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How Superintendents Use Technology to Engage Stakeholders

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Abstract

The job of the modern superintendent involves engaging with a variety of stakeholders in meaningful, yet impactful ways. The current study was designed to understand how superintendents leverage technology to engage school level stakeholders (principals, teachers, and students) through technology generally, and about technology integration specifically. Data were collected from interviews with 14 superintendents across the United States. Three themes emerged: collaborating and communicating with stakeholders was vital for stakeholder engagement; providing relevant and timely professional development opportunities for stakeholders was a key lever for stakeholder engagement; and it was essential to nurture a technology-infused learning culture for all stakeholders across the district.

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Introduction

As a significant lever of organizational culture, the superintendent is at a powerful point of influence. Building trust, fostering organizational culture, and empowering stakeholders across the school district, requires that the modern superintendent engage with a variety of stakeholders in meaningful, yet impactful ways (Freire & Fernandes, 2016). Several studies have demonstrated that superintendents play an integral role in the success of schools within their district (see Bredeson & Kose, 2007; Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young, & Ellerson, 2011; Schechter, 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2007; Zepeda, 2013). For example, results from a meta-analysis indicate that effective superintendents can even have positive impacts on student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2007). It is likely that superintendents are influential because they are uniquely positioned to engage with individuals across the entire school system.

Many scholars have noted the importance of engaging with an array of educational stakeholders. For example, Maxfield, Flumerfelt, and Feun (2009) found that school administrators empowered their teachers by fostering a collegial and communicative culture, providing administrative support, and setting clear goals and expectations. Additionally, through an extensive multidisciplinary literature review, Lee and Nie (2014) noted seven empowering behaviors of school leaders that included: "1) delegation of authority; (2) providing intellectual stimulation; (3) giving acknowledgment and recognition; (4) articulating a vision; (5) fostering collaborative relationships; (6) providing individualized concern and support; [and] (7) providing role modeling" (pp. 18-19). Thus, school leaders

play an important role in empowering others *and* they do that by engaging with stakeholders.

Superintendents of public schools in the United States benefit in many ways when they engage with stakeholders. Poynton, Kirkland, and Makela (2018) noted that when K-12 educational leaders engage with stakeholders, they act in ways that "pull people together, generate innovative solutions, strengthen buy-in, and build trust" (p. 266). Through a study focused on intentionally fostering ways for superintendents to meaningfully engage with stakeholders, Poynton, Kirkland, and Makela concluded that "school superintendents can increase stakeholder trust, build capacity for public participation, and narrow the engagement gap in district affairs" by thoughtfully engaging with stakeholders (p. 265). In contrast, other researchers have found that disengaged stakeholders can become antagonistic toward the school district and hinder innovation and progress (Auerbach, 2007; Coleman & Gotze, 2001).

Schein (1992) argued that schools, as learning organizations, are built "on the assumption that communication and information are central to organizational well-being and [leaders] must therefore create a multichannel communication system that allows everyone to connect to everyone else'' (p. 370). These channels of communication, along with these disparate connections, are core to the work of superintendents when it comes to engaging with stakeholders. Additionally, since the 1980s, there has been increased evidence that communication is a vital skill for school administrators (e.g., Björk, Browne-Ferrigno, & Kowalski, 2018; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Gousha & Mannan, 1991). Björk, Browne-Ferrigno, and Kowalski (2018) noted that "contemporary superintendents' work must focus on developing...expanded communication networks" (p. 180).

Researchers have also found that how superintendents communicate with stakeholders can influence school culture (Barton & Dereshiwsky, 2009; Hilliard & Newsome, 2013; Morgan & Petersen, 2002). Superintendents must also be valiant advocates of social-justice oriented reforms, and as such, they must "influence, engage, organize, and compel a variety of stakeholders" (DeMatthews, Izquierdo, & Knight, 2017, p. 23).

Kowalski (2005) laid out how the role of the school superintendent has morphed over the past century and a half. In *Evolution of the School Superintendent as Communicator*, Kowalski detailed how the conceptualization of this district leadership role has transformed over time from a teacher of teachers, to a manager, to a statesman, and to the current notion of being "superintendent as applied social scientist" (p. 104). This current conceptualization, as described by Kowalski, is highly impacted by today's information-based social environment. In this technology suffused social environment, and in line with the work of Richardson and Sterrett (2018), it is evident that modern digital technologies allow superintendents to embrace dialogue differently. As a result, superintendents must engage with a broader range of stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

The *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) explicitly notes the importance of both engaging with stakeholders and using digital technologies efficiently. Standards 8 and 9 make explicit reference to the notion that school leaders should meaningfully engage with families and communities. Standards 4 and 9 describe how school leaders should employ digital technologies to improve teaching, learning, and leading. Nevertheless, researchers have just begun to

look at how superintendents engage with stakeholders using modern digital tools. For example, Hurst (2017) looked at how superintendents used Twitter as a platform to engage with stakeholders about issues of politics. Nevertheless, in our search of the literature, other than Hurst's dissertation, no research was located that focuses on how superintendents' practices that engage principals, teachers, or students with technology or about technology.

Richardson, Sauers, and McLeod (2015) found that technology leadership at the district level is "just good leadership" (p. 11). These researchers found that effective superintendents are essentially good communicators who demonstrate technology acumen by being collaborative, being risk-takers, being a continuous learner, and having a clear vision of teaching and learning. Each of these skills are all in service of the others and each of these skills are driven and supported by modern digital tools. Given this backdrop, we developed the current study to understand how superintendents leverage technology to engage school level stakeholders being principals, teachers, and students through technology generally, and about technology integration specifically. This study further builds on our comparative analysis of technology savvy superintendents (Richardson & Sterrett, 2018) and change ready district leadership (Sterrett & Richardson, 2019).

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to understand how those at the top (i.e., superintendents) engage various school-level stakeholder groups through and with technology. In this study, the researchers took a qualitative, phenomenological approach to investigate this topic. This methodology was appropriate given that our goal was to

"illuminate and better understand in depth the rich lives of human beings and the world in which we live" (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006, p. 2). A phenomenological lens was useful given the need to examine the meaning of individuals' lived experiences with this topic (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Population

Superintendents in this study were each an awardee of the *eSchoolNews Technology Savvy Superintendent of the Year Award*. *eSchoolNews* is a newspaper that is distributed in print and digital form. It is read by over 300,000 school leaders across the United States. The *Technology Savvy Superintendent Award* began 2001 to highlight district leaders who have stepped up to meet the demands of a digital society. After being nominated by their peers, *eSchoolNews* (2014) applies the following criteria to determine annual award winners. The award winners must be a superintendent who: regularly models the effective use of technology; ensures that technology resources are equitably distributed among students and staff; leads, develops, and implements a districtwide technology plan; articulates an understanding of the role of technology to all school district stakeholders; ensures the integration of technology integration for teaching and learning; streamline school district business operations through technology; demonstrates curiosity in considering emerging technologies; and thinks strategically about the long-term challenges and opportunities of technology in their school district (*eSchoolNews*, 2014).

The population for this study was limited to those award winners from 2011-2014 where 2014 is the last year this award was given. We used this timeframe because 2010 is commonly thought of as about the time social media outlets such as Twitter gained

worldwide popularity (Interactive Schools, 2018). As such, the award winners prior to social media likely engaged with stakeholders through and about technology differently. Hence, we wanted to understand how superintendents engage stakeholders using the modern digital tools that would be germane to today's superintendents. Within that timeframe, thirty-seven superintendents were recognized as technology-savvy superintendents. We attempted to locate contact details of each awardee using email addresses found on district websites and well as on social media. We found contact information for 32 awardees. We reached out to each of these superintendents on three occasions. Fourteen superintendents agreed to participate in the study, yielding a participation rate of 44% of award winners with publicly available contact details. Table 1 details the demographics of the participants in the study. Given that these superintendents are public figures, and in line with our university approved IRB consent procedure, each agreed to having their real names published.

Table 1.

Population of the 2011-2014 Technology-Savvy Award Study Participants

Award Year	Name	Gender	Age	Exp.	Years as Supt.	District	Enrollment*	District Type*
2011	Jim Cain	Male	68	47	14	Klein Independent School District, TX	48,253	Suburb: Large
2012	Dan Frazier	Male	58	36	19	Sioux Central Community School District, Sioux Rapids, IA	514	Rural: Remote
2012	Michele Hancock	Female	61	30+	3.5	Kenosha Unified School District, Kenosha, WI	22,602	Suburb: Midsize
2012	C.J. Huff	Male	46	20	7	Joplin Schools, Joplin, MO	7,784	City: Small
2012	Jerri Kemble	Female	55	30+	6	Centre School District,	404	Rural: Remote

						Lost Springs, KS		
2012	Bradford Saron	Male	41	16	9	Cashton Public Schools, Cashton, WI	563	Rural: Distant
2012	Todd Yohey	Male	52	28	12	Oak Hills Local School District, Cincinnati, OH	7,948	Suburban: Large
2013	Theresa Dunkin	Female	55	35	8	Aptakisic-Tripp Community Consolidated School District 102, Buffalo Grove, IL	2,090	Suburb: Large
2013	Randy Moczygemba	Male	54	30	8.5	New Braunfels Independent School District, New Braunfels, TX	8,299	City: Small
2013	David Tebo	Male	41	16	9	Hamilton Community Schools, Hamilton, MI	2,632	Rural: Fringe
2014	Luvelle Brown	Male	40	20	5.5	Ithaca City School District, Ithaca, NY	5,337	City: Small
2014	Dallas Dance	Male	35	16	4	Baltimore County Public Schools, Baltimore, MD	108,191	Suburb: Large
2014	Karen Rue	Female	62	37	11	Northwest Independent School District, Fort Worth, TX	18,950	City: Large
2014	George Welsh	Male	52	29	18	Center Consolidated School District, Center, CO	657	Rural: Remote

Note. Table from Richardson & Sterrett (2018)

*Data for Enrollment and District Type retrieved from Institute of Education Sciences in the Common Core of Data (www.nces.ed.gov)

Data Collection

To gain a deeper understanding of how technology-savvy district leaders engage various stakeholders, we chose semi-structured telephone interviews as the data collection method. We used interviews to better understand the participants' unique perspectives in their respective context (Kvale, 1996) as well as to understand better the superintendents' unique perspectives and experiences (see Check & Schutt, 2012) related to stakeholder engagement. Through 45-minute, one-on-one, semi-structured telephone interviews, the researchers were able to collect data about how modern technology-savvy superintendents engage others with, through, and about digital technologies. The interview protocol covered various issues including challenges of being a digital leader; technology integration efforts; advice for other superintendents; professional development around technology leadership; stakeholder engagement; and the use of digital tools to engage others.

Data Analysis

The transcripts were coded using a typological analysis as detailed by Hatch (2002). To do this, we first identified typologies being the distinct stakeholder groups (i.e., students, teachers, and principals). Each researcher coded all transcripts individually. Both researchers then compared the coding collaboratively to identify areas of agreement and disagreement across all transcripts until 100% agreement was reached. We then used inductive coding to determine patterns and relationships of engagement across those typologies. After determining the themes, the researchers selected supporting data excerpts that captured those themes.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that the superintendents interviewed came from a defined group of award-winning district leaders. The *eSchoolNews* award is a result of a nomination process. It is possible that those awarded were not in fact the most deserving of the award, but ones that were perceived as being technology-savvy and demonstrated some measures of success. Additionally, these superintendents are not representative of the entire population of U.S. superintendents. These superintendents were comfortable with technology and were thus more likely to use those tools to engage with others.

Results

Three themes emerged as to how these district leaders went about meaningfully engaging with three specific stakeholder groups (i.e., principals, teachers, and students): (1) collaborating and communicating with stakeholders; (2) providing relevant and timely professional development opportunities for stakeholders; and (3) nurturing a technology-infused learning culture across the district for all stakeholders. These themes are discussed below.

Collaboration and Communication is Vital for Stakeholder Engagement

The superintendents in the study discussed how they placed a value on collaborating and communicating with principals, teachers, and students. These technology-savvy superintendents engaged with principals by working with them through technology initiatives and communicating with them every step of the way. With teachers, these award-winning superintendents understood that technology

integration might be stressful, so they listened, provided support, and ensured that the use of technology aligned with the vision of the schools. These district leaders took a hands-on approach with students and engaged them by giving students voice and choice throughout the technology adoption process.

Principals. Five superintendents indicated that encouraging and supporting collaborations in their schools helped them engage their principals for digital change. Fostering collaboration for principals included supporting their work with community members, parents, and teachers. For example, Michelle shared that in her schools, "people work together to think about ways of meeting success." In addition to fostering a collaborative culture within schools, Randy indicated that he fosters collaborations between schools in the district and schools in nearby districts. He stated, "we're very fortunate that we have a couple other school districts very close to us. We send staff there. They send staff here. Our technology directors communicate all the time." Thus, when implementing technology-oriented innovations within their district, it was useful for these superintendents to cross-pollinate ideas by engaging school leaders within and across their district borders.

Teresa and Jerri indicated that district staff, including themselves, are essential in building a collaborative culture around digital innovations. Teresa stated, "I really try to work with my district office staff to understand how to build those collaborative structures and then make sure that we're clear on where we're going…Then I really support the hell out of our principals." Thus, fostering collaborative structures seem to allow these executive leaders opportunities to engage with principals and allow the vision and goals of the district to drive digital innovations.

Five participants noted that communication was an essential component to support collaborative structures that encouraged the meaningful work of their principals. Karen shared, "Someone told me years ago, how to make change happen. There are three ways to do it. You talk to, you talk to, and you talk to again." Thus, keeping the line of communication open with principals and staff created a collaborative culture that facilitated digital innovation.

While Karen emphasized the importance of communication in general, Jerri and Luvelle noted the importance of informal conversations that can spur technology-infused innovation. Jerri shared that having informal conversations with the principals "tend to propel people forward." She explained that these informal conversations include encouraging principals to use social media, to connect the superintendent to what their school is doing, and to praise the principal for what they take on. Luvelle also trumpeted the importance of informal conversation. He shared,

> *I'm able to have conversations with folks. I say, 'I think you should be using this' or 'Please work on this.' Nothing formal as far as a documentation where I'm holding people accountable, but just watching it, modeling it, and then having a conversation.*

Thus, from Jerri's and Luvelle's perspective, informal conversations are critical for engaging their principals to become more technology-savvy themselves.

