SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND SCHOOL EVALUATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BULGARIAN AND JAPANESE EXPERIENCE

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Abstract: The paper presents a comparative analysis of Bulgarian and Japanese experience in the fields of school management and school evaluation. Main focus of the research are the principles, tools and methods for school self-evaluation in Japan. The paper reveals the similarities and the differences between school education system, school management and school evaluation in Bulgaria and Japan in an attempt to identify possible applications of a foreign good practice under Bulgarian conditions.

Key words: school management, school evaluation, Bulgaria, Japan

Education is considered to be the most universal path to social inclusion and social integration. It is viewed as the mechanism which gives each person opportunities for gaining vital knowledge and skills for becoming part of the society and for professional and social adaptation. Access to education, despite the social status, race, ethnic origin, sex, or religion background is considered a major acquisition of modern societies around the globe and a criterion for social development.

Each country develops its own way of providing access to education through different educational systems, consistent with national tradition, cultural background and socio-economic conditions. Compulsory education varies in terms of duration, content, structure and teaching approaches. Educational systems and school organization and management depend in general...
upon social structure, economic situation, state policy, and even political and religious views. Still, each country strives to provide a quality education for the new generation in order to provide its own development and stability, as well as to ensure the quality of life for its citizens. These efforts become even more important in a situation of economic disequilibrium, rapid changes in different social areas, development of new technologies and globalization. Education as a social instrument for providing young people with a quality set of knowledge, skills and attitudes is a major concern for every government and parent, as well the young persons themselves. Schools and the education they provide are becoming the focus of educational researches in terms of quality, organization, teaching approaches, methods and educational results. In times like these school management becomes a significant concern for practitioners and researchers considering the vital role school and school education play in the development and social integration of every new generation. School as a small replica of the society itself, a special type of social organization with its own rules, structure, processes and culture is widely considered to be one of the most important places each and every child interacts with. In this place the child not only acquires knowledge but also learns how to become a part of different groups and small societies. It furthermore becomes aware of social rules and regulations and is given opportunity for self-development.

Considering the importance of education and the school, as the main institution that provides it, in compliance with social needs and personal expectation, school management becomes a significant issue and a major field of research. Providing quality education is a question becoming more and more important in contemporary society and the management of educational system and the school itself are of a great concern for all authorities regardless of their political views and governance approaches. Labor market requirements and the expectation of the employers rise continually along with the value changes and social disintegration, which set enormous and almost overwhelming tasks for education and schools: to equip young persons with extensive knowledge, professional skills, proper attitude and a solid value system, to make them capable of joining both the society and the professional setting and to make them willing to contribute to the social development and stability. In a situation like this school organization and management become a major concern and a topic for scientific disputes. School evaluation as part of school management also draws a lot of attention in correspondence with different societies’ educational goals, traditions and structures. The accountability of schools for the results of education they provide and the accountability of school managers for the organization and functioning of these educational institutions are something both academic researchers and governments are trying to establish and promote. Still, the paths for reaching that goal differ significantly among countries and societies. Studying and analyzing different approaches toward school management and school evaluation gives opportunities to provide a variety of starting points toward these issues as well as to seek, adapt and implement good practices already proven to be effective in different settings after proper consideration of each nation’s social structure, traditions and specific socio-economic conditions.
The present research shows a comparative analysis between school management and school evaluation in Bulgaria and Japan. Although the focus of the research is put on school evaluation in terms of methods, approaches and perspectives, educational and school management is a mandatory element which provides a proper understanding of school evaluation systems in both countries. The main object of the research is to outline the significant elements of school evaluation and school management in both Bulgaria and Japan as well as to provide a theoretical point of view of a possible good practices’ exchange.

NEED FOR SCHOOL EVALUATION – WHY DOES BULGARIA NEED GOOD EXAMPLES?

The transformations which Bulgarian educational system has been going through for the last decade are a natural response to the needs and the requirements of the developing society. Democratization and the development of the civic society in Bulgaria inevitably provoked a lot of discussions what the school education should be in terms of curriculum, competencies and knowledge students should acquire, as well as teaching methods teachers should apply. Naturally, the need for more flexible and community-sensitive education led to the thought of transformation of school system and school management as well.

Changes undergoing within the school system naturally lead to different questions regarding the effectiveness of the school, the effective school management, the role and the place of different factors in school organization and the school environment as well. Bringing together the management approaches and the pedagogical principles, researchers and professionals within the school system and social sciences are trying to determine what a better way to run a school is in terms of school environment, school climate, teachers’ qualification, teaching approaches and so on. Inevitably the issue of school evaluation came at hand along with following questions on what this evaluation should be, what should be evaluated, who should be responsible for the evaluation.

Since 2007, a special external evaluation system for students’ academic achievement has been implemented. It is aimed at providing objective and systematic information about the level of students’ knowledge acquired through the academic year in different academic areas. This system consists of national exams for 4th and 7th grade in the following subjects: Mathematics, Bulgarian language and literature, Humans and Nature, Humans and Society (4th grade) and Mathematics, Bulgarian language and literature, Foreign language, Complex area “Society, civic education and religion” and Complex area “Natural sciences and Ecology” (7th grade). Until last year this evaluation system was also applied in 5th and 6th grade. The main outcome of the national evaluation exams is the opportunity for parents, students and teachers to see the level of knowledge and, relevantly – quality of education in different schools based on external, independent and objective evaluation.
Although this kind of evaluation surely gives important information about students’ academic achievements and about school effectiveness, it cannot be considered a provider of thorough and quality-assured information about school organization itself. Since academic achievements of students are one of the main concerns for both parents and teachers, there are a lot of other issues the school is responsible for. Considering the dynamics of the society changes and the requirements and expectations of business, the effectiveness of school should be considered in different points including social skills and competencies acquisition, professional development and education, moral values and norms of behavior setting, and others.

The Bulgarian educational system transformation since 2005 has led to a certain point of decentralization and school autonomy, giving school principals more rights in fields like budget distribution, teacher selection and recruitment, school management and cooperation with different organizations. Still until today there is no national system for school monitoring and evaluation considering specific requirements other than students’ academic achievements at national external evaluation exams. The present educational evaluation system consists of teacher evaluation regarding their competencies about the subject they teach and pedagogical competencies and evaluation of school principals especially regarding their control functions in school. The evaluation of school as an organization within the specific context of national and regional setting and the evaluation of school principal management competencies are somewhat neglected. This leads to deficiency of information about school educational environment and forces parents and students to relate to different “non-official” and subjective sources when choosing a school.

Considering the importance of school evaluation and quality assurance at school, it is important to study different effective school evaluation approaches and methods so an effective school evaluation system in Bulgaria can be created and promoted in consistency with global educational trends and national specifics of the educational system.

FRAMEWORK OF THE ANALYSIS
For the purposes of the present analysis a system of research areas with specific criteria for description is developed in order to provide a comprehensive and systematic view and understanding of both educational system and school management and school evaluation itself (see Table 1).

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<tr>
<th>Research Area</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<td>Educational system – structure and management</td>
<td>1.1. Levels of education</td>
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of education
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<th>2. School management</th>
<th>2.1. Characteristics of school organization</th>
<th>School management conditions provide information about the school organization, the everyday school life and the responsibilities of the school principal and other management staff. It gives understanding on the level of managerial freedom which is delegated to the school principal as well as ensuring a proper base for analysis of school evaluation.</th>
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<td>2.2. Roles and responsibilities of school management staff</td>
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<td>3. School evaluation</td>
<td>3.1. Laws and regulations</td>
<td>The availability of national and regional laws and regulation on school evaluation shows the level of authority commitment to policy insurance of quality evaluation and school accountability. The whole system of school evaluation – approaches, processes and methods – gives understanding on the evaluation goals and the main use of evaluation results.</td>
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Although such analysis cannot be made in a really deep and comprehensive way in a short research paper, it can give a good starting point for future considerations of the analysis of school evaluation practices and possible adaptation and implementation of effective evaluation approaches within the undergoing changes in Bulgarian educational system.

**AREA 1 – EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM – STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Criterion 1.1. Levels of education**

In Bulgaria school education comprises two main levels – elementary and secondary level. The elementary level consists of two stages – primary and junior high education. The primary education stage covers 1st till 4th grade (age 7-11). Junior high level includes 5th till 8th
grade (age 12 till 15). The secondary level consists of grades 9th till 12th (age 16 till 19). (Law for public education, Art. 22)

Levels of education in Bulgaria are to be changed soon with a new law for school education. This change is expected to eliminate one of the main discrepancies in school education in Bulgaria – the inconsistence between the age for compulsory school education set in the Constitution and the levels of education provided. As for now the compulsory age for school education is 16 years which does not correspond with the graduation of secondary school. The change will lower the elementary school level to 7th grade and will separate the secondary school level in two stages.

In Japan school education levels cover elementary and secondary education. Elementary education includes grades 1st till 6th (age 6 till 12). Secondary education is divided in lower and upper stages. Lower stage includes grades 7th till 9th (age 13 till 15) and upper secondary education includes grades 10th till 12th (age 16 till 18). Compulsory education consists of nine years compulsory schooling – from 6 years old to 15 years old (Shibuya 2010: 59)

Although there are differences in educational levels, both of them ensure mandatory junior high or lower secondary education. The duration of primary education is two years more in Japan while junior high and secondary education levels are one year longer in Bulgaria. Compulsory school education in both countries is 9 years but differs in starting years and correspondence with school level diploma acquisition. Although in Bulgaria compulsory education in fact starts at 5 years old in kindergartens and schools the organization and content of that education is somewhat different from school education. So far we can say that in Japan school education levels are more consistent with the compulsory schooling age which is a change Bulgaria has yet to implement and a consideration for school organization and content of education.

