

# The impacts of human involvement on performance : *the educational institutions*

SANDRINE FOURNIER  
Université de Bordeaux

LARBI HASROURI  
IUT d'Orléans

## Résumé :

L'enjeu de cette recherche est d'évaluer à partir d'une recherche quantitative le niveau d'implication des enseignants en place à travers la mesure de la performance attendue dans les établissements scolaires du secondaire par les parties prenantes. L'objectif de notre étude réside dans la détermination des effets de l'implication humaine sur la performance humaine et les conséquences sur le système éducatif français eu égard à la publication des résultats annuels par la DEPP (Direction de l'Évaluation, de la Prospective et de la Performance). Nous aborderons les notions d'implication, de mesure de la performance publique, d'indicateurs de performance illustrés par un exemple, pour ensuite identifier les relations possibles.

## Mots clefs :

Implication, Indicateurs, Mesure, Performance, Etablissements éducatifs, Enseignants.

**Abstract :**

This article aims at assessing the level of teachers' involvement at work through the expected school performance measurement by the stakeholders thanks to a quantitative survey. The main objective of our study tries to focus on the impact of human involvement at work on the performance regarding the annual results published by the Direction of Evaluation, Performance and Prospective (DEPP). We will mobilize the concept of involvement and the problematic of the education performance measurement with indicators through examples and then we will try to identify possible relations between the two concepts.

**Key words :**

Involvement, Indicators, Measurement, Performance, School, Teachers.

## INTRODUCTION

All the worldwide assessment organizations are concerned about school performance in general and particularly the measurement through indicators.

The stakes are very important with an increasing public spending in the security, justice and education sectors. This research aims to study the way to maintain the French level of education with steady means particularly the current human resource? Or, how to stabilize or to make progress the schools performance with steady means?

We identify three goal of the study. First, we will identify the various levels of involvement of teachers within public schools, then we will evaluate the relations and impacts between human involvement and the public organizations performance as quality factor. Eventually, we will develop our work on the expected level of education performance by the stakeholders (parents-citizens, pupils and state). We situate our work in the framework of Liou and Nylan (1994) who studied the emotional and calculated involvement in the public sector which confirmed the multidimensional nature of involvement based on a sample of public agents.

In the French schools context, teachers can be considered as civil servants with a secure job for their whole work lifetime, which has not always been the case or is no longer the case for multiple countries such as USA, Australia, Poland, and even the United Kingdom with a recent public administration policy.

In 2016, the educational performance is controversial and the French results schools in general are still alarming at an international scale. The recent results disclosed by the OECD 's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) concerning 65 countries show a global fall of the national schools results for the 15 year aged pupils. The Asian countries dominate the top ranking: Singapore at the 1st rank, Hong Kong at the 2nd and South Korea at the 3rd. The best ranking for Europe is Finland with the 6th place and France is at the 23rd rank . The United States are at the 28th rank and the first African country is Tunisia, classified a 64th. Moreover, the study confirms a significant correlation between economic growth and population competences measured by the social development of a country (although a insignificant part of some rich countries' populations has insufficient basic competences at the end of the schooling). Hence, Many French students struggle when entering the workforce with their lack of basic skills increases.

As Jacob and al. (2001) demonstrated "the citizens demand a higher quality of services and they want their expectations to be more taken into account and at last more transparency in the public administration; on the other hand the politics, the public managers and agents are subjected to pressure

from a competitive economy that encourage a management based on results (MBR)”. These reports lead us to our research question: does the teachers’ involvement affect the schools performance?

Two underlying questionings seem to emerge: the first one on different levels of involvement and its effects and the second one on the link between the human performance and the schools performance.

Firstly, we will present the contributions of previous works regarding to our themes; secondly, we will present both the methodology and our results which will be discussed and put in perspective as part of the expected performance.

### **1. Issue of teachers’ involvement in the secondary schools in France**

The process of involvement is defined as the emotional and physical attachment of an individual towards his/her task and his/her organization.

