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School Registration and School Improvement: Rasch Measurement of School Administrators' Beliefs

Harm (Pete) Witten

Title Page

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A proposal submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Faculty of Education and Arts at Edith Cowan University

Harm (Pete) Witten BA, MEd
Student ID 10171363

Principal Supervisor: Professor Russell F. Waugh
Associate Supervisor: A/Professor Jan Gray

Background Information

- *New School Education Act 1999*
- *Primary/Secondary/Tertiary Education*
- *Sector Schools in Western Australia*
- *Department of Education Services*
- *Process of School Registration*

12 Aspects of School Registration and School Improvement

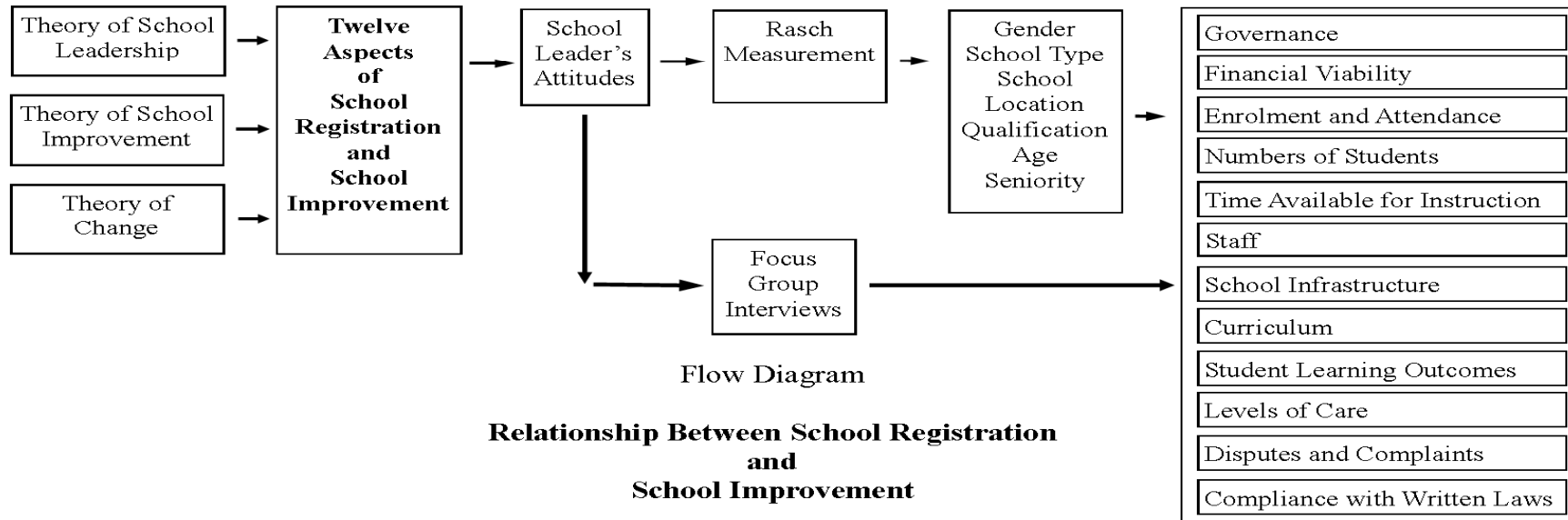
Governance
Financial Viability
Enrolment and Attendance
Number of Students
Time Available for Instruction
Staff
School Infrastructure
Curriculum
Student Learning Outcomes
Levels of Care
Management of Disputes and Complaints
School Compliance with Written Laws

Main Aim & Research Questions

Does school registration lead to school improvement?

1. Can a linear unidimensional scale be constructed using a Rasch Measurement Model to measure the attitudes of School Administrators concerning 12 aspects of school registration in relations to the standard of education for students enrolled in non-government schools.
2. What school improvements are considered to be very easy or moderately easy, very hard or moderately hard due to the formal school registration process?
3. What is the relationship between the attitudes of school leaders regarding the school improvements and their personal circumstances?

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Study Questionnaire

Does school registration lead to school improvement?

Criteria 1: School Governance

	no improvement, due to school registration	improvement, but not due to the school registration	some improvement, due to school registration	significant improvement, due to school registration
The efficiency of School Council meetings				
What I expected would happen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What actually happened	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The School Council's appointment and review of management staff				
What I expected would happen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What actually happened	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The School Council's community and public relations				
What I expected would happen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What actually happened	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The expertise and skills of School Council members				
What I expected would happen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What actually happened	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The School Councils understanding of the distinction between governance and management				
What I expected would happen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What actually happened	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide any additional comments on School Governance and School Registration.