**Criterion 1.2 Types of schools**

In Bulgaria types of schools vary depending on the educational level they provide and content of education in Secondary level. There are: *Primary schools* – 1-4th grades; *Junior high schools* – 5th -8th grades; *Elementary schools* – 1st-8th grades; *Secondary schools* – 9th -12th grade; Comprehensive schools – 1st till 12th grade, *Specialized secondary schools* – 8th -12th grade – with a broadened study of one or more school subjects; *Professional secondary schools* – 8th or 9th grade till 12th grade; *Sport schools*; *Art schools*; *Special schools* – for children with special education needs or learning disabilities.

In Japan there are *Primary schools, Lower secondary schools, Upper secondary schools, Secondary schools (both lower and upper education division)*. The upper secondary schools are classified in general courses, specialized vocational courses and comprehensive courses according to their curriculum. There are technical colleges that provide both upper secondary
education and higher education for 5 years. Upper secondary courses in specialized training
colleges and some miscellaneous schools are also included in upper secondary education.

The school types in both countries naturally reflect the levels of education set in the
national educational systems. Still we can see that upper secondary education in Japan is set in
terms of exam entrance and is not compulsory while in Bulgaria the entrance in secondary
education is required based on compulsory age for school education. Nevertheless, this does not
mean that all types of secondary schools in Bulgaria are access-free. A lot of specialized schools
and professional school apply exams but still there are schools where the students can be
enrolled without any evaluation of their abilities and knowledge. This, however, does not ensure
graduation of secondary education as after the age of 16 (after completing only 9th grade)
students can quit school and are not obliged to study in the relevant school system. This would
leave them with only elementary education according to the national classification of educational
levels and make them highly maladaptive at the labor market, which in Bulgaria requires at least
secondary education for most well-paid and “good” jobs.

**Criterion 1.3 Goals and content of education**

In **Bulgaria** the goals and content of education are set in different laws. The national
goals of education are defined in the Law for public education, article 15 which states that state
education requirements determine the levels of the necessary general education and professional
training and create conditions for: 1) creating a free, moral and initiative personality, who as a
Bulgarian citizen respects the laws, the rights of others, their language, religion and culture; 2)
the satisfying the individual interests and needs and acquiring of wide general culture; 3) the
mastering of basic scientific notions and principles for integrating past experience with new
knowledge from different spheres of science and practice; 4) the choice of options for training
and professional qualification according to the capacity of the students and the school chosen by
them; 5) the development of the material, the cultural and the ecological environment of the
kindergartens, the schools and the servicing units. Along with that the **Regulations on the
Implementation of the Public Education Act** additionally states that the goals of the educational
system, which lay the fundamentals for continuous education of the citizens, include also:
mastering general fundamentals and objective law of human knowledge; mastering universal
national values, virtues and culture; development of individuality and encouragement of creative
talent; intellectual, physical and social development and healthy lifestyle; development of a free,
moral and initiative personality who as a Bulgarian citizen will respect the law, the rights of
others and their language, religion and culture.

The basic goals of general educational minimum are determined also in the Level of
Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act (Article 9). They are as follows: to
assist the physical and intellectual development of the pupil, his successful orientation,
adaptation and realization in society; to create conditions for the formation of values which relate
to his or her feeling for Bulgarian national identity, respect for other persons, sympathy and civic
responsibility; to create conditions for the development of needs, interests and aptitude for education and training as well as self-perfection throughout his or her lifetime.

According to these goals the content of education in Bulgaria is set in the National educational standards and general education minimum which determine the obligatory content of school curriculum in elementary and secondary level along with the possible variation schools can implement in school curriculum depending on the education they provide. The general educational minimum consists of 8 curriculum areas: Bulgarian language and literature; Foreign languages; Mathematics, informatics and informatics technologies; Social sciences, civic education and religion; Natural sciences and ecology; Arts; Everyday life and technologies; Physical culture and sports. Each area consists of different subjects and school hours for each subject for different grades are set in the Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act. Schools can draw their own curriculum plan but should keep it within the requirements for the school hours for each subject and can deviate only in adding additional hours in so-called elective preparation hours, the amount of which is also set in the Act for each grade. The main differences occur in Secondary school with specialized or vocational educational plan where the school can significantly reduce the general education requirements and increase the additional elective content in order to achieve the educational goal. Still, the proportions of the compulsory general education, the specialized education and the vocational education, as well as the proportions of the general educational minimum and the elective educational hours for different types of schools and levels are defined in the law and cannot be overruled by the school management staff.

State educational requirements for different study areas are set for each educational level and stage. They describe the cores of educational content, the standards in each core and the results in term of knowledge, skills and attitude the students should acquire at graduating from the educational level. Based on that, educational programs are developed on national level by the Ministry of education, youth and science. These educational programs describe in detail the content of each school subject in each grade – cores, standards, expected results, new terms, educational activities to be undertaken by students and the basic knowledge to be taught.

In Japan the aim of public education is specified in the Basic act of education as follows (Basic Act on Education in Japan): “Education shall aim for the full development of personality and strive to nurture the citizens, sound in mind and body, who are imbued with the qualities necessary for those who form a peaceful and democratic state and society (Art. 1). The objectives of education are: to foster an attitude to acquire wide-ranging knowledge and culture, and to seek the truth, cultivate a rich sensibility and sense of morality, while developing a healthy body; to develop the abilities of individuals while respecting their value; cultivate their creativity; foster a spirit of autonomy and independence; and foster an attitude to value labor while emphasizing the connections with career and practical life; to foster an attitude to value justice, responsibility, equality between men and women, mutual respect and cooperation, and actively contribute, in the public spirit, to the building and development of society; to foster an
attitude to respect life, care for nature, and contribute to the protection of the environment; to foster an attitude to respect our traditions and culture, love the country and region that nurtured them, together with respect for other countries and a desire to contribute to world peace and the development of the international community."

In addition, objectives of compulsory education are stipulated in the School education act, Art. 21 (Ojima 2006):

1. Social activities are promoted both inside and outside of school in order to nurture in students voluntary, independent, and cooperative attitudes, respect for rules and models, the ability to make sound judgments and a sense of public spiritedness that will help them to become productive members of society. 2. Activities for experiencing nature are promoted both inside and outside of school in order to nurture in students a spirit of respecting nature and life and a desire to contribute to environmental preservation. 3. Students are to be given proper guidance in the history and current situation in Japan and their hometown, in order to nurture in students, teach them to respect traditions and culture, and nurture them with an attitude of loving their country and hometown. Then, through an understanding of foreign cultures, they should be instilled with a respect of other countries and a sense of contributing to the development and peace of the global community. 4. Students are to be nurtured with a basic understanding and abilities related to the roles of the family and home, and about food, clothing, shelter, information, production, and other items necessary for daily living. 5. Students are to be nurtured with a love for reading, a proper understanding of and basic skills for using the language arts they will need in their daily lives. 6. Students are to be nurtured with basic skills to properly process and understand quantitative relations they will need in their daily lives. 7. Students are to be nurtured with basics skills for scientifically understanding and processing, through observations and experiments, natural phenomena that are part of their lives. 8. Efforts are to be made to instill in students the proper habits needed to live safe, healthy and happy lives, to build up body strength through physical activities, and to harmoniously develop their bodies and minds. 9. Students are to be nurtured with basic understanding and skills needed for music, art, literature, and other fine arts in order to brighten and enrich their lives. 10. Students are to be nurtured with basic skills and knowledge needed for their careers, an attitude of respecting work, and the ability to choose their career path that matches their own individual aptitude.

In accordance with these objectives the content of school education in Japan consists of different Courses of Study. The curriculum of each school is an ultimate responsibility of the school principals although it is usually drawn by the teachers. The curriculum design is based on principles such as: considering the Course of Study regulations and the actual conditions in the community and the school as well as keeping in consideration the developmental stages and characteristics of students’ mind and body (Yamaguchi 2010: 325-329).

As for the present there are Courses of Study in Japan as follows: for kindergarten education, for primary education, for lower secondary education, for upper secondary education, and for special-needs schools. Each Course of study describes the objectives, the content and the
teaching activities of the study or the subjects in it depending on the educational level. The study areas for primary school level include: Japanese language, Social studies, Arithmetic, Science, Life environment studies, Music, Drawing and handicraft, Homemaking, and Physical education. In addition there are school hours for Moral education, Foreign language activities, Period for integrated study, and Special activities. In lower secondary school the curriculum consists of Japanese language, Social studies, Mathematics, Science, Music, Fine arts, Health and sports, Industrial arts and Homemaking, and Foreign language. In addition there are school hours for Moral education, Period for integrated study and Extracurricular activities. In upper secondary school the content consists of different areas each one containing several subjects. The areas are: Japanese language, Geography and History, Civics, Mathematics, Science, Health and physical education, Arts, Foreign language, Homemaking, Information, and Period of integrated studies.

A comparison between objects and content of education in Bulgaria and Japan shows some differences. Even though both countries emphasize the importance of development of mind and body, value system and respect for law and culture in students, as for now in Japan the educational goals are much more directed at nourishing community feelings and spirit, along with becoming productive members of society. In Bulgaria the educational goals are facing the challenge of creating a free, moral and initiative personality within the frame of mutual understanding and respect for others’ culture, religion and morality. As a reflection of that the content of education in Japan attaches a great deal of importance to social studies and moral education, as well as integrated studies. It is also based on respecting local requirements and community participation in school activities along with the autonomy of schools to design their own curriculum (which will be discussed in details in the next research area). Bulgarian school education content is much stricter on a national level with all the state standards and study programs issued by the Ministry of education, while in Japan curriculum design is an important issue for the school principal and school staff. The goals of education on different levels and the content of education significantly influence both school management and school evaluation. In the framework of the present research we can say that while in Bulgaria educational goals and educational content are more or less determined strictly on a national level, in Japan these elements, although present in national law acts, can be influenced much more by the school and the local community.