Karen shared that the content of what is discussed is vital when engaging with principals. She stated, "When you talk about the things that you want to see repeated, and you don't talk about the things you don't want to see repeated, you get more of what you talk about than you do what you don't talk about." Thus, what is discussed with principals influences their behaviors. The medium through which

these conversations are occurring can also be important, according to Dallas. He shared that digital technology helped him have conversations and connect with his principals on a regular basis. Having conversations through technology such as social media and email was a way to model technology's use in a practical application.

Teachers. The superintendents in the study noted how their role was also to communicate and collaborate with teachers about digital learning initiatives. For example, Jerri said, "The thing that gets in the way the most is adult discomfort. Many adults are very uncomfortable with technology and so they want to push it aside." She went on to say that teachers "want to negate it and say things like screen time is bad for students. We shouldn't be doing this. I think it's from a place of fear and not knowing." Jerri went on to say,

> *The hardest thing is to get those adults to understand that this is the world we live in. No one is going back to the way it used to be. If we're going to prepare kids effectively, we must move forward with them. We don't have to know all the answers. We must be willing to learn and to model that learning.*

For these superintendents, this was done through regular and ongoing communication. In support, Luvelle noted that "There are educators and administrators who aren't comfortable with the tools, refuse to use the tools. . . or are just uncomfortable. Luvelle went on to say that "It's my job to inspire them. That gets tiring because people are looking to me to be that person who often inspire folks who are stuck to move."

Students. Eight superintendents indicated that they actively engaged their students by giving them opportunities to have their voices heard. To do this, most of these technology-savvy superintendents indicated giving voice to their students by communicating and directly interacting with them. For example,

David, Dallas, Jerri, Luvelle, and Randy discussed how they made themselves available to students, asked questions, and listened to them. When David was asked how he ensured technology was used to enhance learning, he stated simply that "We talk to kids."

Many of the participants highlighted the importance of keeping open communication channels with students. For example, Dallas discussed that the best professional development he received was by "focusing or spending time with students." Further, he shared,

> *I recognize in this job that if I want to get things done, of course, I have to get things done through others. But I have to get things done mostly through students. So often superintendents set these goals, and they believe these goals can get accomplished without talking and involving kids. There is no way you can make that happen.*

Hence, talking to students and involving students in the goals of the school, was not only fundamental to engaging with students about the use new digital tools, but it also was also crucial for accomplishing organizational goals around integrating technology into teaching and learning.

George and Karen discussed involving students in molding their school's goals as well as involving them in community and national activities. George reported that his schools brought a team of six kids to attend an annual state conference in order to "learn with the school board about what's looking forward in education." Additionally, Karen noted that her students participated in a technology expo; being a student conference for the community. Here, students presented their work to the community. She explained the importance of this by described how "That type of thing honors the work and makes it important. It gives it validity, and it gives it an audience."

One way that these superintendents reported engaging with and giving voice to their students was by collecting data through surveys and interviews. Luvelle shared that his district surveyed students annually to monitor how technology was being used. He went on to say that,

> *We asked students technology-related questions. For example, how often are you working in the digital space? How often do you publish online? Some of those numbers have been very encouraging to show that our young people are working in this way, using these digital tools. We hope those numbers continue to go up year after year.*

Similarly, Randy stated, "I personally interview students at the end of every school year and ask about what their thoughts were about the implementation and the changes." Thus, the feedback provided through these mechanisms seemed to provide useful data for the schools in order to further hone the schools' goals.

Jerri shared that having students facilitate adult learning led to some powerful changes. Jerri shared that "It became this great 'ah-ha' moment for me. Number one, I didn't have to know all the answers about the technology to be the educator. The kids were doing the work, and they were doing meaningful work." Jerri went on to detail that, "I was so impressed by this little team of students that we started going out all over the state. I don't know how many hundreds of teachers we trained." Furthermore, Jeri shared "These kids led teachers on how they saw, from a kid's perspective, how to integrate technology." Jerri explained that she was allowing students to "do something that was meaningful to them."

Another way of communicating with students, and likewise giving students voice, was by allowing them to have a say in what they are learning. Dallas shared that in his schools, students are asked

what they would like to learn about with regards to technology. Doing so, teachers and school leaders found out that students wanted to learn how to create a safe, digital footprint. Further, Dallas shared that in response to the students' requests,

> *We created this webpage called Growing Up Digitally…It's all the information created in one place for our students, for our parents, in terms of what we're doing with student data, what are some lessons around growing up digital, and some resources for parents to use for their kids at home. But kids can go there to get examples of how not using technology in a responsible way can have an impact later on.*

Similarly, Jerri reported that by making herself available to kids and listening to them, a student sometimes come to her with ideas about learning. She explained,

> *I would sit in the common area with my iPad, kind of catching up on things. Kids would come over. What evolved out of this was I had a group of third and fourth grade kids that came to me and said, 'We have ideas for this iPad.' I said, 'Really?' 'Yes, we have some things we want to do. Would you let us take the iPad home?' I said, 'Tell me what it is you're going to do with it. What is your idea?'*

The technology-savvy superintendents in this study often engaged with their students by making themselves available to students and by following through with students' suggestions. Brad highlighted this importance further by stating,

> *One of the trends that we see in education is a notion that when students have voice, choice, and agency in their learning, their commitment goes up. This means their attendance increases and negative behaviors decrease. It's more meaningful to them, so their engagement increases. If their engagement increases, then their understanding of those concepts increases. So, their attainment levels increase. I don't think that you can separate out voice, choice,*

and agency in a personalization type of a horizon and technology. You can't do it without the integration of technology.

Allowing students' voices to be heard, along with collaborating with them, gives meaning to their work while empowering them to do more with the digital tools afforded to them.

Professional Development is a Lever for Stakeholder Engagement

These technology-savvy award-winning superintendents spoke of engaging with principals and teachers through professional development. By taking an instructional leadership approach to leading and learning around technology initiatives, these superintendents provided ongoing support that met the needs of the stakeholders. These district leaders noted now professional development needed to be collaborative and individualized and be in service of improving student learning.

Principals. Ten of the superintendents indicated that professional development was essential for engaging with school principals around technology innovations. The types of professional development most discussed focused on coaching around technology-enhanced project-based learning. These district leaders also spoke about the importance of providing professional development around instructional leadership activities, such as mentoring and instructional walkthroughs to support technology in the classroom.

Providing consistent professional development was essential for these leaders. CJ noted that "All of our building principals have received the same training that a lot of the teachers did." He explained that this allowed for transparency and consistency throughout the school. Having embedded professional development

for principals was discussed by Jim who shared that “When you have continuing staff development, it just makes all the difference in the world." He continued that "We offer staff development all the time. We've got night classes. We have Saturday classes. We have summer classes. We have a technology staff development center. It is just outstanding. We just keep that going. That's the key.”

In addition to having consistent, continuous, and relevant professional development that includes principals, for these district leaders, specific types of professional developed seemed to work best. Michelle shared that she required her principals to go to institutes instead of conferences because institutes "allowed my administrators to be involved and take a critical look at their own leadership practices. I would agree to pay for institutes especially if the focus was project-based learning." She explained that "Project-based learning institutes provided scenarios, examination of their situations, and they had to present and share their learning with others nationally." Thus, this type of professional development provided principals with practice in solving real problems and ways to positively impact their schools when infusing digital tools into the processes of teaching and learning.

In addition to project-based learning, professional development on instructional leadership for principals was important. Luvelle shared that, "with administrators, I'm also having them read a lot of leadership books and technology-related books so they can get a better thirty-thousand-foot view of what it should look like and how to lead it.”

Providing professional development on how to conduct walkthroughs was mentioned to engage the district’s principals. Walkthroughs are a technique that school leaders can use to quickly

monitor instructional activities and provide feedback, especially when it comes to technology-enhanced learning activities. In discussing how he engaged with his principals, Luvelle shared that it is important for principals to "walk through their classrooms and recognize good and mediocre technology implementations." Similarly, CJ stated,

> *We had professional development that was all about the look-for with technology integration. As they were doing their building walkthroughs, we are giving them a system, the training that they needed through which they could go out and observe and know what they are observing and measure what they were observing in a way that provided them feedback on the progress of their staff, which was really important. Your principals need to know your teachers and they need to know where every teacher is in terms of technology integration. Training our principals on what to look for related to that was a critical part of our work.*

CJ also shared that his school district hired instructional coaches to work in the schools. These people provided principals with guidance to "not only monitor, but help, guide, support, and model technology integration in the classroom."

In addition to instruction coaches providing modeling, Jerri and Michelle indicated that superintendents and other district leaders should provide similar support themselves. Jerri said, "Sometimes I like to push a little and say, 'We need to model a little more. How can we model this? How can we model it for our staff so that we're always in front of them with the vision?'"

Teachers. Professional development around technology was a way to engage teachers as well as to make their work with technology initiatives more meaningful. As such, ten participants underscored the importance of professional development for teachers. Superintendents in this study listed peer-led professional

development as a form of collaborative professional development for teachers. Six of the participants indicated that this type of professional development was critical for fostering learning around digital initiatives. CJ, Michelle, and George shared that peer-led professional development was perhaps the best form of teacher professional development. CJ shared,

> *I think the best PD is the opportunity to observe other teachers who are doing the work and learning from one another in the collaboration that comes from that and the sharing of resources, and lesson planning together, and those types of things. I think our teachers would agree that the best PD is when you get a number of smart people in the room together and start having conversations about what each other is doing and learning from one another.*

Likewise, Michelle stated, "having teachers teach other teachers is probably the strongest methodology you could use in the school." While George stated, "whether it's technology or anything, the best way teachers grow professionally is by learning from each other."

Todd likewise shared how "We like to provide opportunities for classroom teachers to learn from other classroom teachers about how they were using technology to enhance learning." Additionally, David reported that for the teachers in his schools who have expertise in a certain area, "We have freed them up to do some side-by-side coaching, to go in and support, watch the teachers, and give them some feedback." Similarly, Teresa shared that it is important to identify "Some of those early adopters who already implement the desired practices to assist in that peer-to-peer, shoulder-to-shoulder learning." George explained that when he sees technology being used well, "I want that staff member to share it out with the rest of the staff and empower them to coach the rest of the staff in using it." Thus, these technology-savvy superintendents seemed to view peer-led professional development as a vital way to engage teachers across the

district. There seems to be a unique power in teachers learning from their peers. According to these district leaders, teachers learning from their peers seemed to ignite the learning process and empower teachers to utilize technology.

CJ, Jim, and Jerri emphasized the importance of individualized professional development when it comes to classroom technology integration. CJ stated that "It needs to be individualized because you have teachers that are all over the place in terms of their skill sets related to technology integration. You have to be respectful of that." Further, CJ shared that "It needs to be very customized to the individual teacher and not a shotgun approach to technology integration training." Since teachers have different learning needs when it comes to technology. Jim stated, "Depending upon what they already know, some of the teachers have to start with the very basics. Pull it out of the box and turn it on." Jerri and CJ both noted that having technology specialists/instructional coaches within the schools is an excellent way to ensure that individualized professional development occurs. By having these specialists and coaches on hand, it allowed for professional development to occur in a one-on-one setting. It also allows for teachers to get help, guidance, and support at the time its requested and needed.

Students. The superintendents in this study made links to how professional development of leaders and teachers ultimately impacted students. Brad discussed how professional development exposes teachers and leaders "to people that are using technology to assist in helping kids just do awesome things." Dallas talked about how the best professional development for technology is simply spending time with students. This applies to superintendents as well. "When I visit schools, very rarely do I spend time with the principal

because I see the principal from a whole different vantage point. I sit down with kids, I sit down with them in the cafeteria, hearing how their experiences were going." This practice gives students voice and allows them opportunities to engage with leaders who listen to their needs and who have the power to change things. Dan talked about how his district focused on professional development that is intendent to ultimately impact student learning experiences. For example, Dan discussed adopting an observational protocol called the *4-Shifts Protocol* from that was later turned into an instructional book by McLeod and Graber (2019). This tool centers on higher order thinking, student agency, authentic work, and technology integration. Karen noted that professional development in her district is driven by the reality that students need to be empowered and engaged to be lifelong learners given the constant evolution of digital technologies.

Nurturing a Technology-Infused Learning Culture through Stakeholder Engagement

The importance of creating a cultural paradigm shift around technology was not lots on these district leaders. Participants discussed how building leaders were the lynchpin to creating a digital learning environment. Thus, engaging them around the district vision for technology integration was vital. These district leaders expressed a deep commitment to engaging with teachers, so they understand the big picture for technology integration before getting them to adopt digital tools. These superintendents also understood that students were instrumental in this cultural shift.

Principals. Four participants indicated that emphasizing the importance of technology for principals was critical. Jim shared that principals need to "understand the importance of technology and

leadership in that regard. They've got to step up because if they drop the ball, that campus is going to be down in that regard." As leaders of schools, Jim believes principals must know the importance of technology.

Jeri noted the importance of understanding the pragmatic impact that technology can have on principals. She stated that "if we show them that technology helps us work smarter not harder, they like that because they're very busy people." Thus, to gain buy-in, it was vital to get principals to understand how technology will ultimately benefit them.

Stressing the importance of technology use for their students and their teachers was also noted by these superintendents. David indicated that he engaged with principals to help them understand what technology "can do for our kids and our teachers." Luvelle underscored the importance of principals knowing how technology can impact learning. He described engaging his principals by being purposeful in how he introduces technology to them. He shared that he primarily emphasizes teaching and learning, and secondarily incorporates and introduces technology, which positively impacts principal buy in. He stated,

> *Our folks are much more comfortable with the conversation starting there and then talking about how tools can enhance it. I think our purposeful start has got folks comfortable with what we wanted them to be comfortable with, and now we're pushing them to think differently using the tools.*

Therefore, by emphasizing the purpose of technology and keeping that purpose in line with the goals of teaching and learning for the district, these district leaders were able to engage with principals around a culture of technology integration.

Teachers. Four technology-savvy superintendents in the study reported that it was imperative that teachers understand the importance of technology for themselves and their students. David shared, "our teachers are just working their tails off." He described the difficulty of encouraging the use of technology while also not putting more burden on teachers. David explained that although this is difficult, it helps when teachers understand that technology ultimately streamlines their workload. Similarly, Michelle stated, "When you invest in teachers being trained and taught to use this stuff in positive ways to make their life easier, then they get on-board quicker." Thus, having teachers understand how technology benefits them helps empower them to build a technology-infused culture.