This attachment would mean a strong belief of individual in organization goals and values which would lead to a will to make significant efforts in favor his/her organization and a strong desire to be remaining as a fully-fledged member (Mowday and al., 1982). The involvement appears as a polymorphic concept and admits several forms; From the individual one (the involvement by valorization of performance or the involvement in the career or the involvement at work or at a particular job or the involvement in the profession or the involvement with the task), to the mixed forms (the organizational involvement) including the collective one (the cohesion involvement, the involvement within a union, the involvement in the organization culture and the strategic involvement).

Nowadays, a skilled teacher can be effective in class without any other form of involvement within the school. We underling a few characteristics (Fournier, 2015) such as:

- He doesn’t work in team or he’s not part of any network in the school,
- He doesn’t take part in the collective school project or the school life in general,
- He is willing to stay well away from the union and profession activities,
- He is very little committed in the social, cultural, political and economic life, at both local regional or national level.

According to these four criteria, each teacher has a personal and individual profile. Between those who are very involved and those who keep their distance from everything, we can find some contrasting

practices. Thus, one can collaborate in team without worrying about the educational policy or he/she can work alone and be disengaged from all local and collective work. There is no standard profile of involved teacher, only some drawn trends shaped by each one feels its involvement in the job and /or in the organization (Fournier, 2015).

In education science, Duchesne and Savoy-Zajac (2005) demonstrated that the teachers' involvement could obey to private factors such as enjoying to work with children, having colleagues and direction recognition. The signs of recognitions of accomplished work and the possibility to update their knowledge seem to encourage them to be engaged at work.

Finally, for 87 % of the secondary school teachers actually live and practice their job as a passion in which they can steadily learn in a school context with resources. They maintain an involved relation with their own practice, and they appear proud to practice their job with a real intention to keep going for most of them.

## **2. The expected effects of the involvement on the performance at work**

The individual acceptance to the organization's values or project is necessary Thevenet (1992); it could lead to an investment at work and a will to act. Giving varied tasks to employees or encouraging them to use multiple competencies or to granting them more autonomy or giving them sensemaking on their own tasks -as efficient- may influence their attitudes and behaviors at work (Manville, 2014). The emotional form (Allen and Meyer, 1984) which seems the most strongly predictive in terms of beneficial behaviors for the organizations like the performance at work or loyalty (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and al., 2002 ; Morrow, 2001).

Some authors (Chasserio and Legault, 2005, p. 136 ; Charles-Pauvers and al., 2006) underline that “a means to reward some employees could be simple actions and dispositions for those who proved their availability within the organization”. The choice to satisfy the employee's expectations can also be a positive signal for expected involvement (Pfeffer and Veiga, 1999). Ferris and al. (1999) identified various practices of Human Resources Management (H.R.M) that appear crucial as a competitive advantage and show a positive relation between the strategic management of human and the performance impact (Delery and Doty, 1996 ; Huselid, 1995 ; Mac Duffie, 1995 ; Pfeffer and Veiga, 1999). Ulrich (1997) confirmed that a human resources manager could play a role as an agent of change, or as a strategic partner in the modernization operations in the public administration. This exchanges quality may also shape the involvement and the satisfaction at work.

### **3. The performance in the public sector**

Performance is at the center of the Organic Finance Act (LOLF) set up in 2001 in France, considered as a “historical reform” (Joxe, 2001) or a “spate of performance” (Arthuis, 2005). According to section 51-5 of the Act, an annual performance is expected for each program and more precisely “the presentation of the actions regarding the costs, the targets, the forecasts and the results including for the coming year. They all have to be measured through accurate indicators whose choice is relevant”.

Concepts of results and performance has been emerging in public administrations (Emery and Giaque, 2005; Carassus and al., 2012; Mazouz and al., 2012) for decades. However, these concepts have evolved due to administrative reforms (Bartoli and Chomienne, 2007; Chomienne, 2001; Guenoun, 2009) in France. According to Pesqueux (2010), public management targets both effectiveness and efficiency and eventually performance.

Gibert (2008) defines a performant organization through an approach focused on efficiency that means to achieve the objectives with the least means possible. Minimal use of resources and means will allow to improve the organization efficiency and then its performance.