**Criterion 1.4 Management level**

When speaking of the levels of management of the educational system it can be said that both countries have some similarities and some really striking differences which also influence school management and school evaluation.

In **Bulgaria** the main levels of educational management are:

- **National Level** – Parliament is the national law-constructing body. Council of ministers – the main government body that prepares and implements the national educational
strategies and policies. The Ministry of education, youth and science develops implements and controls the educational policy on national level. It provides the education system with different programs, rules and regulations concerning the educational process in all different educational institutions.

- **Regional level** – There are two different bodies regarding school management system at this level. The first one is The Regional Educational Inspectorate. It is a territorial based structure, subordinate to the Minister of education, and there are such inspectorates in all 28 districts of Bulgaria. They are responsible for the control of the educational institutions in their districts. The other management body is the Municipal Department of Education in each municipality. They support and control municipals’ schools and co-finance some facility maintenance, students’ enrolment and students lunch program.

In **Japan** the management of the educational system is the same in terms of levels but not in terms of responsibilities. Due to the decentralization and the need to make education a local function, the actual ruling authority regarding schools and school education is the Board of education on prefectural or municipal level.

On national level the governance bodies are similar to the ones in Bulgaria – the National Diet, the Cabinet and the prime minister along with the Ministry and Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The path for developing and enforcing law acts on national level concerning education is similar in both countries. Still, there are some differences in MEXT rights and obligations. The main duties of MEXT are to disseminate and promote school education, social education, academic study, sports, culture, science and technology (Horii & Akikawa 2010: 157). Its main functions concern promotion, advise, guidance, planning, and support. In Bulgaria the Ministry is much more regulating, setting laws and ordinance and controlling their implementation on local and school level.

On local level in Japan Boards of Education – prefectural or municipal – are responsible for school education organization and effectiveness. Their rights are much broader than the rights of the bodies on local level in Bulgaria concerning some organizational issues. Boards of education consist of people appointed by the prefectural governor or the mayor and approved by the local assembly (Municipal Council in Bulgaria). The Board of education is an administrative body with some independence from the mayor and the local assembly. It consists of a decision-making body of members who decide by voting and a superintendent in charge of the policy implementation. The members are usually 5 with requirements about age (to be able to be elected by law), value and spirit (noble minded and a good positive view toward education). The term of appointment is four years; reappointments are allowed. The Board of Education elects a chairman for one year and a possible reelection. The superintendent serves as a professional advisor to the board. He/she is appointed by the board with the approval of MEXT for prefectural boards and the Prefectural board of education for municipal superintendent. His/her main duties are to give the members (who are not professionals in education) a professional point of view and advise them on different management topics. This approach allows for both the
“layman control” and the “professional leadership” to be present in the educational management system on a local level. The main duties of the Board of Education are as follow (Horii & Akikawa 2010: 67-179): To establish, manage and abolish schools and other educational institutions; To appoint and dismiss the teachers and others educational workers; To manage school organization, curriculum, students learning and students guidance; To provide textbooks and other teaching materials; To maintain school buildings, facilities and equipment; To provide in-service training for teachers and other staff concerned; To control the environment, the hygiene and to manage the school lunch program; To administer and promote social education and sports; To conduct surveys on education and generate statistics. The Board of education carries a lot of advice and guidance function through the network of supervisors, usually persons experienced in teaching and appointed among principals, vice-principals and teachers with suitable expertise.

Educational management on local level authorities and discretion can be seen when students’ enrolment and teachers’ appointment in Japan are discussed. Students’ enrolment in primary and lower secondary schools is under the rule of the “school attendance system” (Hidaka 2008: 270). This means that students are obliged to attend the school in their district and the decision on which school each student will attend is made by the Board of education. The opportunity of parents’ choice is being promoted by the Japanese government since the middle on 1990s. The power to make this system official lies within the hands of the local administration. Until 2004 only 11.1% of municipalities have applied the school choice system for primary schools and no more that 8,5% – for lower secondary school. These figures actually show that in Japan the main decision-making body about which school the child will be enrolled in is the Board of Education, based on the family residence.

When it comes to teachers the situation is similar. The Board of Education chooses and appoints teachers in the municipal and prefectural schools. Neither the teacher, nor the principals have any power when it comes to job placement or the teacher selection process in public schools. Each 5-7 years teachers are sent to a different school again by the choice of the Board of Education. The main reason is to provide all schools in the district, irrespective of their location and conditions, with qualified teachers as well as to prevent the decline is teachers’ motivation and routine job performance. The amount of teachers’ salaries is decided by the prefectural authorities; salaries are paid by the founders of the school with a subsidy of 1/3 from the national budget.

As can be seen the main difference between Bulgaria and Japan is within the discretionary powers of national and local educational authorities. Although there is a decentralization going on in Bulgaria regarding education, it is mainly pointed in terms of financial power, some organizational issues of schools and not much regarding the curriculum or teaching advice and guidance despite the fact that the Regional Inspectorates of Education do have such obligation; however, they are mainly focused on control regarding the national standards implementation.
The discretionary powers of the school principal and regional bodies of educational management vary a great deal between both countries and set quite different conditions for school organization, management and evaluation.

Summarizing the comparison between Bulgaria and Japan in the first research area “Educational system – structure and management”, there are some major conclusions to be pointed out:

1. The school education systems of both countries consist of elementary and secondary education though in a different organization of educational stages. While in Japan the primary school is a separate educational level and lasts 6 years, in Bulgaria it is part of the elementary level along with junior high school and is only 4 years long. Compulsory school education is nine years in both countries but starts with 6 years-old in Japan and 7 years-old in Bulgaria. Educational levels in Japan are consistent with the age for compulsory school education while in Bulgaria there is a discrepancy which opens the space for dropping out of school with only elementary education (1st till 8th grade). This issues draws the negative evaluation of the society and the employers as it gives students little opportunities for taking a proper professional occupation in the future.

2. Both countries’ types of school reflect the needs of the society for a certain type of education and professionals and on this point there are no relevant differences regarding school management and school evaluation. Still it seems that in Japan the transition between upper secondary and higher education is more actively promoted through the creation of upper secondary courses in some colleges or through providing 5 years education in Technical colleges consisting of upper secondary education and higher education curriculum.

3. Educational goals and content vary in terms of the level to which local governments, schools and communities can influence them. In Bulgaria the content of education is more strictly set in national rules and programs for each subject and study area. Although in Japan there are Courses of Study which describe the national curriculum, schools are not only allowed but also obliged to develop their own curriculum in consistence with their educational goals, community specifics and children characteristic. This is to say that schools in Japan have much more power in curriculum management than they have in Bulgaria although Bulgarian schools create their own school plans regarding the proportion between general compulsory education and elective education in different subjects and areas.

4. Students’ enrollment and teacher allocation and appointment are very different in Bulgaria and Japan. In Bulgaria since 1991 the school choice system is fully working on a national level. The right to education means also the right to choose a school for your child, be it elementary or secondary. Teachers in Bulgaria are free to seek a job in different schools and it is up to the school principal to select and appoint teachers in his/her school as long as they have proper diploma required by the national law. In
Japan these two management functions are given to the Boards of Education except some municipalities where the school choice system is experimentally implemented. These main characteristics of school organization deeply reflect the school management and school evaluation as well as the role and responsibilities of school principals in both fields.

5. Educational management levels differ greatly in terms of rights and duties on a national and local level. These differences will become even clearer when comparing school management and school principals’ roles and responsibilities. For now it suffices to state that local authorities in Japan have much more rights concerning educational administration than local authorities in Bulgaria, mainly in terms of curriculum design, school organization, school regulation, teacher appointment and other management functions regarding school operation.

The above mentioned conclusions set the conditions for school management and organization and school evaluation in broad terms. Within their framework a deeper understanding of school management and school evaluation can be reached and some valuable conclusions for school evaluation practices and approaches can be drawn in order to seek good examples within different national conditions.

AREA 2 – SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Criterion 2.1 Characteristics of school organization

In Bulgaria school is considered a special organization which is created to satisfy the needs of society for young generations’ preparation for social integration and proper professional and personal life.

Besides the types of schools in terms of educational level and content described above, schools in Bulgaria vary in terms of their founders and governance body. There are national schools under the discretion of the Ministry of education or different other Ministries, which usually provide secondary education in different economic fields, sport or art education. There are also municipal schools, established by the municipality. Private school have become part of the school education system for the past 20 years but still differ in terms of their organization and management from the public schools which are the main focus of this research.

School life depends on whether the school has a one- or two-shift organization of the study process. One-shift organization of school life means that students have school classes (lessons) either in the morning or in the afternoon. This type of organization is typical of small schools, usually elementary or secondary with no large amount of students. In primary level if the school has the opportunity it can organize additional school hours for 1st till 4th grade in
which students are doing their homework and study lessons for the next day with the help of a designated teachers. It has become compulsory for schools to provide this so-called “whole-day organization of study” for 1st and 3rd grade with an anticipation to gradually implement it in grades from 1st till 4th. Still, there are schools which can not support this type of organization due to two-shift organization of school life, lack of enough material conditions or financial resources. Two-shift organization of school life means that there are two separate shifts of students in the school – morning and afternoon. This type of organization is mainly typical for the Comprehensive School (1st till 12th grade) in large cities. For example, in such a school students at the elementary level have school lessons from 7.30 in the morning till 1.30 in the afternoon, when they leave the school. Students in the second shift have school classes from 1.30 in the afternoon till 6.30 or 7.00 in the evening. This type of organization causes a lot of pressure on both teachers and school management and leaves no free time or space for additional activities within the school day.

