be too easy to report the findings as showing that decentralization policies, particularly changes in the management system from the perspective of the eight schools, have had little effect on improving the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom. While it is true that on the basis of what was "supposed to happen" according to MOE reports and circulars, and "what is happening" in the schools, the policies are not being fully implemented. Most importantly, based upon the eight schools studied thus far, policies have had only a marginal effect on improving educational quality and addressing the needs of the teachers. However, to conclude with such broad generalizations would be to ignore the rich descriptive accounts of the experiences of these eight schools. In order to answer the overall research question, it is necessary to address the questions: How have the policies affected educational quality? And, what are the effects of the management reforms on teachers' needs?

We contend that it is essential for policymakers, planners, and administrators to understand how each of these schools reacted to the policy changes in order to understand how to obtain the desired outcomes. Furthermore, we contend, obtaining this qualitative understanding will not only assist in changing these schools, but provide important insights into the basic school system so as to inform the process of change generally needed by planners. First, though, we will provide some necessary background.

Methodology and Design

Eight sites were selected for intensive qualitative research. Five researchers from the Research Unit of the National Institute of Education were trained in qualitative research methods by the BRIDGES Project. Each visited the eight schools for up to 25 days at each school. Data were collected from the national, regional and cluster levels, including interviews with Regional Directors, Division Directors, Cluster Principals as well as interviews and observations with teachers, principals and community members from each school. A data collection manual containing interview questions, observation guidelines, field schedule, and directions for preliminary analysis was provided by the BRIDGES Project.

Each researcher wrote a case study following their third visit. These case studies were critiqued by BRIDGES team members, NIE staff, and a special panel which included MOE staff and regional administrators. Two more visits followed these critiques. The case studies were then completely rewritten and critiqued once again by BRIDGES team members and members of the NIE staff. After yet further revisions, the case studies will be completed for presentation at a BRIDGES Project Conference in Sri Lanka in July 1988. The summary of findings which follows is based primarily upon these case studies.

The Setting

This study focuses on primary schools and there are several important reasons for deciding such a focus. Sri Lanka has a total of 10,100 schools at the primary and secondary levels according to the 1987 School Census Report. Of this total, approximately 40% or 4014 are "type 3" or schools having classes up to year 5 (in 1987 year 5 was moved to the secondary

level and the primary cycle was reduced to the first five years). Most of these schools are located in rural areas which means that they tend to have smaller enrollments. Twenty-four percent of the schools had enrollments of less than 100 students in 1984. Teacher availability is also linked with the size of a school. In 1984, 24.7% of the total number of schools were one or two teacher schools, while in 5 districts 40-50% of the schools were two teacher schools. On almost every quality measure imaginable, type 3 schools are inferior to other schools. The unit cost at the primary level is Rs 450 as compared to Rs 950 at junior secondary. And, teacher-student ratios are 1:31.7 in Type 3 schools and around 1:25 in others.

Repetition and dropout rates are another performance indicator pointing to the plight of primary schools. In 1987, repetition rates were 9.02% for years 1-5 (8.01, 9.5, 9.4, 9.72, 8.48 respectively). Not surprisingly, many drop outs have also been repeaters. The average dropout rate for the same year was 3.51%. The MOE estimated in 1982, that 8.93 pupil years were necessary on average to complete the primary cycle, while some students, particularly those in disadvantaged areas were taking longer. One district estimated a period of 17.5 pupil years to complete the primary cycle (Gunaratne and Navaratnarajah, 1982).

Given the commitment of the BRIDGES Project, to basic education, it was decided to focus this research on these type 3 schools for the intensive case studies. Not only are a large proportion of the schools in Sri Lanka classified as type 3 (not to mention the highest percentage of the school-aged population), but most schools with the greatest needs in other Third World countries are of a similar type. Therefore, the applications and comparisons of this research is enhanced by its focus on type 3 schools.

The Sample

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY: Four of the eight schools selected for this study were members of the original twenty-one clusters established by the MOE (sites A, B, E, and F). The four schools which were not members of clusters were all members of zones (sites C, D, G, and H). In addition, three of the schools (D, G, and H) were in decentralized districts.

The Ministry of Education distinguishes schools by their accessibility and the availability of public services such as post office, hospitals, bus and train terminals, and so on. This classification scheme (congenial, difficult and very difficulty) not only serves to differentiate between contexts, but, as mentioned earlier, it provides a means of compensating teachers and principals working in more difficult stations. One school (B) was classified as very difficult. It was one mile from the nearest road and over three miles from the centre of the village of which it was a part. It grew from a one teacher school to a staff strength of three teachers and a principal since 1981. Two other schools were classified as difficult (A and F), while the remaining five (C, D, E, G, H) were all congenial.

