THEO WUBBELS

10. TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN POLICY MAKING IN DUTCH SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we present the design (section 4) and results (section 5) of the Dutch study on principal and teacher perceptions of teacher responsibility for school change. As a background for the results, we first present in section 2 some information about the Dutch educational system at the time of data collection, its foundation and structure. Because the study is on teachers and principals in secondary education we focus on the characteristics of the secondary system and we then present information in section 3 on recent developments in secondary education that are a background for the interpretation of teacher responsibility taking and receiving in school change. In section 6 we discuss the results among others taking into account Dutch cultural characteristics.

THE DUTCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Founding Principles

Freedom of schooling. The freedom to found schools, to organise them and to define the religious, pedagogical or other conceptions on which they are based, is laid down in the Constitution. This right may be exercised within the context of educational laws, which define the structure of education, the outline of the curriculum and the foundation criteria, such as, the minimum number of students in a school, the distribution of schools of the same religious character in a particular region and the norms for granting financial support. The result is a wide variety of schools at all levels. Two main categories can be distinguished: public-authority schools (±30%) on the one hand and private schools (±70%) on the other. The latter category can be subdivided into schools based on a religious conception such as: Roman Catholic schools, schools founded by the various Protestant denominations and more recently Muslim and Hindu schools and a variety of private non-denominational schools which include Montessori, Dalton (Parkhurst) and Steiner (Waldorf) schools. All schools, whether public or private, which meet the requirements set by the government are financed on an equal basis.

School boards. For public-run schools the responsible authorities are boards installed by the municipalities in which they are situated. Private schools have their own boards installed by themselves. Members of these school boards are parents,

A. Menlo & L. Collet (Eds.), Do Teachers Wish to Be Agents of Change?, 189–204.

managers from the public or private sector, educational experts, etc. who usually perform their board tasks unpaid in the evenings on a voluntary basis. These boards are accountable to the government for the quality of the education that the schools provide, and for all financial and legal matters. This implies that all government correspondence goes to and from the boards, these boards are liable in court and the members personally are responsible for the acts (and mistakes) of the board. In practice these school boards hire the school principal to do the job for which the board is responsible. School principals are accountable to their boards.

The Structure of the System

The structure of the system in 2003 is demonstrated in Figure 10-1. In the Netherlands compulsory education spans 14 years, from age 4 to 18. Until age 16 there is full time compulsory education, followed by two years part-time or full-time education. Primary education starts at the age of four and ends at the age of twelve; the students are placed in successive age groups: groups 1 to 8. Apart from the transition year or period, secondary education is based on the principle of streaming, i.e. it consists at the age of 12 of (i) preparatory intermediate vocational education (VMBO, 4 yrs, consisting of four streams varying from very practical to theoretical), (ii) senior secondary general education (HAVO, 5 yrs) and (iv) pre-university education (VWO, including the Gymnasium, 6 yrs). At the age of 16 students from VMBO proceed to intermediate vocational education (MBO, between 2 to 4 years). After HAVO students can proceed to MBO or higher (vocational) education (4 years) and after VWO to higher vocational education or universities (4 or 5 years).

For this chapter we focus on the secondary level: VMBO, HAVO and VWO. As a consequence of the trend during the last decade to concentrate schools, the majority of secondary schools currently include all three types of education. All schools start with either a transition class (grade 9) or a transition period (grades 9 and 10) after which the cohort is subdivided into streams on the basis of the cognitive abilities of the students. In principle it is possible to move from one level to another, usually this is a move downwards and only infrequently upwards. If streaming up takes place this happens usually after students have completed examinations for one level and continue their studies at an advanced level.

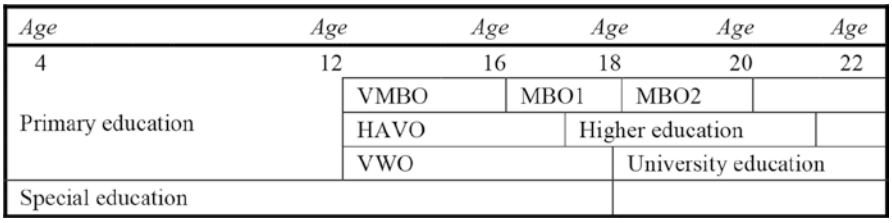

Figure 10-1. Structure of the Dutch educational system in 2003

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION.