A typical day at school in Bulgaria comprises 5 to 7 classes. School hours are 35 minutes in 1st grade and 45 or 40 minutes from 2nd till 12th grade depending on whether the school has one- or two-shift organization. Between classes there are 10-minute breaks and one bigger brake – usually 20 minutes between 3rd and 4th class. Extracurricular activities vary a great deal among schools and are usually held before or after classes depending on the shift the students are enrolled in. Still, one of the greatest concerns in contemporary Bulgarian school is the lack of effective and different extracurricular activities that school can provide due to the lack of time, space and financial support. Schools organize extracurricular activities in forms of clubs in different fields or sports practices, but usually with the support of different private educational institutions and there are charges that apply for the attendance. Naturally, there are some activities organized by the school or school staff but still they are not very common. School also organize different ceremonies, school events and trips for their students which are part of the school annual calendar and are mainly focused on celebration of the patron of the school, national holidays and some major religious events like Christmas and Easter. School events are also organized on different educational topics like tolerance, risk-behavior prevention, charity events, etc.

Lunch is not obligatory in Bulgarian schools though most schools keep a school cafeteria in which students can have a warm meal if they want. A special programme provides primary students with morning breakfast free of charge but this does not exist for the upper grades.

School management staff in Bulgaria consists of school principal and one or two vice principals. They are in charge of study activities and administrative tasks in the school. Usually each school has an accountant, administrative staff, teachers and a pedagogical counselor and/or a psychologist, nurse and maintenance staff. Teachers in Bulgarian schools are considered professional and a special type of regulations apply on a national level about how someone can become a teacher at different educational levels. Primary teachers usually teach all the subjects from 1st till 4th grade for one class and are considered homeroom teachers. Exceptions are made
for foreign language, for which a teacher with qualification in the foreign language linguistic and primary education is required. Teachers in junior high and secondary school are usually graduates from university or college in different scientific fields and have acquired the so-called “teacher qualification” which allows them to teach the subject/subjects they are specialists in at school. As a rule, in order to become a teacher one must have a bachelor degree in the relevant field and a teacher qualification or a bachelor degree for primary school education. Teachers are responsible for the instruction and guidance of students, the preparation of the annual study plan on their subject in correspondence with the school educational plan as well as for the evaluation of students’ results on the subject they teach. Each class has an assigned by the principal so-called “homeroom teacher” or leader who is responsible for keeping the records of students regarding absence, results, behavior and other school issues. Lately a system for career-promotion of teachers has been set up in Bulgaria. Within its framework teachers are now divided in different levels according to their experience and expertise but still the system is working slowly and is due to adjustments. A Typical day of the teacher consists of teaching classes on the his/hers subject, administrative work on keeping students records and teaching documents in order, planning the next lessons and participation, if any, in meetings and extracurricular activities. Teachers have longer paid leave of absence than the usual employee in the public and private sectors and, as they are not required to prepare for their work at school, they can go home when they finish lessons. This may create prejudices within the society against teachers who are broadly considered privileged in some way, while their work is often not considered to be valuable. The low salaries compared to the standard of life and the troubles of the teaching profession, mainly concerning poor discipline and lack of support from parents and community, drive young people away from the teacher’s profession.

Pedagogical counselors and school psychologists are special educational staff appointed to help teachers and students deal with different education and communication problems like conflict resolution, student guidance in difficult situations, risk behavior prevention and other extracurricular activities. They are usually specialists in pedagogy, psychology and deviant behavior with bachelor degrees from university, and are usually considered to be of a great importance for the school climate and culture.

In Japan schools are also divided by their founder to national, prefectural and municipal or private. The founder is by law the governance body of the school with all the obligations for its organization and maintenance.

Still the school life in Japanese schools differs a great deal from the one in Bulgaria. Typically, there are some differences between primary and secondary schools but as a rule the daily organization of school life applies to all type of schools. Usually the school day starts at 8.30 in the morning with morning reading in primary and lower secondary school or free time for the students and brief meeting for the teachers. Usually a meeting between the homeroom teacher and the class follows for setting the day’s schedule and school lessons start. School hours are 45 minutes for primary school and 50 minutes for secondary school. Lessons breaks are
usually five minutes with a bigger break for lunch – between 45 minutes and hour in a half. In some school this time is also used by the students for different student councils’ meetings and by the teachers for teachers’ meetings on different topics. School lessons are usually 5 or 6, rarely 7 in some upper secondary schools. After that there can be a meeting with the homeroom teacher for the end of the classes. One of the very specific characteristic of Japanese schools is the cleaning time. Each day, students clean their classroom and the common spaces of the school. It is a long cherished tradition and a very important part of school life, set in the daily routine. Club activities or extracurricular activities follow with high rates of students participating in at least one. Extracurricular activities vary between primary and secondary schools and consist mainly of classroom activities (homeroom activities in upper secondary school), child society activities (student council activities in lower and upper secondary school) and club activities and school events (Hayashi 2010: 585). Classroom and homeroom activities aim at organizing the class society, dealing with problems and planning different activities, students’ guidance on the importance of learning and work and career guidance in upper secondary school. Child society and students’ council activities include all students and are under appropriate teacher guidance. They aim at sustainability and enrichment of school life and consist of planning and organization of child society or student council, adjustment of variety of different school activities, exchange by different age groups event cooperation and social participation such as volunteering. Club activities are voluntarily chosen and are usually sport, art or culture oriented.

Usually school day for children lasts till 3.30 in the afternoon in primary school and till 5.30 or 6.00 o’clock in the evening for secondary school. School week is five days but on Saturday there are usually school and club events so a lot of students participate in school life on weekends.

School staff in Japan consists of a school principal and vice principals, deputy vice principal, teachers and variety of administrative roles teaches are appointed to or elected for. Some of the positions are obligatory (principal, teachers) while others are up to the discretion of the school and Board of Education (senior teacher, Chief of teachers department). Teachers in Japan are considered public servants with a special mission and a teacher certificate system applies as a prerequisite for becoming a teacher. This system has three main levels and a variety of certificates, depending on the level, the subject to be taught and the diploma gained by the university or college. There are three classifications of certificates – regular, special and temporary with different division by types, school and subjects. Together with the school principal, teachers are responsible for curriculum development in their subject field, for teaching and evaluation of students, for students’ guidance and career guidance and for implementing or managing extracurricular activities. Although the working week is set at 40 hours, five days a week, it is not unusual for a teachers’ working day to be 10 or even 12 hours long in some cases where additional teachers meetings are announced or some extracurricular activities are held. Saturdays can also become working days if school events or extracurricular activities are held.
The organization of schools in Bulgaria and Japan shows a lot of differences regarding everyday school life, teachers’ positions and working conditions, as well as the practical implementation of educational goals through school lessons and extracurricular activities. These differences set different conditions for school management and school evaluation and reflect the society specifics and the ultimate political and social understanding on how education should be administered and what the school education should be.

Criterion 2.2 Roles and responsibilities of school management staff

In Bulgarian schools there are two main bodies of school management – the school principal, along with vice principals and the Pedagogical council. Additionally, Boards of Trustees are established in many schools in order to improve parent participation in some aspects of school management.

The main management body of each school is the school principal. This person has to fulfill a number of criteria in order to become a school principal: they needs to have at least 3 years of teaching experience in addition to the law-based requirements for Bachelor Masters degree and not have been sentenced for a crime or punished with job dismissal or discharge. They also should have the proper teacher qualification and be able to tech a certain amount of lessons as prescribed in the Public Education Act. During the last two years some additional requirements are being applied in the recruitment process of school principals, such as attending a special school management course provided by the National institute for principal education under the Ministry of education, youth and science. Still this is not a legal bound requirement but gives additional strength to the candidate application. The school principals’ selection and appointment system includes interviews with the candidates and presentations of school development concept. School principals for national schools are selected by commission within the Regional Inspectorate of Education and are appointed by the Minister of education. School principals for municipal schools are selected by a commission of the Regional inspectorate with additional members of the municipality administration, selected by the mayor and are appointed by the chief of the regional inspectorate.

During the past 5-6 years school principals’ roles and responsibility have changed a lot in Bulgaria. Due to the decentralization process, school principals are considered to be managers rather than mere administrators. They have received much more responsibilities along with much more duties. The responsibilities of school principal include but are not limited to: organization and control of the whole school function and school environment; implementation and control of the National standards for education; selection and appointment of teachers and other staff in the school; appointment of a vice-principal and senior teachers; planning and control over the school budget in a cost-efficient way; definition of job descriptions; setting of the job-organizational chart at school and the salaries of the school staff based on the law requirements; punishment of students or granting of appraisals to students with regard the national laws and school regulations; punishments or dismissals of teachers and other school staff; planning and
organization of student enrollment; representation of the school in relation to authorities and other organizations; control over the proper documentation organization and keeping; and other responsibilities.