Insert Table 1

The distribution of these schools with regards to community context roughly approximated the national distribution of type 3 schools. Site B, described above, was rural-remote. It was not accessible by public transportation and cultivation was the exclusive occupation of the community. Two schools (A and F) were rural. They were sometimes accessible by public transportation, meaning buses passed infrequently, and often irregularly. Cultivation was the principal occupation, although a

few small boutiques were present. Three schools were semi-rural (D, E, and H). They were easily accessible by public transportation and some public services were available nearby. While cultivation remained the principal occupation, a significant proportion of the community were engaged in semi-skilled and even skilled occupations implying the presence of local industries and/or a nearby urban centre. Two schools (C and G) were semi-urban. They resided on the outskirts of major cities. Although some of the parents were engaged in cultivation, a majority were employed as unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled labourers. Understandably, the wealth of the communities and the access to resources to enhance and supplement the basic funds, facilities, and aids provided by the MOE were stratified according to the community context (i.e., the semi-urban schools were in a relatively abundant environment while the rural-remote school was located in a relatively scarce environment). As might be predicted, these resource differences had an impact on the teaching and learning process of each school.

Insert Table 2

School size also varied within each of the above classifications. Schools with less than 200 students included A, B, C, and D. Schools with more than 200 students included E, F, G, and H. Although, according to Dove (1987), more or less than 200 students has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the school, by itself, we failed to find school size as a strong predictor of quality.

PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS: Of the eight principals, only one (D) had not undergone any management training. One principal (E) was a Grade II in the Principal Service, a civil service classification, five were a Grade III (A, B, C, G, and H), and one was a trained teacher in mathematics with

an "acting principal appointment" in addition to teaching year four (F). Only two of the eight principals did not reside in the communities in which the schools were located (B and C).

The majority of teachers in the sample were trained (27 out of 42). Two schools had a higher proportion of untrained teachers as opposed to trained. One school (E) had 5 out of a total of 7 teachers who were untrained, while the second (F) had 7 untrained university graduate teachers and only one trained teacher, the "acting principal."

Insert Table 3

Excluding site G (missing data), principals had an average of 10 years of experience as a principal, ranging from 2 years in 2 schools to 19 years in another school. Overall, the average of service rendered to education was 16.7 years, ranging from 6.4 years in one school to 24.3 years in another. Twenty-three teachers and principals had only the G.C.E. O/L or its predecessor, the Secondary School Certificate. Nine had the G.C.E. A/L qualification, and one had the G.A.O. qualification. Among the graduates, 7 had a B.A. degree while 2 had the now discontinued B.Ed. degree. On the basis of these characteristics, it is difficult to identify any clear patterns which stand out as having a dominant effect on school outcomes except community context. Although each characteristic is a factor which influences the quality of the contact students have with teachers, it is necessary to first get inside the schools to sort out the nature of the influence on the outcomes of schooling.

Analysis of Case Studies

Each of the eight case studies provides a detailed account of the social relations of instruction found in each school. Therefore, this

analysis will focus on the patterns in relations which influence the outcomes of schooling. However, the first question which we must address is, what do we mean by school outcomes? There is no reliable measure of school outcomes for type 3 schools. Only a small fraction of students sit for the scholarship examination and promotion/retentions policies vary across schools. Although dropouts is one measure of school quality, alone it tends to discriminate against schools in poorer communities since poorer students are much more likely to leave school to participate in the earning of the family income irrespective of the quality of schooling received. Therefore, we selected "curriculum implementation" as the principal measure of school outcomes. By curriculum implementation, we mean simply compliance with MOE mandates for teaching and the management of teaching in type 3 schools. Assumed here is, compliance with these mandates will lead to higher academic achievement.

The detailed case studies contained data on over 66 variables related to the social relations of instruction. Most of these, in one way or another, addressed issues related to curriculum implementation. In order to rank the eight schools according to their outcomes, these 66 variables were reduced to seven key variables directly indicating how the MOE mandates on curriculum were being implemented: the integration of subjects; the completion of the syllabi; inservice participation; use of instructional aids; supervision of instruction (internal and external); addressing student learning needs; and pupil evaluation. A nine point scale was used to score each school from very high to very low for each variable. This analysis attempts to explain the variance between each school and considers the options available to policy makers for school improvement.

Insert Table 4

Effects of Community Context

As indicated in the previous section, the only pattern which could be identified simply at the level of school characteristics which correlates with school outcomes, was community context. A common assumption is that the greater the available resources to a school, the higher the academic achievement. After ranking the eight schools according to their compliance with MOE policies with respect to curriculum implementation, we found that there was a one-to-one correspondence between compliance and resources only in the 2 semi-urban schools. That is, the two schools with the greatest amount of available resources (semi-urban, economically diverse, accessible to RDE and vice versa, etc.) were also the schools with the highest degree of compliance with MOE mandates. Upon careful examination of the social relations of instruction in each school, we found that in both schools, but particularly school G, there was a high degree of congruence between the MOE policies and the "local culture of the school."