Data Collection

- Study data collected between 19th March 2011 and the 30th November 2011
- Total sample size was 150 non-government member school of the Association of Independent Schools in Western Australia.
- 110 school leaders, approx. 72% of the independent schools, completed a questionnaire of administrators' beliefs.
- Of the 110 participants, 65 (approx. 59%) completed all twelve parts of the questionnaire.
- Of the 65 completed questionnaires, 60 had all 120 questions completed.

Rasch-Created Linear Scale

Table 5.6 A Rasch-Created Linear Scale of School Administrators Beliefs That Actual School Improvements Were Due to Formal School Registration

Item:	Very Easy
116 The school's development of policy to comply with legal requirements was improved	-3.84
120 The school's commitment to legal compliance was improved	-3.12
98 The schools' emergency-crisis response policy and procedures was improved	-3.47
42 The school's compliance to the legal requirements was improved	-3.46
Item	Very Hard
108 Parental satisfaction with the school's disputes and complaints was improved	+2.94
14 The expertise and qualifications of the school's financial management staff was improved	+3.00
96 The management of student behavior at school improved	+3.02
50 A reduction in the number of disruptions at school was improved	+3.33
102 A reduction in the complaints registered at school improved	+4.02

Person-Item Threshold Distribution

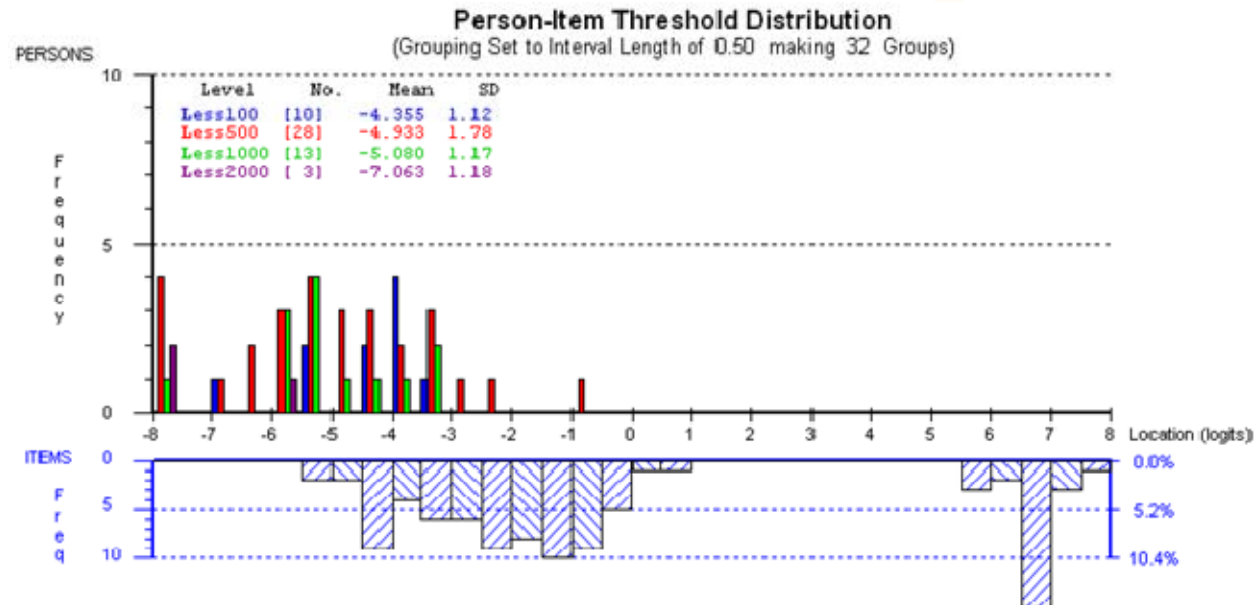


Figure 5.4 Target Graph by School Size of School Administrators Beliefs That Actual School Improvements Were Due to Formal School Registration

Figure 5.4 shows that administrators at larger schools have lower measures than those at smaller schools and this is statistically significant ($F=2.46$, $df=3,50$, $p=0.0007$). This is as expected since School Leaders at larger schools have greater access to resources required to meet the criteria of formal school registration.

Significance/Limitations of this study

Significance

1. The re-registration of non-government schools in Western Australia is new and little information about its acceptance in the school communities of Western Australia is available.
2. An 'off-shoot' from the research is the development of a linear measure relating to the 12 aspects of school registration which has not been created before and which may help other researchers in other educational districts.

Limitations

1. The study is restricted to school leaders in schools that are members of the Association of Independent Schools in Western Australia.
2. The study suggests that school leaders are arguably the key decision-makers in schools, excluding the attitudes of several educational stakeholders, such as classroom teachers, students and parents or guardians.

Thank You!