These superintendents also indicated that teachers should know about the importance of technology for their students. For example, Luvelle explained that having access to technology is critical for students' learning. He stated, "I'm able to speak to the sense of urgency around why these tools should be in the hands of young people, but also give very specific examples of how they will transform cultures and transform learning experiences." It was also noted that teachers must understand the importance of technology for students in today's technology enriched society. David shared, "It's about changing the way we teach and learning together with kids using the most current and powerful resources at our disposal. It really is a mindset thing, not a device thing." Karen discussed how technology helps prepare students for their future. She stated, "We are educators and, if we're smart, which we are, then we use the environment of today to do our best to prepare our kids for tomorrow."

Students. The superintendents in this study reported that their students are active participants in nurturing a technology-enhanced learning culture. For example, Teresa stated, "There's a place for blended and direct instruction. I think we acknowledge students will work beyond expected limits when they're engaged in projects that are meaningful and have that personal relevance." To better engage with students, superintendents reported listening to students and allowing their voices to be heard (i.e., communicating with them) and allowing them to be central to the cultural shift in the school. Dallas detailed that "I have many students who follow me on social media. I have many students who get videos or messages from me that really encourages them and pushes them to do better."

Discussion

The current study aimed to illuminate how technology-savvy district leaders engage with principals, teachers, and students. Understanding how superintendents, who have demonstrated expertise around digital innovations, work with stakeholders in their districts, adds to the limited body of research that intersects these three topics (i.e., digital innovation, district leadership, and stakeholder engagement). Themes that emerged from the analysis centered on supporting collaboration and communication, focusing on relevant and timely professional development, and fostering a digital learning culture.

Collaboration and communication allowed these superintendents to engage stakeholders across their district. Kowalski et al. (2011) observed that over 75% of superintendents in their study noted that community involvement was "either a *major* or *minor asset*" (p. 137). To ensure a culture of collaboration exists within the

district, superintendents should lead by example and engage stakeholders through open communication and active listening. Social media also allows for greater connection and engagement within and outside the school district as also discussed by Sack-Min (2017).

These district leaders supported professional development through resource allocation and strategic action taken to realize organizational change around technology. Brown and Militello (2016) observed that school leaders are "commonly named as the most important influence on teachers and their practices" (p. 703). From strengthening mentoring, to ensuring that staff development is perceived as relevant and timely, these technology-savvy superintendents started with a vision for teaching and learning and supported that vision through relevant and meaningful professional development. This practice aligns with the work of Kraft and Papay (2014) who found strong evidence that teacher effectiveness was impacted by supportive professional development environments. The literature body similarly reflects that professional development is a vital lever of engagement, and a strategic investment, given that most of a school budget is allocated to human resources (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2010).

Today's district leaders must shift from ensuring that infrastructure is adequate and secure, to instead ensuring that students have the skills to succeed in a rapidly changing world (Richardson & Sterrett, 2018; Ullman, 2017). Digital Promise (2015) observed the importance of bridging technology and instruction together in a form of "change management" (para. 8). The technology-savvy superintendents in this study focused on culture

building across stakeholder groups in a way that is supported by literature body (see for example Hoy & Miskel, 2012).

Effective superintendents understand that engagement is key to change management. Engagement, however, has morphed and continues to morph in today's digitally suffused world. By commanding the use of technology and shifting away from one-way communication and toward multidirectional engagement, the technology savvy superintendents in this study provide us with various practices and examples of the resultant impacts. Nonetheless, with those practices come pitfalls. For example, transparency vis-à-vis communicating on social media, opens leaders up to critique and pushback. Superintendents who engage in this kind of communication must learn to embrace that reality without holding onto potential negativity.

This study has implication on both practicing as well as pre-service district leaders. Technology allows for engagement with stakeholders to be dialogic and thus collaborative. Pre-service preparation programs must demonstrate and model to aspiring district leaders how to leverage the power of digital technologies seamlessly into their day to day job. As such, educational leadership professors need to become more technology savvy themselves. In-service superintendents need mentoring around how to provide relevant and timely professional development opportunities to a variety of stakeholders through and about technology. This learning often comes on the job and through informal outlets. Twitter chats are a useful resource to achieve this end. By participating in chats such as #edchat, #ISTEchat, or #satchat, school leaders can interact with peers around common issues including technology focused professional development. Finally, culture is key to organizational health; effective

superintendents know this. Superintendents must nurture a technology-infused learning culture across the district. This means that today's superintendent must be a lifelong learner. Fostering this disposition either through preservice or in-service training is essential.

Future Research

Future research could focus on how superintendents from similar demographics (e.g., urban or rural) engage with stakeholders. Taking a comparative lens with this future research would be valuable. Future research could focus on how superintendents balance digital tools for engagement with other forums for stakeholder engagement. In the current study, we also used only phone interviews to gather data. We did not conduct site visits or gather additional stakeholder data. Future researchers could collect multiple sources of data to ascertain a more robust picture of engagement.

In the current study, we examined a limited time frame of award recipients in this study. Looking at a select number of schools over a longer time frame would be a fruitful line of inquiry. We are uncertain how the acts of stakeholder engagement were viewed by the stakeholders given that data were only collected from superintendents. Future research might include a broader pool of interviewees to understand how superintendent engagement impacts students, teachers, and principals. Finally, this research focused on three specific stakeholder groups. Looking at how superintendents use technology to engage with families would be a logical next step and would align with previous research (Wood & Bauman, 2017).

Conclusion

The practice of school leadership is not just relegated to the role of the superintendent, principal, or the teacher leader. Rather, it entails a collaborative effort comprised of all three groups that benefits the *student*. Insights from these technology-savvy superintendents provide direction for how district leaders can use technology to engage all school level stakeholders. Preparation programs and district partners can learn from how these district leaders navigate leadership that is in service of engaging stakeholders in technology-suffused school improvement efforts. As Maak (2007) noted, a leader's relational interactions are a "precondition for both the emergence and the quality of social capital" (p. 334). Social capital is needed for any organizational changes; like those brought on by technological innovations. This social capital can only be fostered through stakeholder engagement.

While recent studies have examined the role of the *principal* to lead technology rich schools (Schrum & Levin, 2013; Sterrett & Richardson, 2019), there remains a lack of literature on district-level leadership with few exceptions (see Dexter, Richardson, & Nash, 2016; Richardson & Sterrett, 2018). Nevertheless, superintendents serve as a catalyst for helping others understand, share, and own a district vision for teaching and learning through and with technology. Engaging with principals and teachers in a way that does not burden them and engaging with students to actively embrace technology-driven learning, builds trust (see Poynton, Kirkland, & Makela, 2018), and helps make everyone's work more meaningful. As such, the way superintendents are prepared, hired, supported, evaluated, and promoted should be anchored in their capacity to

engage, in meaningful and impactful ways, with principals, teachers, and students.

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Leadership Preparation in China: Providers' Perspectives

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Abstract

In China, accreditation training programme has been a compulsory programme for all the aspiring and new principals, which is also a part of National Training Plan. Under such hierarchical system, leadership preparation in China is supported, implemented, evaluated, and also, constrained by different levels of administrative organisations and various professional providers. The purpose of the study was to understand the role definition and task allocation of different levels of administrations and providers, as well as how they work as a whole for leadership preparation. The study features a qualitative design that combined data from policy document analysis and semi-structured interviews of people who directly involved in this procedure. Data collected in qualitative strand were coded and analysed thematically through discourse analysis. We identified a completed, but disintegrated system for leadership preparation. The results provided important practice and policy implications. We suggest the

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collaboration and appropriate supervision among different providers and develop a systematic mechanism for principal preparation and development.

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Introduction

Evidence from school-improvement literature, from 1980s to the present day, discloses that school principals play a crucial role in enhancing and sustaining student achievement by promoting high-quality teaching in schools (Hendriks & Steen, 2012; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008), which is 'second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers' instruction' (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) . This evidence leads to a question about how to develop school leaders, and how to facilitate principals' professional learning (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Gronn, 2003). Numerous studies on new principalship have revealed that the transition from teaching to principalship is a daunting process (Kilinc & Gumus, 2020; Swen, 2019; A. Walker & Qian, 2006; Webber, Cowie, & Crawford, 2008), described by Daresh and Male (2000) as a 'culture shock' (J. Daresh & Male, 2000). There is a broad international consensus that the capacity of those who aspire to become principals needs to be systematically developed (T Bush, 2011; Cheung & Walker, 2006; Cowie & Crawford, 2007).

China is also aware that it is necessary to improve the quality of principal leadership, to raise the quality of general education. There is increasing political recognition of principal development and preparation, with a growing number of policies and regulations.

However, empirical research on leadership preparation is limited. This paper explores the leadership preparation process for high school principalship in China, through a multi-level analysis, including policy makers, DoE officials, programme organisers and lecturers, in what is a pluralist process.

Literature Review

Much international research shows how systematic leadership preparation could help new and aspiring principals with their first post (Kelly & Saunders, 2010; MacBeath, 2011), and this evidence leads some education systems to address the need to develop school leaders (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). Empirical evidence demonstrates that leadership preparation programmes can stimulate changes in aspiring principals' educational orientation, perspectives, attitudes and skills (Matthews & Crow, 2003), all of which are essential to effective leadership practice.

Leadership Preparation and Accreditation

The turbulence of the school leader's world is created by constantly changing external impositions, and the need to respond to continuous internal demands, leading to multiple accountabilities (Erich et al., 2015). Leadership preparation refers to a pre-service activity, which focuses on initial preparation for aspiring principals. Initial principal preparation varies considerably across countries. Some programmes are well-established, for example in Singapore (Ng, 2008), Hong Kong (Ng & Szeto, 2016), England (T Bush, 2013) and the US (Fanoos & He, 2020; Fryer, 2011; Lazaridou, 2017), while others are more recent, such as those in Canada (A. D. Walker, Bryant, & Lee, 2013), Germany (Klein & Schanenberg, 2020) and South Africa (Gurmu, 2020; Okoko, 2020; Okoko, Scott, & Scott, 2015).

Bush (2008) made a strong call for principal preparation describing leadership preparation as a 'moral obligation'. 'Requiring individuals to lead schools, which are often multimillion-dollar businesses, manage staff and care for children, without specific preparation, may be seen as foolish, even reckless, as well as being manifestly unfair for the new incumbent' (Ibid, p. 30). The process of developing principals involves not only completing professional training but also engaging in personal transformation (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; G. M Crow & Glascock, 1995). However, it is not easy for teachers to change their career identity (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). New principals struggle to relinquish the comfort and confidence of a known role, such as being a teacher, and feel unsecure in a new, unknown, role as a school leader (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Spillane & Lee, 2013; Tahir, Thakib, Hamzah, Mohd Said, & B., 2017). Principals also feel overwhelmed with issues such as isolation and loneliness (Miklos, 2009; Tahir et al., 2017), transition into their new occupations (Spillane & Lee, 2013), cultural inheritance and legacy of the previous leader (Liang, 2011) and other school managerial issues, i.e. school budget, multiple tasks, ineffective staff, burden paper work (Garcia Garduno, Slater, & Lopez-Gorosava, 2011; Nelson, de la Colina, & Boone, 2008). All these pressures lead to requests for formal preparation programmes for new principals (Slater et al., 2018).

Leadership Preparation as a Systematic Process

Several researchers indicate that systematic preparation, rather than inadvertent experience, is more likely to produce effective leaders (Avolio, 2005; T Bush, 2008; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; M. Young, Crow, & Murphy, 2009) . Some scholars also identify the features of exemplary preparation programs,

including well defined theories, coherent curriculum, active learning strategies, quality internship, knowledgeable faculty, social and professional support, standards-based evaluation and rigorous recruitment (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, & Orr., 2009; Weinstein & Hernandez, 2016).

These studies illustrate that the process of leadership preparation is systematic and interrelated and requires the participation of various individuals and organisations. Policy documents are defined as 'a statement of intent' (Forrester & Garratt, 2016). Yuan (2018) indicates that Chinese educational policies should be categorized into formulation, implementation and evaluation stages, to make the policy process systematic, interrelated and orderly (Yuan, 2018). Globally, researchers found that systematic and administrative-oriented preparation could bring positive changes to new principals' preparation, socialisation and professionalisation ((T Bush & Chew, 1999; Lazaridou, 2017; Plsek & Wilson, 2001; Weinstein & Hernandez, 2016).

Context: Leadership Preparation in China

China has long been a hierarchical society, and this shapes principal development and how it is enacted. Under the macro-guidance of the Ministry of Education, principal development is coordinated and managed through four administrative levels, national, provincial, municipal and county (MOE, 2017). The research reported in this paper focuses on the compulsory national level training programme for new and aspiring principal preparation at high school level in China, which is funded by the national government and implemented by provincial education faculties. As a rapidly developing, and highly centralized, country, China has emphasised principal development, at both political and practical

levels, and most of the principal training opportunities are formed through formal professional programmes and implemented systematically by different levels of government and by other organisations.

The preparatory programme, for both aspiring and new principals, is guaranteed by the national government, politically and financially, with official policy documents to ensure its implementation. The formal preparation process in China is directly connected to the accreditation process, as all the new principals are expected to be posted with a 'certificate for principalship', which is allocated after preparation programmes (SEC, 1989). Under the broad spectrum of leadership preparation, local departments and programme providers are requested to provide specific lectures and activities to facilitate the professionalisation of new and aspiring principals. However, provision largely depends on local education professionals and other resources. This raises the issue of how central government can guarantee the quality of preparatory programmes in different places, and also how it can evaluate the effectiveness of these programmes.

Leadership development in China has been criticized for its overwhelming reliance on knowledge-based learning, focused on the acquisition of knowledge and skills. A typical principal training programme in China comprises formal lectures and sessions, including professors sharing management theories, and high-performing practitioners sharing practical strategies for action based on their experience (A. D Walker, Chen, & Qian, 2008; Zheng, Walker, & Chen, 2013). This body of research draws on perspectives from programme participants, but there has been little attention to the views of programme providers, in terms of how provision is

organized and framed, to facilitate the preparation and socialisation of new and aspiring principals. This research addresses this gap by exploring how preparation programmes in China have been formed and the respective roles and obligations of these provider groups.

Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study was qualitative in nature, interpretivist in orientation, with an emphasis on seeking providers' perspectives on their roles and obligations in leadership preparation through discourse analysis. Interpretivism entails gaining access to people's understanding of their situations, including their accounts of their own actions or behaviour, and generating understanding on that basis, which requires more reflection and inquiry (Brannen, 2005). This paper reports how diverse providers contribute to leadership preparation programmes for high school principals in China.

A case study approach was selected for this research, as it allowed the researchers to employ multiple methods to enable in-depth access to the leadership preparation programme as understood by the providers of the programme, linked to the wider context (Yin, 2003). Cohen et al (2007) note that case study allows the researcher to take account of the political and ideological contexts of the study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The present research was conducted within the general background of Chinese society, which is top-down, centralized, and deeply influenced by Confucian ideologies. Leadership preparation in China is strongly impacted by such issues in the case study province.

Research Methods

Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis refers to a form of qualitative analysis that requires the researcher to locate, interpret, analyze and draw conclusions about the evidence presented (Morrison, 2002). Documents provide access to the underlying sophisticated world of organisations (Bryman, 2004). The sources scrutinized for this study were mainly primary sources, including official policy documents, government reports, and institutional documents. The researchers found 56 documents (including policies, regulations and guidance) relating to teacher and principal development. Fine grained analysis refined the process, and ten documents directly related to principalship preparation and leadership accreditation were selected for analysis (see table 1).

Table 1.

Policy Documents from 2010 to 2020 Included in the Analysis

Type	Publication of policy documents	Time
Expectations for principalship: macro policies on education	Standards and qualifications for principalship in China	2013
	Further Strengthening the Vitality for School Governance for Primary and Secondary Schools	2020
Delivery and operations: micro policies on principal development	Guidance on further strengthening training for primary and secondary school principals	2013
	Developing mechanisms for principal development in rural areas	2013
	National training programmes for primary and secondary principals	2014
	National training plan for nursery, primary and secondary teachers	2015
	Managing in-service training through credits for teachers' professional development	2016
	Guidance on three-phase training for school principals	2017
Personnel policies	Personnel management for public administration	2015
	Personnel management for primary and secondary school principals (provisional)	2017

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the various providers, policy makers, programme organisers, government officials and lecturers. Interview guides were customised by provider group. The interview guides were developed based on the literature review, policy analysis, and programme design. Common issues explored across groups include how providers understand and define principalship in China, how they shape the orientation of leadership preparation, how they prepared for programme delivery, and whether and how they communicate and negotiate with other providers during the process. Specific issues related to their roles and obligations during the process. For example, for administrative officials (DoE), questions were related to how they shape the talent pool of principal candidates, the process of principalship accreditation and standards, and qualifications for principal management and recruitment. For programme designers and coordinators, issues related to how they design and shaped the learning process for new and aspiring principals, and how they select and evaluate professional providers.

Sampling Profile

Maxwell (1997) defined purposive sampling as a type of sampling in which 'particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices' (Maxwell, 1997) (p. 87). In this study, participants were selected via judgmental sampling techniques as they were able to provide important information that could not be obtained from other choices (Maxwell, 1996). The selection of participants, based on their positions and roles during the process, included one national level policy maker, two provincial

level (DoE) officials, two programme organisers, and three programme lecturers (see table 2). The researchers handpicked the cases to be included in the sample, based on their specific responsibilities during the preparation process, including programme allocation, design, delivery and evaluation. The researchers invited all providers central to the planning and delivery of the preparation process to participate and they all agreed to do so. This enabled the collection of substantial date and also facilitated respondent triangulation.

Table 2.

Sampling Strategy

Samples (no.)	**Duration**	**Features**
Policy maker (1)	20 minutes	One professor from a normal university, who was involved in the design of *the Standards and Qualification for Principalship in China.* (P-M)
Government officials (2)	Approx. 60 minutes each	One official in charge of the management of principals (O-M) and one in charge of the professional development of principals and teachers (O-T).
Programme Designer (1)	75 minutes	One official who framed the whole training programme, including content and delivery methods, and also invited most of the lecturers (P-D).
Programme Coordinator (1)	30 minutes	One official who was in charge of contacting the principal participants, and helping the participants to register, and also worked as an assistant for programme lecturers (P-C).
Lecturers (3)	15-20 minutes, each	Three programme lecturers from different backgrounds – one university professor (L-U), one experienced practitioner (L-P) and one trainer from commercial organisation (L-C).

The length of the interviews varied, due to the nature of their contributions, and also the time allocated by participants. Interviews with local government participants and programme organisers took

between 60 and 75 minutes while those with the national policy maker and lecturers lasted for between 20 and 30 minutes.

Data Collection

Policy documents were collected from the government's official website and some interviewees, for example the programme designer and government officials, also suggested documents with direct relevance to the study. Interviews took place in participants' workplaces, which were audio-recorded with the permission of seven of the eight participants, and this further enhanced the descriptive validity of qualitative data (Maxwell, 1996). One participant declined to be recorded and the researcher made near-contemporaneous notes of the interview. The audio records were transferred into *Word* documents through the APP, called '*xunfei yuyin*', a digital translator to transform audio records into written language, which largely ensured the accuracy and confidentiality of the data.

The researchers contacted the chief designer of the program to articulate the aims of the study and to seek permission to conduct the research. Permission was granted to observe the three-week training program, and to conduct other aspects of the research, including interviews with the programme designer, programme coordinator and the government official. All the participants gave their voluntary consent. Ethical approval was granted by the researchers' university, and by the local authorities responsible for the program. Participants provided voluntary informed consent.

Data Analysis

Discourse analysis, 'to designate the conjunction of power and knowledge' (Kenway, 1999: 128), allowed the researchers to embed the qualitative data in particular social, political and culture contexts,

and also to explore the relationships among social organisations, roles, situations and power (Kress, 1985). First, the researchers applied discourse analysis for policy documents, not only focusing on their texts or textuality, but also on the 'conditions of possibilities' (McHoul, 1984), to see how these policies could be fulfilled. Discourse analysis on policy documents allowed the researchers to examine how political process and policymaking could shape the social power relations among different organisations and individuals. Discourse analysis was also applied for interview transcripts. Through discourse analysis, interviewees are defined as members of communities, groups or organisations, and speak, write or understand from a specific social position(Van Dijk, 1993). This allowed the authors to explore how leadership preparation was interpreted and delivered, providing a holistic and integrative perspective (Nisbet & Watt, 1984), and also to probe the interrelationships among multi-level providers.

Data analysis was conducted through a basic coding system. According to Fielding (2002), coding is fundamental to qualitative data analysis, and Miles and Huberman (1994) point out that pattern coding allows researchers to break down large interview data into smaller analytical units based on similar themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Coding of qualitative data through NVivo was carried out by creating a set of nodes. This process involves putting tags or labels against large or small pieces of data, in order to attach meaning to them and to index them for future use (Watling, James, & Briggs, 2012). For this research, the labels originating from initial coding patterns were arranged in hierarchies to indicate levels of association between the coding concepts identified. Free-standing codes were then applied for emerging themes. Then, the researcher conceptualized elements and developed meaningful categories

(Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Through open and axial coding, categories were established. Examples of free-standing codes include role identification, job descriptions, interrelationships and effectiveness of the programme.

Authenticity and Validity

Unlike quantitative studies, the validity of qualitative study is not a commodity which could be justified with techniques, instead, it is more like integrity, character and quality, which connect to the purpose and circumstances of the study, and also need to be justified through the interpretation of the data (Brinberg and Mcgrath, 1985; Maxwell, 1992). The authenticity of the data in this study were enhanced through methodological triangulation (T Bush, 2012), through comparisons among different data sets, including policy analysis and interview transcripts among multiple sample groups, comparing contrasting sources of information to ascertain their accuracy (Bryman, 2004; T Bush, 2012; Flick, 2009). For this study, we included several providers and data sets to provide breadth of coverage, representativeness and in-depth inquisition of key issues, as well as throughout the data collection, analysis, and writing stages of the study (Creswell, 2012).

According to Maxwell (1992), there are various forms of validity, including descriptive, interpretive and, evaluative validity, generalisation and theoretical validity. In the field study, audio records and digital translation were applied to reinforce descriptive validity. The interpretive validity of the study is addressed through well-defined research questions, interview processes, and the juxtaposing of data sets. We also conducted purposive sampling to ensure the representativeness of the data (Stake, 2005).

Research Focus

Meadow's book on systems (2012) mentioned three basic factors for a systematic thinking framework, elements, coherence and orientations. This study, conducted through a systematic thinking paradigm, examined how multi-level providers construct inherences and acknowledgement for the leadership preparation process in China, which fits the nature of the topic and also situates to the contexts of Chinese society. Three research questions relate to this issue:

1. How multi-level policy documents shaped the orientations and configurations of leadership preparation in China?
2. What are the roles and obligations of multi-level providers during the leadership preparation process?
3. How multi-level providers coordinate and negotiate with each other systematically during the leadership preparation process?

Findings

The findings are structured to address the research questions.

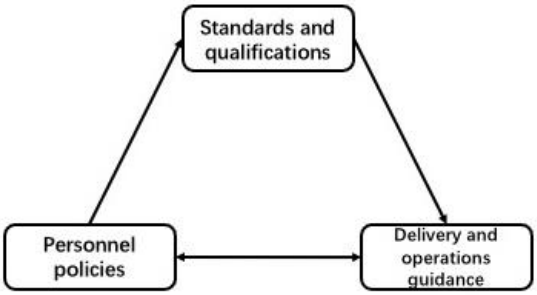
Research question 1: How multi-level policy documents shaped the orientations and configurations of leadership preparation in China?

The policy documents show that the leadership preparation process in China is divided into phases: namely, qualifications and standards, the delivery process and personnel management. To examine the orientation and significance of the process, we begin with an overview of the broader context of policies and regulations related to leadership development in China over the last ten years (from 2010 to 2020), including both national and state documents. The

expectations and standards for principal leadership provide the foundation for programme implementation and accreditation review. Further, these three aspects are interrelated, and form the administrative system for leadership preparation and accreditation conjointly (see Figure. 1).

Figure 1.

The System for Political Documents



Comprehensive Policy Formation

As a state-financed programme in a centralised system, the central government impacts on the preparation programme through the publication of various policies and regulations on principal preparation and accreditation. Since 2010, principal training has become a part of the national training plan (MOE, 2010). The documents can be classified into three categories: standards and qualifications for principalship, guidance for leadership development and accreditation, and principals' selection and recruitment (see table 3).

Table 3.

Policy Analysis between 2010 to 2020

Type	Publication of policy documents	Time	Key points related to principalship
Expectations for principalship: macro policies on education	Standards and qualifications for principalship in China	2013	1. Basic concepts for professional principalship in China; 2. Professional capacities and requirements for principal leadership in China; 3. The Standards applicable for principal training, development and management;
	Further Strengthening the Vitality for School Governance for Primary and Secondary Schools in China	2020	1. Shifting the role of principals from professional leaders to transformational leaders; 2. Stressing the shared responsibilities for education quality among different entities within the school community and among the social contexts
Delivery and operations: micro policies on principal development	Guidance on further strengthening training for primary and secondary school principals	2013	1. Raising the quality for leadership training; 2. Reinforcing the coverage and effectiveness of leadership development; 3. Providing training programmes to meet the dynamic demands of principals; 4. Applying innovative approaches to stimulate active learning of principals; 5. Optimizing leadership development system, to formalize the training and development for principals; 6. Energizing principals' motivation for work; 7. Improving the professional capacity of training providers through regular training; 8. Reinforcing the significance of programme evaluation, to ensure the quality of the programme;
	Developing mechanism for principal development in rural area	2013	1. A political inclination on rural principals, particularly for underprivileged areas and districts; 2. Specific content and delivery approaches for principal training; 3. Specific DoE responsibilities for selection criteria and the process for providing organisations, constitution of lecturers and evaluation of the quality of programmes;
	National training programmes for primary and secondary principals	2014	More specific principal training programmes: 1. Principal training plan for rural and underprivilege areas; 2. Principal training plan for principals from special education schools;

			3. Principal training plan for high-performing school principals; 4. Training programmes for professional providers.
	Supporting plans for rural teachers (from 2015-2020)	2014	1. Optimize the overall quality of rural teachers; 2. Improving the wellbeing and living status of rural teachers; 3. Providing more training opportunities for rural teachers.
	National training plan for nursery, primary and secondary teachers	2015	1. Continuous support for principal training under the national training plan; 2. Principals' responsibility for school-based curriculum;
	Managing in-service training through learning credits	2016	1. Managing in-service training programmes through learning credits; 2. Encouraging personalised training plans for teachers and principals; 3. Connecting professional training to principals' evaluation and assessment;
	Guidance on three-phase training for school principals	2017	1. Selecting qualified programme providing organisations; 2. Establishing professional teams for principal training, including lecturers, demo schools and mentors; 3. Thematic training for principals; 4. Three-phase training: in-campus training (5 days) – shadowing principal (7 days)—back to work practice (50 days)
Personnel policies for principal management	Personnel management for public administrations	2015	1. Principles 2. Criteria and qualifications for principal positions; 3. Selection process; 4. Tenure and tenure targets; 5. Professional development and rewards. 6. Supervision and control;
	Personnel management for primary and secondary school principals (provisional)	2017	1. Principles 2. Criteria and qualifications for principal positions; 3. Selection process; 4. Tenure and tenure targets; 5. Professional development and rewards. 6. Supervision and control;

The principals' preparation programme is compulsory, for new and aspiring principals, funded by the national financial department, while national policies and regulations provide strict guidelines on its implementation. Overall, the Ministry of Education has provided a complete political system to support leadership preparation, from

principal standards to programme implementation and evaluation, from educational cadre development to new principal recruitment, and training and guidelines for professional providers. However, these national policies only provide a broad outline of knowledge content, which does not guarantee the details and quality of each preparation programme in different provinces (MOE, 2017).

Roles and Obligations Shaped by Policies

There are four levels involved in teacher and leadership training in China, as defined by the policy documents (MOE, 2017), sponsored at national, provincial, municipal and county levels (see table 4).

Table 4.