School G is located on the grounds of the "G" Teachers College and has developed a reputation in the district as a pilot centre for special projects. Lecturers from the Teachers College often come to the school to experiment with new approaches to teaching and provide instruction to the practicing teachers in the school. In addition, students from the Teachers College also utilize the classes in the school for their own practice-teaching requirement, ensuring a constant inflow of new techniques and ideas to the instructional programme. The visit by a former D.E. from the Training Colleges Branch of the MOE and his comments emphasize this observation.

"I was thoroughly impressed by the institute as a centre for the primary maths programme and as a model primary school in the area. I find a close co-ordination between the school and the G T.C. which is indeed a good sign and which has helped a great deal in the progress of this school. I most congratulate the Principal who is endowed with qualities of devotion and dedication and also the members of the staff whose work is very impressive."

Being located close to a major metropolitan centre of the island, the school has access to many resources, including benefactors. The local Rotary Club is one such benefactor which has donated resources and equipment to the school, such as sports equipment, playground equipment, library facilities, and furniture. The principal proudly displays his collection of supplementary materials which he has been able to purchase due to the generosity of the Rotary Club and members of the SDS which, he feels, significantly contributes to the preparation of students for the scholarship examination.

Students are drawn from a range of backgrounds to the school. Approximately 25% of the children are from low SES backgrounds, yet student attrition is negligible (1 student in 1987). Expectations on the part of school staff and parents are very high as evidenced by their careful monitoring of student progress, including the performance of repeaters. Discipline problems are also minimized by an emphasis on values education which is supported by the parents. Although the principal did refer to certain problems with students from low SES homes, he has been able to address these through personal attention in getting parents to correct their children.

The staff all live within one kilometer from the school and are either property owners or have spouses with substantial positions in business or government. All the staff are trained as well.

The school had been getting good results on the scholarship examination during the period 1980-1986. Except for one year when they got only 4 students qualifying, in the other years a minimum of 8 students had qualified. This was one of the best accounting for about 10% of the total qualifying (250) among 250 schools in the district. Also about 25% of those who appeared for the test from the school had been successful. This had definitely created a good image about the school to the parents.

As the above description indicates, there was a high degree of congruence between the academic goals of the MOE, the school practices and the community's interests, thus a high rate of compliance with MOE policies. While not as clear-cut in the case of school C (second in rank of compliance with a score of 21 as compared with 13 for school G), a similar correspondence between academic goals, school practices and community interests was also present.

Insert Vignette for School C

However, when we moved beyond these two semi-urban schools, and considered

the semi-rural, rural and rural-remote schools, we found a much more mixed picture.

Insert Figure 1

We found that schools which ranked high in relative abundance were lower in their compliance and vice versa. In other words, access to resources was not the only factor in determining the quality of school outcomes for most of the schools in the sample. This finding implies that management factors are also an important influence on school outcomes and help to explain the variation found across the eight schools.

What Management Factors Do

In order to explain the variation in outcomes for each school, the case studies were carefully scrutinized to attempt to identify different patterns, first internally, and then across all eight sites. A list of dominant characteristics for each school was generated and compared. From this list, three factors seemed to emerge as capturing the variations in performance and most powerfully explaining the nature of the outcomes from each school. These were: school leadership, staff relations, and school-community relations.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP refers to the role of the principal in setting and shaping a school ethos. The principal is active not only in articulating a vision of education around which resources are organized, but he also demonstrates a capacity for initiative and innovation in responding to the needs of the school, especially those of teachers in order to enhance their own commitment to teaching. The converse role of a strong leader is a "caretaker" principal who goes through the motions of the principal's role without clear goals or direction.

STAFF RELATIONS represents the intersection between teacher knowledge of the subjects they are suppose to teach, the methods of teaching, the use of instructional aid and a disposition towards fostering growth in children. This factor includes teachers' training, their participation in staff development activities, the type of supervision received, as well as a school climate which is directed towards developing education through direct classroom teaching, and other activities rather than simply maintaining a marginal commitment to schooling.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS refers to the participation of parents and other members of the community in the development of the school--Shramadana (school week), green porridge programme, contributing to development of curriculum materials, assisting in homework, enhancing facilities through labour and/or paying facilities fees, and attending school activities such as sil campaigns, sports meets, literary association meetings, and individual meetings with the principal and teachers.