In the Netherlands as in many other countries education is not only a matter of continuing public debate, it is also an arena where politicians want to have influence and therefore innovations have been abundantly proposed and initiated the last twenty years. Many of these innovations were government driven and they refer to the relation between government and schools, to government, board and principal control, and to the curriculum.

Government School Relations

A characteristic trend in Dutch policy of the last two decades is the 'withdrawal' of the central government from its role as first-responsible for all affairs in public life. Education is one of these domains. In contrast with the last 150 years, the government today governs 'from a distance'. That policy is based on the conviction that market-forces will stimulate both the effectiveness and the quality of schooling and the efficiency of the governance of schools. In most industrialised countries government educational policies the last 20 years tend to strengthen regional or local authorities' responsibilities (school districts, schools, municipalities) for education (OECD 2004). This can have various forms depending on the local structures. In the Netherlands this trend started by transferring responsibilities from the national government to municipalities and later towards individual schools.

This new way of governing education has led to a decentralisation of the responsibilities for example on financial matters and staff policy. Until the beginning of this century schools were financed on the basis of a reimbursement system. Nowadays however schools receive a budget and, apart from teacher remuneration and a limited number of guidelines defined by the government, the boards have become responsible for the way they handle their budget. As a consequence boards now have a lot of freedom to set their own priorities. A similar development can be observed with respect to staff-policies. Boards of schools have become responsible for the well being and the quality of the staff. The government, for example, no longer provides centrally organised in-service programs. In-service money has been distributed among the schools, which can develop their own tailor-made in-service plan and can buy the in-service they need.

Government Control

Despite the decentralisation the national government continues to define aspects of education policy and to control education by means of regulations and legislation. The decentralisation of responsibilities in fact has been balanced by a strong emphasis on accountability. This is put into practice directly by imposing standards to be met; for example, by nation-wide examinations at the end of secondary education. More indirectly, this is done by means of regulations concerning the

finances and additional resources the schools receive and other conditions schools have to comply with, such as the qualifications of its teaching staff. Finally, when the government started to govern from a distance, a system for monitoring quality in and of education was set up. An example of this approach is the school rating system that has been established. Schools are rated on the basis of a set of quality indicators and the outcomes of this check are made public (The School Quality Card). Parents can use these cards to select the right/best school for their children. School boards also are held responsible if a school does not meet the criteria. A school that continues to underachieve after repeated warnings may lose its grant from the government. Recently this applied to a Muslim school.

The government exercises its authority mainly through the Inspectorate of Education that monitors the quality of education in the Netherlands. All institutions in primary, secondary and special education, as well as in vocational and adult education are regularly visited and evaluated. The inspectorate has exactly the same authority for schools with a public and schools with a private board. The responsibility for the quality of education lies in first instance with the school itself. The school decides on objectives (within the national framework), organisation, methods, materials and pedagogy and on the ways in which quality is assessed, evaluated and improved. The inspectorate conducts a periodical assessment of the quality of each educational institution. The schools' own evaluation is an important input for the external evaluation by the Inspectorate. The results of these inspections are published and discussed with the school. Schools that do not comply with national regulations are called to account. In addition, the Inspectorate points out to the school leadership in what respects quality improvements can be achieved (Inspectorate 2007).

Board and Principal Control

From the previous section we conclude that during the past years two trends can be distinguished in the field of education in the Netherlands. On the one hand national regulations have been reduced and the responsibility of educational institutions for their own policy and practice has been strengthened; on the other hand there is a growing demand for insight into educational standards and performance (accountability). It appeared that for many schools neither their boards nor administrators were prepared for bearing the responsibilities laid upon them by the government. One of the consequences of this was that schools or school boards decided to merge: They felt that bigger organisations would be better able to be responsible for financial matters, staff policy and also for educational developments. In these big organisations one board can govern sometimes up to 40 schools and the board then may install a central office with administrators to supervise the school principals.