Roles and Obligations of Different Administrative Levels

Administrative level	*Roles and obligations for leadership preparation*
National level -- Ministry of Education	**Political guidance:** publishing national level policies, and guiding the implementation of preparation programs; **Financial support:** allocating funding (National Training Plan)
Provincial level -- Department for Education	**Administrative level**: selecting, recruiting, managing and evaluating principals; **Preparation procedure**: selecting, recruiting, supervising and evaluating the providing organisation; **Allocation of funding**
Municipal level -- Local Educational Authority	**Professional support:** local university and colleges; **Financial support**: funds for running the school (partly); **Programme organisers:** design, deliver and assist the implementation of the preparation programme, which is predominately supported by local universities, colleges or educational faculties.
District Level -- District Education Board	**Selection and nomination** of program candidates; SES (social and economic status) background of the school;

Orientation: Struggle between Professionalisation and Administration

Although the policy documents are comprehensive, there is a contradiction between professionalisation and administration. Although there has been a strong trend towards professionalisation for principals' career development since 2013 (MOE, 2013a), there is still an inclination towards administrative-oriented recruitment of new leaders (MOE, 2015, 2017). The development strategy is not consistent with the selection system, as the development of professional leaders co-exists with selecting administrative cadre. The policy maker, who participated in the making of *the Standard and Qualification of Principalship in China*, also claimed that the practical value of the *Standard* was very limited, as it was not intended for practical application, but rather for administrative action.

> *'At very first, we noticed that these western countries, such as UK, US and Singapore, all have published their qualifications and standards for their headship, which triggered us to think of developing one for Chinese principalship as well. This is a strategy where we imitate or get closer to these developed areas, rather than thinking of the professionalisation of our principals. Thus, this set of standards has not been incorporated or equipped with any other strategies or action plans. I don't think it has any practical meaning.' (Policy Maker)*
>
> *'The principles of the Standards were more like copy, paste and refinement of other western qualifications on school leadership, which illustrated a weak connection to the reality of Chinese principals, and also poor practical value for the preparation process.' (University Professor)*

The ten policies closely related to principalship include only limited attention to leadership preparation. Differences between teacher training and principal training, and between preparatory training and other principal training, are blurred, as some

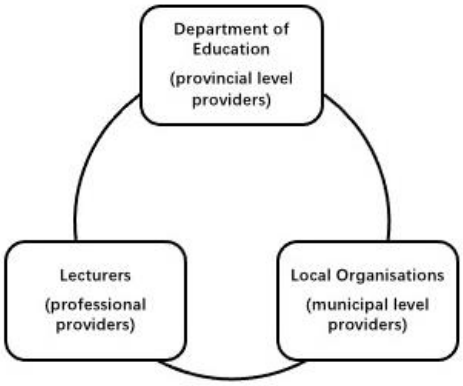
preparation documents relate to other policies, and are not clearly focused on the features of new headship preparation (MOE, 2010, 2013b, 2015). The programme designer adds that, although multiple policy documents shaped the implementation of leadership preparation, '*Supporting Plans for Rural Teachers (2015-2020)*' (MOE, 2014) was the most influential one, and was originally designed for teachers in rural and under-privileged areas. Leadership preparation in the sample province fits this policy as it is located in a less-developed area, and the principals are still part of the teacher team (programme designer).

Research question 2: What are the roles and obligations of multi-level providers during the leadership preparation process?

The responsibilities and division of work were well-articulated and clearly illustrated by national documents and government administration. The new principals' preparation process was supported by administrative and professional providers, but in different ways. Administrative providers are the national and provincial educational departments, while professional providers include lecturers, mentors and professional organisations and faculties. The programme provider, an institute linked to the local university, fulfilled both roles. It is an administrative provider, authorised as a '*cadre training centre*' by the government, as well as a professional provider, linked to the local normal university (see figure 2). The discussion below relates to how, and to what extent, different providers fulfilled their obligations during the process.

Figure 2.

System of Multi-level Providers



Passive Role of the Provincial Educational Department

The DoE shouldered most responsibilities for leadership preparation, including selection, supervision, support and evaluation of the programme, as well as the accreditation and recruitment of the new heads. However, most of these tasks were fulfilled at a modest level. According to the officials from the DoE, their expectations of the preparatory programme were low (Official for Principal Management: O-M), and it was not their main focus compared with other leadership programmes (Official for Principal Training: O-T).

Unclear provider selection

Organisations needed to apply to be able to contribute to the programme. In the sample province, the opportunities were open only to faculties or training centres attached to universities, or organisations under the supervision of the DoE (P-D, L-U and O-T). However, the bidding process was confidential, without clear criteria, and the organisations only needed to submit their proposed training

plans. 'We hardly know why we get the project, or why we failed' (P-D).

> *'It only takes few minutes for the review committee to decide the qualification of each bid book, without any bidders' present, so that the whole process was reckless and speedy.' (P-D)*

The choice of organisations also lacked consistency, in terms of programme providers, content, curricula and delivery methods. First, the programme-providing organisations for new principal preparation and training were different from year to year, picked by the DoE, based on their bid books (P-D and L-U). As a result, the content and delivery methods for new and aspiring principals differ from year to year. Second, there was no consistency between principal preparation programmes and other principal development programmes, as their providers were different and unconnected. Sometimes, the same topics, or the same lectures, were taught in both the preparation programme and the development programme, as the lecturer was invited for both programmes (L-U and L-C).

Limited professional support and programme evaluation

The policy provides an overall system to guide the implementation of the preparation programme, as well as defining the roles of the DoE, but the DoE fulfilled its obligations inadequately. At the political level, the documents stressed the importance of a pre-survey before the programme started, and a post-investigation after the programme (MOE, 2013b). The aims of the pre-survey were to provide valuable information for programme design, in terms of principals' background, learning preferences and knowledge construction. However, at the DoE level, the preparatory programme was underestimated, which made them detached from implementation after the bidding process, and there was no follow-

up support (P-D). The programme designer indicated they had never received any pre-service advice or data.

The policy document emphasized the significance of programme evaluation and supervision and stated that 'the DoE should establish a mechanism to investigate and evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme' (MOE, 2014). The policy further suggested that the evaluation should include experts' evaluation, participants' feedback, and an evaluation of the implementation and funding allocation of the process (MOE, 2014). The results of the evaluation would apply to the rewards and penalties of the programme providing organisation, and more importantly, to future programme improvement. In this study, the programme was evaluated by the DoE, in the form of a chart which comprises numbers and dichotomous answers (yes or no) (see appendix 1). However, the government's supervision and evaluation of programme implementation was too simple to be constructive. The inspection focused on facts and numbers only, in terms of the completion of the programme, rather than the effectiveness of the process, and did not provide any practical or detailed information for programme improvement and modification.

Constrained Authority of the Principal Training Institution

The responsibilities of the lead body for programme implementation, the *cadre-training centre,* include an administrative role as implementor, a professional role as designer, and an assistant role as organiser. However, it has little scope when running the programme, which is largely constrained by the government and programme providers, in terms of programme bidding, use of funding, selection of programme providers, and curriculum content, according to the programme designer.

Under China's centralized system, both national policies and local regulations have a significant influence on the implementation of the training programme. These policies clarify the framework and content of the principal preparation programmes, including compulsory learning hours, time allocation, delivery methods and curriculum content, composition of programme providers, allocation of funding, and examination approaches (P-D and O-M), as also noted in MOE (2013a). The programme designer also mentioned that the centralised system constrained the customisation and personalisation of the preparation process, and impeded the professionalisation of the training process.

The availability of lecturers and other programme providers also made the programme designer and programme coordinator passive when implementing the programme. The curriculum content was based on the availability of experts, who usually lecture about their specialism. As the PD and L-U both mentioned, lecturers seldom customized their content to the needs of the programme. Similarly, the lecturers also mentioned that programme designers or coordinators seldom discussed the design or requirements of the programme with them before it began (L-U and L-C).

> *'Usually, they will directly ask you to give a lecture that you are familiar with. Every professor or lecturer will have one or some 'signature' topics that he/she has lectured on many times.' (L-U)*

Without an effective pre-discussion of programme implementation, the programme coordinator had little authority on the content and curricula of the programme. The programme providers described the preparation training programme as 'sale in bulk' (PD), or just 'assorting the cold dishes together' (P-C). The current system made both groups passive. As programme organisers,

they had little authority over the selection of lecturers and approaches, funding allocation and budget management. As programme designer, they also had little control over curriculum content or the effectiveness of lecturing, as they could only frame the programme, while not influencing implementation details.

Low Levels of Customisation of Professional Providers

Professional providers mean those who provide professional inputs for the programme. These comprise lecturers, demonstration schools for situated learning, and mentors. There are three main types of lecturers, university professors, practitioners, and professional trainers from the commercial organisations. The policies and regulations specify the proportion of the curriculum, and the budget, for each category of provider. As the programme coordinator described the programme as 'assorting code dishes', the researchers further explored the extent to which these professional providers prepare their sessions to adjust to principals' real-world contexts. Most providers responded that they could only customize their lessons to a modest level. For example, the provider from the commercial organisation added one case related to school management in his lecture, while the other nine cases were all business examples.

These limitations made programme organisers passive when delivering the programme, as they could not control the quality and relevance of these lecturers, particularly those from other provinces. According to the programme designer, some local lecturers, particularly local practitioners, received compliments from participants. However, due to the policy constraints, the proportion and payment for each provider could not be modified according to

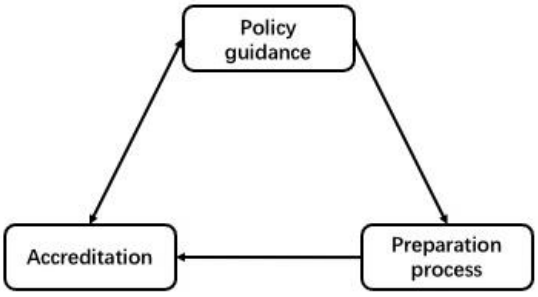
their performance or in response to principals' preferences, because the programme must be consistent with the policy principles (P-C).

Research question 3: How multi-level providers coordinate and negotiate with each other systematically during the leadership preparation process?

We noted earlier that multi-level organisations and individuals shaped their understanding for leadership preparation independently. Research question 3 focuses on comparing provider perspectives, in terms of how they negotiated and cooperated together in running the system of leadership preparation. Due to the nature of the administrative structure in China, this system is formed of three facets, which are policy guidance, the preparation process and accreditation (see Figure 3).

Figure 3.

Preparation Process System



Inadequate Executions of Providers

Under the centralised system, policy documents, and regulations on leadership preparation and development, regulated the behaviour and obligations of the different providers. However, at the implementation stages, we found gaps, and contradictions, between the documents and practice. Most of the providers fulfilled their obligations in modest ways (see table 5), which impeded the expected outcomes of the preparation process.

Table 5.

Policy and Practice for Leadership Preparation

Providers	Roles Defined by the Policy Documents	Levels of Accomplishment
Ministry of Education in China	Allocating funding – part of national training plan (MOE, 2015)	Generous funding to ensure the coverage and implementation of the programme;
	Numerous policies published and updated every year (MOE, 1999, 2010, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020)	Broad spectrum of policy documents related to the issue;
Provincial Department of Education	Selecting appropriate providing organisation (MOE, 2013b, 2015)	Unclear programme provider selection process;
	Pre-investigation requested to provide evidence and foundation for programme design (MOE, 2017a);	No pre-programme survey or investigation;
	Issuing 'Certificate for Principalship' (MOE, 1999)	Automatic pass (100% pass rate).
	Evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme, in terms of participants' satisfaction, and funding allocation (MOE, 2013b) Provide further feedback and advice on programme implementation and improvement (MOE, 2013a)	Little evaluation or supervision of programme implementation;
	Selection, management and evaluation of the principals through policies (MOE,2017b)	Administrative-oriented principal selection and recruitment;
Cadre Training Centre	Transfer the standards and requirements in national documents into practice and construct high-quality programmes to facilitate principals' socialisation (MOE, 2013a).	Constrained authority for programme implementation;
	Supported by the LEA with information from pre-service survey and post-programme evaluation for programme design and improvement (MOE, 2013b);	Little professional support or guidance from the government;
	Self-evaluation (MOE, 2013b)	Occasional self-evaluation and improvement
	'Training for programme providers' (MOE, 2017a)	Few specific training opportunities.
Programme Providers	Provide variety of programme providers, including university professors, and practitioners (MOE, 2013b, 2017a).	Variety types of programme provider
	Customise their courses to meet the practical needs of principals (MOE, 2013b, 2015).	Limited levels of customisation for the course.
	'Training for programme providers' (MOE, 2017a)	Few specific training opportunities.

Little Connection to Principal Recruitment

At the government level, the O-M declared that the major task of the preparation programme was to introduce the principal position to the participants, which he described as 'something they should know and acquire'. Further, at the political level, after completing the programme, the successful participants are entitled to a 'certificate for principalship', which makes them eligible for principal positions, and is also the 'stepping-stone' for principalship (SEC, 1999). However, the pass rate for the certificate was too high (100%) to be valid (programme coordinator). Assessment was based only on the quality of principals' 3000-word essay and on their attendance. The university professor (L-U), one of the examiners, claimed that the quality of these essays was low, but he added that the principals were not trained on how to write a suitable essay during the programme.

There is also a weak link between the principal preparation training programme and the selection and recruitment of new principals (O-T), as 'party intention', and administrative appropriateness for the school organisation, have been the most influential factors when selecting the new leaders (O-M). The P-D admitted that his understanding of principalship had little impact on the recruitment of the principals, as he regarded the criteria for principal selection as: 'none of my business, so that I have not thought about it'. Meanwhile, O-M admitted that the certification for headship had little impact on the selection and recruitment for principal positions. In real-world selection, what they consider the most is whether the candidates could fulfill the Party's intentions and be appropriate for the construction of the school leadership team. In the rural districts, 'being posted without a licence' was quite common, and the principals were allowed to 'get on the bus first, and

then, buy the ticket' (O-M). This undermines the value of the certificate and of the preparation programme.

Discussion and Implications

Policy makers, professional associations, universities, and school leaders have a shared interest in preparing school leaders. According to Walker and Qian (2017), this shared interest should lead to substantial discussion to support the preparation and growth of successful school leaders. Within China's centralised system, the respective roles and responsibilities of these faculties and individuals were specific and clear, and the policy makers also encouraged the separate groups to cooperate. The substantial and continuing investment in principals' development is intended to guarantee the continuity of principal training in China, particularly for principals from under-privileged areas (Zheng et al., 2013).

