

SHOULD MANAGERS WALK AROUND OR WALK AWAY? PERCEPTIONS ABOUT AND EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

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***ABSTRACT:** This article reports the findings from an empirical study at Norwegian schools and hospitals aimed at examining professional employees' perceptions about and expectations towards their managers. A framework based on four organization theory approaches was used: the professional and street-level bureaucracy approach, the management-leadership approach, the relationship between employers and employees, and the ideas of organizations as loosely coupled or decoupled systems. The results indicate that professional employees want their managers to motivate and encourage them and to give them feedback, rather than wanting autonomy and perceiving the managers to have other interests than they do. Thus, rather than wanting their managers to walk away, they want them to walk around. The challenge of being a manager in such organizations is not that of autonomy ideals among the employees or the handling of opposing interests; rather, it is because the demand for leadership exceeds what the managers are able to supply.*

Managers necessarily have followers, or at least those who are supposed to follow. These followers have some ideas about management and leadership; i.e., they hold perceptions about and expectations towards their actual managers as well as managers in general. Such perceptions and expectations are important for how management can be exerted. More than in other types of organizations, such perceptions and expectations are important in organizations in which professionals, employees that have crucial knowledge and expertise for the organizations, are the main workforce. Compared with most other employees, professionals regularly work more autonomously and they hold knowledge and expertise on which the organizations, and thus the managers, are

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dependent. In short, the relationships between managers and employees are more in favor of the employees in professional organizations than in more traditional ones.

There are at least two main approaches to the study of the relationships between managers and employees in professional organizations. For one thing, the same methods as for any organization are used, e.g., 360-degree feedback of followers' relationships to managers (Edwards 1996). These approaches are based on the basic idea that managers, by means of others, are supposed to obtain some goals or get some work done. This can be done by means of instructions to the employees: the managers can decide visions, goals, and strategies, or rules can be worked out. Furthermore, the managers are supposed to motivate, encourage, and empower their employees. The crucial point is that someone is supposed to direct and make fruitful relationships with some others.

The other main approach to the study of relationships between managers and professional employees is the basic idea that professional employees want autonomy and resist attempts to steer and direct them, e.g., Raelin (1985, 35): "Perhaps the most critical problem management faces in its association with professionals is how to handle the professionals' insistence on autonomy. This desire for autonomy clashes with the expectations of management regarding the proper role of the employee. Employees are hired presumably to conform to the basic goals and procedures of the enterprise. For the most part, management will not tolerate professionals establishing their own agendas and being controlled by their own peers." There is a lack of studies, however, that examine these phenomena empirically. What kind of perceptions and expectations do professional employees actually hold? This study is done to examine these issues. It is based on four organization theory perspectives: the professional and street-level bureaucracy approach, the management/leadership perspective, the employer/employee approach, and the idea of organizations as loosely coupled or decoupled systems.

The core idea of the study is that the ways in which organization theory and leadership scholars analyze professional organizations do or may affect the phenomena in question. I examine to what degree these perceptions and expectations are influenced by the four theoretical perspectives mentioned above. The professional employees may hold perceptions and expectations according to these approaches by various mechanisms, however. For one thing, such ideas may be quite commonly known, not limited to managers as the primary target group. Similar to all others, professional employees are likely to know these ideas. Other theoretical approaches are not necessarily so common, but describe processes and phenomena in professional organizations or claim to do so. Perceptions about and expectations towards the managers based on such insights may be brought about either by professional employees' explicit knowledge by means of literature, seminars, etc. Alternatively, the employees may have recognized the same phenomena and processes as the organization theory and leadership scholars have described. This seems likely, because it is the same type of organizations that are theoretically studied and in which professional employees have their work. In this case, of course, the academic terms and notions are not interesting, but rather the phenomena and processes by themselves, independently of what academic scholars call them.

Since the purpose of this study is to examine professional employees' cognitions about leadership, the functioning of the organizations in question is not focused upon, acknowledging that the professional employees' cognitions about such functioning are

not necessarily correct. An organization may, for example, be loosely coupled even if the professional employees are not aware of it, and there may be more or less congruent goals and interests among groups within an organization than a professional actually perceives. The perceptions about and expectations towards management, on the other hand, are probably derived from the professional employees' ideas about the functioning of the organizations.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of this study is to examine

1. to what degree professional employees' perceptions and expectations are affected by the four relevant organization theory perspectives.

Based on the results from this question, the next one arises--how variability in these perceptions and expectations can be accounted for; i.e., explained by relevant independent variables:

2. how individual and contextual independent variables can explain variations in perceptions and expectations based on the above-mentioned theoretical approaches.

By focusing on perceptions and expectations among employees, the study takes a demand perspective on management, acknowledging similarities between the ways goods, services, and experiences on the one hand, and job-related issues such as leadership, on the other hand, are perceived and evaluated. Oliver (1997, 17) suggests a framework with two dimensions for evaluation of objects--complexity and episodic blending; i.e., a scale where unique episodes are on one end and constant experiences on the other. Job-related issues, according to Oliver, are complex and scheduled, repetitive episodes.

Professional employees' demands upon their managers, i.e., the ways in which the employees perceive them and what expectations they hold towards them, will heavily affect how management and leadership can be exerted. Thus, the results of the study may enable managers to focus on managerial efforts that are likely to produce results rather than superfluous ones or endeavors with less potential to bring about any major improvements. Furthermore, if professional employees hold inconsistent or contradictory expectations or their demands exceed what is doable for managers, the results of this study may make managers more able to make rational choices between expectations. Lastly, it might be considered whether some of the perceptions and expectations should be changed or modified.

The study was conducted in the health and education sectors in Norway, i.e., in organizations where the basic tasks are performed by professionals such as physicians, nurses, and teachers. Furthermore, these sectors are large and therefore resource consuming. Studies that may contribute to the improvement of quality or cost effectiveness in these sectors are, accordingly, very interesting.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework of the study is made up of two dimensions. The first examines cognitive categories:

1. Perceptions about the functions and roles of public sector managers.
2. Expectations about public sector managerial behavior.

The second dimension in the framework is the four theoretical approaches mentioned earlier. These organization theory approaches are included in the framework either because they may be sources for common assumptions about the relationships that are examined in this study or because they give or claim to give relevant descriptions of how professional organizations are functioning. While all of them are potential explanations for professionals' perceptions of and expectations towards management, they differ as to how they explain these phenomena. The management-leadership perspective is mainly normative, giving recommendations about what managers should do. The other theoretical approaches are more descriptive, claiming to explain organizational processes and phenomena. For all approaches, the crucial point in the present study is the degree to which this way of reasoning has influenced professional employees' perceptions of and expectations towards managers.