The definition suggested by the French budget minister is the following: “it consists in the capacity to reach beforehand set objectives, expressed in terms of socio-economic effectiveness, of service quality or of efficiency of management. The public performance can thus be integrated as the ability of public organizations to implement the public policies and the accountable for their results (Waintrop and Chol, 2003).

By December 2012, the French government has started an approach of evaluation in the whole public policies . In March 2015, on the 59 evaluations 58 were completed. Two of them are in link with our problematic. The first one is on the evaluation of management of teaching hours regarding to the supply of formations . The second one is on the development and the optimization of financial and human resources . This implementation of this approach of evaluation confirms the interest of the State for an approach of control of the public performance in the secondary schools.

### **4. Performance indicators specificity of the education system**

Rieder and Farago (2000) and Proeller (2007) noted that the performance of public services are mainly measured through quantitative indicators and they are focused on the level of products which reveals a very limited vision of the very complex nature of the performance of public organizations. The French secondary system of education has been impacted for several years by multiple reforms, which aim at improving the effectiveness and efficiency (Dorbaire and Pupion, 2001; Maroy, 2006).

The concept of performance, central in the LOLF, seems important for the national education executives for their controlling missions but such values –performance, efficiency- need an acceptance from teachers as much as strategies and educational orientations. The reform of the State targeted by the LOLF is to carry out a new culture in particular by the evaluation of human resources. The evolution of various measurements and indicators as Chappoz and Pupion (2013) explain suggests to reach a result and supposes that any public action can only be appreciated regarding to a conformity with the objectives.

The main indicators of measurement of school performance have evolved. At the beginning in 1991, there were only three:

- The pass rate in the national exam,
- The access rate from the first and second year to the national exam and to higher education (higher level),
- The proportion of graduates among the students leaving high school.

During the late nineties, the indicator evolved to more relevance affording analyses such as:

- The future of the pupils exiting high schools,
- Indicators tended to take into account parameters such as sex, socio-professional group, repeating rate, school origins,
- Indicators of resources and means (average schedules, numbers, teachers),
- Operating indicators and environment indicators (ratio of hours of effective teaching per pupil, suggested supply of formation, services of schooling life, contacts with the economic world).

Norman (2007) underlined that the evaluation of performance through the publication of the indicators of performance generates dysfunctions and can lead to motivation problems. The main issue is the role played by the staff members and their professionalism which are not fully taken into account, which could lead in the long term an identity crisis (Horton, 2006). No systems of performance measurement is perfect (Corbel, 2015). But, such a system must at least allow comparisons between institutions. On the top of that, if it is also designed to help their internal management, they must be adapted to the different information needs of the specific stakeholders in these organizations.

#### 4.1. Example of analysis of schools performance

We observed the indicators of results provided by the regional education authority of Bordeaux and Poitiers in 2014 and table n°1 shows the numbers of the schools according to the kind of politics (Selective, Powerful or Guide). In conclusion of our results, the schools are grouped in five categories:

- The performant school gets higher results than those expected by the Ministry if we focus on the pass rate and the access rate from the first and second year to the national exam (or from the first year to the national exam in vocational schools),
- The guide school that takes the high-school pupils until the national exam with a higher pass rate than the one expected by the Ministry,
- The selective school where the pupils access rate to the examination is clearly lower than the expected one by the Ministry but when the pass rate in the national exam is not significantly different from the expected one,
- The school “below the expectations” when the two indicators (pass rate and access rate to the national exam) are lower than the forecasts,
- The Neutral school which is the case for the majority of high schools whose indicators are close to the expected values.