Epistemological scholars further stressed that, when systematic thinking is applied to human activities, it 'is based on four basic ideas: emergence, hierarchy, communication and control as characteristics of the systems' (Checkland, 1999)(pp.318). The present authors' findings indicate two specific issues that constrained the implementation and the value of the preparatory programme in China: how to optimize the effectiveness of each provider, and how to encourage the separate groups to work together.

Emergent: Optimize the Effectiveness of Each Provider

The data indicate that, although the policy provided a complete and idealized picture of the roles, definitions and relationships of each provider, they only fulfilled their obligations at a modest level, particularly the DoE. The data further show the importance of

encouraging the autonomy of each provider during the process, as '*giving it more autonomy has the potential of raising its quality*' (MOE, 2020). In this study, the programme providing organisation fulfilled its role and obligations administratively, which constrained its activity and creativity when designing and implementing the programme. The role of the providing organisation was one of policy follower, rather than professional provider, without any modifications or adjustments, thus limiting the levels of professionalism in the preparatory process.

The study reviewed how quality leadership preparation could impact on principals' professional growth and leadership enactment, showing that high-quality leadership preparation is necessary for new and aspiring principals, as also acknowledged by Chinese researchers (Hui, 2016; Wang, 2020). It is important to stress the importance of lecturer quality, in order to ensure quality education for these principal participants. As noted above, programme curricula were described as 'sale by bulk', or 'assorted cold dishes', rather than responding to participant needs.

Hierarchy: Re-define the Role of Government (DoE)

Certain scholars (Ford, Lavigne, Fiegener, & Si, 2020; Knudson, Shambaugh, & O'Day, 2011) note the importance of 'district effectiveness', which highlights support from the 'central office' that makes a difference to leadership performance, such as professional development, supervision and mentoring, and improved instructional coherence. The state plays various roles in shaping principal development across different domains, and there are different ways of looking at this. For example, Dale (1997) suggests that roles and subsequent influence may be determined by three governance activities: funding, regulation and provision while, in this

study, the system provided funding, but little has been done in the area of regulation and provision, particularly for programme implementation and evaluation (Dale, 1997).

McLaughlin and Talbert (2003) point out that high-performing districts differed from low-performing districts by the way they approached principal and school professional development (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003). Instead of simply being a provider, the district served more as a supportive resource for leaders in identifying, organising, and offering professional development opportunities. For this preparatory programme, the government appeared to disregard the purpose of principal preparation and had only a modest impact on programme implementation. They allocated programmes to different providers (public organisations), with no evaluation, supervision or follow-up support, after the bidding or application process, and there was no monitoring, or feedback, about these programmes. In centralized systems, the government usually acts as 'the powerful hand' to guarantee the stability and coherence of the preparation system, thus, it should set the 'tone' for preparation programmes, with increased 'professional control' over principal preparation.

Communication: Interconnections Between and Among Providers

As a centralised system, China has strong features of hierarchy and control, with little evidence of communication and emergence. In the authors' research, all these providers offered 'single' contributions, with limited relationships, which made the preparation process partial and disconnected (see figure 4). These providers did not reach agreement on the value or meaning of preparation training through dialogue or communications, as the data showed that their perceived significance and understanding for leadership preparation

in China were limited and varied. These disconnections impeded the value and impact of principal preparation in the sample province.

Figure 4.

Interconnections Between and Among Different Providers

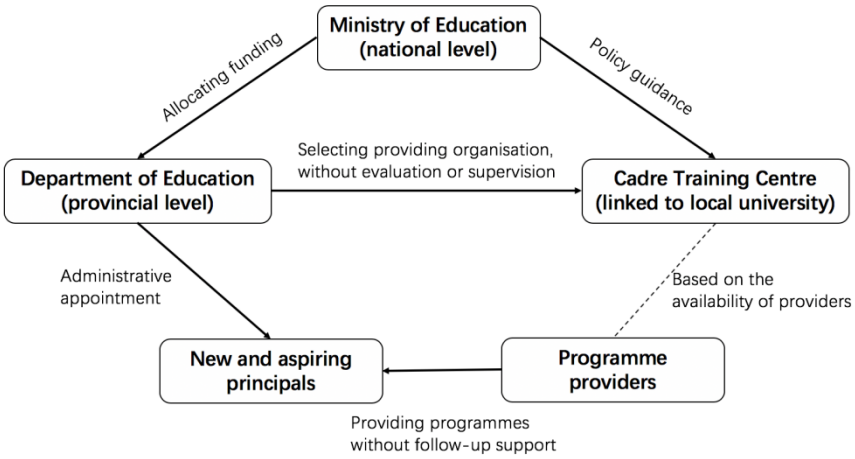


Figure 4 indicates that there were few connections between and among different administrators and programme providers. Ehrich and Hansford (1999), and Daresh (2004), reported that the low level of support provided by government officials, particularly in respect of resources, and the perceived benefits of mentoring, affected the training and professional development of school administrators (J. C. Daresh, 2004; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999). In the authors' research, education officials and the Ministry demonstrated very limited responsibility for the implementation of the programme. According to the programme designer, the government showed little interest in supporting or evaluating the programme. The government officials also declared that the leadership preparation programme was not

their main working focus (O-T), and they had very low expectations about the the programme (O-M).

Control: Reflection and Evaluation

Several international researchers have indicated the criteria for preparatory programme evaluation. For example, Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) stress that five inter-related factors impact on the outcomes of the preparation training programmes: purpose, framework, content, delivery, and operational features(Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Young and Crow (2017), and Kirkpatrick (1998), stress that programme evaluation should be based on preparation experience and participants' satisfaction, related to changes in participants' knowledge, skills and dispositions, changes in school practices, changes in classroom conditions and improved student outcomes (Kirkpatrick, 1998; M. D. Young & Crow, 2016). Throughout the international literature on leadership preparation, the evaluation of programme outcomes has been significant to determine if specific preparation improvement strategies are effective in achieving the desired outcomes, which could contribute to further programme improvement and the validation of current practice (Black, Burrello, & Mann, 2017).

In China, there was limited programme evaluation and lack of critical thinking about the extent to which the preparation programme could facilitate the professional growth of new principals. The policy clearly states the significance of retrospective reflection about the preparation process, as it could provide robust evidence for subsequent preparation programmes, based on the evaluation results. The policy also encourages the LEA to reward those high-performing organisers, by offering further contracts, while discarding those which underperform. However, as mentioned

above, the current system of leadership preparation does not seem to encourage thinking about 'how to evaluate the work we have done?', and 'what we can do to make it better?'. Throughout the whole system, evaluation is very limited, and there is no compulsory self-evaluation or third-party evaluation.

Conclusion

This paper explores provider perspectives of leadership preparation in China, through a multi-level analysis, including policy makers, DoE officials, programme organisers and lecturers, through a systematic thinking framework. It also offers a broad picture of the issue, in terms of policy analysis, programme design, programme implementation, programme evaluation and principals' accreditation and selection. The research shows that these providers and programme dimensions were notionally connected, at political and administrative levels, but these connections were weak and loose at the level of implementation. Meadows (2012) mentioned three factors of systematic thinking, which were elements, coherence and orientation, and she further stressed that what really matters to a system is not the elements, but the coherence and interrelations among the elements (Meadows, 2012). As noted earlier, the process focused on administrative 'hierarchy and control', with little attention to professional 'emergence and communication'. The authors' findings stress the importance of reflection, supervision and cooperation for the programme, as well as the need for providers to have more dynamic and interconnected roles.

International literature demonstrates the great interest in leadership preparation and principal development, from both programme implementation perspectives and programme evaluation

perceptions (G. M. Crow & Whiteman, 2016; Dinham, Collarbone, Evans, & Mackay, 2013). As the largest developing and centralised country, new headship preparation in China has been poorly reported, with very few empirical studies, which makes this study significant in terms of contextual background. The nature of leadership preparation, and the contextual background, in China requires integrity and administrative thinking towards the design and delivery of the process. The systematic thinking framework stresses the motivation and obligation of multi-level providers, and also reinforces the need for negotiation and cooperation among them.

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Appendix 1: *The Administrative Evaluation Form*

Prog. Code	**Name of the programme**	**Pattern of the programme**	**Time**	**Place**	**Proportion of context-based learning**
No. 17	Preparatory training	On-campus training	2015. x. xx - 2015. X.xx	Xx district	40%
Participants information	**Population**	**Attendance**	**Proportion of participants**	**Proportion of Graduates**	**Distinction Rate of graduates**
	110	106	96.4%	96%	15%

Levels of completion[1]	**Completion of the proposal**	**Completion of the curriculum**	**Experts fit the proposal[2]**	**Outsourcing or not**
	65%	88%	85%	No

Documentation	**Participants' diary**	**Participants' evaluation**	**Issues of Programme Report[3]**
	Submitted	Submitted	4
Funding	**Funding allocation**	**Funding usage**	**Proportion of usage**
	500,000 rmb	320,000 rmb	64%
Features	**Any rewards or reports?**	**Any experience to share?**	**Remarks**
	Once, reported by local newspaper	Yes, submitted	None

[1] Levels of completion: to what extent, the providing organisation completed the programme as their proposal planned;
[2] To what extent the providing organisation employed the lecturers and experts according to the proposal planned.
[3] Programme report: a self-reported bulletin to illustrate the implementation and delivery of the programme, which was completed by the providing organisation, and submitted to the government for inspection.

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Levels of School Administrators Exhibiting Instructional Supervision Behaviors: Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract

Beginning with the 2015-2016 academic year in Turkey, school principals were given the responsibility of instructional supervisory authority. The purpose of this study is to reveal the level of instructional supervision exhibited by the school principals according to the perceptions of teachers and to examine these perceptions in terms of various variables. In this context, 1237 teachers working in primary, middle and high schools in Balıkesir and Bursa provinces were included in the study. In the study, a survey was used to reveal the current situation regarding instructional supervision exhibited by the school principals. The results of the study showed that the instructional supervision exhibited by the school principals occurred at a low frequency. Within the scope of the study, it is recommended that the current practice regarding the instructional supervision should be provided in a way that will recognize the teachers in the process of providing feedback to teaching and teachers and benefit from these teachers in this process.

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Introduction

Instructional leadership has become an important leadership approach, especially after the emergence of the effective schools theory in the 1980s in which school administrators prioritize the curriculum and the teaching process (Lashway, 2002; Lochmiller, 2016; Lochmiller, Huggins, & Acker-Hocevar, 2012; Serin & Buluç, 2012). This form of leadership has focused on improving teaching instead of managerial roles by fundamentally changing the traditional role and leadership understanding of the school principal (Çelik, 2015; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010). As a matter of fact, monitoring and evaluating the instruction activities carried out by the school administrators have been shown to have the potential for improving the teaching (Creemers & Scheerens, 1994; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990; Lochmiller, 2016). In addition, the school administrators, through the supervision and evaluation of the teacher, fulfill the responsibility of instructional leadership in this way as well as providing professional development of teachers (Stronge, 1993). Krug (1992), classified these instructional leadership behaviors, which should be demonstrated by school principals and focused on improving teaching, as the definition of the school mission, management of teaching and curriculum, supervision of instruction, monitoring of student development, and improvement of the teaching climate. This study will focus on the instructional supervision that is considered as one of the instructional leadership

behaviors (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Krug, 1992; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

Since the announcement in the literature that effective schools are usually managed by school principals with instructional-oriented leadership behaviors, recommendations have been made for school administrators to serve as instructional leaders (Edmonds, 1979). Subsequent studies have confirmed the importance of instructional leadership, and have sought to understand the behaviors required by effective instructional leadership (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). These studies indicate that there is an important gap in our understanding of instructional supervision as an instructional leadership practice (Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Lochmiller, 2016; Neumerski, 2013; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Therefore, it is seen that there is a deficiency in international literature, especially in non-Western countries in terms of defining the instructional supervision behaviors of school principals and reflecting their practice. At this point, first, the current situation is thought to be quite meaningful to put forth because the transfer of instructional supervision to school principals in Turkey is a new development. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to present an idea about the instructional supervision to policymakers and educational administrators by revealing the level of instructional supervision behaviors exhibited by school administrators according to perceptions of primary school, middle school and high school teachers. Answers to the following questions were sought for the stated purpose.

1. What are the levels of instructional supervision behaviors exhibited by the school principals according to perceptions of primary, middle and high school teachers?
2. Do the levels of instructional supervision behaviors exhibited by the school principals differ significantly in terms of teachers' gender, teaching level, age and seniority according to perceptions of primary, middle and high school teachers?

Instructional Leadership

The concept of leadership, which has been put forward for the organizations to reach their goals more quickly and effectively, has become an intense study area by education researchers for almost half a century. Leadership, in general terms, means defining the realistic vision and mission for the future of the organization and the power to attract and pursue people to actualize that visions and mission (De Bevoise, 1984; Robbins & Judge, 2016). The leader is the person who can actualize all these. Studies have shown that leadership requires different approaches depending on the various situational factors and conditions within which the organization is involved (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Özdemir & Sezgin, 2002; Robbins & Judge, 2016). In this context, one of the organizations that needs a leader and different leadership approaches is educational organizations (Çelik, 2015). Because there are many different groups of people (teachers, students, parents, etc.) and situations that the principal deals with in the educational institutions. In the literature, although there are many models related to leadership, lately a model has become more prominent especially in educational organizations compared to others. This leadership model is the instructional

leadership that school administrators must have in every situation and condition.

Leadership in the context of school management was based on theories developed in business administration until the 1980s. During this period, trait theories, behavioral theories and contingency theories are frequently mentioned theories in the field of educational administration. Leader behavior in behavioral theory is designed in two dimensions, based on McGregor's X and Y Theory, as building structure and giving importance to relationship. Leadership behaviors of the school administrator were examined in terms of these two dimensions (Özden, 2013). In the 1980s, with the emergence of effective school movement, the school-specific instructional leadership approach emerged (Hallinger, 2005; Harris & Spillane, 2008; Spillane, 2006). One of the most important factors in the emergence of this concept was school administrators who were criticized for ignoring the quality of education and socio-economic needs of the society (Hess, 2003). Upon critiques in research conducted on effective schools, leadership has been found to have a critical place in the teaching process (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Şişman, 2014). Based on this, an attempt was made to determine the roles of the school administrators who could create an effective school. In these determined teaching roles, school administrators have been an important element in increasing student achievement along with implementing the curriculum to adapt schools to changing structure and to achieve goals (Ergen, 2009; Glanz, 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Spillane & Zuberi, 2009).