Perceptions

Perceptions are the processes of organizing and interpreting information received from the outside world (Lahey 2001). Professionals' perceptions about managers may be influenced by

1. General norms, values, and taken-for-granted assumptions. Perceptions about relationships between employees and managers may be influenced by cultural factors within the entire society.
2. Workplace experiences. Employees meet and interact with managers at workplaces. Because professionals may hold norms that are formed during their education, the impacts of workplace experiences on perceptions of managers may be less significant for professional employees than for other subordinates. Their actual encounters take place at a later stage in their careers than what is true for other employees, since they stayed at colleges and universities for rather long periods. Professionals may also perceive themselves as representatives of their professions. This is of great importance for jurisdictional issues; i.e., what kind of work professionals are and are not entitled to do (Abbott 1988). Additionally, by considering what is going on in their organizations, professionals may arrive at conclusions similar to those in the organization and leadership textbooks (see point 3 below). After all, it is the same phenomena that is experienced and described, and if the scholars are right, it should be no surprise if some employees have discovered the same things.

3. Organizational understandings according to theoretical analyses. Professionals may obtain understandings of how organizations are functioning by being taught in various organizational and management education, seminars, courses, or books.

The professionals' perceptions of managers examined in this study are similar to the implicit leadership concept (Offermann, Kennedy, and Wirtz 1994). They suggest that such implicit leadership theories are generated and refined over time as a result of people's experiences with actual leaders or descriptions of leaders (45). Offermann, Kennedy, and Wirtz revealed these implicit theories by asking people to generate terms that described leaders generally, not the respondents' experiences with actual leaders. By means of factor analyses, eight factors that described leaders were found: sensitivity, dedication, tyranny, charisma, attractiveness, masculinity, intelligence, and strength.

By assuming that professional employees' perceptions and expectations are or may be made up from one or more of the four theoretical perspectives examined, the present study is more deductive than the Offermann, Kennedy, and Wirtz approach.

Expectations

Expectations are future-oriented anticipations of what will or may happen. They are based on prior experience, current circumstances, or other sources of information (Oliver 1997, 68). Such anticipations may be mere computations or conjectures of the likelihood of some future events. This is the case in probability analyses, in game theory, and in a variety of strategic analyses. This type of reasoning is also found in Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, in which the focal individuals are portrayed as evaluating the relations between efforts and performance and between performance and rewards.

The anticipation of quality or performance is another type of expectation: people are assumed to have levels of preference or tolerance for goods and services (Oliver 1997, 72). This kind of expectation is also similar to the notion of met expectations (Wanous et al. 1992). For the present study about expectations towards managers, this latter approach is the more useful. Professionals' acquisition of these expectations is assumed to be similar to that of perceptions, i.e., by cultural impacts, workplace experiences, and by theoretical analyses of organizations. Furthermore, such expectations may be reinforced by internal and external experiences, e.g., anecdotes about leadership excellence.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Theoretical perspectives were included in the framework of the study because they do or may affect professionals' perceptions of and expectations towards management. They differ substantially, however, in how they explain these phenomena. The management/leadership approach is normative, by giving more or less explicit recommendations to managers about how to manage. The employees, accordingly, may hold perceptions and expectations according to these recommendations. The other approaches describe or claim to describe phenomena and processes in professional

organizations. Professional employees may have acquired perceptions and expectations according to these perspectives in the three ways described above.

The Professional and Street-level Bureaucracy Perspective

When describing professional organizations and street-level bureaucracies, Mintzberg (1979), Freidson (1970, 1986, 1994), Abbott (1988), and Lipsky (1980) emphasize the lack of managerial control. Freidson (1994, 63) states that “management can control the resources connected with the work, but it cannot control most of what the workers do and how they do it.” Thus, according to Freidson, management “does perform logistic functions, but is essentially stripped of what Weber considered to be the prime characteristic of administrative authority--the legitimate right to exercise imperative coordination” (64). Lipsky (1980, xii) similarly states that the policies of such agencies are made by street-level bureaucrats rather than by the managers.

For the purpose of this study, professionals’ perceptions and expectations are emphasized, as an extended version of Mintzberg’s (1979, 31ff) support staff. The professional and street-level bureaucracy perspective thus focuses on the facilitating functions of managers. Their primary tasks are to ensure that practical and administrative matters are functioning well.

The Management/Leadership Approach

The main idea in this perspective is that managers, by means of others, bring about some organizational goals or accomplish tasks. Management is the head of the organization and there is a division of work and responsibilities between managers, who set goals and work out plans, and subordinates, who carry out orders and instructions. This idea is found in several versions of *Scientific Management* (Taylor 1911), which took only monetary incentives into consideration, and in modern approaches that typically synthesize organizational goals and employees’ needs for meaning in their work.

The management/leadership approach de-emphasizes conflict and diverging interests. Rather, there is assumed to be a basic harmony between employers and employees. Conflicts are regularly explained as managerial failures, e.g., that people did not have the opportunity to express their opinions and emotions openly.

By giving recommendations to managers about what to do to improve the functioning of their organizations or organizational units, the management/leadership approach is mainly normative. Employees may adopt perceptions and expectations according to these recommendations; i.e., that managers should act according to these recommendations. The approach is an important part of the present culture; the huge number of leadership books, for instance, indicates that people nowadays give great emphasis to this reasoning. By this predominance, the approach may have influenced not only managers’, but also non-leaders’ ways of reasoning. By these perceptions and expectations, employees may demand leadership.

The Employer/Employee Approach

This is the classical Marxist class struggle perspective, portraying individuals and groups as having opposing interests, e.g., Braverman (1974). Since the seminal article of Emerson (1962), the power approach to management has been important in the study of organizations. Numerous books have been written (e.g., Pfeffer 1992; Kramer and Neal 1998) and studies have been made describing organizations as arenas for the pursuit of group or individual interests. These interests, furthermore, may well be at the expense of the organization.

Deviant interests are typically about salaries and work conditions. But other topics may be conflict dimensions between professionals and managers, such as resource allocation between established and new strategic areas within organizations.

In this approach, professionals perceive their managers as having interests that conflict with their own--in extreme cases, as their exploiters. As to expectations, it is possible to argue quite convincingly both that professionals should want their managers to walk away as well as around if they want to protect their self- or group interests. For one thing, professionals may want their managers to be remote, enjoying autonomy and lack of managers' supervision. If managers are away, however, the professionals take the risk that the interests of someone else, not their own, will be taken into consideration.