Related to each of these factors are: the methods of teaching and the use of instructional materials, teacher knowledge and training, and, the availability and quality of experience in extracurricular and co-curricular activities. However, performance due to each of these indicators are dependent upon first strong leadership, positive staff relations, and/or active community support, for a positive effect on school outcomes. This interrelation is illustrated in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2

While the management system can influence what happens in classrooms, it cannot control the actual teaching and learning process. Instead, we found that the nature of the local school culture as characterized by the

interaction of the above factors, buffers the impact of the management system. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this interaction effect is to compare vignettes for school G with school F.

Insert Vignettes for Schools G & F

A content analysis of the detailed case studies identified 49 behaviours for school G and 51 behaviours for school F which provide evidence of strong or weak school leadership, staff relations, and school-community relations. For school G, the pattern was clearly in the direction of strong principal leadership: 25 positive indicators as opposed to 2 negative. Staff relations were also high, 17 to 0, and school-community relations were 5 to 0. By comparison, school F was mostly negative in staff relations, 9 positive to 16 negative; positive in school-community relations, 10 to 0; and clearly weak in school leadership. Only 1 positive indicator to 15 negative. What do these patterns tell us? First they show how important management factors are for affecting teacher behaviours. Second, they provide an "explanatory context" for the performance of schools. A school that is characterized by weak leadership and negative staff relations, despite the support of the community, will be less likely to be successful in implementing the curriculum. If we consider a school more in the middle of our ranking, we will see that the behaviours are more mixed.

Insert Vignette for School A

However, there was also a discrepant case which was harder to explain with our model. That is, for school D, we found strong principal leadership towards shaping the ethos of the school, a staff with congenial relations, and a community actively participating in school affairs. Nevertheless, we found a lower level of compliance in curriculum implementation than other

schools with weaker principal leadership, mixed staff relations, and/or weaker community support. To explain this apparent contradiction with our explanatory model, we reviewed the case study for clues and found that rather than refuting the model, the case compliments it IF one considers more than just one set of goals around which schools might be organized.

Insert Vignette for School D

Earlier we observed that congruence between school goals, organizational context, and community interests results in positive school outcomes. This was most clearly illustrated in the case of school G, but this finding also held for school C. In both these cases, schools were clearly organized around academic goals. In school D, however, we found an alternative set of goals around which the school was also organized--"nurturing the talents of individual students." While not incompatible with academic goals, we see in the vignette an emphasis on the aesthetic, religious and physical development of the child. When asked what he felt he most needed for his school, the principal of school D requested sports equipment, citing the accomplishments students in the school had achieved at the district sports meet without any proper equipment. He felt that better equipment would not only enhance the students' training, but also motivate them to excel in the area. Similarly, a great deal of attention was devoted to school maintenance and personal care. Recognizing that some children arrive at school without having eaten, teachers would spend their own money to ensure that the children were not hungry in their classrooms. The principal modeled this concern for total development and responsibility in his manner of interaction with students. For instance, rather than admonishing students for littering the school grounds with paper, the principal simply told the students, "Unlike the trees which drop their leaves by nature, we

have a choice and may choose to take pride in our school by not dropping paper."

While these behaviours are not unique to school D, their dominance in influencing the organizational context is evident in the role of the principal, the nature of staff relations, and in the strong support of the community towards achieving these ends. Therefore, what appeared to be a contradictory case in our explanatory model, may actually be seen as supporting it if we consider alternative goals for schools. The configuration of school leadership, staff relations, and school-community relations in the context of nurturing goals explains the variance in school outcomes.

Insert Figure 3

The case of school D also illustrates the significance of the local school culture in buffering the influence of the management system in the organization of the school. For instance, we see that despite a relatively high level of staff training and participation in inservice, the implementation of the new teaching methods was lax. Similarly, teachers guides, lesson notes, and continuous assessment were ignored or changed to suit the convenience of the teachers, but as illustrated earlier, also to pursue alternative goals, namely nurturing. The cluster or zone may influence the school management and the teaching and learning process, but the local school culture mediates that influence (see Figure 4).

Insert Figure 4

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

First, it is clear that the purposes of schooling vary according to community context and factors in the schools themselves. Some of these variations are positive and indeed deserve to be fostered--thereby giving rise to a need to reexamine our definitions of "effectiveness" and how it is measured and rewarded in the current policy structure. The question here is, compliance with respect to what? Is nurturing the talents of individual students a respectable objective for an educational institution? What gets lost when enforcing greater compliance with MOE policies when local policies are themselves educative? However, we do not believe that academic goals and nurturing goals are incompatible, which leads us to our second point. Schools can be improved by providing an appropriate mix of accountability and capacity-building interventions. While there may be nothing new in this statement, the emphasis is on "appropriate." We believe that the identification of the six factors which influence school outcomes and the identification of alternative goals, helps us to more clearly identify indicators for providing the appropriate mix of intervention strategies. Finally, our findings indicate that school clusters provide an important organizational context for carrying out these tasks, provided the cluster principal is sufficiently knowledgeable of policy options and has the means of facilitating their implementation at the school level.

