

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SALERNO



Facoltà di Economia

**Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche Aziendali – Management & Information
Technology (DISTRA – MIT)**

**Dottorato di Ricerca in
Economia e Direzione delle Aziende Pubbliche
XII Ciclo – Nuova serie**

Tesi di dottorato

*L'imperativo della collaborazione: la prospettiva inter-organizzativa per una nuova
lettura dell'integrazione socio-sanitaria*

ENGLISH ABSTRACT

Coordinatore

Ch.ma Prof.ssa Paola Adinolfi

Tutor

Ch.ma Prof.ssa Gabriella Piscopo

Candidato

Dott. Rocco Palumbo
matr.: 8880400075

Anno Accademico 2013 - 2014

This PhD thesis introduces a review of the international literature in the field of *inter-organizational relationships*, with the purpose of devising a robust theoretical framework intended at fostering the conceptual and empirical research about the dynamics of cooperation and collaboration that concern public sector organizations. Although the proposed theoretical framework has a wide applicability, the Author focuses on the integration of health and social care, conceiving it as a complex process of recovery from the current situation of institutional, organizational, professional, and cultural detachment that divide health and social care providers.

Drawing from the evolution of managerial models in the public sector, the Author argues for the transition toward a systemic approach in the management of health and social care, which is evocatively defined as “*New Health Governance*”. It emphasizes the importance of inter-organizational relationships to enhance the capability of both health and social care organizations to pursue their institutional aims. Despite the latter have been usually understood as parts of a weakly coupled system, they have been infrequently aware of their mutual interdependencies and, as a consequence, they have not adequately exploited their underlying synergies. Such a circumstance undermines the health and social care organizations’ ability to meet the growing and complex needs of their served population, with serious backlashes on their long-term sustainability.

From this standpoint, inter-organizational relationships are acknowledged as a critical success factor for both health and social care organizations. Assuming the fragmentation of the scholarly literature in this field, an in-depth double layered literature review has been realized, with the purpose of providing a synthesis of the main theoretical and empirical argumentations claimed by the scholars who have discussed about this topic. On the one hand, the attention has been paid to inter-organizational relationships in general terms, collecting and analysing scientific contributions dealing with: the determinants of collaborative and/or cooperative relationships between two or more organizations, the process of implementation of inter-organizational relationships, the prevailing models of governance of the latter, the costs and the benefits associated with them, and the management of the underlying organizational interdependencies.

The formulae: “*inter-organizational relation*”, “*inter-organizational relationship*”, “*interorganizational relation*”, and “*interorganizational relationship*” have been employed as criteria of the research within the field “*keywords, title and abstract*” of the database “*Scopus-Elsevier*”. No temporal limitations or exclusion criteria relying on the type of publication were assumed. On the whole, 1.333 scientific contributions were collected; they have been arranged in electronic worksheets and systematized in order to remove redundancies, that is to say contributions retrieved more than one time due to their conformity with two or more criteria of research. Consistently, 603 items were deleted; the remaining 730 contributions underwent an in-depth content analysis of their abstract. Complying with specific criteria of selection aimed at skimming off the items that were not consistent with the aims of the research, 157 contributions were included in the study. Three out of four selected contributions were represented by articles in refereed journals; the remaining part mainly consisted of proceedings and, secondly, by chapters in edited books and monographs.

Thereafter, the theoretical framework devised with regards to inter-organizational relationships has been translated in the perspective of health and social care integration, inspiring the second layer of the literature review. Jointly exploiting the databases “*Scopus Elsevier*”, “*PubMed*”, and

“Emeroteca Virtuale”, the Author collected the main scientific contributions that deal with the organization and the management of integrated care adopting the lens of inter-organizational relationships. The terms: *“integrated care”*, *“health and social care integration”*, *“healthcare and social care integration”* and *“social care and healthcare integration”* have been employed as primary research criteria within the field *“keywords, title, and abstract”*; their utilization has been coupled with secondary research criteria that were drawn from the findings of the previous layer of literary review, among which – as an illustrative, but non exhaustive example – the formulae: *“inter-organizational relation”*, *“alliance”*, *“collaboration”*, and *“cooperation”*. Also in that case, neither temporal limitations nor exclusion criteria relying on the type of publication were assumed.

Approximately, 600 scientific contributions were retrieved, among which articles in peer refereed journals, conference proceedings, monographs and chapters in edited books. Due to the skimming of the redundant items, the original number reduced to 472 contributions, that were subjected to a significance analysis in the light of the objective of the research. On the whole, more than 200 contributions were selected, that were included in the effort of interpretation of integrated care in the perspective of inter-organizational relationships. Particular attention has been paid to the determinants of the integration between the provision of health and social care. The reasons that incite health and social care organizations to cooperate and/or collaborate are addressed; as well, the costs and the benefits that could be associated with this choice are dealt with. Besides, a systematization of the governance models and of the managerial approaches related with the inter-organizational relationships in the field of integrated care is provided. Last but not least, the evaluation methods of the outcomes generated by the integration of health and social care are discussed and compared, suggesting an integrated framework to globally assess the impacts of the latter.

Drawing from the theoretical framework devised according to the findings of the literary review, the integration of health and social care is analysed adopting an integrated perspective. More into details, the integration of health and social care is analysed in the light of both the contingency factors that affect inter-organizational relationships and the structural and operational attributes of the latter. Several empirical rules to address the implementation and the management of integrated care are introduced, outlining the facilitating and obstructing factors to the establishment of successful inter-organizational relations. This conceptual discourse is exploited dealing with several empirical cases of health and social care integration. Some international practices are presented as concrete experiences to assess the reliability of the arguments discussed; moreover, an in-depth analysis of the Italian case of the *“health budget”* is examined. According to the findings of the empirical analysis, the inter-organizational relationships are conceived as an essential, but challenging solution to improve the effectiveness, the efficiency, and the sustainability of health care and social care organizations, boosting their ability to meet the growing health needs of the served population.