The Decoupling and Loose Coupling Approaches

The loose coupling and decoupling perspectives (Weick 1976; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Brunsson 1989, 2002, 2003) suggest that managers, on the one hand, and operative core employees, on the other hand, do their tasks quite independently of each other. Managers typically produce symbolic action such as talk, while the operating core employees are performing the basic activities in an organization. Importantly, such independence is described as a virtue rather than a shortcoming: legitimacy is produced by the managers' symbolic action. If too tightly coupled to the legitimacy-generating rhetoric of the managers, the actions by operating core members may be hampered. Because of the dominance of the management/leadership approach, in which tight couplings and correspondence between what is said and what is done is explicitly or implicitly recommended, this way of reasoning may be perceived as quite odd and even offensive.

The loose coupling and decoupling perspectives approaches are remarkably silent as to how the division of labor and responsibilities between managers and the operating core employees is actually brought about and who the main actors in these processes are. For the purpose of this study, the professionals' autonomy is emphasized, and this autonomy is considered to benefit the organization. The professional employees, accordingly, are supposed to expect their managers to go away, i.e., not to interfere in their work.

CONTEXT

This study was done in the two most substantial areas of the Norwegian public sector: education and health care. The scope of these sectors was the decisive factor for

studying them. Insight and knowledge about professionals' perceptions and expectations in these areas have more substantial practical potential than what is true for smaller areas of the public sector. Additionally, the size of the areas made it possible to examine the perceptions and expectations at several organizational levels: each organization is so large that several levels are necessary. Both primary and secondary schools are examined. In secondary schools, the perceptions and expectations about principals as well as section managers were examined, while only those about principals were examined in the primary schools. At hospitals, three levels were examined. Level 1 refers to the lowest managerial level for doctors and nurses. Level 2 refers to department managers who are managers for both doctors and nurses within the department in question. Level 3 refers to hospital managers.

Model and Inclusion of Independent Variables

The first of the two research questions in this study is quite explorative, by measuring the level of perception and expectation according to the various theoretical perspectives on which the study is based. The second research question, on the other hand, is deductive, based on the basic model(s) in figure 1.

The model includes these independent variables:

1. Context. The most striking difference between the two contexts in this study, schools and hospitals, is that of three types of relationships: a) between employees and clients, b) among employees, and c) between employees and their managers. While schools are organized to provide education towards many students simultaneously, the work in hospitals is diagnosing, treating, and giving care to individual patients. School work, accordingly, is done by one or a few teachers and is inherently more individualistic than hospital work, which is typically organized as teamwork, often with several occupational groups.
2. Professional level. There are many ways in which to define professional level. Hernes (2002) suggests three approaches: a) the combination of values and type of knowledge that is used, i.e., occupations with autotelic values and scientific knowledge have a higher professional level than occupations with heterotelic values and empirical (trial and error) knowledge; b) length of education and the combination of education and occupation, e.g., the degree to which outsiders may perform the work in question; and c) the vertical division of work, i.e., whether the same persons or persons in the same profession make the decisions as well as perform the work. Hernes' conclusion is that these approaches lead to quite similar ranking of professions as to level.
Among the professions included in this study, doctors have the highest professional level according to all three of the above-mentioned criteria. Furthermore, because of length of education and the degree to which other than fully educated teachers may take jobs, there is a slightly higher professional level among teachers in secondary schools than in primary schools. The professional level for teachers is quite similar to that for nurses.
3. Gender
4. Age