Traditionally the Dutch principal came from the teaching profession and was a teacher among teachers. It is now also possible to hire principals who do not have a teaching certificate and we now see that principals from outside the education profession

(managers in other parts of the economy) enter the schools. Nowadays we see separate unions for principals and consultancy organisations develop and deliver in-service education for principals. In some cases huge differences in salary between principals and teachers developed. Although the majority of the principals still have been teachers or teacher educators the distance between teachers and principals has increased.

The development of a stronger and more distant school leadership implies that for teachers the development towards school autonomy described above may not be that visible. Whereas previously their work was dependent to a large degree on government regulations, it is now dependent on regulations set by the school boards and administrators. Some teachers probably even feel that they have become less independent. Whereas teachers were described as kings in their classrooms in earlier days they nowadays sometimes are described as workers delivering a centrally developed curriculum and supervised intensely by school administrators.

Curriculum Reform

Several curricular reforms have been initiated by the government at the end of the previous and the beginning of the present century. In the nineties the educational goals for the 12 – 16 years age group were brought into line, i.e. the same goals for all students. As a consequence the curriculum for Junior Secondary Education was reformed with respect to both the contents and the methodologies. In the new curriculum acquiring skills – cognitive skills, social skills, learning skills, basic technical skills and caring skills – and the apprehension of knowledge are of equal importance. Because acquiring skills at all levels has become an important object in the curriculum, teachers teach less, students work more on tasks and teachers are expected to guide student learning processes rather than to transfer knowledge. The new curriculum has led to a process of amalgamating the earlier existing different types of schools for Junior Secondary Education. As a consequence teachers no longer teach students of a specific level but they teach the whole range of Junior Secondary.

An even more sweeping change has taken place in Senior Secondary Education. A number of problems were identified with respect to the preparation of the new generation for the 21st century – especially on the tuning of secondary and tertiary education, student motivation and students learning competence. Therefore, starting in 1998, a large educational reform was implemented in the upper grades of Dutch secondary education (grades 10–12). The reform involved two components: changes in the curriculum and the pedagogy, which was intended to stimulate schools and teachers to adopt a new approach involving self-regulation of student learning.

The new approach was explained by Oolbekkink-Marchand (2006) as follows. "The curriculum of several school subjects was changed, new school subjects were introduced, and learners could choose a specific combination of subjects (instead of a free choice from all examination subjects). Along with these mandatory changes, schools were encouraged to promote students' active and self-regulated learning (ASL) which requires students to gradually take control of their own learning

process. Teachers, therefore, had to change their approach towards learners who had to become responsible for their own learning process. The teacher had to become a guide of the learning process, while remaining an expert in his or her specific school subject". In all subjects acquiring subject-related cognitive skills (productive knowledge) prevails over the apprehension of reproductive knowledge.

For schools this reform implies adapting the school buildings to the new requirements, i.e. creating areas suitable for self-study and extending their computer facilities. The new timetable consists of only a limited number of whole class or big audience instruction periods next to self-study periods, small group teaching and teacher office hours for those who need extra help. These innovations require teachers to change rather drastically, that is, the pedagogical innovation does not simply involve the incorporation of new topics into the curriculum but also touches upon the most deeply held beliefs of teachers with regard to education and the role of the teacher. That role is expected to change from mainly being an instructor to becoming the coach of student learning processes.

METHODS

Data Gathering and Analysis

The English versions of the 20 item principal and teacher questionnaires used in this study were translated by the author into Dutch and back translated by a second translator. For two items a discussion between the translator and back translator was necessary to get agreement on the Dutch wording. In the questionnaires some items asking about teacher and principal background variables were included. The original English questionnaires are described in Chapter 2.

The data for the Dutch part of the study were collected in 2002 by approaching 100 principals of a random sample of secondary schools in the Netherlands. Of them, 59 responded positively by answering the questionnaire. In 2004 the same schools were approached to have teachers answer the teacher version of the questionnaire. Of the 236 teachers approached, 101 (43%) responded.

The quantitative data were processed by the Consortium's data analysis centre in Ann Arbor. The qualitative data (the comments section for the principals) were coded according to the categories of the internationally developed coding scheme also described in Chapter 2. A second researcher coded all the data and an inter-rater-reliability (Cohen's kappa) was calculated. The result was 0.82, which was considered to be acceptable.

