Faculty Trust and School Characteristics
An Exploration across Secondary Schools in Flanders

Intro
• Purpose
  ➢ Does faculty trust occur across secondary schools in Flanders?
  ➢ Exploring faculty trust dimensions
    (students, parents, colleagues and the principal)
  ➢ Relating structural and compositional school characteristics to faculty trust

Trust in Schools
• Trust is a complex and multidimensional concept:
  General willingness to be vulnerable + the five facets of trust
  (Reliability – Benevolence – Competence – Honesty – Openness)
• Two research lines
  ➢ Bryk & Schneider: ‘Relational Trust Perspective’
  ➢ Hoy & colleagues: ‘Teachers’ collective perceptions of trust in the school context’

Methodology
• Data
  ➢ Flemish Educational Assessment 2004-2005
  ➢ 80 schools with > 5 teachers responding (cf. critical mass for aggregation)
  ➢ 2,091 teachers & 11,872 students (third and/or fifth grade)
• Research design
  ➢ 29 items derived from the trust scales of Hoy & Tschannen-Moran (1999)
  ➢ Translated and transformed to measure individual attitudes on trust
  ➢ Factor analysis on the individual trust items gives four trust dimensions

Results

Regression Analyses between Faculty Trust Dimensions and School Characteristics
Table 1: Correlation matrices between faculty trust and school characteristics

Trust in Schools
• Teachers in a particular school = similar role & same school context
  ➢ Social information processes → collective trust
• A shared level of trust among teachers within the same school
  ➢ A staff’s trust culture
• Four dimensions of FT related to diverse referent groups
  ➢ FT in students, parents, colleagues and the principal
  ➢ FT in students and parents forming a unitary concept: ‘FT in clients’
• Structural & compositional school features related to trust
  ➢ School sector – Socioeconomic context – Ethnic context – Gender context

Discussion & Conclusion
• Individual teachers’ trust
  ➢ Teachers discern trust in students, parents, colleagues and their principal
  ➢ Teachers from the same school = a shared level of trust on each trust dimension
  ➢ Faculty trust exists in Flanders’ secondary schools
  ➢ Faculty trust is composed of four dimensions
  ➢ ‘Faculty trust in clients’: probably not a unitary construct
• Structural and compositional school characteristics
  ➢ Do explain FT in students, parents and colleagues
  ➢ ‘FT in the principal’: more attention needed on aspects of the principal’s behaviour and character
• Private (catholic) schools show more ‘FT in colleagues’
  ➢ Social capital theory from Coleman & Hoffer
• An all determining negative effect from a low socioeconomic student body on FT in students, parents and colleagues
• Role of the students’ study culture and the staff’s academic culture
• Influence of the students’ ethnic composition:
  ➢ FT in students: explained by SES composition
  ➢ FT in parents: negative effect
  ➢ FT in colleagues: positive effect
    ➢ Mutuality leading to trust
    ➢ Category-based trust
• The importance of school context when analyzing teacher trust
• Raising the staff’s awareness of their attitudinal trends
• Further research on teachers’ trust
  ➢ Individual and collective trust as both an input and process variable

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