Table I
Characteristics of Sample

	A	B	E	F	C	D	G	H
Cluster Zone	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Decentralized District						X	X	X
Very Difficult		X						
Difficult	X			X				
Congenial			X		X	X	X	X
Rural Remote		X						
Rural	X			X				
Semi-Rural			X			X		X
Semi-Urban					X		X	
< 200 Students	X	X			X	X		
> 200 Students			X	X			X	X
Principal - Management Training	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Principal - without Management Training						X		
Principal Grade II			X					
Principal Grade III	X	X			X	X	X	X
Principal without Grade				X				
Principal resides in community	X		X	X		X	X	X
Principal does not reside in community		X			X			
Majority of teachers with training	X	X			X	X	X	X
Majority of teachers without training			X	X				

TABLE 2: MOE Classification/Community Characteristics/Teacher-Pupil Ratio

	CONGENIAL	DIFFICULT	VERY DIFFICULT
Semi-Urban	G (1:31) C (1:35)		
Semi-Rural	H (1:26) E (1:28) D (1:25)		
Rural		A (1:30) F (1:53 [*])	
Rural Remote			B (1:34)

* year 1 - 5 only

TABLE 3: Teacher & Principal Training / Years of Experience

Staff	Academic Qualification	Yrs. of Service	At School	Since Training	As Administrator
School G					
Principal	SSC	32			
Teacher A	SSC	35			
Teacher B	SSC	32			
Teacher C	SSC	28			
Teacher D	SSC	9			
Teacher E	SSC	<u>10</u>			
Average		24.3			
School C					
Principal	SSC	30	4	27	15
Teacher A	SSC	26	19	12	
Teacher B	SSC	10	1	6	
Teacher C	SSC	33	10	14	
Teacher D	GAO	15	9	12	
Teacher E	SSC	26	9	23	
Teacher F	BA	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>--</u>	
Average		21.42	7.85	13.42	
School H					
Principal	A/L	23	2	11	2
Teacher A	SSC	42	30	35	
Teacher B	SSC	30	25	29	
Teacher C	O/L	23	12	22	
Teacher D	A/L	9	5	--	
Teacher E	O/L	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	
Average		22.5	13.17	16.17	
School E					
Principal	SSC	29	7	25	15
Teacher A	O/L	9	1	2	
Teacher B	BA	1	1	--	
Teacher C	SSC	14	1	5	
Teacher D	A/L	20	9	17	
Teacher E	O/L	<u>19</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>16</u>	
Average		15.33	4	10.83	

TABLE 3 (cont'd) p.2

Staff	Academic Qualification	Yrs. of Service	At School	Since Training	As Administrator
School D					
Principal	SSC	31	14		13
Teacher A	SSC	30	17	15	
Teacher B	SSC	26	4	23	
Teacher C	SSC	23	13	21	
Teacher D	A/L	5	2	3	
Teacher E	A/L	7	3	--	
Teacher F	B.Ed.	3	1	--	
Average		17.86	7.71	8.86	
School A					
Principal	SSC	23	15	18	5
Teacher A	O/L	16	9	12	
Teacher B	O/L	8	8	--	
Teacher C	O/L	10	8	6	
Teacher D	BA	1	1	--	
Teacher E	A/L	3	1	--	
Teacher F	A/L	0	0	--	
Average		6.42	6	10.83	
School F					
Principal	A/L	16	5	8	2
Teacher A	BA	2	1	--	
Teacher B	BA	11	3	--	
Teacher C	BA	11	10	--	
Teacher D	BA	11	3	--	
Teacher E	B.Ed.	12	3	--	
Average		10.5	4.16	1.33	
School B					
Principal		28	3	26	19
Teacher A	O/L	23	6	11	
Teacher B	O/L	10	5	8	
Teacher C	A/L	1	1	--	
Average		15.5	3.75	11.25	