Sample

The Dutch sample consisted of 101 teachers (55% male) and 59 principals (75% male) from secondary schools across the country. For the Dutch population of

Table 10-1. Age distribution in percentages for teachers and principals in our sample and in the Dutch teacher population. Data for the principal population are not available

Age group	*<35*	*35 – 44*	*45 – 54*	*54 – 65*
Population of Teachers	19.3	24.1	38.1	18.3
Sample of Teachers	14	17	48	20
Sample of Principals	0	12	58	30

Table 10-2. Years of work experience of teachers and principals in the Dutch sample

Experience in years	*0 – 5*	*6 – 10*	*11 – 25*	*26 – 40*
Teachers	8	16	36	41
Principals as principal	24	12	64	0

teachers, data are available on gender and age distribution in secondary education (Melser, 2004). Table 10-1 shows the age distribution of teachers in our sample and in the Dutch population. It appears that the teachers in our sample are a bit older on average than in the Dutch population. Unfortunately no data on the Dutch principal population are available.

In 2002, 54% of the secondary teachers were male, so our sample is representative with respect to gender.

From Table 10-2 we can see that the experience of the teachers is distributed similar to the age and that therefore our sample probably is more experienced than Dutch teachers in general. This is an indication that our results will hold more for a group of a bit older teachers than for the Dutch secondary teacher population. These older Dutch teachers generally are less satisfied with their job than their younger colleagues (Vrielink, Kloosterman & van Kessel, 2004).

The student body of the schools of the principals and teachers surveyed ranged from about 420 up to 5000, with about 50% in the range of 1000 to 1500 students. Some were located in rural, others in urban and sub-urban communities. All denominations of schools common in the Netherlands were present in the sample. The schools to our knowledge have no specific characteristics that make them not representative of the population of Dutch schools.

RESULTS

The results of this study are summarized in four figures displayed on the next two pages. Teacher Preferences and Teacher Estimates of principal preferences appear in Figures

10-2 and 10-3, and Principal Preferences and Principal Estimates of teacher preferences appear in Figures 10-4 and 10-5. In each figure the black bars present the Dutch means and the grey bars the Ten-Country means. Note that the values of the grand and index means are printed above their bar graphs in all four figures.

The remainder of this section is organized in five parts: first, we discuss the Dutch scores contained in the four figures; second, we present comparisons of Dutch scores with the average scores internationally; third, we evaluate the differences between teachers' and principals' scores; fourth, we highlight some results on specific indices across variables; and fifth, we discuss the discrepancies between our results and the hypothesised order of the indices within each figure. In each of these areas, we occasionally present results for individual items and significance tests: these values are provided in Appendix Table A-8 for Dutch data and Table A-1 for Ten-Country data.

Dutch Scores

An inspection of the grand means (all items taken together) for the four teacher involvement variables in Figures 10-2 to 10-5 shows that Dutch teachers and their principals generally have moderate scores, somewhere between a score of 3 (some involvement) and 4 (much involvement). Both teachers and principals want teachers to be involved to a moderate degree in decision making. A mild exception is the result for Teacher Estimates of principal preferences in Figure 10-3. Here the score is 2.81, somewhat below the level of 'some support'.

The highest index scores are for the Principal Preference to have teachers participate in Classroom Learning and Evaluation policies (both 4.16), meaning a wish for much involvement. Here the strongest contributing item concerns involvement in development of new departmental courses (4.60). From their comments it is clear that principals see this as the core competence of a teacher. But we can also see some hesitation about the practical implementation:

> This is the core of the professionalism of the teachers, but they are reluctant to take this as an extra task
>
> Teachers have too much work already
>
> Teachers are not very much inclined to develop

Teacher background variables such as gender and age or school characteristics such as student number appeared to be only weakly related to the scores for teachers and not at all for the principals. The trend for teachers was that the older and more experienced teachers were, the more they wanted to be involved in decision making with the strongest relationships appearing for the Classroom Learning and Administration issues. (See Chapter 3 for detailed statistical results.)

