

Swiss Nurse Education Reform: Receptivity to Change



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Plan of the Presentation

- Context: Nurse Education's Reform
- Theoretical Framework: Receptivity to Change Model
- Research Question
- Material and Method
- Results
- Summary and Conclusion

Swiss Nurse Education Reform

- 1995: University of Applied Sciences (UAS)
 - integration of professional education into the academic system
- 2001: First UAS of health and social work
 - 22 schools in 7 cantons (French speaking only)
 - 10 training tracks
 - 3 professional domains (care and health education, social work, mobility and rehabilitation)
 - 3`727 students in 2004, among them 1660 nursing students

UAS Central Tenets

- Harmonization
- Simplification
- Competition
- Cooperation

UAS “Missions”

- Pre-registration education
- Postgraduate education
- Applied research
- National and international collaborations

UAS Major Principles

- Shift from a:
 - Functioning in autarchy to a network perspective
 - Vertical organisation of nursing training to a horizontal and interdisciplinary educational concept
 - Student centred vocational teaching to a training built on disciplinary expertise
 - Conventional teacher's role to one of agent of change, focused on research and disciplinary development

Main Challenge

To implement the multiple dimensions
of the change
in a rather limited time
and without extra resources

Receptivity to Change's Model

(Pettigrew, Ferlie and McKee, 1992)

- « Receptive context »:
 - set of features of context, including actions of management, favourably associated with the achievement of a higher rate of strategic change
- « Non-receptive context »:
 - configuration of features which may be associated with blocks on change

Receptivity Factors

(Pettigrew, Ferlie and McKee, 1992)

1. Quality and coherence of policy
2. Key people leading the change
3. Long-term environmental pressure
4. Supportive organisational culture
5. Effective managerial educational relations
6. Cooperative inter-organisational networks
7. Simplicity and clarity of goals
8. The fit between the change agenda and the locale

Research Question

- How do the rate, pace and extent of changes vary accordingly to specific arrangements in the eight factors of the receptivity model?

Method

- Eight nursing schools
- Stratified sample of 24 representatives of :
 - School's direction
 - Nursing track
 - Nursing faculty members
- Semi-structured interviews
- Content analysis

Results Related to the Change's Process

- All of the schools obtained a first UAS accreditation
- Great variations observed in the rate, the pace and the extent of change
 - From minimal implementation to complete reengineering

Factor 1: Quality and Coherence of the Inter-Cantonal UAS Policy

- General agreement on the overall goal
 - but
- UAS policy generally perceived as incoherent and
- Its implementation seen as chaotic

- Despite a negative stance toward reform's content, the major reform's stake related to survival induced general commitment-building

Factor 2: Availability of Key People Leading Change

- “Quality” of key people has a positive influence
- Changes in key people
 - no influence on change
 - but linked with burn-out in the staff
- Defect of leadership
 - negative influence on change

Factor 3: Long-term Environmental Pressure

Two types of cantonal pressure, both contributing to change:

- Driven toward prioritisation
 - Positive effects on defining local goals
- Driven toward managerial change
 - Adverse effects on teachers' attitudes

Factor 4: Supportive Organisational Culture

- Supportive organisational culture:
 - Major influence on the rate of change
 - Key people functioning as role models
 - Involvement of the whole nursing faculty
 - Organisation of social events related to innovations
 - Staff with high academic credentials
- Lack of supportive organisational culture:
 - Collapse of morale, resistance
 - Negative influence on the rate of the change

Factor 5: Effective Managerial - Educational Relations

- Few nursing faculty members “thinking managerially”
- Schools’ key people assumed this feature
 - Positive impact on the link between the UAS project and its concrete implementation
 - Developments tended to be based on - or linked to - teachers’ interests
 - Tendency to play an active role in key UAS committees
 - But an overvaluation of managerial principles disrupt their relations with the teachers

Factor 6: Cooperative Inter-Organisational Networks

- Networking is linked to positive outcomes:
 - Creation of new networks
 - Evolution of the pre-existent networks within the UAS project:
 - Productive activation
 - Unsuccessful activation
 - Under exploitation or even non-activation
 - Networking as a secondary effect

Factor 7: Simplicity and Clarity of Goals / I

- Nature of the goals impacts on the rate of change:
 - Reduction of the priorities' complexity by splitting them into objectives led to wider changes
 - Reduction of the number of the priorities has a negative impact on change
- Nature of the goals varies according to the key people competencies to:
 - Link their analysis of the policy content with the wider social and political context and the local level