Instructional leadership is defined as a set of behaviors that the principal exhibits, or enables others to exhibit, in order to increase student achievement in the school (De Bevoise, 1984). The most

important characteristic that distinguishes instructional leadership from other leadership models is its focus on the teaching-learning process (Gümüşeli, 1996). Along with this, another characteristic of instructional leadership is that the instructional supervision is under the responsibility of the school administrators. However, the process of instructional supervision here refers to helping the teacher in improving the teaching process rather than the process of controlling or judging teachers (Aydın, 2016). The cooperation, communication, coordination, and objective understanding of observation between the teacher and the school manager play a critical role in the success of this process (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Memduhoğlu & Zengin, 2012).

Instructional Supervision

One of the main goals of schools is to ensure student success under effective management. One of the sine qua non of good management is supervision (Başar, 1995; Henson, 2010). Supervision is the examination of the plans prepared in accordance with their aims, checking for errors and deficiencies, and correcting them for success (Demirkasımoğlu, 2011; Taymaz, 2019). The aim of the supervision that expresses the action aimed at both assessing and improving as understood from its definition is to ensure and maintain the effectiveness of the school (Aydın, 2016; Başaran, 2000). As one of the management processes, supervision is the responsibility of school administrators. Although the instructional supervision is mostly carried out in the form of informal observations in order not to disrupt teaching activities, it reaches a formal dimension through classroom supervision (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Thus, school administrators have the opportunity to evaluate the degree to which the defined and shared objectives are actualized as teachers are

practicing through classroom visits (Korkmaz, 2005). A successful school administrator is aware that assessing the development of teachers and students is essential for improvement. In addition, it is expected that he/she will have knowledge about the measurement and evaluation methods by which these assessments will be performed with (Serin & Buluç, 2012; Krug, 1992). Otherwise, he/she is aware that it is impossible to assess student development without evaluation.

In Western education systems (especially in the USA), instructional supervision has evolved from a centralized supervision and control model to humanistic and collective models for centuries (Başar, 2000; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). The supervision and control model, which took place between the 17th and 19th centuries, represented a hierarchical relationship between teachers and supervisors. In the age of scientific management in the first part of the 20th century, people who supervised teachers emphasized the importance of supervision by discovering the role of supervision activities on teaching-learning process. From the 1930s to the late 1950s, a new approach to supervision came to the forefront. The main priority of this approach was to increase the motivation of teachers by improving interpersonal relations and meeting personal needs (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017). A new management approach at the end of the twentieth century envisaged a shift to instructional supervision focusing on the development of teachers rather than teachers' compatibility (Pajak, 1993). In addition, new terms such as instructional, developmental and moral leadership, vocational education, mentoring, and academic coaching have entered the leadership literature.

The instructional supervision has been thought to be mainly focused on teacher evaluation in terms of teacher perceptions (Schulman, Sullivan, & Glanz, 2008). However, Glanz and Behar-Horenstein (2000) emphasized that instructional supervision should have an identity that improves teaching processes rather than evaluative activities. At this point, instructional supervision and teacher evaluation are closely related to each other, but they do not pursue the same objective. Instructional supervision relies on school-based supervision of relevant staff (principals, administrators, teachers, and inspectors) in order to improve and support the professional development of teachers and the teaching process, whereas teacher evaluation is a systematic procedure used to review a teacher's performance in the classroom and to provide constructive feedback for the teacher's professional development. In other words, the instructional supervision aims to reveal the teacher's development while the teacher evaluation aims to reveal the performance of the teacher (Holland & Adams, 2002; Zepeda, 2017). However, evaluation is, inevitably, a process where the focus is on development (Akgün, 2001; Chao & Dugger, 1996; Schlechty, 2014; Schulman, Sullivan, & Glanz, 2008; Senge, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2014). Nolan (1997) stated that the supervision and evaluation of the teacher were different processes, but stated that these two actions could not be carried out effectively by a single person. For this reason, it was emphasized that the development of teaching activities should be primarily under the responsibility of the coaches in the informal form (Schulman, Sullivan, & Glanz, 2008).

In instructional leadership, the school administrator creates a development-oriented evaluation system by a rewarding student and teacher success (Akgün, 2001; Schlecty, 2014; Senge, 2006). School administrators sometimes experience this evaluation system through

informal and sometimes formal supervision (Seifert & Vornberg, 2002). The supervisions are organized to show the intentions and aims they have. Following the supervision, deficiencies and faults of the issues that contribute to the achievement of the goal are revealed with the experienced evaluations (Başaran, 2000). The results are shared with teachers and are used to develop new strategies that will improve student performance (Çelik, 2015). The interactions that the administrator makes with the students in this process enable them to better see their individual abilities. This information that the administrator has helps her to establish richer and more meaningful dialogues with the students, families and teachers (Whitaker, 1997).

Historical Development of Educational Supervision in Turkey

Supervision in the Turkish education system started with the studies made after primary education became compulsory with the edict issued by II. Mahmut in 1824. With the official regulation made in 1838, a more control-oriented supervision institution was established (Erdem, 2009). Later, in 1846, two units named Primary Education Inspectorate and Secondary Education Inspectorate were established under the Ministry of Education (Aydın, 2014). In 1862, an important change was made and the inspectors who were assigned to inspect the high school and junior schools were assigned the duty of inspecting all schools (Taymaz, 2015). With the "Education Regulations" prepared by the Ministry of Education (MoNE) in 1869, new provisions were introduced on supervision services and it was emphasized that supervision was a management process (Şahin, Elçiçek, & Tösten, 2013). In 1875, the guiding principle was brought to the forefront in the inspection activities carried out with a regulation prepared; and it was foreseen that there should be

an inspection book in the institutions and the findings, observations and suggestions should be written here (Taymaz, 2015).

In 1923, the "Instruction for Education Inspectors" and the "Instruction on the Duties of Primary Education Inspectors" were published and thus, the duties and powers of the inspector, inspection principles and the establishment of the inspectorate were explained in detail. Upon the enactment of the Education Organization Law No. 789 in 1926 and the establishment of education security, a regulation on the rights, powers and duties of ministry inspectors was prepared. On the other hand, in the First Education Inspectors Guide published in 1929, the personal and professional characteristics required to be found in primary education inspectors were listed and it was stated that the inspector should be a good teacher first. However, since there is no concrete criterion for a good teacher, this understanding has been reflected in practice by assigning inspectors from teachers with a high level of seniority. In 1961, with the 23rd article of the law numbered 222 on January 5, 1961, "Primary education inspectors are appointed to carry out the guidance, inspection and investigation services of primary education institutions" provision has started to be implemented. With the regulation published in the Official Gazette dated October 27, 1990 and numbered 20678, another step was taken in inspection services, and it was stated that classroom supervision will be carried out during or separately from the general supervision process in Article 62 of the Ministry of National Education Inspection Board's Communiques dated 1993 and numbered 2570.

In Turkey, the classroom supervisions were done by the inspectors from the MoNE or the Provincial Directorate of National Education until the year of 2015. According to official data, the

number of teachers working in the MoNE was 993,794 and the number of inspectors was 2,496 in 2015-2016 academic year (MEB, 2016). Given this situation, the small number of inspectors, the high number of workloads in the discipline, and the lack of long-term monitoring, observation and evaluation of teachers prevented the realization of instructional supervision. Therefore, this situation limited the control and supervision mechanisms of the Turkish education system, which has a strong central structure. This authority has been transferred to school principals under Article 54 of the Regulation on Teacher Assignment and Relocation of Ministry of National Education published in the Official Gazette dated April 17, 2015 and numbered 29329. It is seen that the form of "Classroom Supervision and Teacher Evaluation", which was published in this context and implemented by school principals, has two dimensions: classroom practices and occupational and personal qualifications. This necessitates school principals to have adequate knowledge and equipment not only in the field of management but also in the field of supervision. However, although the Turkish education system has recently transferred its supervisory authority from inspectors to school principals, it has neglected the dimensions of instructional supervision by school principals such as coaching, mentoring, and professional development. Therefore, the instructional supervision given to the principals reflects a centralized system, in which "control" aspects are privileged on "authorization" dimension. This case creates the impression that instructional supervision, as a factor supporting teaching in Turkey, is also a bureaucratic process. From this perspective, present instructional supervision in Turkey particularly, especially in the bureaucratic sense of direction is a little different from the concept in western countries. Together with all that, this delegation of authority can be considered as an important

step towards the acceptance of school leaders who are not legally accepted as a profession in Turkey.

Method

In this section, respectively, the research design, population and sample of the research, data collection tools, data analysis, and statistical techniques used in research are described.

Research Design

In this study, surveys were used to better understand the levels of instructional supervision behaviors of school principals working in primary, middle and high schools.

Research Context

This study was carried out in Bursa and Balıkesir cities located in the South Marmara region of Turkey during the academic year of 2015-2016. The South Marmara region is located in the west of Turkey. Some factors were effective in the selection of these two cities. Firstly, the researchers are familiar with these two cities, different school types (Science High School, Social Sciences High School, Anatolian Vocational High School, Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School, Religious Vocational Middle and High School, Middle School, Special Education Schools, and Primary School) and school principals (gender, seniority, age etc.). The second concerns the state of the cities. While Bursa is the fourth largest city in which most teachers serve, Balıkesir is the seventeenth largest city in Turkey. The number of teachers working within the Ministry of National Education in these two cities corresponds to approximately 5% of the total number of teachers (MEB, 2016). This ratio is remarkable considering that Bursa and Balıkesir are cities that receive

intensive migration from different regions and cities of Turkey and have a cosmopolitan structure in a socio-cultural sense. Based on these points, the study was designed with a quantitative method in order to reach more generalizable results.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of 21,785 teachers working in primary, middle and high schools of the Ministry of National Education in the central districts of Balıkesir and Bursa in the 2015-2016 academic year. Research is carried out on the sample. It is assumed that 381 teachers can represent at the 0.5 significance level and 95% confidence level for sample size (Cohen, Manin, & Morrison, 2011). In this direction, 87 schools were identified primarily by simple random sampling in the central districts of Balıkesir and Bursa. Subsequently, 2,000 questionnaires were distributed to the schools. At the end of the data collection, 1,442 of the 2,000 (response rate is 72%) which were distributed to teachers who participated voluntarily in 87 schools were returned and 1,237 were analyzed because 205 of them had missing data (more than 10% unmarked items, multiple markings on the same items). Information about the research sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Number of Schools and Teachers in the Sample

Teaching level	Number of schools		Number of teachers		Number of participants	
	Balıkesir	Bursa	Balıkesir	Bursa	Balıkesir	Bursa
Primary	8	19	151	423	91	269
Middle	11	26	203	589	107	386
High	6	17	146	488	75	309
Total	25	62	500	1500	273	964
Grand Total	87		2000		1237	

Of the teachers who participated in the study, 770 (62.2%) were female and 467 (37.8%) were male. Of these teachers, 351 (28.4%) were working in primary school, 515 (41.6%) in middle school and 371 (30%) in high school. In terms of age, 222 (17.9%) of the teachers were in the 21-30 age range, 507 (41%) in the 31-40 age range, 378 (30.6%) in the 41-50 age range, and 130 (10.5%) were 51 or above.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, Instructional Supervisory Behavior of School Administrator Scale (ISBSAS), which was developed by İlğan (2014), was used to measure the levels of instructional supervision behaviors exhibited by the school principals according to perceptions of primary, middle, and high school teachers. İlğan (2014) stated that the scale is two-dimensional and consists of 23 items. The first dimension of the scale, the teaching and teacher development dimension includes expressions such as teachers' board meetings, follow-up of student success, involving teachers in management, teacher orientation, school climate based on trust, dealing with

teaching problems, lifelong learning, cooperation and professional development. The second dimension, called class visits and providing feedback, includes statements about the school principal's class visits, encouraging teachers to visit each other's classes, analyzing these visits, and feedback on performance.

The scale created for teachers contained statements such as: "Listens to teachers' teaching problems", "After the class visit, he/she talks with the teacher about her observation and provides feedback.", "Provides the necessary support for teachers who are new to the profession or school to adapt to the school", "Encourages teachers' participation in professional development activities", "Takes necessary steps to find a solution when the student has a learning deficiency/disability", "Takes into account teachers' opinions in making decisions regarding teaching and learning", "Promotes collaborative efforts among teachers", "Rewards successful teachers based on their concrete behavior)".

The reliability coefficients for the subscales of the ISBSAS were calculated as α = .97 for teaching and teacher development, and as α = .93 for classroom visits and giving feedback. As a result of the reliability analysis that İlğan (2014) applied to the scale, Cronbach's Alpha value was determined as α = .98 for the whole scale. The results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) conducted by İlğan (2014) on the ISBSAS show that KMO value was .98 and Bartlett test value (.000) was significant. Within the scope of the research, 5-point Likert-type scale was used to determine the frequency of instructional supervision behaviors exhibited by the school principals and the options were chosen from the most negative to the most positive as "never, occasionally, sometimes, often, always" (1-5). Finally, for the analysis of the responses to the scale, the 4/5 formula that is

correspondent of the arithmetic means to the scale was used. According to this, arithmetic means were very low for 1,00-1,80, low for 1,81-2,60, medium for 2,61-3,40, high for 3,41-4,20, very high for 4,21-5.00.

Data Analysis

The SPSS 24 package program, which is used in data analysis in social sciences, was used for the analysis of the data. First, descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were calculated to determine demographic characteristics. Data analysis progressed in two steps. In the first step, the functions of the scale were examined with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). As a result of CFA, it was determined that ISBSAS consisted of two sub-dimensions and 23 items, as in İlğan (2014). In the second step, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was applied to determine whether the instructional supervision behaviors exhibited by the school principals showed a significant difference according to the gender, teaching level, age and seniority variables of the teachers (Huck, 2011; Mertler & Vannatta, 2016). Post Hoc LSD test from the multivariate comparison tests was used to determine the source of the probable differences between the variables. As the significance level, $p<0.05$ was accepted in the interpretation of these results. Finally, the homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, which is one of the basic conditions of multivariate analyses, and whether there is a linear relationship between the variables were examined according to Levene's test results. It was seen that the obtained results provide the necessary basic conditions.