**Table 1:** Distribution of results 2014 for New Aquitaine region

Establishment Regional education authority	Total	Neutral	In on this side expected	Selective	<b>Powerful</b>	Guide
GS* Bordeaux	105	55	31	10	<b>9</b>	0
VS** Poitiers	53	28	15	6	<b>0</b>	4
percentage	158	52.5 %	29.11 %	10.12%	<b>5,69%</b>	2.53%
VS** Bordeaux	106	40	24	16	<b>19</b>	7
GS Poitiers	49	15	21	1	<b>9</b>	3
percentage	155	35,5%	29,03%	10.96%	<b>18,06%</b>	6,45%

\*General schools \*\* Vocational schools



We can notice that only 18, 06 % of educational schools are classified as powerful in the Region Authority of Bordeaux-Poitiers. At a local scale, the results are a sign of the introduction of a confidence in the schools from the families and the media. We will talk about good or bad schools according to the displayed and announced results. Most families are proud to send their child to a considered school, that is to say where the results are good or excellent. The media “lobbying” shapes significantly this “excellence race”. This steady research “of more”, of the perpetual progression, as in the economy and financial world, consumerism has become crucial in the educational world (Fournier, 2015). The “race” for results can then be an answer to demand, or can be anyway a pressure leading the actors of the education system to take this growing need into account for accountability. The performance expectations through the annual publication of the results to the national examinations could call the equity of public education system into question.

### **5. The stakeholders’ expectations**

Since 2006, all the actors of the education system have to define their objectives with indicators of results in harmony with those fixed by the national Authority. For most of them performance means a concept of surpassing and the ‘performant’ school will go beyond the others in terms of results.

The Ministry of Education states every year “the indicators of results of high schools published do not target to constitute a “ranking” but emphasize for both pedagogical teams and parents or pupils “an image of a complex and relative reality of the results of school”. The goal is to emphasize the own action of schools as much as possible for the teaching structure of each school in order to compare it strictly with equivalent structures. The number of pupils, the variety of sectors, the disciplines supplied, and the social geography constitute factors that need to be analyzed and they provide high schools’ public executives and teachers elements of reflection to help them to improve the effectiveness of their actions.

Moreover, the school context tends towards a competing outlook, accordingly to the surrounding liberalism and individualism. The public agents in frontline are supposed to pursue new goals increasingly centered on performance, even their classical expectations (legality, equality, fairness) are still present leading to paradoxal injunctions (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004 ; Emery and Giauque, 2005).

During the last two decades, we saw in both managerial practices and research growing recommendations and requirements in favor of a more collective practice of work and performance (Defelix and al., 2014).

This paper continue now by describing the empirical results.

## 6. Methodology of research and empirical results

This section aims at evaluating the relevance and the intensity level of the effects of the human involvement on the educative performance school.

### 6.1. Protocol of collection data and data processing

We adopted a hypothetical-deductive approach, by a quantitative research undertaken with more than 7000 emails with a return of 80 usable answers. Our questionnaire was composed of items based on the Likert type scale numbered from 1 = strongly disagree 7 = very strongly agree. We associated the results with a longitudinal active observation in a school during two school years. This database contains teachers with an average age of 42 years old. They teach for 25 % of them in rural area, for 65 % in urban area and finally for 10 % in ZEP (Priority education area). The sample is composed 60 % of men with 40 years old in average and a 15 year average seniority, and 40 % of women with 38 years old in average of and a 10 year average seniority. All the collected quantitative data were treated by a statistical software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Firstly we started to clean the database after the first collection by a factorial analysis and the calculation of the Cronbach alpha of each scale dimension. We obtained purified scales. We only kept the variables whose significance is higher than 0.7 in order to obtain valid and reliable results on an empirical plan.

Concerning the assessment of the concept of multiple involvement, we retained a total of 41 items after purification and for the assessment of the concept of multiple performance, we retained 19 items after purification. We present all the items in appendix 1.

We evaluated the variables of psychological, individual, collective, professional and organizational involvement of the teachers within educational schools with our significant variables. All the variables are collective environment and performance, the effect of individual teachers' performance on the pupils, the monitoring of the results by the teachers, the school rhythm as activators of performance and finally the effects of stress on the individual performance and long-term performance.

We secondly exploited the main results of our quantitative analysis by a univariate and bivariate analysis of the collected data. The bivariate processing aims at highlighting the possible relations existing between two variables simultaneously analyzed. Concerning our scales of measurement, we made the choice to use the indicators of correlations from the Spearman test ( $\rho$ ) to study the correlation between the variables.