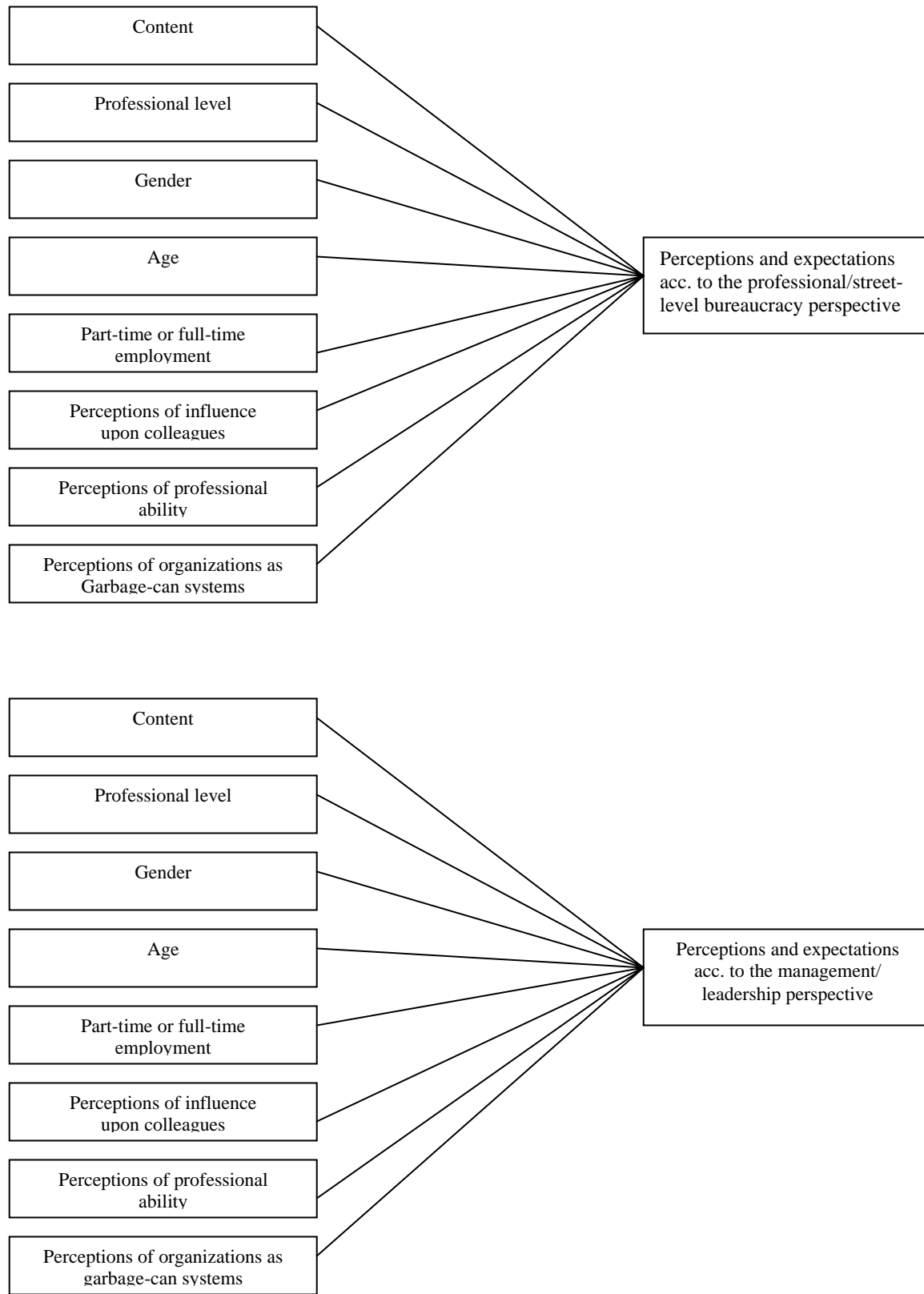


FIGURE 1. Four Organizational Theory Approaches

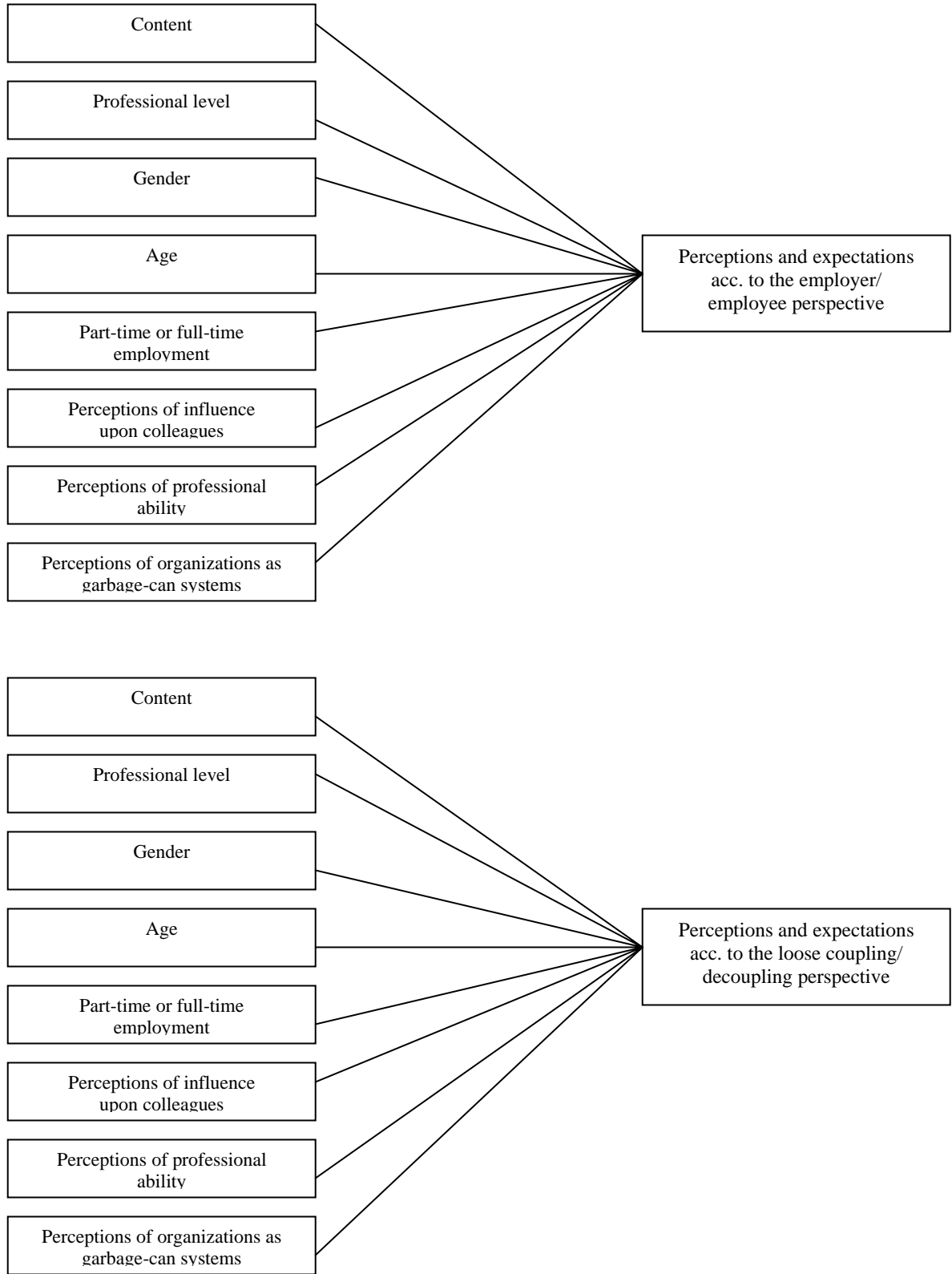


FIGURE 1. Continued

5. Ratio of full-time employment
6. Perception of influence upon colleagues, i.e., the respondents' standings as informal leaders
7. Perception of professional ability
8. Perceptions of organization as a garbage-can system (Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972)

HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses are developed below based on analytical reasoning about relationships between independent and dependent variables. For many of the relationships, hypotheses are not developed; the independent variables in these cases are control variables. Relationships for which hypotheses are not developed, but turned out to be significant, are discussed in the results section below.

To avoid too much complexity, hypotheses are not specified as to the three different organizational levels of this study. The results, however, are discussed according to this issue.

As mentioned above, there are no unequivocal expectations to be derived from the employer/employee perspective: it may be argued that individual and group interests may be best served if managers are involved in the professional work. This can also be achieved by managers that are distant: the employees do what they want to without any purview and supervision from their managers. From the employer/employee perspective, therefore, only hypotheses for perceptions are developed. For the other approaches, the same hypotheses are developed for both perceptions and expectations; an individual's perceptions and expectations are not likely to differ.

Because the work in hospitals is more complex and involves more people than the work in schools, there is likely to be more need for management in hospitals for task issues as well as for relationship issues. Thus:

H₁: Higher levels of perception and expectation will be found in hospitals than in schools.

The loose coupling and decoupling perspectives are developed by studying professional organizations. Because of the relationship differences described above, however, there are substantial differences between professional organizations. Schools are likely to be more loosely coupled than hospitals. Thus:

H₂: Lower levels of perception and expectation will be found in hospitals than in schools.

The professional bureaucracy and street-level bureaucracy perspectives describe managers as an extended support staff. As to professional level, higher-level professionals are more likely to be influenced by this perspective than others. For one thing, they have higher salaries. An economically optimal division of work between professionals and support staff functions, therefore, implies more use of support staff for higher-level than for lower-level professionals. Furthermore, higher-level professionals,

more so than lower-level professionals, may be accustomed to being supported and therefore expect more assistance. Thus:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between professional level and perceptions and expectations according to the professional bureaucracy/street-level bureaucracy perspective. Thus, doctors have higher levels of such perception and expectation than the other occupational groups, and teachers at secondary schools have higher levels of such perception and expectation than teachers at primary schools.