As can be seen above, the school principal is in charge of everything going on in the school. He or she prepares the school organizational documents such as teacher allocation to classes, student classes’ formation, school annual plan, and school study plan for different types of educational levels, grades and content of education in the school. The school principal is in charge of the proper planning of any extracurricular activities, school projects participation, and the school building and facilities. All these management functions require the school principal to act as a manager instead of simple administrator. For example – the fact that that school is funded according to a “per capita” principle requires a lot of marketing skills so the school can attract enough students in order to receive a proper school budget. The numbers of teachers also depends on the number of students and the school study plan as teacher positions are bound to a certain amount of classes each teacher should teach for a school year. These conditions force the school principal into becoming a skillful balancer between educational goals and standards, school environment, and parent and student expectations.

In all these duties the school principal is assisted by vice-principals. They are mainly in charge of study or educational activities, as well as administrative activities. Vice-principals are selected among teachers in the schools and are appointed by the school principal. The principal delegates some of his duties and rights to the vice-principals so school organization can function smoothly and autonomously. Usually the principal and vice-principals are required to deliver teaching lessons, however a smaller number due to the management responsibilities they have.

The other main management body of the school is the Pedagogical council. It is a specialized collective body for discussing and deciding educational and pedagogical issues. The Pedagogical council consists of all the teachers in the school, vice-principals, the pedagogical counselor and other educational staff and is chaired by the school principal. In this council the chairman of the school Board of trustees and the school nurse can be included with the right to give opinions and vote. This collective management body usually decides matters like: accepting a school development strategy; approving school rules and regulations; adopting a school study plan; choosing different forms of education the school will provide; discussing the results of education; setting the rules on student enrolment with regard to law requirements; making suggestions to the school principals for students to be rewarded or punished; deciding on the extracurricular activities; adopting school uniforms after coordination with parents as well as adopting school rituals and symbols after coordination with parents or school board of trustees.

In most Bulgarian schools Board of trustees have been established. These are non-profit legal entities consisting of parents of students in the school. Their main functions are to support the school management and the school principal by providing opportunities for project participation on different funding schemes on national and regional level, bring the voice of parents closer to the school, discuss and support the school on discipline support issues,
supporting school cafeteria through providing additional financial aid and other relevant activities.

It is apparent that the school principal and Pedagogical council have a significant authority regarding school organization although main rules are set in national law acts and ordinances. Still, the school principal’s job requires a lot of management skills in different fields like human resources, educational management, organizational management, financial management, etc.

In Japan, school management staff consists of several levels. It includes a school principal, vice-principals, deputy vice-principals, heads of department and senior teachers as well as other not obligatory management function on the middle management level. Although the Board of education serves as a general governance body for the school, the school has its own independence and autonomy in dealing with various school management questions. The most important elements of school management system are the decision-making function and the implementation afterward (Horii & Yoichi 2010: 185).

A principal takes charge of school affairs and supervises the school staff (School Education Law, Article 37, Clause 4). His/her main duties include the following (Ojima 2006): (1) Matters regarding implementation and management of education; (2) Matters regarding teaching staff; (3) Matters regarding students; (4) Matters regarding organizational management; (5) Matters regarding the institution and facility; (6) Matters regarding external relationships. The status of school principals is described as “school administrator” and “high ranking teacher” (Horiuchi 2008: 57). The duties of the principal mainly include several basic areas (Ojima 2006):

- Organizational system and curriculum – designing the curriculum, deciding on the school daily organization, organizing school events, deciding on supplementary materials, deciding on a homeroom teacher and subject teachers, selecting a school counselor, deciding school organizational duties
- Students – entries, transfer permissions, drop-outs, permissions for temporary leave of school, checking attendance and making guidelines, authorizing the completion of a curriculum and graduation, disciplinary actions toward students, awarding of diplomas, delivering confidential report when advancing to upper secondary school, suspension from school for prevention of inflectional diseases.
- Educational personnel – planning and implementing school duties, submission of opinion about personnel management, selecting part-time teachers, approving teachers’ vacations, directing teachers to a business trip.

Requirements for becoming a school principal include: holding an advanced or first teaching certificate and having a teaching experience of more than five years; having a career in education for more than five years; to be admitted to have the equivalent qualification as the above two to no teaching certificates holders. The second requirement actually allows persons without a teaching license to become school principals. It is a specific effort that promotes
introduction of business and management persons from private sectors to school principal positions in order to enrich the school management processes and to improve school organization. School management duties should be understood in the framework of the relation between school principal and Board of education. Usually school principals are appointed by the superintendent of the prefecture and the designated city or the Board of education after a very selective procedure that varies among different prefectures and municipalities. The selection process includes extensive exams and in some cases – thorough interviews. School principals are chosen from among vice-principals and other teaching staff with the status of assistant principals (vice-principals).

A deputy vice-principal (vice-principal) stands by the principal and performs management functions when the school principal is incapacitated or unavailable. Still they may be considered part of the top management.

The head of department system consists of various middle level management positions held by appointed teachers. The aim of this system is to arrange school organization that is appropriate for a harmonious school management as well as to conduct organizational functions of the school efficiently and effectively. Duties of the head teacher include: (1) making plans for one's part; (2) communication and management, and (3) guidance and assistance under the supervision of the principal. There are different head of department system and positions on different school levels. Some of the positions include, for example: head of school affairs, head of grade, head of health, head of guidance, head of career guidance, and head of the administrative department. Thus it becomes obvious that the management structure of Japanese schools is much more complex and stratified although most of the management functions are performed by teachers according to their skills and experience.

Teachers’ meetings are usually an assembly of teachers with the task to provide opinion and advice to the principal. They enable teachers to participate in school decision making and it is set at each school. Its institutional roles are: (1) to support the duties of the principal, (2) to form a common understanding of the management policy of the school, (3) to create opportunities for information exchange and mutual understandings between teachers. In reality, it is considered to be an organization that makes teachers participate in school decision making. Though there had been arguments over whether its function is more as a decision-making body or as a consultative body of subsidiary board for school principals, teachers’ meetings were identified as functioning as subsidiary boards for the principal (Ojima 2006).

The comparative analysis between Bulgaria and Japan in Research area 2 - School management leads to the following significant conclusions:

- The way schools operate in Bulgaria and Japan are quite different. While in Bulgaria schools are mainly focused on formal education and teaching the law set curriculum with little extracurricular activities and social interaction with the community, in Japan schools function as real small societies with a rich organizational life and a significant input from the community into different school and community events.
• Students in Bulgaria spend less time in their schools and during that time they are involved in attendance of formal lessons and classes and are not so much included in social activities in class, at school or in different clubs. Students in Japan participate in different forms of compulsory and voluntary activities both inside and outside of school which gives them better opportunities to interact in different social settings and to acquire the needed social skills for future social integration.

• The teachers’ education, selection and appointment systems also differ significantly in both countries. A teacher certificate in Japan provides a complex system for ensuring a proper teacher preparation in both teaching and class management as well as providing different opportunities for in-service trainings and promotion in certificate levels. In Bulgaria teachers in secondary schools are more “subject oriented” with lower competency on pedagogy or classroom management. The teacher qualification system for in-service training in Bulgaria is still to be made effective by providing broader opportunities for teacher education and qualification. Although there is an existing system of teacher qualification provided by universities and divided into different levels of “professional qualification in the teaching profession”, this system has yet to be adapted to the present conditions in Bulgaria, which require opportunities for on the job qualification. Concerning the teacher selection and appointment system the differences are significant as well. Bulgaria promotes an open market for teachers and each teacher can chose a school to apply to, provided this particular school is recruiting teaching staff. School principals are in charge of teacher selection, appointment and dismissal as well as of inner personnel affairs like teachers duties, teacher assignment to classroom teaching or subject teaching. Teacher salaries are decided in each case individually by the school principal according to the law regulations for minimal teacher salary requirements at different school levels.

• One of the main differences between the two countries can be found in the role and the responsibilities of the school principal and the structure of the school management system. Although both countries apply decentralization principles in educational affairs, the approaches to the implementation of decentralization differ a lot in terms of school management. In Bulgaria the school principal has more rights and responsibilities regarding school organization like teacher selection and appointment, teacher salaries, school budget planning and organization, and textbook selection. At the same time, school curriculum design is limited to the school study plan within the framework of national standards for general and specialized education. In Japan the school principal is more of an educational manager considering his duties in school curriculum design, curriculum planning and implementation, social education activities and inner organization of the school. Still, it can not be said which approach toward school management is better as the conditions in both countries regarding the main framework of educational system are very different. School choice system in Bulgaria actually force the school, the school principal and management staff to be more market-oriented – therefore
they need more rights to plan and set the school organization in a way they consider to be proper in the local conditions, especially in terms of teacher selection, teacher working conditions, student enrollment (with an approval of the Regional Inspectorate) and the school study plan. Otherwise the principles of equity between schools will be broken and schools will have no control over these issues even though they are required to compete for students proven to be the best. Conversely, in Japan issues like teacher allocation and appointment ensure equal distribution of qualified teachers among schools without the participation of school principals and teachers themselves as well as providing subsidies for school budget on both a national and local level. This puts the schools in a position of caring more about the school curriculum and school activities, which in turn ensures the achievement of educational goals on both a national and a school level considering local conditions and requirements. The underlying principles in both educational systems are different, which inevitably leads to different approaches toward school organization and school management.

As a whole it can be said that school management differs a great deal in Bulgaria and Japan. This is a result of the different educational systems established in both countries as well as of somewhat different educational goals and underlying principles of educational administration. Still, a lot of questions can be considered when discussing the development and changes in Bulgarian school education, provoked by the approaches and organization of school education in Japan such as: establishing educational activities for better social skills, approaches toward whole-day school organization with regards to possible positive and negative effects of student achievements; school life and school stress; teacher working conditions; developing more complex school management organization within school; etc. These will be discussed further within the context of the school evaluation system and within the final conclusions of the research report.