## 6.2. Results

Our investigation shows that work takes up an important place in the teachers' life through an interactive and multiple involvement. We notice that this involvement matters in an individual level and in collective level as well. We confirm the previous Neveu and Thevenet's works (2002) which showed that involved staff is more productive at work and has a less propensity to be voluntarily absent. However, we note the negative effects of fatigue and stress on the productivity and absenteeism.

Emotionally involved teachers appear as a capital of "human resources" for National education Authority and particularly for the local structure where they work. Their multiple involvement will intensify the performance of the pupils, the colleagues' effort (possible synergy of the pedagogical teamwork) and also the perception they could shape the school performance. This last point is very important because we can identify a link between involvement and performance. In addition to the fluctuation of involvement according to the working organization, we can notice that the attention teachers may pay to the examinations success is related to their involvement. The energy they may deploy and the teachers' will to give more of their time are positively correlated with the paid attention to the performance of their classes and the school.

Thus, performance at work would be a central element of self-esteem and involvement would be viewed as the result of the individual evaluation of the balance between one's individual performance and the necessary capacities (Vroom, 1964; Aronson and Carlsmith, 1962). Nijhof and al.'s Work (1998) specifies for this purpose that involved staff generally has a better quality of work and accepts changes more easily. They also demonstrate that this involvement improves communication within the organization. Walumbwa and al. (2008) reveals that involved people are likely to work more and to be more successful than those with a weak involvement and this attitude is a better support for productive effects at work creating value.

During our study, we focused on concepts of multiple involvement. Regarding to performance, we were interested in the variables in relation to performance (collective environment, teachers' stress and performance and effect on the pupils).

Our results show a positive correlation of the involvement on performance. Favorable working conditions positively impact the individual performance. The monitoring of classes, a good atmosphere of work and an active teaching collaboration increase the involvement at work with effects on performance. Working with clear and definite objectives creates a collective environment in favor of individual work in a group which strongly shapes both the individual and collective performance

thanks to the sensemaking of teachers' action. Our results support that the human involvement has a significant impact on performance. We also support that any Human Resources Management's practices from the principal as a support for attitudes and behaviors are favorable to the involvement at work within the school.

## **7. Discussion**

We confirm as Rhoades and al. (2001) the need to pay special attention to human resources in place in order to act on the level of performance. Any organization centered on their employees and their values according to a mechanism of social and reciprocity exchange tend to develop an emotional attachment on it (Rhoades and al., 2001). Teaching staff strongly identifies with his work which has a particular meaning for him. He develops a strong attachment with his profession and then openly expresses this attachment by the attitude and the actions he may adopt. Among the most favorable factors of professional involvement, we can find the sensemaking of the mission, the associated rewards in relation with the pupils, the quality of the relations with colleagues. The person is identifying with both her organization and her profession. These forms of professional commitment exceed the simple involvement at work due to the intensity of the suggested personal investment and by the significance that they give to the teachers' life at work. Appropriate working conditions in schools facilitate the involvement on multiple levels, more particularly the psychological and behavioral involvement of the teachers. They also convey the possible pupils' commitment for respect at schools (Fournier, 2014). The headmaster will have to take into account these elements to develop as much as possible the individual and collective skills of their staff. The more the headmasters will give welfare working condition to the teachers -by taking into account the time rhythm, their personal needs-, the more they will be involved and powerful within the school.

Pesqueux (2010) specifies that the New Public Management plans have targeted an improvement of the public performance thanks to five axes: strategic planning (strategic vision), participative management, and quality management, the introduction of new information and communication technologies and the management control tools.