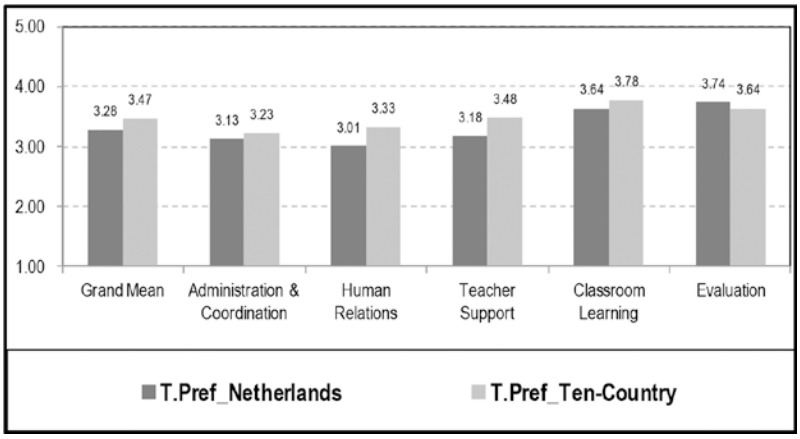

Figure 10-2. Dutch & Ten-CountryTeacher Preferences for participation in decision making

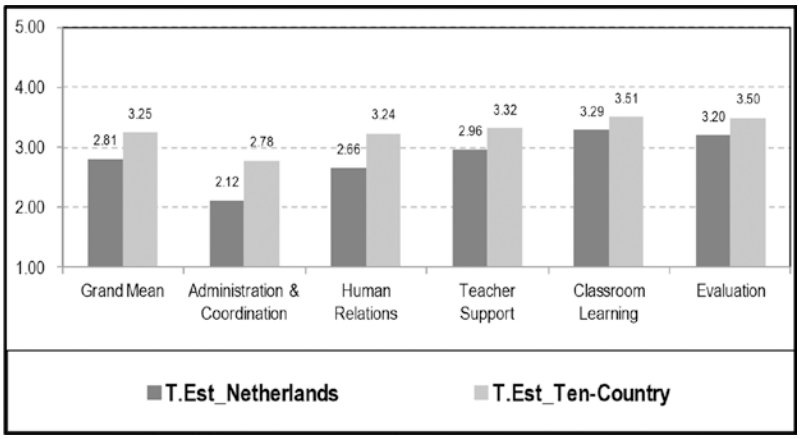

Figure 10-3. Dutch & Ten-Country Teacher Estimates of Principal Preferences for teacher participation in decision making

Comparisons with the Ten-Country Average

The scores for the Dutch teachers and principals on the Grand Mean generally are pretty close to the Ten-Country average, the exception (largest difference) again being the Teacher Estimate of principal support for teacher involvement. The Dutch score of 2.81 is considerably lower than the Ten-Country average of 3.25. Looking at the five indices and the constituting items, it appears that the relatively low Teacher

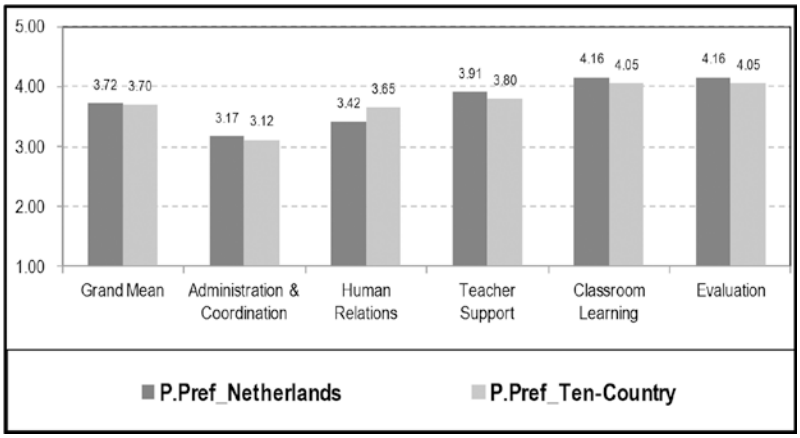

Figure 10-4. Dutch & Ten-Country Principal Preferences for teacher participation in decision making