**RESEARCH AREA 3 – SCHOOL EVALUATION**

Because this area is the main focus of the research, and due to the fact that in Bulgaria school evaluation has yet to be fully developed and implemented, the analysis in this research will be presented in a slightly different way. The conception of school evaluation in Bulgaria on all the research criteria will be introduced and then the Japanese system for school evaluation concerning the same criteria will be presented.
Criterion 3.1 Laws and regulations

In Bulgaria school evaluation is a relatively new concept, especially when it comes to the point of legally based school evaluation requirements. At present, there is still not a legal bounding order on national level requiring schools to conduct any special form of school evaluation. Schools are obliged to draw an annual school plan as a part of the official school organization documentation at the beginning of each school year. According to the guidance by the Regional educational inspectorates this plan includes an evaluation of the school based on the SWAT\(^1\) analysis. In this evaluation schools are to present their strengths, weaknesses, alternatives and troubles for the previous year and regarding the preparation for the new one.

In any case, a development of National Inspectorate on education is envisaged for the next two years. This inspectorate is supposed to evaluate schools as a complex of activities within the context in which the school is situated and in which it operates. The evaluation will also gather the opinions of parents and students. This evaluation is to be conducted every 5 years by certified evaluators.

Criterion 3.2 Evaluation goals and approaches

The main goal of the SWAT analysis is to provide school management with a broad view of school achievements for the previous school year and to serve as a starting point for the development of a school mission, vision and educational goals for the next one. Usually the school principal or vice-principal, along with a designated commission of teachers, is in charge for conducting the SWAT analysis. This form of evaluation does not include evaluation in any official form from parents, students or teachers like questionnaires or focus groups and interviews.

Criterion 3.3 Evaluation methods, criteria and processes

The main sources of information for the SWAT analysis are the results of the external evaluation of students’ achievements through nationally administered tests, administrative records for school activities in different fields like school events, project development and participation, students’ achievements on national and regional competition in different study fields or in additional activities, teachers’ achievements in qualification, etc. The evaluation process includes pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the school – like things we achieved through the last school year and things we failed to achieve in students’ learning, extracurricular activities, school organization and management, teacher qualification, building and facilities maintenance, etc. Then the alternatives or opportunities are presented in terms of resources the school has available for improvements or the things that can be done for the upcoming school year that will make the school a better place as well as a more successful

\(^1\) Strengths, weaknesses, alternatives, troubles.
educational organization, followed by the possible troubles the school can encounter during its function. As far as school evaluation as an organization is concerned, this is the only type of evaluation schools are conducting each year.

**Criterion 3.4 Application of evaluation results**

Usually the annual school plan is an internal school document. It is sometimes put on the Internet school homepage, but there is not an obligation to make it public and announce it to parents or students. The main use of the SWAT analysis is to provide a starting point for developing a school mission, vision and educational goals for the next school year as well as to serve as a checking point for the next SWAT analysis, ensuring the long term vision of the school management. Still, in terms of school evaluation, this type of evaluation results are not put into the public view except for the results of students’ achievements, which usually serve to prove that the school can give a solid education and can teach students in such a manner as to help them fulfill the national standards in the best possible way.

As a main conclusion it is possible to say that school evaluation in Bulgaria is yet to be developed and implemented in a more effective way. The evaluation of school organization as an institution with specific tasks, school life and culture is still to be achieved.

**JAPAN**

**Criterion 3.1 Laws and regulations**

In Japan school evaluation is an issue introduced into the school management area first after World War II (Kazuaki & Takashide 2008: 173). Through the extensive cooperation between US and Japan the concept of school evaluation entered school administration policy but was not broadly adopted by most of the schools. Still, there are some efforts in this field mainly focused at: workshops and handbooks concerning school evaluation methods and criteria; studies on school evaluation in the United states and a rising concern with the introduction of school evaluation as a path toward school accountability as well as studies on school evaluation methodologies. This starting point gave school evaluation a visible place and a special interest among Japanese school administration and management. In the following decades school evaluation research studies and concepts were introduced. School evaluation was discussed until the 70’s in the framework of two main concepts – School evaluation and School management evaluation. The latter became more popular and soon prevailed in school evaluation theses. Anyway, the changes occurring in society in the late 80’s brought a different view about the school evaluation – the understanding of school evaluation as a means for evaluation of the school organization and functioning toward achieving the educational goals. The idea of external and third-party evaluation was adopted.
Laws and regulations concerning school evaluation were introduced on a national level in 2002. First in this year the Elementary school establishment standards required elementary schools to introduce school evaluation as an effort obligation. These were also applied to lower secondary school as well. Schools were obliged to perform self-checks and self-evaluation and make an effort to announce the results to the public. In order to support schools in the evaluation process in 2006 MEXT issued “Guidelines for school evaluation”. In 2007, the School education law and its enforcement acts were amended and school evaluation became a part of the legal prescribed obligations of schools. In article 42 it is stated that as designated by the Minister of education, culture, sports, science and technology, elementary schools shall conduct an evaluation of their educational activities and operations and must work to improve the level of educational standards by using the results to formulate necessary measures for improving their operations (Ojima 2006). It is further prescribed that in order to broaden the understanding of parents, the local community and other relevant persons and to promote cooperation and ties with the above mentioned parties elementary schools shall make efforts to provide information about school activities and operations. The enforcement regulations of school education act were also amended and schools are now required to conduct school self-evaluation and evaluation by the stake-holders and to announce the results as well as to report these results to the Board of education. These requirements apply also to lower and upper secondary schools, kindergartens, and schools for children with special needs. In 2008 and 2010 new Guidelines for school evaluation were issued by MEXT along with examples of good practices of school evaluation.

As a main conclusion it can be said that school evaluation is legally prescribed in Japan along with necessary guidance from the Ministry for effective and systematic school evaluation.

Criterion 3.2 Evaluation goals and approaches

The goal of school evaluation is mainly to give an opportunity to the school to review its activities and operations and to access the achievement of the educational goal and objectives as well as to identify problems and issues. The main purpose is to use self-evaluation results for improving the school. The objectives of school evaluation can be stated as follows (Ojima 2006): To set up objectives to go on its own educational activities and other school operations and to try continual organizational improvement as a school by evaluation of its achievements and achievement approaches; To achieve accountability by self-evaluation or evaluation, announcements, explanations by school stakeholders together with understanding and participation of guardians and local residents and to continue to build schools that effectively cooperate with families and local communities; To help the supervisory board in guaranteeing a certain level of educational quality and promote the improvement of the school by measures to enhance supporting conditions in accordance with the evaluation results.

The approach toward school evaluation includes three distinctive steps:

- School self-evaluation;
• School stakeholder evaluation;
• Third party evaluation.

The first two steps are mandatory for the schools while the third is not.

School self-evaluation is conducted by 95.5% of publicly funded schools in 2004.

The main approach toward school evaluation is the community and stake-holder participation in the evaluation process. The evaluation by a third party or the evaluation by professionals in education or educational management and administration is still a voluntarily step. Some schools use the school advisors or academic staff for third-party evaluation. However, the focus in school evaluation is much more on school and local needs and conditions when evaluating school affairs than aiming at national set standards and evaluation criteria.

The Guidelines from MEXT for school evaluation permit advisory discretion and their main purpose is to help schools conduct efficient and productive evaluations. The evaluation criteria set in the Guidelines are not obligatory for schools to follow at all costs and schools can set their own evaluation criteria and items. The local authorities also issue guidelines for school evaluation considering the characteristics of schools in their district, the local conditions and the needs for specific information regarding school education in the certain district. This approach makes evaluation much more school-centered and local community-bound and significantly raises the expectations towards school accountability and willingness for improvement.

**Criterion 3.3 Evaluation methods, criteria and processes**

Evaluation criteria differ among schools and districts. Still the evaluation processes and methods are similar. School self-evaluation is conducted through gathering information from parents, guardians, students and teachers through questionnaires. The questionnaires are usually developed by the school principal and management staff based on the Guidelines from MEXT and local authorities. Some prefectures develop questionnaires which schools can use in school evaluation (e.g., Nigata prefecture). The results are then analyzed in both quantitative and qualitative terms and are summarized in a school self-evaluation report. The discussion with four school principals showed a great percentage of parent and student participation in school self-evaluation – between 80% and 90% of the distributed questionnaires are usually filled out and brought back to the school authorities. The method of distribution of questionnaires to parents is usually through students. Questionnaires are anonymous; however, they include the grade of the student and sometimes the age of the parent or guardian.

School stakeholder evaluation usually happens when the results of self-evaluation are ready. Then a special committee is selected by the school principal consisting of parents, local community residents and other persons considered valuable for the purpose. School stakeholder evaluation is usually conducted through methods like class observation, school educational and
extracurricular activities observation and a discussion based on the self-evaluation results. Stakeholder evaluation also finishes with a report and both the results of the evaluation procedures are sent to the Board of education and are made public usually at the school homepage.

Third-party evaluation is still in the process of broader implementation, however the evaluation procedures usually include observation of school activities, meeting with the school principal to discuss school educational goal and its achievement, along with interviewing teachers and making a final report.

Criteria for school evaluation vary among municipalities and schools. The MEXT Guidelines for school evaluation are quite extensive and provide information on certain criteria and items for evaluation. Still, as mentioned above those guidelines are not obligatory and municipalities and schools can adapt the criteria to their own needs. This makes the analysis of school evaluation criteria difficult due to the differences between schools.