Employees at a higher professional level are likely to be more independent of their managers for task-related issues--i.e., what to do and how to do it--as well as for relational issues such as motivation. They are trained to do their work quite independently. Also, they are likely to be more self-motivated than lower-level professionals. Therefore:

H₄: There is a negative relationship between professional level and perceptions and expectations according to the professional management/leadership perspective. Thus, doctors have lower levels of such perceptions and expectations than other occupational groups, and teachers at secondary schools have lower levels than teachers at primary schools.

High-level professionals are likely to work more autonomously and with looser couplings to the system than low-level professionals who, to a greater extent, perform their tasks as decided by their superordinates. Thus:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between professional level and perceptions and expectations according to the loose couplings and decouplings perspective. Thus, doctors have higher levels of perception and expectation according to this perspective than other professional employees, and teachers at secondary schools have higher levels of these perceptions and expectations than teachers at primary schools.

An individual's standing as an informal leader is likely to reduce the employee's need for management as far as the relationship aspects are concerned. Therefore:

H₆: There is a negative relationship between influence upon colleagues and levels of perception and expectation according to the management/leadership perspective.

People with high levels of perception of influence among colleagues likely work quite autonomously. Therefore:

H₇: There is a positive relationship between influence among colleagues and levels of perception and expectation according to the loose coupling perspective.

An individual's professional ability is likely to reduce the need for directions from managers as to what to do and how to do it. Thus:

H₈: There is a negative relationship between professional ability and levels of perception and expectation according to the management/leadership perspective.

An individual's standing as to professional ability is likely to make him/her work more autonomously. Thus

H₉: There is a positive relationship between professional ability and levels of perception and expectation according to the loose coupling perspective.

People that hold the idea that organizations are garbage-can systems are likely to perceive their managers in quite modest roles, rejecting the management/leadership perspective idea that managers, by means of others, ensure that goals are accomplished and work done. Similarly, they are likely to have only minor expectations towards them. Thus:

H₁₀: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of organizations as garbage-can systems and levels of perception and expectation according to the management/leadership perspective.

The idea that organizations are quite anarchic is quite similar to the loosely coupled system and decoupling approach and the idea that professionals should work quite autonomously. Thus:

H₁₁: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of organizations as garbage-can systems and levels of perception and expectation according to the loose coupling perspective.

The hypotheses are summarized in table 1, in which a plus symbol (+) indicates a positive relation and a negative symbol (-) indicates a negative relation.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

This study aimed at examining the perceptions of and expectations toward management among professionals. A quantitative approach was most able to give answers to these research questions. Teachers, nurses, and physicians were included as respondents in the study because they are the main professional groups in two major areas of the public sector.

Teachers in primary schools and secondary schools participated in the study. The nurses and doctors were employees in middle-range hospitals. The study was done as a postal survey. A total of 1,844 questionnaires were sent, of which 650, or about 35 percent, were returned. The response rate is quite similar within the subgroups.

The respondents were distributed into the groups shown in table 2.

While only the managerial level was examined in primary schools, two and three levels were included in the questionnaires used at secondary schools and hospitals, respectively.

TABLE 1
Summary of Hypotheses

	<i>Professional/ Street-level Bureaucracy Perspective</i>	<i>Management/ Leadership Perspective</i>	<i>Employer/ Employee Perspective</i>	<i>Loose Coupling/ Decoupling Perspective</i>
Context		H ₁ +*		H ₂ -**
Professional level	H ₃ +	H ₄ -		H ₅ +
Gender				
Age				
Full-time or part-time work				
Influence upon colleagues		H ₆ -		H ₇ +
Professional ability		H ₈ -		H ₉ +
Perceptions of organizations as garbage-can systems		H ₁₀ -		H ₁₁ +

Notes: *higher in hospitals than in schools
 ** lower in hospitals than in schools
 + = positive relation; - = negative relation

TABLE 2
Respondents in the Four Categories

Teachers in high schools	262
Teachers in primary schools	187
Doctors	56
Nurses	145
Total	650

Measurements

Quantitative data was gathered using a survey questionnaire. Respondents were asked to answer questions and to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. There were no open-ended questions. Questionnaires were tested in a pilot study before the final version was sent. The questions and statements are presented in tables 3 and 4.

Independent Variables

The independent variables were partly examined by direct questions. The questions and statements used to examine the perceptual constructs are listed in table 5.

For the management/leadership approach, an index variable was computed.

RESULTS

In the tables below, level 1 indicates the lowest managerial level at secondary schools and hospitals. Level 2 indicates principals in both primary and secondary schools and the department level at hospitals. Level 3 indicates general-level managers at hospitals.

Table 6 unequivocally demonstrates the difference between the professional and street-level bureaucracy approach and the management/leadership perspective on one hand, and the employer/employee and the loose coupling and decoupling perspectives on the other hand. While the first two have much influence on professional employees' perceptions, the idea of opposing interests and loose couplings is largely rejected. The only modification of this pattern is that of relationships towards hospital managers. Doctors tend to hold some antagonistic perceptions towards these managers. There is also a higher average score for nurses.

Expectations associated with the three relevant perspectives are presented in table 7. Please note the difference in scale. While a 0 - 4 scale is used for the professional and street-level bureaucracy perspectives, a -2 - +2 scale is used for the loose coupling and decoupling approach.

This table demonstrates a pattern very similar to that for perceptions; professional employees express high levels of expectation according to the professional/street-level bureaucracy and management/leadership perspectives. Furthermore, they do not want their managers to go away; they reject the idea that managers should not interfere in their work. There is a slight difference between the levels of expectation based on the

TABLE 3
Perceptions

Scale: -2 Strongly disagree - +2 Strongly agree

<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Operationalizations (Statements)</i>
Professional/street-level bureaucracy perspective	The primary tasks for managers are practical and administrative.
Management/leadership perspective	By means of others, managers ensure that the goals of the school/hospital are accomplished and that necessary tasks are done.
Employer/employee perspective	Managers' goals and interests are not aligned with my goals and interests.
Loose coupling and decoupling perspective	As professionals*, our goal is to run the organization, and we do so, independently of the managers. Sometimes the school/hospital may be better off if we teachers/doctors /nurses have a relaxed relationship to what management is expressing.

Note: *In the questionnaires the terms teachers, doctors, and nurses were used.

TABLE 4
Expectations

Basic question: To what degree do you consider these items to be important managerial tasks?