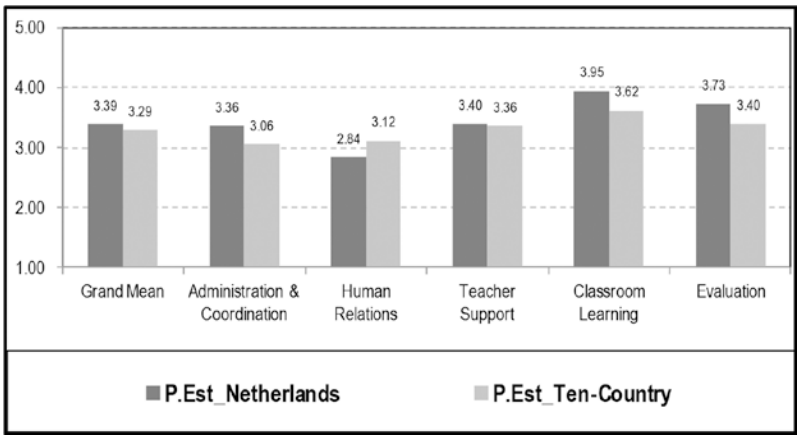

Figure 10-5. Dutch & Ten-CountryPrincipal Estimates of Teacher Preferences for participation in decision making

Estimate of principal support was consistently reflected in all indices. The strongest appears in the already mentioned belief about principal support for participation in administrative issues. Further, the corresponding difference for the Human Relations indices is also pretty large (Figure 10-3). To a greater degree than their Ten-Country counterparts, Dutch teachers consistently think that principals want them to be less involved in decision making.

For Teacher Preferences for involvement in decision making (Figure 10-2) two indices indicate a rather large difference with the Ten-Country mean: for the Human Relations and Teacher Support indices Dutch teachers want to be less involved than their foreign colleagues. This is true for all items except *'improve the school's relationship to the community' and 'developing teacher induction programs'* where Dutch teachers want to be involved as much as teachers in other countries.

Looking at the content of the remaining items (e.g. policies for parent involvement and developing in-service opportunities), it seems that indeed these are areas where Dutch teachers traditionally are not involved.

The reluctance to be involved can also be illustrated by the relatively high number of principals with opposing comments for the items in this index. (See chapter 3 for specific percentages.) From these comments it is clear that principals are also hesitant about the *quality* of teacher input. An example of quality concern is provided by a comment about the professional benefits for teachers:

> They may be too much only subject oriented

Figure 10-4 shows the results for Principal Preference for teacher participation. On four indices (Administration, Teacher Support, Classroom Learning, and Evaluation) Dutch principals want their teachers to be slightly more involved than their colleagues in other countries. But for Human Relations Dutch principals think that teachers should be less involved than preferred by principals in the other countries. Principals make relatively few supportive comments about these items and more (strongly) opposing ones. For example comments about teacher involvement in *'improving the school's relationships with the community'* were:

> This is a virgin territory

> This is irrelevant for teachers

And for 'setting policies for parent involvement' a typical comment was:

> This has a very low priority for most teachers and let everyone do the job she is good at

Finally, for Principal Estimates of teacher preferences for participation in decision making (Figure 10-5) it appears that again, except for Human Relations, Dutch principals estimate teacher preferences higher than principals in other countries.

Differences between Teachers and Principals

The largest difference between teacher and principal variables appears between the Teacher Estimates of principal preferences and the actual Principal Preferences. Similar to the other countries, teachers very much underestimate principal support for their participation.

The comparisons of Teacher Preferences and Principal Estimates generally give the opposite pattern of results as the Ten-Country average. Dutch principals generally estimate that teachers want to participate more in decision making in three domains than teachers themselves preferred: these are Administration, Teacher Support and Classroom Learning. This differs from the international trend, where teachers want to participate more than principals estimate that teachers prefer. Apparently Dutch principals tend to *over*estimate teacher preferences in these three domains while Ten-Country principals *under*estimate them.

Comparisons across Involvement Variables

In the previous section we discussed the results according to the four involvement variables: Principal Preferences (support) for teacher involvement, Principal Estimates of teacher preferences, Teacher Preferences, and Teacher Estimates of principal preferences. We now turn to a few remarkable results taking a view of the indices across the four variables.

The most striking findings are the relatively low scores in the Netherlands on all four items for the Human Relations Index. Dutch principals and teachers alike are less in favour of teacher involvement in decisions on human relations than their foreign colleagues.