The Guidelines for school evaluation after the MEXT revision in 2010 cover the following criteria and evaluation items:

1. **Curriculum and Teaching**
   - Strengthen the status of each class
     - Method of conducting the teaching for each faculty member
     - Use of teaching tools and educational materials such as audiovisual equipment, etc.
     - Experiential learning and problem solving, learning by utilizing the voluntary self-interest of students and development of a learning situation
     - Individual and group instruction, teaching according to the level of proficiency, according to students' interests, etc.
     - Learning issues, such as the status of teaching methods depending on the individual learning and development, such as supplemental learning
     - Status of guidance and cooperation between teachers in team teaching and guidance
     - Status of Classroom Management – whether the environment in the classroom has been developed for learning
     - Teaching situations for effective utilization of computers and telecommunications networks
     - Status of teaching in accordance with the standards set by the Board of Education, the curriculum guidelines and the individual developmental stage of students
     - Utilizing outside personnel, such as regional human resources development courses and teaching materials

   **Status of Curriculum**
• Status of common understanding among teachers about the idea of organizing and implementation of the school curriculum
• To know the status of the academic strength of students
• Evaluation and assessment of conditions such as different learning situations in terms of student learning
• Planned use of the library and school initiatives to promote reading activities
• Hands-on activities, status of school events and other administrative implementation system
• Status of Implementation System for managing the activities outside the curriculum
• Strengthening of the development of leadership required
• Compliance with the standards set by the Board of Education curriculum guidelines and individual, teaching situations that enhance the developmental stage of students
• Management implementation status of the curriculum organization (e.g., whether it has been created appropriately)
• Teaching according to the level of student proficiency by group tutorials and guidance
• Learning and development, such as supplementary learning and teaching plans according to individual circumstances
• Status of saving collaboration, coordination elementary, middle and high cooperation, devised for smooth connection and cooperation between schools
  • (E.g., data) as a result of academic research
  • (E.g., data) physical exercise survey
  • (E.g., data) assessment of the evaluation results of different learning situations in terms of students' learning

2. Career education (career guidance)
• Establishment of a system to address the career education (career guidance)
• Utilization of the state of personal documents and resources as necessary for the understanding of students' ability to collect information about the course
• Status of ingenuity to discover the capabilities of students, etc.
• State of counseling (career counseling)
• Systematic status or systematic guidance for the development of attitudes and a skills base toward work and the formation of students' sense of proper working necessary for social and vocational independence
• Status of collaboration with companies, parents and community
• Status of development of facilities for career education (career guidance)
• Status of implementation of activities and work experience workplace experience activities
3. **Student guidance**

**Status of student guidance**
- Establish a system to address the status of student teaching through the whole school staff
- Policies to deal with problem behavior
- Status of implementation of delinquency prevention classes
- Status of collaboration with other agencies, parents and community
- Status of Consultation – Education through collaboration with other schools, school counselors or social workers
- (Other data) late attendance status of students
- (E.g., data) the occurrence of problem behavior

**Teaching situation for the personality development of students**
- Status of such guidance – students can express opinions, act autonomously and independently, and be responsible for their actions
- Status of the device for someone to learn and practice basic life
- Protection and cooperation
- Ability to discover the aptitudes of students
- Status of guidance for building rich relationships
- Guidance on the importance of life and environmental conservation
- Consciousness as a member of society (equity, fairness, working, service, public spirit, public spirit and information, moral example)
- Guidance to improve the status of normative consciousness
- (E.g., data) consolidation of the status of lifestyle personality development of students
- (Other data) the occurrence of problem behavior

4. **Health**
- Status of implementation of guidance and counseling for students and health (drug abuse prevention, including psychological care, etc.)
- Status of cooperation with health institutions, home and community
- Status of implementation of the statutory creation of a school health program
- Environmental health status of school management
- The medical examination forms – Observation and routine health disease prevention efforts for students' self-health management capacity.

Depending on the circumstances of each school in situations such as school feeding and health management, evaluation may be considered.
5. Safety management
- School’s emergency response to situations such as accidents
- Status of cooperation with organizations like families and local authorities,
- Status of the system for school safety planning
- Creation of manuals for such circumstances and crisis management
- Efforts to promote safety inspection (including inspection of school road safety)

6. Special needs education
- Special schools and special classrooms
- Interaction and collaborative learning situations with students in regular classrooms with support for students with special needs
  - Medical conditions, cooperation with relevant organizations
  - Status of development of the school support system for special education
  - School committee involvement in implementation of training and appointment of a school special education coordinator
- Status of teaching plan and creation of a separate education support plan

7. Organizational operation
- Status of leadership toward achieving educational goals
- The trust of faculty status
- Status of the development of a clear system of responsibility for school management
  - Status of school finance and administration (planning, execution and conditions in financial audits)
  - Approval of training and employment conditions, etc
  - Status of information handling policy known – Status of information management and other personal information held by schools and various documents and information with relation to staff
- Status of information for the management of various administrative and other schools

8. Training (quality improvement efforts)
- Status of efforts to improve teaching
- Continued implementation of lesson study, cooperative teacher learning and in-service training, etc.
  - Status of training in the school system
  - Status of school training issues
  - Training status of efforts to secure and improve the quality of non-regular faculty employed part-time
• Participation in training for school field trips
• Ascertain the status of faculty support and guidance is adequate

9. School Evaluation of Educational Objectives

Implementation of educational goal setting and self-assessment
• Reality of students and school conditions, such as setting goals as a school, based on the opinions and wishes of parents and local residents
• Prioritization was based on the situation of the school (medium) term goals
• Set the status of self-assessment based on the evaluation criteria
• Self-evaluation is carried out regularly at least once a year
• Utilization of such targets for the next year to improve the results of self-evaluation
• Systems or situations, such as faculty involved in the evaluation
• Utilization of surveys to conduct self-assessments and external evaluation
• Taking into consideration the security situation in the anonymity of students if the assessment was conducted for school tuition, etc.
• (E.g., data) the goal of the school plan

Implementation of school officials rating
• “External surveys” are carried out regularly at least once a year by the subjective evaluation of active school officials and other parents
• Self-assessment and evaluation are based on the results of the school
• Organization for the evaluation of school officials (other school personnel evaluation committee, including when to take advantage of existing organizations such as school trustees and Science Steering Committee)
• Status of the configuration of the evaluation of school officials rating (that includes parents, etc.)
• Utilization of such improvement targets for the next year of school personnel evaluation
• Reporting the results of the evaluation to school officials

Status of opinions and requests of parents
• Understanding the situation of parents and students
• Status of the educational counseling system
• Support for parents,
• Understanding the opinions and requests of students
• (E.g., data) such as results of the evaluation of parental teaching

10. Provision of information
Availability of information on various school activities and operations
Status of implementation of school board as part of transition toward community school
Status of the protection of the personal information of students
Announced availability of the results of the school evaluation (self-evaluation and evaluation by school officials)
News and news publications such as school classrooms activities – availability of information primarily aimed at parents

11. Work with parents and local residents
- School management of PTA
- The status of participation and cooperation with local residents
- Understanding the situation and requests of specific comments from local residents
- Implementation of open schools
- Implementation of school management council meetings with the School council and PTA
- Enhancement of the status of PTA and liaison with community groups
- Utilization of traditional events such as local natural, cultural, and educational resources
- Involvement of outside personnel and human resources in the region for the development of teaching materials
- Efforts to ensure the safety of movement of students
- Projection of children in the classroom, after school
- Regional business relationship between the faculty and, if necessary, exchange of information
- (E.g., data) results of a survey to parents and local residents

12. Environmental Improvement of Education
Facilities
- Availability of facilities and equipment (classrooms room, including the usage of such special classrooms)
- Efforts to check the status of safety and maintenance of facilities
- Status of safety improvement and maintenance of facilities and equipment
- Development status of such forms of learning content that supports learning in conjunction with a variety of installation
- Status of information technology education in conjunction with the installation

Materials such as teaching tools
• Status of the development of teaching tools books and materials
• Efforts to enhance the learning environment

These criteria and items for school evaluation are applied and adapted in different schools and municipalities according to their understanding of school education and school evaluation. As can be seen they cover a broad range of school affairs and operation.

A survey of MEXT in 2009 shows the choices for school evaluation criteria rating as follows (School evaluation survey, MEXT, 2009):

• Educational goal – 89%
• Teaching – 88,5%
• Safety management – 86%
• Parental cooperation with local residents – 85,5%
• Pupil guidance – 85,3%
• Curriculum – 85%
• Training (quality improvement initiatives ) – 82,2%
• Health – 78,8%
• Environmental improvement of education – 77,4%
• Organizational operation – 73,4%
• Provision of information – 61,6%
• Special needs education – 61,1%
• School evaluation – 48,6%
• Career guidance – 42,3

Another assessment shows that when conducting evaluations, over 90% of schools in Japan evaluated the following items: school management, grade/class management, lesson study/improvement, school-based training/research, school events, and guidance (Ojima 2006).

As can be seen by this rating most of the schools adopt evaluation criteria and items regarding educational goal, curriculum, teaching and student guidance along with safety measures and cooperation with parents and community. This fact states clearly the main goal of school evaluation as understood by schools themselves – to assess and improve education and teaching as well as to strengthen the cooperation between schools and local communities.

An example of school evaluation criteria and items can be found on the sites of some prefectures and municipalities (for example – Niigata and Itami). Such a system for school evaluation in Itami schools is showed below (Itami school evaluation system).