Factor 7: Simplicity and Clarity of Goals / II

- This factor is dynamic:
 - Bad communication about action, delays in decisions and actions led to confusion (contradiction between words/facts)

Factor 8: The Fit between the Change Agenda and the Locale

- Major differences in implementation processes between urban and rural cantons
- Contextual features:
 - Pre-existent resources
 - no influence on the rate of change
 - University Hospital
 - inhibits change

Summary I

- Crucial criterion for a high rate of change:
 - Permanence of the leadership function is central (not the leaders' stability)
Determine the locale sense-making of policy messages
 - Goal prioritisation is crucial (not goal selection)
Reducing complexity is more than simplification
 - Actions and goals must be linked together - and with teachers interests
Sustain the confidence and the optimism
 - Stake is decisive in mobilizing
Can overcome weakness of other factors
 - Pressure exert by the closed environment is important

Summary II

Criterion having low impact the rate of change:

- Preexistent resources and networks are not critical

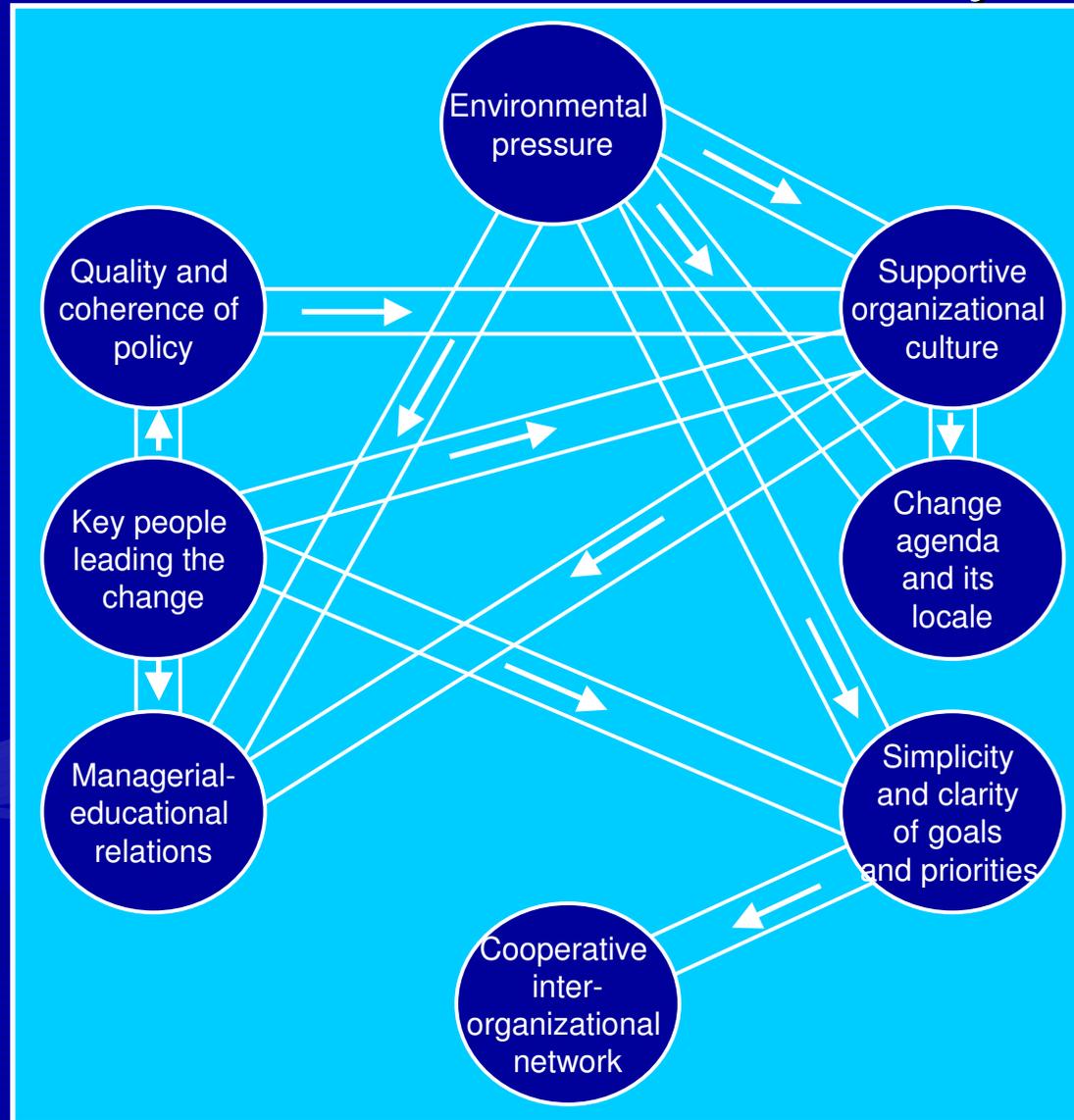
Conclusion

- The key people's reinterpretation of policy content has a central importance in the change implementation
- A special attention should be given to the local leadership if we want not only the letter of the reform but also its spirit to be implemented.