## CONCLUSION

Regarding our problematic on the effect of the teachers' involvement on schools performance, we underline the direct impact of the multiple involvement on schools performance. However, we can notice an existing gap between global schools performance such as it is measured through the national indicators of performance –disclosed par the National Authority- and those perceived by the teachers. We want to underline that the teachers' practices do not integrate or very little the different concepts of the performance: objectives, indicators and management. All these issues seem far from their daily concerns, but, thanks to the quality of their work, most of the pupils succeed according to those concepts. The genuine question is how to impulse new concepts of management which could impact social performance (to improve the communication between services and the working conditions, the people satisfaction, etc.) as much as the organizational and external performance through sensemaking. The teachers constitute an interesting population to study particularly through their involvement on the way they perceive the performance. Indeed, their high level of autonomy leading to a very weak control on their work gives a high potential variability to their level of performance compared to employees with basic or elementary tasks in the organization –such as administrative employees-. Moreover, this study opens a new prospect by analyzing the effect of involvement as an intermediate variable making possible to develop the organizational and values' change, possibly based on performance. Crucial elements of involvement and performance of staff in a school go by a communication which needs to be at the same time reciprocal, open, ascending and downward. The sensemaking is another extremely important factor regarding individual performance. What is at stake is the possibility for teachers to become aware and to understand their role in the framework of their organization and in a larger framework the objectives which are assigned of their organization. A good understanding of the whole organizational operating, their roles and their tasks, and above all the capacity to link the personal role and the organizational objectives constitute elements strongly correlated with the sensemaking of individual performance. We notice that the actors feel their performance all the more positive as they appear motivated by their work and they develop even pleasure to carry it out. In terms of performance, the fact of working for “public interest” and for “collective well-being” is also a significant factor in favor of a positive feeling in terms of organizational and collective performance. Recently, the French Ministry of Education has declared to pay special attention to the quality of human resources in order to ensure a successful future for young people. However, the concept of performance as a common vocabulary for state staff of education needs to be clarified and integrated. If we focus on efficiency as the main concern, the high state staff of education have to find out -material, human and economic- solutions and perhaps managerial ones to curb the fall of the education system performance in France. We think that performance requires a special attention especially in the post-NPM era. Numerous questions remain asked and amongst them



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one seems interesting: Do we do have to evolve towards an entrepreneurial approach to satisfy the parents and pupils expectations? Are consumerism and supply and demand likely to be applied or should we –education staff- work for all?

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#### **Appendix 1: Units of direction and extract of items of the scales selected**



Scales selected	Items
<u>psychological involvement</u> : Lodalh 1965, Lodalh et Kejner 1965, Kanungo 1982 translate byNeveu 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 items are preserved concerning the psychological identification of the teachers : the psychological involvement,</li> <li>- 4 items are preserved on the emotional place of work in the life of the teachers concerning the attachment at work.</li> </ul>
<u>Emotional, normative and calculated involvement of</u> Allen et Meyer (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5items are preserved for the emotional involvement at the trade,</li> <li>- 3 items are preserved items for the emotional involvement at the organization,</li> <li>- 2 items are preserved items for the normative involvement,</li> <li>- 2 items are preserved items for the calculated involvement which informs on the attachment with the establishment,</li> <li>- 2 items are preserved for the calculated involvement which informs on the attachment with the teacher's occupation.</li> </ul>
<u>Professional involvement</u> Goodell (1969)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 items are preserved items for satisfaction as for the conditions related to management,</li> <li>- 2 items are preserved items for time devoted to work,</li> <li>- 2 items are preserved items for follow-up of the pupils,</li> <li>- 2 items are preserved items for additional working time devoted to the pupils in the establishment.</li> </ul>
<u>Organizational involvement</u> Goodell (1969)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8 items are preserved for organizational involvement inside the establishment.</li> </ul>
<u>Collective performance</u> Borman, Buck and al. (2001), Coleman, Borman (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 items are preserved for environment at work (two concerning collective environment, two concerning the organization effect of the establishment on the collective).</li> </ul>
<u>Individual Performance</u> Williams et Anderson (1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 items are preserved for the monitoring of the results by the teachers.</li> <li>- 3 items are preserved for the teachers' performance of the effects on the pupils.</li> </ul>
<u>Stress and Performance</u> Williams et Anderson (1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 items are preserved for the effects of the rhythm on the performance,</li> <li>- 3 items are preserved for the effects of the stress on the long-term performance,</li> <li>- 3 items are preserved for the effects of the stress on the individual performance.</li> </ul>