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TABLE 4

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

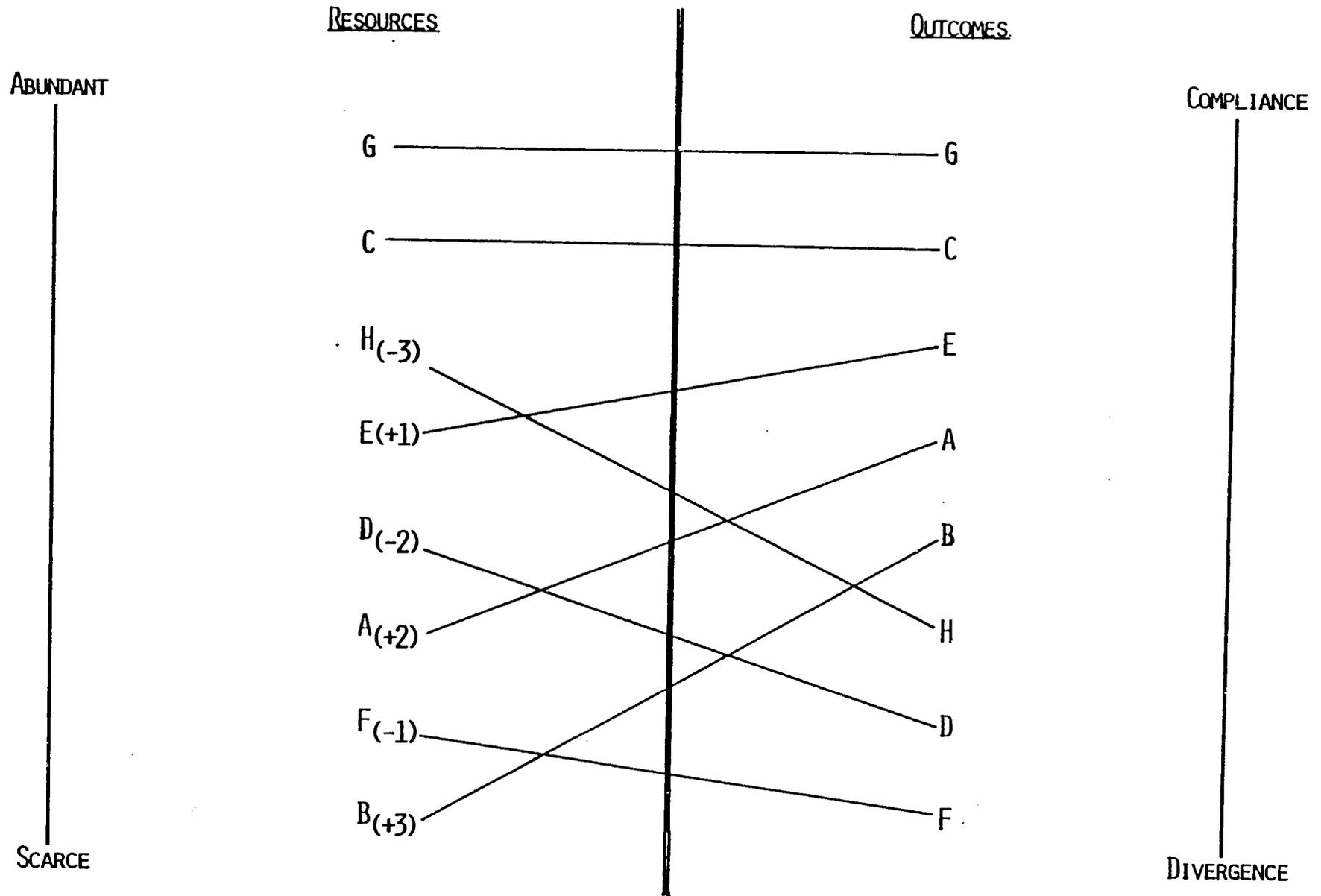
	<u>G</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>F</u>
INTEGRATION OF SUBJECTS	1	2	4	6	7	9	7	8
COMPLETION OF SYLLABI	1	3	5	6	6	5	7	7
INSERVICE PARTICIPATION	1	2	3	3	7	5	5	7
USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS	1	3	5	5	5	5	5	3
SUPERVISION OF INSTRUCTION	3	3	3	4	1	8	8	8
P-EXTERNAL	2	3	4	6	6	6	6	9
ADDRESSING STUDENT LEARNING NEEDS	2	3	5	5	8	5	5	8
STUDENT EVALUATION	2	2	5	5	5	3	5	5
	<u>13</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>55</u>