It is remarkable that on three indices (Administration, Teacher Support, and Classroom Learning) Dutch principals estimate a higher teacher preference for involvement than principals in the other countries (Figure 10-5), whereas Dutch teachers actually prefer a lower involvement than their colleagues in other countries (Figure 10-2).

The relatively strong difference for the Administration and Coordination index is especially due to the difference in scores on the items about deciding the number of students in class and the hiring of teachers. These are probably issues teachers think they cannot influence, although they would wish they could. Their lack of confidence to have influence on these issues may make them unwilling to participate in administrative decision making. The anticipated unlikelihood of success might make teachers reluctant to pursue involvement.

Principals, however, might think that teachers indeed find class sizes an important issue and that they therefore want to participate. In this judgment principals then overlook that teachers are aware of the fact that they cannot affect decisions on class size.

Further, Dutch principals compared to their colleagues in other countries *over*estimate teacher preference for involvement in Teacher Support and Classroom Learning issues while Ten-Country principals *under*estimate their teachers interest in being involved in these issues. Dutch teachers want to be somewhat *less* involved than teachers in other countries, but Dutch principals think they want *more* involvement than their foreign colleagues. These relations are consistent for all five items in the Teacher Support index and all four items in the Classroom Learning index. A

possible reason for the consistent principal overestimates of teacher interest in being involved may be that Teacher Preference scores were depressed by a significant percentage of part-time teachers who might not have time for involvement beyond assigned teaching tasks.

The Dutch score for Teacher Estimates of principal support on the class scheduling item is extremely low. This may reflect the fact that in the Netherlands scheduling has for long been a primary task of principals and their staff and teachers have not been involved in this at all. This is even true in the last years when the innovations in the upper grades of secondary education asked for changes in schedules such as room assignments for longer and shorter periods for class and other time slots than traditional lessons: e.g. independent and group work for students. The way to realize this through schedules was strictly the domain of administrators.

Order of Indices

Looking at the ordering of the mean scores on indices, the Netherlands for two imdices differ from other countries and from the hypothesized order of indices. The score for the Human Relations Index was lower than for the Administration and Coordination Index for the principal about the teacher wish to participate and the teacher actual wish for involvement. We will turn to an explanation for this result caused by the extremely low human relations score in the next section.

DISCUSSION

The most important conclusion from the results presented in the previous sections is that the data about the perceptions of Dutch principals and teachers by and large show similar trends as were found in the international data. The Dutch scores generally are close to the ten-country average and also the differences between variables do not deviate very much from the international averages. In this discussion we will concentrate, however, on the few relatively large differences between Dutch results and the averages across countries. First we discuss the difference between teacher preferences for involvement and principal estimates of those preferences, and the difference between the teacher estimates of principal support for teacher involvement and the actual principal support. Next we will focus on differences in cultural values to elucidate the results on the Human Relations Index.

Two results about the estimation by teachers and principals of the desire of the other party to have teacher involvement were notable. First, principals in the Netherlands overestimate teacher preference for overall responsibility-taking more than their colleagues in other countries. Second, in most countries it was found that teachers underestimate the principals' willingness to have teacher involvement but in the Netherlands this underestimation was twice as large as on average.

Several factors may help explain this mismatch in the Dutch situation. First, as can be seen from the page 5 description of curricular innovations in the last 10 years, it may be that teachers are a bit fatigued with innovations (see also Wubbels & Vonk 2004). It could very well be possible that principals underestimate what all these innovations have asked from the teachers and how this may have diminished their willingness to play a role in initiatives for change. Second, the Board and Principal Control section (pages 4-5) described several circumstances that may have enlarged the distance between teachers and principals: mergers of schools leading to less direct contact of teachers and principals, another type of influx in the principal positions and a more "professional" but detached school management. Third, the composition of the teaching force in the Netherlands has a distinct feature that could be important in this regard. In the Netherlands the proportion of part-time teachers (50.5%) is twice as high as in the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on average (24.6%) (OECD 2003). It is not far-fetched to assume that part time teachers could want to be less involved in policy making at the school level than full time teachers. Apparently then, the principals do not sufficiently understand or foresee teachers' lack of desire for participation.