Scale: 0 = Not an important managerial task – 4 = Very important managerial task

Professional bureaucracy/street-level bureaucracy perspective:	ensuring that the practical and administrative things are working well
Management/leadership perspective:	providing a good organizational culture
	taking advice from professionals* before decisions are made
	deciding visions, goals, and strategies
	encouraging and recognizing professionals*
	managing on educational/medical/nursing issues
	motivating professionals* to make the best possible effort
	being visible, firm, and clear towards professionals*.
	giving specific feedback as to how professionals* are doing their jobs
	establishing systems that encourage teachers/doctors/nurses to greater efforts
 <i>Scale: -2 = Strongly disagree - +2 = Strongly agree</i>	
Loose coupling approach:	Managers should not intervene in teachers'/doctors'/nurses' professional work

Note: *In the questionnaires the terms teachers, doctors, and nurses were used.

TABLE 5
Perceptual Independent Variables

How would you characterize your influence upon your colleagues?	<i>Scale with these answer alternatives: well below average, below average, average, greater than average, much greater than average</i>
How would you characterize your professional ability?	

professional/street-level bureaucracy and management/leadership perspective for doctors towards hospital managers: they tend to consider the management/leadership perspective somewhat less important than the support staff aspects of management associated with the professional/street-level bureaucracy perspective. The ideas of the loose coupling/decoupling approach are largely rejected. There are some interesting exceptions,

however. For one thing, doctors quite unequivocally do not want hospital managers to interfere in their work (score +1.13). Also, teachers are quite neutral to the idea of loose coupling and decoupling as far as relationships to principals are concerned (score -0.05).

The results presented in tables 6 and 7 can be summarized as support for the idea of management by walking around and a rejection of the idea that managers should walk away.

Regression Analyses

The second research question in this study is how variability in the levels of perceptions and expectations can be explained by contextual and individual independent variables. Since the results presented in tables 6 and 7 are reported specified to context and professions, this question is to some extent accounted for above. To examine this question more thoroughly, however, regression analyses based on the above-developed hypotheses were done. The results are presented in tables 8 and 9. As far as the context and professional level variables are concerned, results are reported as dummy variables for the professions that are included in this study. The results as to context must be inferred from the results for each profession.

These analyses demonstrate major differences as to how much of the variability in the dependent variables is explained. A larger part of this variability is explained for the employer/employee and loose coupling perspectives than for the professional/street-level bureaucracy and the management/leadership perspectives. The only exception from this is expectations associated with the management/leadership perspective of level 1 relationships. A summary of the results for the relationships between the various independent and dependent variables is presented in table 10.

The results may be summarized in this way:

- The professional employees in this study perceive their managers according to the professional/street-level bureaucracy and management/leadership perspectives and expect them to behave according to these perspectives.
- To a much lower degree, the respondents perceive their managers according to the employer/employee approach, and the same is true for perceptions and expectations according to the loose coupling and decoupling approach.

Some of the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables and the level of perception and expectation associated with the four organization theory perspectives are, to a smaller or greater extent, confirmed:

- There are higher levels of perception and expectation at hospitals than at schools (H₁).
- The levels of perception and expectation are generally lower for higher-level professionals than for lower-level professionals (H₄).

TABLE 6
Perceptions – Means

	<i>Professional/Street-level Bureaucracy Perspective</i>	<i>Management/Leadership Perspective</i>	<i>Employer/Employee Perspective</i>	<i>Loose Couplings Perspective</i>
Teachers in secondary schools				
Level 1				
Mean	.67	.68	-1.02	-.16
N	260	257	258	259
Std. Deviation	1.195	1.072	1.126	1.007
Level 2				
Mean	.69	.84	-.77	-.11
N	257	255	256	258
Std. Deviation	1.282	1.069	1.258	1.044
Teachers in primary schools				
Level 2				
Mean	.46	.83	-1.26	-.45
N	184	183	184	182
Std. Deviation	1.258	1.128	.979	.976
Doctors at hospitals				
Level 1				
Mean	.10	.77	-1.31	-.39
N	51	52	55	52
Std. Deviation	1.513	1.262	1.034	1.068
Level 2				
Mean	.48	.96	-.71	-.19
N	52	52	56	53
Std. Deviation	1.350	1.120	1.187	.952

Level 3					
Mean	1.06	.98	.50	.40	
N	52	52	56	54	
Std. Deviation	1.227	1.129	1.293	.958	
Nurses at hospitals					
Level 1					
Mean	.96	1.11	-1.21	-.82	
N	139	141	143	139	
Std. Deviation	1.160	1.015	1.131	.976	
Level 2					
Mean	1.04	1.17	-.75	-.63	
N	139	141	142	140	
Std. Deviation	1.076	.941	1.240	.960	
Level 3					
Mean	1.06	1.09	-.08	-.43	
N	140	141	142	139	
Std. Deviation	1.133	.996	1.327	.997	

TABLE 7
Expectations - Means

	<i>Management/Leadership Perspective</i>	<i>Professional/Street-level Bureaucracy Perspective</i>	<i>Employer/Employee Perspective</i>	<i>Loose Couplings Perspective</i>
<i>Scale:</i>	<i>0-4</i>	<i>0-4</i>		<i>-2 - +2</i>
Teachers in secondary schools				
Level 1				
Mean	3.78	3.30		-.37
N	260	255		259
Std. Deviation	.505	.556		1.270
Level 2				
Mean	3.60	3.15		-.05
N	258	245		258
Std. Deviation	.660	.556		1.296
Teachers in primary schools				
Level 2				
Std. Deviation	3.70	3.32		-.65
N	186	182		184
Std. Deviation	.524	.451		1.065
Doctors at hospitals				
Level 1				
Mean	3.61	3.58		-1.39
N	56	50		54
Std. Deviation	.731	.446		1.089

Level 2				
Mean	3.77	3.50		-0.71
N	56	51		55
Std. Deviation	.467	.466		1.257
Level 3				
Mean	3.71	2.99		1.13
N	55	51		54
Std. Deviation	.599	.576		1.065
Nurses at hospitals				
Level 1				
Mean	3.78	3.67		-1.50
N	143	136		143
Std. Deviation	.509	.326		.956
Level 2				
Mean	3.69	3.45		-1.04
N	143	134		144
Std. Deviation	.655	.412		1.064
Level 3				
Mean	3.41	2.96		-.34
N	142	134		143
Std. Deviation	.900	.620		1.327