KEY: HIGH HIGH = 1
 MEDIUM HIGH = 2
 LOW HIGH = 3

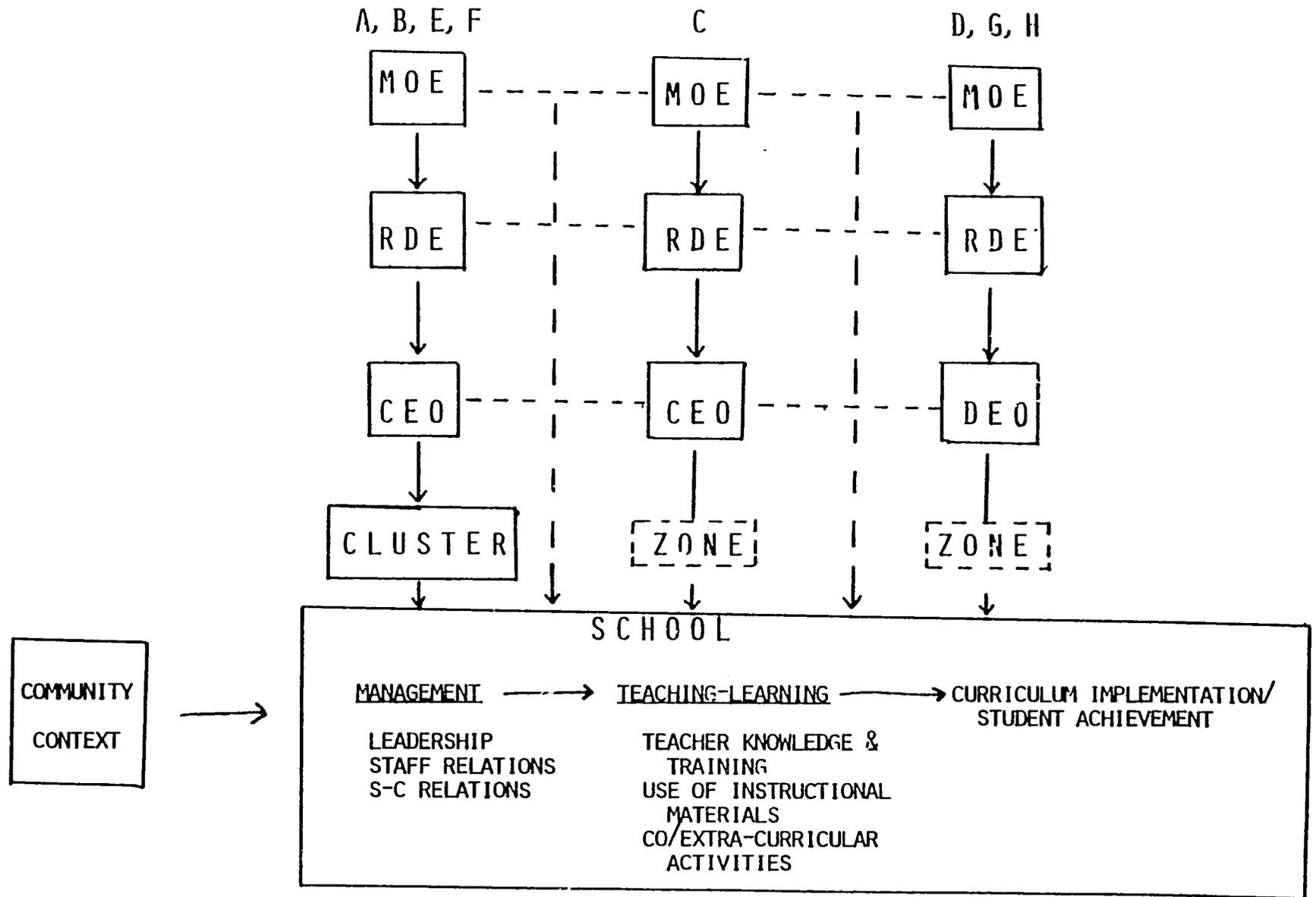
HIGH MEDIUM = 4
 MEDIUM MEDIUM = 5
 LOW MEDIUM = 6

HIGH LOW = 7
 MEDIUM LOW = 8
 LOW LOW = 9

FIGURE 1: INFLUENCE OF RESOURCES ON SCHOOL OUTCOME



FB



KEY: — (SOLID LINE) = DIRECT INFLUENCE
 --- (BROKEN LINE) = INDIRECT INFLUENCE

FIGURE 2: MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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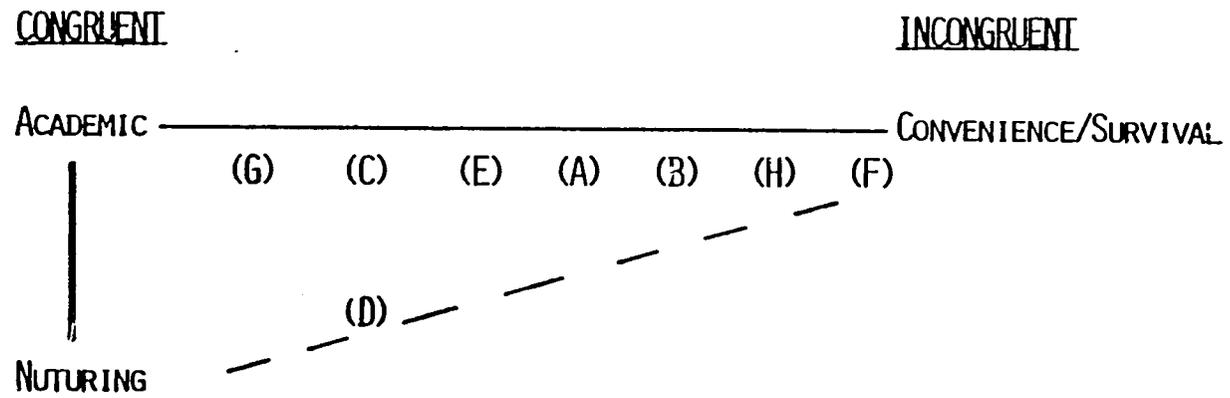