From the study by House et al. (2002, 2004) that built on the seminal work of Hofstede (1994) on cultures in organisations, we know that among the ten countries the Dutch culture has extremely low scores on two cultural dimension: power distance and one of the two collectivism dimensions. Power distance is broadly defined as the extent to which a society accepts and endorses authority, power differences, and status privileges. The low power distance within the Dutch society is promotive of its egalitarian consensus inter-relationships. There is emphasis on equality of roles, equivalence, solidarity and solving problems by negotiating. We therefore can expect that the school administrators put a lot of energy in ensuring teachers' co-operation in changes and thus want teachers to be involved in decisions. This is confirmed by the principal data except for the Human Relations Index.

The Dutch teachers, however, see principal support for teacher involvement as relatively low. Thus the low power distance in the Dutch culture is more reflected in the principals' than in the teachers' perceptions. The more powerful ones (principals) seem to be aware of their need to have their power legitimized, whereas the relatively powerless (teachers) do not recognize their principals' efforts. It is interesting that a high power distance is defined as the degree in which the powerless accept the power of the powerful people. In this light the low teacher estimate of principal support is the more surprising. It seems very reasonable that principals do not communicate their willingness to have teachers participate clearly enough.

Because of the low power distance in the Netherlands one could expect that both principals and teachers would favour teacher involvement in decision making in all domains. In this light the relatively low scores in the Netherlands for all four items of the Human Relations Index are surprising. These low scores even caused a change from the hypothesized order of indices with the Administrative and Coordination Index being higher than Human Relations. Generally, the higher

the scores on an index, the more teachers would be involved in that domain and the more principals and teachers share responsibility. In the Netherlands, teachers and principals are less ready to share responsibility in the domain of human relationships than in other countries. For this domain both Dutch principals and teachers apparently accept that this is primarily the domain relegated to the school administrator.

Two points may help explain the relatively strong emphasis Dutch teachers place on their desire for participation in the Classroom Learning and Evaluation domains. First, from our previous study (Wubbels and Vonk, 2004) we know, that in the Netherlands, much more than in other countries, educational changes concerned classroom practices. These changes had considerable impact on teachers' work lives and most teachers felt rather positive about these changes. This makes it understandable that teachers want to be involved in decisions on matters that influence their classroom practices as indicated in the Classroom Learning and Evaluation Indices. Furthermore, a cultural characteristic might be important. The second collectivism dimension of House et al. (2004) reflects the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations or families. The low Dutch score on this dimension implies that the Dutch society is rather individualistic. Classroom Learning and Evaluation are pre-eminently the domains where teachers can have their individual preferences.

Finally we want to draw attention to our earlier result that showed that Dutch teachers did not feel very positive about changes that are required outside their classrooms (Wubbels & Vonk 2004). The present results show a low wish of teachers to be involved. The negative feelings of teachers about such changes may have reduced their eagerness to be involved in policy making on the issues outside the classroom. An additional factor to explain their low motivation for involvement might be that they do not expect that their participation would affect the decisions made. Finally there is the possibility that both teacher involvement scores could have been depressed by the inclusion of part-time teachers with little time for extracurricular activities.

CONCLUSION

Dutch principals overestimate teacher preference for responsibility in school administrative issues. However, teachers underestimate principal preference for teacher participation. This mutual misunderstanding is similar to other countries. Some cultural values might help explain these effects, but further research on this issue is needed. In any case it is important to encourage teachers and principals to communicate with each other about their perceptions of each other.

In conclusion we want to return to some of the developments mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. In the second section we described that school boards are the responsible authorities in the Netherlands and that principals are "only" representatives of these boards. It is remarkable that in the comments of principals

as well as teachers we didn't find any reference to these boards. Some indications, however were mentioned of the limited space to manoeuvre which principals might have because of government regulations. This is a signal that the government is seen as a more important stakeholder for Dutch education than the school boards. We also mentioned in the second section that a development toward more responsibility for schools has been set in place. The comments in the questionnaire suggest that teachers as well as principals seem to be more aware of limits set to their decision making space than of the freedom. The rather large distance between teacher and principal views found in the Netherlands indicates that the trend to appoint administrators rather far away from teaching practice may create a divide between these two groups. Principals should be aware of the limited time part-time teachers have for involvement in decision-making.

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