TABLE 8
Perceptions - Regression Analyses

	<i>Professional/Street- level Bureaucracy Perspective</i>	<i>Management/ Leadership Perspective</i>	<i>Employer/Employee Perspective</i>	<i>Loose Coupling and Decoupling Perspective</i>
	<i>Standardized Coefficients Beta</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients Beta</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients Beta</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients Beta</i>
Level 1				
Dummy variables				
Teachers in secondary schools	.026	-.069	-.002	.082
Doctors in hospitals	-.127*	-.001	-.124*	-.072
Nurses in hospitals	.150*	.164**	-.123*	-.240**
Gender	.027	.054	.038	.038
Age	-.002	-.075	-.013	.024
Ratio of full-time employment	-.051	-.008	-.010	.122**
Perceptions of influence upon colleagues	.090	-.087	-.068	-.119*
Perceptions of professional ability	-.091	-.015	.067	.109*
Perceptions of organizations as garbage-can system	-.109*	-.103*	.240**	.222**
R Square	.067	.063	.073	.176
Adjusted R Square	.048	.043	.053	.158
Level 2				
Dummy variables				
Teachers in secondary schools	.113*	.050	.120*	.046
Teachers in primary schools	-.114**	-.054	-.192**	-.075
Doctors in hospitals	.008	.067	.023	-.039
Nurses in hospitals	.189**	.157**	.068	-.152**

Gender	-.025	-.022	.092*	.077
Age	-.047	-.069	-.069	-.010
Ratio of full-time employment	.033	.026	-.002	.122**
Perceptions of influence upon colleagues	-.019	-.049	-.076	-.095*
Perceptions of professional ability	-.017	.010	.044	.177**
Perceptions of organizations as garbage-can system	-.017	-.119**	.328**	.293**
R Square	.035	.037	.151	.172
Adjusted R Square	.020	.022	.139	.160
Level 3				
Dummy variables				
Doctors in hospitals	.013	.003	.043	.229**
Nurses in hospitals	-.038	.044	-.298**	-.353**
Gender	.088	-.036	.089	.065
Age	-.044	.033	-.181*	-.051
Full-time or part-time work	-.253**	-.064	.044	.066
Perceptions of influence upon colleagues	-.110	-.080	.063	-.097
Perceptions of professional ability	-.048	.120	-.048	.030
Perceptions of organizations as garbage-can system	.032	-.068	.397**	.289**
R Square	.081	.028	.248	.315
Adjusted R Square	.040	-.015	.216	.285

* indicates statistical significance on 95% level

** indicates statistical significance on 99% level

TABLE 9
Expectations - Regression Analyses

	<i>Professional/Street- level Bureaucracy Perspective</i>	<i>Management/ Leadership Perspective</i>	<i>Employer/Employee Perspective</i>	<i>Loose Coupling/ Decoupling Perspective</i>
	<i>Standardized Coefficients Beta</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients Beta</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients Beta</i>
Level 1				
Dummy variables				
Teachers in secondary schools	.025	-.234**		.218**
Doctors in hospitals	-.096	.064		-.141**
Nurses in hospitals	-.022	.112		-.203**
Gender	-.077	-.257**		.081
Age	.008	.072		.137**
Ratio of full-time employment	.011	.035		.000
Perceptions of influence upon colleagues	.034	.109*		-.070
Perceptions of professional ability	.073	.006		.064
Perceptions of organizations as garbage-can system	.048	.140**		.051
R Square	.025	.219		.259
Adjusted R Square	.005	.203		.244
Level 2				
Dummy variables				
Teachers in secondary schools	-.065	-.152**		.174**
Teachers in primary schools	.042	.030		-.077*
Doctors in hospitals	.049	.126**		-.064
Nurses in hospitals	-.054	.063		-.155**

Gender	-.146**	-.203**	.128**
Age	.001	.074	.011
Ratio of full-time employment	.022	.021	-.039
Perceptions of influence upon colleagues	.020	.053	-.029
Perceptions of professional ability	.040	.037	.049
Perceptions of organizations as garbage-can system	.003	.017	.138**
R Square	.027	.103	.139
Adjusted R Square	.012	.090	.126
Level 3			
Dummy variables			
Doctors in hospitals	.103	.024	.340**
Nurses in hospitals	-.206*	-.043	-.340**
Gender	.054	-.058	.229**
Age	-.127	.084	-.015
Ratio of full-time employment	-.033	-.057	.050
Perceptions of influence upon colleagues	-.039	.042	-.021
Perceptions of professional ability	.055	.112	-.016
Perceptions of organizations as garbage-can system	.121	.100	.121*
R Square	.076	.040	.431
Adjusted R Square	.036	-.005	.407

* indicates statistical significance on 95% level

** indicates statistical significance on 99% level

There are mixed results for some other relationships:

- The hypothesized relationships between professional level and levels of perception and expectation are confirmed for teachers and disconfirmed for doctors and nurses (H₃).
- The hypothesized negative relationships between professional levels and levels of perception were confirmed for doctors and nurses at all three levels, but disconfirmed for levels of expectation for doctors and nurses at level 1 (H₅).
- The hypothesized positive relationships between professional ability and levels of perception and expectation were confirmed at level 1, but no other significant results were found (H₉).
- The hypothesized negative relationships between the perceptions of organizations as garbage-can systems and the levels of perception and expectation are confirmed for perceptions on levels 1, 2, and 3, but disconfirmed for expectations on level 1. For expectations on levels 2 and 3, there were no significant findings (H₁₀).

The hypothesized relationships were disconfirmed and/or there were no significant results for these relationships:

- No significant relationships were found between respondents' perceptions of influence among colleagues and the levels of perception and expectation (H₆).
- The hypothesized positive relationships between influence among colleagues and perceptions and levels of expectation were disconfirmed for level 1, but no other significant results were found (H₇).
- No significant relationships were found between respondents' perceptions of professional ability and levels of perception and expectation (H₈).

Significant results for non-hypothesized relationships were found:

- Employees at hospitals have lower levels of perception at level 1 than employees at schools.
- Teachers at primary schools have lower levels of perception than teachers at secondary schools at level 2.
- Males have lower levels of expectation than females on level 3.
- Males have lower levels of expectation than females at levels 1 and 2.
- Older professional employees have lower levels of perception than younger employees.
- Professional employees with higher employment ratios have lower levels of perception at level 3 than professionals with lower employment ratios.
- A negative relationship between perceptions of organizations as garbage-can systems and levels of perception was found at level 1.
- Positive relationships between perceptions of organizations as garbage-can systems and levels of perception were found at levels 1, 2, and 3.