FIGURE 3: RELATION OF "DEVELOPMENTAL ORIENTATION" TO "LOCAL SCHOOL CULTURE"

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R D E
 |
 D E O
 |
 C L U S T E R

S C H O O L

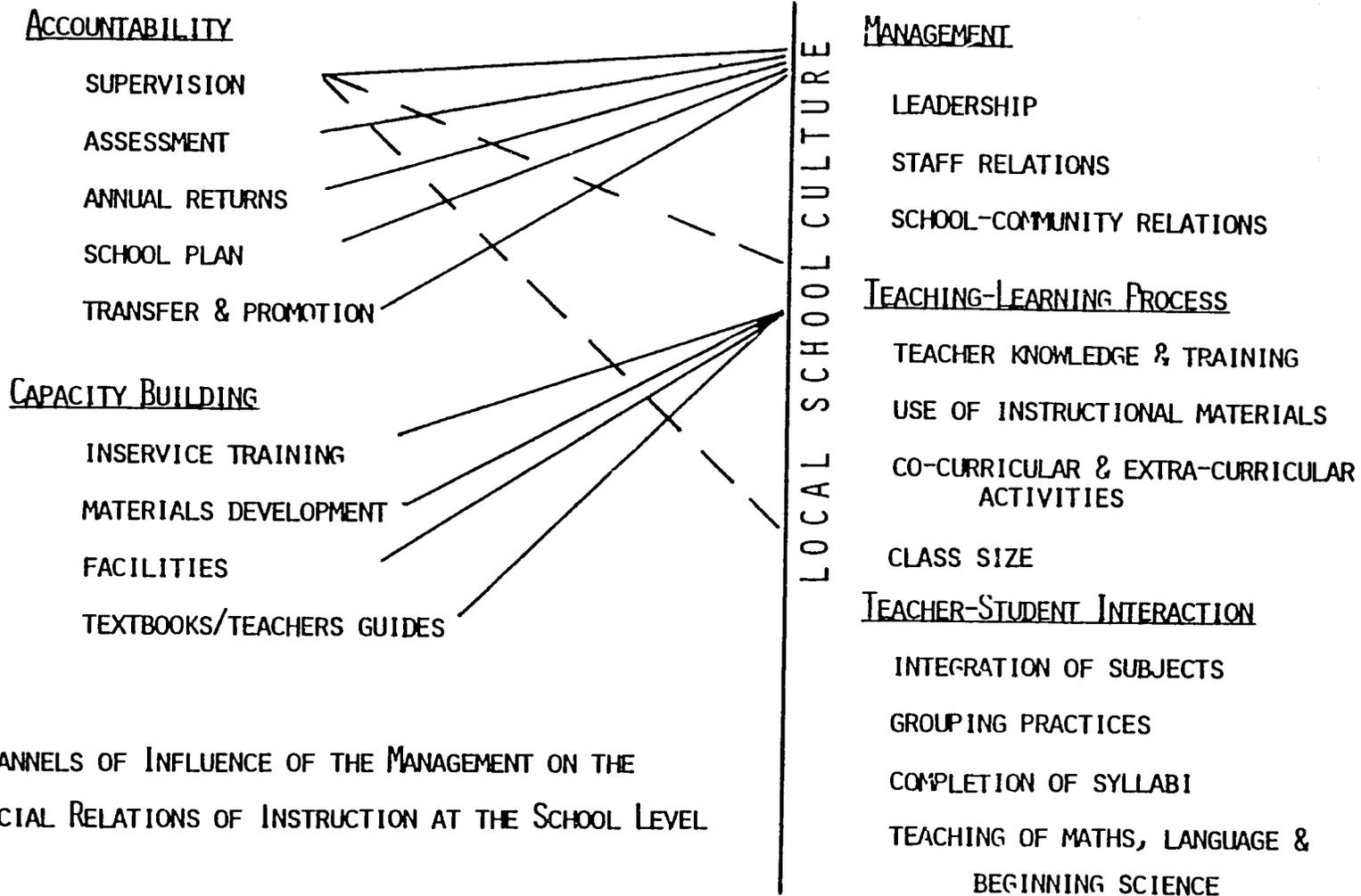


FIGURE 4: CHANNELS OF INFLUENCE OF THE MANAGEMENT ON THE SOCIAL RELATIONS OF INSTRUCTION AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

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