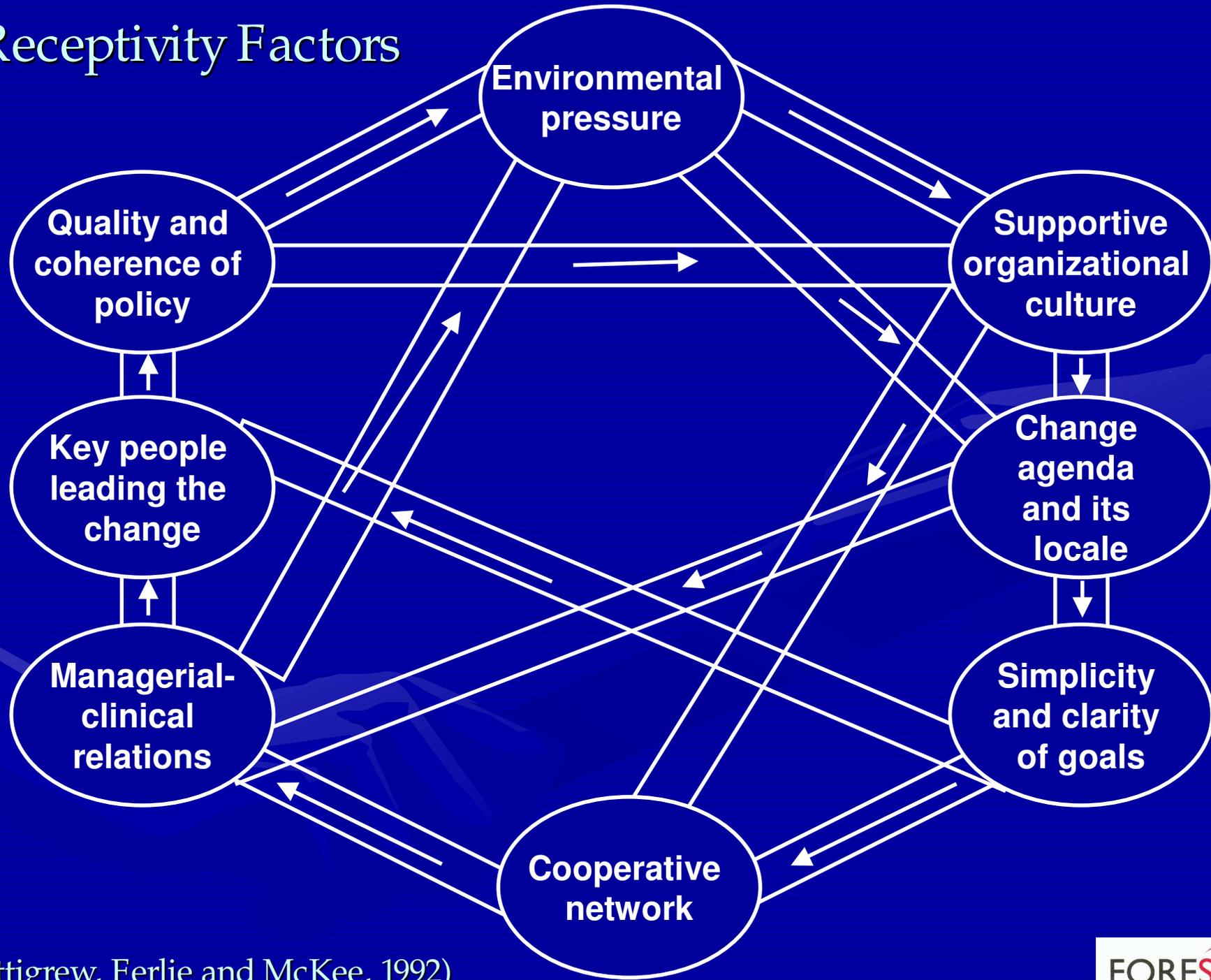
THANK YOU

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Relationships between eight receptivity factors (Swiss Nurse Education Study)



Receptivity Factors



(Pettigrew, Ferlie and McKee, 1992)