TABLE 10
Summary of Results from Regression Analyses

	<i>Professional/Street-level Bureaucracy Perspective</i>	<i>Management/Leadership Perspective</i>	<i>Employer/Employee Perspective</i>	<i>Loose Coupling and Decoupling Perspective</i>
Context		H ₁₊		H ₂₋
Perceptions			Negative effect for hospitals compared with schools at level 1	
Expectations		Confirmed at levels 1 and 2		Confirmed at levels 1 and 2
Professional level	H ₃₊	H ₄₋		H ₅₋
Perceptions	Disconfirmed for D/N at level 1 Confirmed for teachers at level 2 Disconfirmed for D/N at level 2	Confirmed for doctors/nurses at levels 1 and 2	Negative effect for teachers at primary schools at level 2 Negative effect for nurses at level 3	Confirmed for doctors/nurses at levels 1, 2, and 3
Expectations	Confirmed for doctors/nurses at level 3	Confirmed for teachers at level 1 Confirmed for D/N at level 1 Confirmed for teachers at level 2 Disconfirmed for D/N at level 2		Disconfirmed for doctors/nurses at level 1
Gender				
Perceptions	Males have lower-level perceptions than females on level 2	Males have lower-level perceptions than females on levels 1 and 2		

(table continues)

	<i>Professional/Street-level Bureaucracy Perspective</i>	<i>Management/Leadership Perspective</i>	<i>Employer/Employee Perspective</i>	<i>Loose Coupling and Decoupling Perspective</i>
Expectations		Males have lower-level expectations than females at levels 1 and 2		
Age				
Perceptions			Negative effect on level 3	
Expectations				Positive effect on level 1
Ratio of full-time employment				
Perceptions	Negative effect on level 3			Positive effect at levels 1 and 2
Expectations				
Perceptions of influence upon colleagues		H ₆ -		H ₇ +
Perceptions				Disconfirmed at level 1
Expectations		Disconfirmed at level 1		
Perceptions of professional ability		H ₈ -		H ₉ +
Perceptions				Confirmed at level 1
Expectations				
Perceptions of organizations as garbage-can systems		H ₁₀ -		H ₁₁ +
Perceptions		Confirmed at levels 1 and 2	Positive at levels 1, 2, and 3	Confirmed at levels 1, 2, and 3
Expectations	Negative effect on level 1	Disconfirmed at level 1		Confirmed at levels 2 and 3

DISCUSSION

The results of the explorative part of this study indicate that professional employees prefer their managers to walk around rather than to walk away. They seem to hold perceptions and expectations quite similar to a common understanding of organizations as entities similar to the ideal of a person (Brunsson 1990, 89), i.e., with one will and in which action is subsequent to intentions--as purposive manageable systems in which managers are supposed to give directions toward accomplishment of goals and to get work done, and to ensure good relationships with and motivation among employees. The examined perceptions and expectations may be explained by the cultural/cognitive pillar in institutional analyses of organizations (Scott 2001, 57ff). The idea of tensions between employees' desire for autonomy on the one hand, and managers' efforts to align professionals' interests with those of the organization (e.g., Raelin 1985), on the other hand, does not seem to be a major part of professional employees' perceptions and expectations. Neither do they, to any substantial degree, seem to perceive their managers as having opposing interests from their own.

This study does not reveal any data about the perceptions of and expectations towards managers at earlier points in time. According to Røvik (1998, 134), however, the idea that organizations are formal abstract entities is a quite recent one. Because of the close connection of this idea and the management/leadership approach examined in this study, the dominance of this perspective may have been less pronounced if examined at previous points in time.

To some extent, the results from the regression analyses modify the above-mentioned main findings. There are some differences between schools and hospitals, and higher-level professionals do have lower scores on the management/leadership variables and higher scores on the autonomy variables. As to the perceptual independent variables, there are, interestingly, no significant results for the respondents' perceptions of themselves as influential among colleagues and their professional ability and the dependent variables. Perceptions of organizations as garbage-can systems, on the other hand, reduce the levels of perception and expectation associated with the management/leadership perspective. Interestingly, perceptions of organizations as garbage-can systems seem to enhance the perceptions of managers as having opposing interests to those of the professional employees. The results, however, should more appropriately be interpreted as nuances between the groups in the study than as fundamental differences. The main finding of the study is that the professional/street-level bureaucracy and the management/leadership perspectives are best able to explain the examined cognitions among the professional employees.

These results, therefore, suggest another answer to the question of why it is more challenging to manage professional employees. Rather than a desire for autonomy and identification with their professions, the results indicate substantial expectations from professionals of managerial leadership. This expectation is more pronounced in hospitals than in schools, and at a higher level for lower-level than for higher-level professionals. This demand for leadership raises the question of whether it is possible for managers in professional organizations to cope with and fill the demand. Consider the case of a normal span of control in a school or hospital, with substantially more employees reporting to one manager than in other kinds of organizations. Additionally, and more in schools than in hospitals, employees' contact with their clients is regularly more frequent

than with their managers. The managers' ability to be near individual employees is quite limited. Employees probably expect more than managers are able to supply in the walk around alternative, thus establishing permanently unfulfilled expectations and potential dissatisfaction with their managers.

The results of this study have major implications for the size of administration in public services. In contrast to a supply argument, that the driving force for increasing administration is that managers want more comprehensive staffs (Niskanen 1971), the results of this study suggest that demand for management plays a major role. Professional employees' requests for managers' time and attention are more than most managers can supply. This demand may be an important explanation for why administrative units in organizations are increasing.

This study was done in two major public sectors in Norway, and despite some differences the findings are remarkably similar. This similarity prompts a question about the generalizability of the findings. The fact that respondents adopted a generalized understanding of organization and leadership across the two sectors makes it likely that the same pattern would be found in other public-sector organizations in Norway. As to generalizability between countries, it may be argued that one should be careful not to assume the same findings in other countries because of the special oil economy situation in Norway. In comparison with other countries, resources for public-sector spending are less limited. On the other hand, the generalized conception of organizations found in this study is an integrated part of New Public Management paradigm, which is the common way to understand public administration in Norway as well as in most Western countries. Along this line of reasoning, therefore, the findings of this study are likely to be similar in other countries.

The managerial challenge of the results of this study is to cope with the professional employees' demands for management. What can managers do when employees' expectations exceed their capacity? For one thing, managers can try to fulfill employees' expectations to the highest possible degree, e.g., by giving lower priority to other managerial tasks than to their relationships with employees. The second alternative is to make it explicitly clear to subordinates what expectations managers will try to fulfill and what expectations they intend to ignore. The strength of the management/leadership perspective, however, may make it difficult for managers to be explicit on this issue because they contradict well-established ways of reasoning and may even be perceived as offensive by employees. The third alternative is more in-depth change than in the second; i.e., explaining to subordinates the major differences between professional organizations and other types of organizations. Thus, not only the managerial reactions to professional employees' perceptions and expectations but also the perceptions and expectations themselves should be changed. If such changes are to be brought about, however, managers are not necessarily the best change agents.

Further research should examine how professionals' perceptions and expectations towards managers in other national and international settings differ from those included in this study.

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