1. Curriculum
1. Educational goals
2. Curriculum development

2. Educational guidance
• improvement of educational guidance methods and approaches
• evaluation
• effective and efficient study at home

3. Student guidance
• organization of student guidance
• problem behaviour guidance
• understanding of students’ needs

4. Future development guidance
• Organization of career guidance
• Future development guidance
• Family cooperation

5. Safety management
• Establishment of a system for control and reaction in crisis situations
• Improvement of safety teaching methods
• Family cooperation

6. Health management
• Physical development
• Health monitoring and health management education
• Health education directed toward the family
• Establishing life habits
• Nutrition for a sound mind and a sound body

7. Special needs education
• Organization of special needs education
• Content of special needs education
• Promotion and development of special needs education
• Establishment of a system for support of special education toward common educational goal

8. Organization management and information provision and control
• Goals an principles of school management
• Cooperation school duties allocation
• Information gathering and protection

9. Training and qualification
• Class observation and study
• Spreading the results of training qualification events

10. Family and local community cooperation
• Provision of information on school activities
• Open classes implementation
• Family and local community cooperation

11. Buildings and facilities
• Provision of a proper learning environment
• Effective utilization of buildings and facilities

12. Human rights education
• Tolerance and caring for others
• Measures for improving human rights

As demonstrated, school evaluation criteria and items are in accordance with the guidance of MEXT and yet they reflect the specifics of the school. Each criterion is assessed with a mark from a range scale. Scales can have 4 or 5 degrees. Then an average evaluation mark is assigned to each item based on the marks of its criteria. Additional comments on the possible improvements on each item can be added with regard to the task that school sets based on the evaluation results.

Based on school evaluation system of items and criteria, questionnaires for parents, teachers and sometimes students are developed by the school principal. Students participate with school evaluation filling questionnaires according to their stage of mental and cognitive development. Questionnaires consist of 10 to 20 questions regarding evaluation items and respondents mark their agreement or satisfaction in a scale consistent with the scale for criteria evaluation. Questions for students usually involve issues like their satisfaction with time spend at school, the amount of homework, the satisfaction with teaching and guidance they receive, the safety issues, friends at school, life habits and health, extracurricular activities, etc. Questions for parents include items like satisfaction with the educational goal of the school, school organization and school management, child development and academic improvement, moral education, extracurricular activities, cooperation with the school and local community, etc. Questions for teachers include organizational issues, planning and implementing the curriculum, management support, organization of student guidance, safety and health issues, teacher qualification and training, etc.

As a final conclusion for evaluation methods, criteria and procedures in Japan it can be said the main discretion for developing and implementing school evaluation system lies within the hands of the schools with the support and guidance of local authorities and MEXT. The clusters of evaluation criteria and items are usually within the proposed one by MEXT and local authorities with a great degree of school independence when taking final decisions. Still there
can be seen that extensive evaluation items and criteria are applied in school, and this possibly leads to time-consuming evaluation procedures.

**Criterion 3.4 Usage of evaluation results**

A special attention is paid to the usage of the evaluation results in Japan. As stated above the main goal of school evaluation is to provide schools with resources for improvement and strengthening the cooperation between schools, parents and the local community. The results of the school self-evaluation and stakeholder evaluation are to be presented to the Board of Education and schools are required by law to make efforts to publicize these results. This is usually done via the school homepage or the home pages local authorities’ education sections. School evaluation results are to be applied to Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle with a special attention toward ACT measures. Schools use the results of evaluation as a starting point for future planning and organization of school activities and operation in order to achieve school educational goal and to fulfill the schools’ mission and vision for the education they provide for their students. This means that evaluation is not just something that has to be done because of the law requirements but is rather viewed as a useful tool for school management and school improvement. The principals state their understanding of the importance and significance of school evaluation results for their managerial actions and abilities and most of them deem it to be useful for school management and organization.

The comparison in Research area 4 – School evaluation between Bulgaria and Japan shows that Japan has already established a working system for school evaluation, something Bulgaria is yet to develop and implement. The main characteristics of school evaluation system in Japan can be outlined as follows:

1. There are legally enforced requirements for school self-evaluation and stakeholder evaluation with a focus on utilization of school evaluation results.
2. Goals of school evaluation focus on school improvement and school cooperation with the local community and parents. Special attention is paid to the evaluation as a tool for raising school accountability for the education in accordance with parents’ and local community needs.
3. There is a three-step school evaluation system with an emphasis on school self-evaluation and stakeholder evaluation rather than third-party evaluation by professionals in education.
4. There is significant school discretion regarding school evaluation items and criteria with extensive guidance provided by MEXT and local authorities. These guidelines are just an example and not legally enforced rules.
5. School evaluation items are focused on curriculum design, moral education, social education, student guidance, health and safety management, school classes, extracurricular activities and school events.
6. Participation of parents, students and teachers in school self-evaluation is focused on their satisfaction of school operations and affairs, education, as well as cooperation between the school, parents and the local community.

7. There is a strong involvement of the local community in the school evaluation process within the framework of stakeholder evaluation.

8. Evaluation results are implemented in practical school management toward the achievement of school educational goals and educational improvement.

DISCUSSION

The present paper reveals only a short and partial comparison between school management and school evaluation in Bulgaria and Japan. A deeper and more extensive analysis is needed in order to account for all the factors influencing these issues in both countries. Even so, some major conclusions and questions for further discussions can be drawn from this comparison based on the above analysis and statements.

School educational systems in both countries differ in terms of school management and school organization. The “right to choose”, set as an underlying principle of the educational system in Bulgaria for both parents and teachers, influences the way the school operates. Decentralization in Bulgaria is viewed in terms of giving more discretion to the school principal in school organization issues like teacher selection, budget planning, student enrollment and teacher salaries. This is a basis for a different management function of the school principal which inevitably will influence school education. Still, in Bulgaria centralized curriculum development and content of education gives little opportunity for educational management.

There is some resistance among teachers and school principals in Bulgaria regarding the participation of parents and students in school evaluation. This resistance is based on the fact that teachers are required to grade students on each subject they teach and according to these grades students are promoted to the next grade (for example – from 2nd to 3rd grade). There are law set minimum standards by which teachers evaluate students and if the student can not reach the minimum requirements, he/she is graded with a “poor” mark and can not pass to the next school grade. That places the teachers in a very sensitive situation when it comes to students’ evaluation of the school. Teachers are afraid that students’ evaluation of the school and teachers will be influenced by the marks teachers gave them. This factor renders the evaluation useless and unreliable while at the same time making some teachers lower their evaluation standards in order to receive good marks from the students in the school evaluation. Furthermore, teachers and school principals object to parent and student participation in school evaluation based on the fact that most of the parents are layman in education and are not involved enough in school life and school activities, with some of them even having a hostile attitude toward school. This makes them incapable of an objective and reliable evaluation of school activities and operations. Still, considering the Japanese approach in school evaluation so far, it is inevitable to include parents
and students in the school evaluation process as they are the main “customers” of the educational services school provides and their opinion has a great importance.

It is worth thinking about school evaluation under consideration of the fact that in Japan schools are responsible for developing and implementing the evaluation system, items, criteria and evaluation tools. The role of MEXT as an advisor and not as a legal arbiter of these issues gives the schools much more freedom and, accordingly, much more accountability in school evaluation and the implementation school evaluation results in school management and operations. Although the decentralization in Bulgaria has given schools a substantial freedom in school management and school operation, they are still bound by various legal requirements and restrictions which do not give them opportunity to expand their reflection on local conditions and to adjust their activities according to the needs of the students, parents and local residents. The choice system creates a great distance between parents and schools, as well as between schools and the local community. Despite this fact, school evaluation approaches can be sought in order to ensure parent-school cooperation and more active involvement of schools in local life. This can be made possible only if schools are given authority to develop their own evaluation system according to their needs and the expectations of parents. This should be done by providing an extensive guidance for school principals and school management staff regarding to the selection, development and assessment of evaluation criteria. Otherwise the evaluation will not be properly and efficiently conducted and the results will not be useful for school improvement.

The community-sensible and society-sensible education in Japan influences the school evaluation system to a great extent, as can be seen in school evaluation items. It is up to national common understanding and national policies whether in Bulgaria such a type of education will be emphasized and promoted. Nevertheless, it is obvious that school education has to fulfill certain duties and to satisfy certain society expectations. The approaches toward this goal may differ, but school evaluation based on self-evaluation and stakeholder evaluation is necessary in order to track school achievement and to ensure school improvement and accountability.

The organization of school life and the variety of extracurricular activities in Japanese schools place a special focus on school evaluation. Still, in Bulgaria the tendency is to implement whole-day organization of school life and to promote the development of extracurricular activities in school. These goals of the educational reform will be achieved easier if school evaluation is conducted in the way it is done in Japan – with regard of the whole school as a system of different activities, sub-systems and groups.

Considering the national traditions in education and educational policies, an external school evaluation by professionals should be included in order to ensure proper school evaluation on issues regarding specific management functions of the principal and a proper professional teacher evaluation. Since schools and communities in Bulgaria are not bound by district allocation of students, an important question arises as to whether school evaluation should reflect local or national standards with an appropriate balance between standards on the one hand, and parents and students needs and satisfaction, on the other.
Studying school management and school evaluation in Japan gives a lot of opportunities for the observation of different approaches and the finding of different paths for the improvement of the school education system. This however, should be accompanied by a proper consideration of the national conditions, traditions and goals in education as well as a broad consultation with the help of which a common understanding between educational authorities, schools, teachers and parents should be reached. And yet school evaluation is an important issue in future educational reforms in Bulgaria and is surely something that schools, parents and the community should consider not merely as another task to be fulfilled but with a proper understanding of underlying principles and possibilities for school improvement and enforcement.

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