Findings

Mean Scores According to Perceptions of Teachers

The levels of instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals according to perceptions of primary, middle and high school teachers are given in Table 2.

Table 2.

Mean Scores Related to ISBSAS

Sub-dimensions	**Teaching level**	***N***	$\bar{X}$	***sd***
Teaching and teacher development	Primary school	351	2.00	.95
	Middle school	515	2.38	1.00
	High school	371	1.98	.87
Classroom visits and giving feedback	Primary school	351	2.51	1.03
	Middle school	515	2.87	1.04
	High school	371	2.65	1.05
ISBSAS total	Primary school	351	2.17	.94
	Middle school	515	2.55	.97
	High school	371	2.21	.89

According to Table 2, the mean scores of the teachers related to teaching and teacher development were $\bar{X}$ = 2.00, sd = .95 in the primary school, $\bar{X}$ = 2.38, sd = 1.00 in the middle school, and $\bar{X}$ = 1.98, sd = .87 in the high school. The mean scores of the teachers related to classroom visits and giving feedback were $\bar{X}$ = 2.51, sd = 1.03 in the primary school, $\bar{X}$ = 2.87, sd = 1.04 in the middle school, and $\bar{X}$ = 2.65, sd = 1.05 in the high school. The findings show that primary school, middle school and high school teachers' perceptions of teaching and teacher development are at low level. Primary school teachers' perceptions of classroom visits and giving feedback were found to be

at the "low" level ($\bar{X}$ = 2.51, sd = 1.03), middle school teachers' perceptions ($\bar{X}$ = 2.87, sd = 1.04) and high school teachers' perceptions ($\bar{X}$ = 2.65, sd = 1.05) were found to be at the "medium" level. Finally, teachers working in primary school ($\bar{X}$ = 2.17, sd = .94), teachers working in middle school ($\bar{X}$ = 2.55, sd = .97), and teachers working in high school ($\bar{X}$ = 2.21, sd = .89) had a "low" level of ISBSAS perception.

Factor Analysis

In this study, CFA was conducted to verify that the ISBSAS consisted of two sub-dimensions and 23 items as in İlğan (2014). As the results of CFA, emerging factor structures and fit indices and values regarding the model are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Fit Indices and Values of CFA

Fit indices		**Values**	**Decision**
χ^2		778.44	
sd		203	
χ^2/sd	3 ≤ χ^2/sd<5= Acceptable	3.8	Accepted
GFI	≤.95= Perfect	0.95	Accepted
AGFI	≤.90= Perfect	0.93	Accepted
CFI	≤.95= Perfect	1.00	Accepted
NFI	≤.95= Perfect	0.99	Accepted
NNFI	≤.95= Perfect	0.99	Accepted
SRMR	≤.05= Perfect	0.024	Accepted
RMR	≤.05= Perfect	0.036	Accepted
RMSEA	≤.05= Perfect	0.048	Accepted
RFI	≤.95= Perfect	0.99	Accepted
IFI	≤.95= Perfect	1.00	Accepted

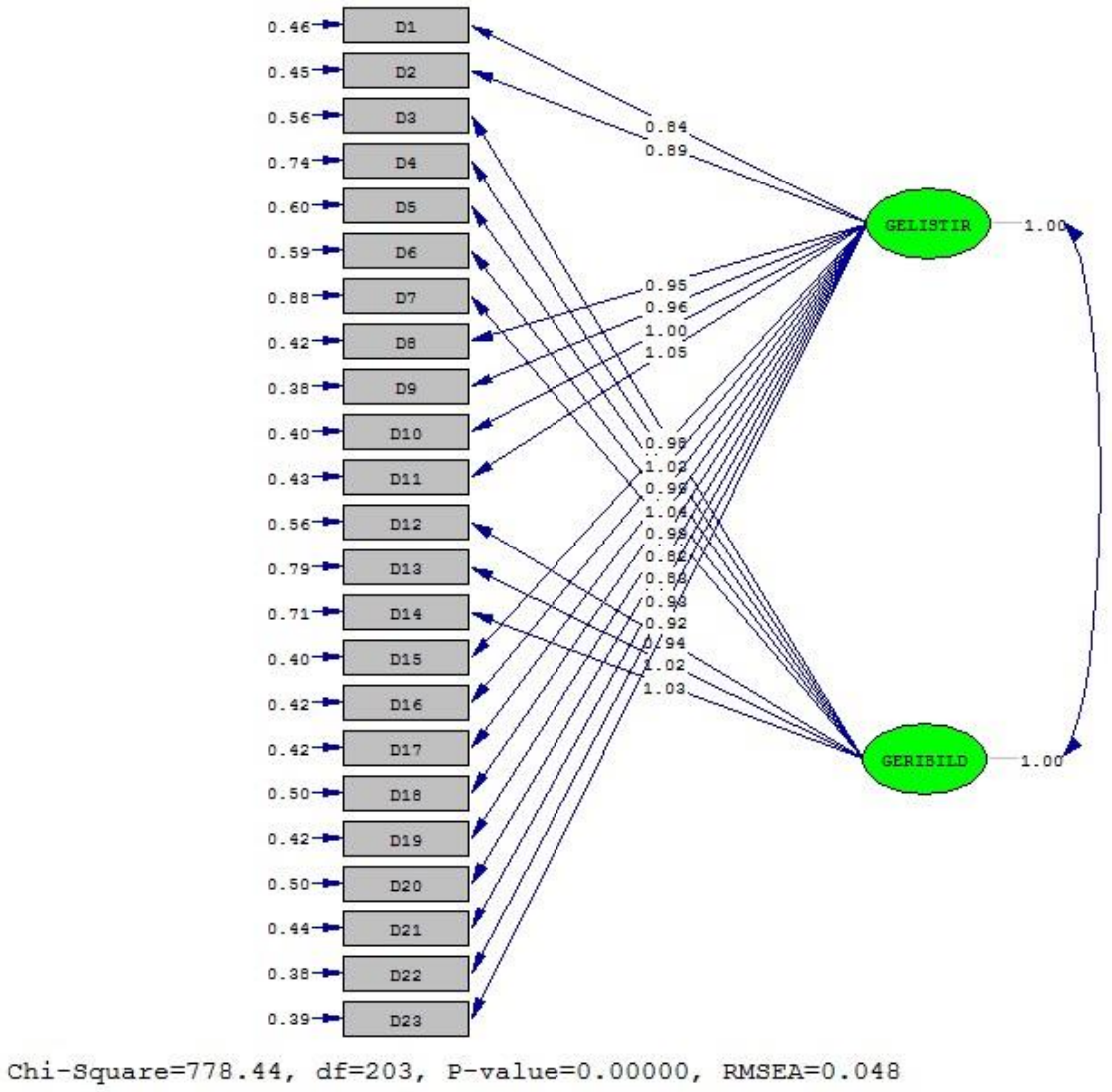
Source: Schumacker & Lomax, 2010, p. 76.

When we looked at the values that are formed as a result of CFA in Table 3, it was seen that all the obtained values had a good fit for analysis. In addition, as a result of the CFA, the scale was determined to consist of two sub-dimensions and 23 items, as adapted by İlğan (2014). Items numbered as 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 were included in the dimension of "teaching and teacher development", while items numbered as 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, and 14 are included in the dimension of "classroom visits and

giving feedback". The path diagram describing the relationship between the factors and items of the two-dimensional model of ISBSAS is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

The Path Diagram of the ISBSAS.



Multivariate Analysis of Variance

After factor analysis, "teaching and teacher development" and "classroom visits and giving feedback" dimensions of the ISBSAS were determined as dependent variables. Then, MANOVA was conducted to determine whether the instructional leadership behaviors exhibited by the school principals in the classroom supervision showed a significant difference according to the independent variables of teachers' gender, teaching level, age and seniority. The output of MANOVA includes analysis of homogeneity of variances. Therefore, comments begin with the results of Box's M analysis (Mertler & Vannatta, 2016). Box's M values obtained as a result of the analysis are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.

Box's M Multivariate Analysis

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices[a]	
Box's *M*	184.782
F	.989
df1	168
df2	13847.165
Sig.	.526

Note[a]: Tests the hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the independent variables are equal among the groups.

According to the results of Box's M variance equality analysis in Table 4 (Box's M = 184, 13847.165; F = .989, p = .526), equality of covariance was not accepted. Due to the fact that there was no significant difference in Box's M analysis for the equality of covariance matrices, Wilks' Lambda test was preferred.

The results of MANOVA to determine whether the instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals show a significant difference in terms of the independent variables of teachers' gender, teaching level, age, and seniority are shown in Table 5.

Table 5.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Instructional Supervision Scale

Effect		**Value**	***F***	**Hypothesis *df***	**Error *df***	***p***	**η^2 (eta)**
Intercept	Wilks' Lambda	.601	386.256b	2.000	1163.000	.000	.399
Gender	Wilks' Lambda	.997	1.1953b	2.000	1163.000	.142	.003
Teaching Level	Wilks' Lambda	.979	6.127b	4.000	2326.000	.000	.010
Age	Wilks' Lambda	.988	2.326b	6.000	2326.000	.030	.006
Seniority	Wilks' Lambda	.986	2.077 b	8.000	2326.000	.035	.007

*p<.05

The results of multivariate analysis of variance regarding instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals revealed that the dependent variables of "teaching and teacher development" and "classroom visits and giving feedback" were effective on the independent variables. Accordingly, the teaching level [Wilks' Lambda = 0.979, F (4, 2326) = 6.127, p = 0.000, partial η2 = 0.010], the age [Wilks' Lambda = 0.988, F (6, 2326) = 2.326, p = 0.030, partial η2 = 0.006], and the seniority [Wilks' Lambda = 0.986, F (8, 2326) = 2.077, p = 0.035, partial η2 = 0.007] affect the teachers' perceptions of instructional supervision behavior of the school principals, while the independent variable gender [Wilks' Lambda = 0.997, F (2, 1163) = 1.953, p = 0.142, partial η2 = 0.003] does not have any effect on the instructional supervision behavior of school principals.

Post Hoc LSD, which is one of the multivariate comparison tests, was applied to determine the source of the probable differences between the variables. In addition, the homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices as one of the basic requirements of multivariate analyses and the linear relationship between variables were evaluated according to Levene's test results. The obtained results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6.

Test of Normality of Instructional Supervision Scale

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances[a]				
	F	***df1***	***df2***	**Sig.**
Teaching and teacher development	1.251	72	1164	.082
Classroom visits and giving feedback	1.248	72	1164	.083

In Table 6, the results obtained from the Levene's test were found to provide the basic requirement for the analysis of variance.

Univariate Analysis of Variance

Univariate Analysis of Variance was conducted as a follow-up test. The results of the Univariate ANOVA related to "teaching and teacher development" and "classroom visits and giving feedback" sub-dimensions are shown in Table 7.

Table 7.

ANOVA Results Related to Teaching and Teacher Development and Classroom Visits and Giving Feedback

	Dependent Variables	***F***	***p***	***sd***	η^2
Teaching level	Teaching and teacher development	8.508	.000	2	.014
	Classroom visits and giving feedback	8.409	.000	2	.014
Age	Teaching and teacher development	2.761	.041	3	.007
	Classroom visits and giving feedback	2.924	.033	3	.007
Seniority	Teaching and teacher development	1.957	.099	4	.007
	Classroom visits and giving feedback	2.897	.021	4	.010

*p<.05

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that the teaching level variable had an effect on "teaching and teacher development" [F (2, 1164) = 8.508, p = 0.000, partial η2 = 0.014] and "classroom visits and giving feedback" [F (2, 1164) = 8.409, p = 0.000, partial η2 = 0.014] sub-dimensions. Also, the age variable of the teachers had an effect on "teaching and teacher development" [F (3, 1164) = 8.283, p = 0.041, partial η2 = 0.007] and "classroom visits and giving feedback" [F (3, 1164) = 8.773, p = 0.033, partial η2 = 0.007] sub-dimensions. Finally, it has been concluded that the seniority variable had an effect on the sub-dimension of "classroom visits and giving feedback" [F (4, 1164) = 8.409, p = 0.000, partial η2 = 0.014].

Multivariate Comparison Test

One-Way Analysis of Variance (One-Way ANOVA) related to the teaching level, age, and seniority variables between which a significant difference was found according to univariate ANOVA was conducted as a follow-up test. One-way ANOVA results are shown in Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10, respectively.

Table 8.

Post Hoc LSD Test for Teaching Level Variable

Dependent Variable	(I) Seniority	(J) Seniority	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Differenced	
						Lower bound	Upper bound
Teaching and teacher development	Middle school	Primary School	.078*,b,c	.026	.002	.028	.128
		High School	.100*,b,c	.026	.000	.049	.152
Classroom visits and giving feedback	Middle school	Primary School	.079*,b,c	.025	.002	.030	.129
		High School	.066*,b,c	.026	.010	.016	.117

*p<.05

When Table 8 is examined, it is seen that teachers working in middle school have higher perceptions of instructional supervision behaviors compared to the teachers working in both primary and high school in terms of the teaching level in the sub-dimensions of "teaching and teacher development" and "classroom visits and giving feedback".

Tablo 9.

Post Hoc LSD Test for Age Variable

Dependent Variable	(I) Seniority	(J) Seniority	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Differenced	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Teaching and teacher development	Age of 21-30	Age of 31-40	.095*,b,c	.028	.001	.041	.149
		Age of 41-50	.098*,b,c	.031	.002	.038	.158
		Age of 51 and above	.044b,c	.041	.283	-.036	.124
Classroom visits and giving feedback	Age of 21-30	Age of 31-40	.072*,b,c	.027	.008	.019	.125
		Age of 41-50	.104*,b,c	.030	.001	.045	.164
		Age of 51 and above	.049b,c	.040	.220	-.029	.128

*p<0.05

When Table 9 is examined, it is found that there is a significant difference between the age groups of teachers and their instructional supervision behavior perceptions on the sub-dimensions of "teaching and teacher development" and "classroom visits and giving feedback". Based on the findings, in both "teaching and teacher development" and "classroom visits and giving feedback" sub-dimensions, teachers who are between the ages of 21-30 think that instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals are more frequent compared to teachers between the ages of 31-40 and 41-50.

Table 10.

Post Hoc LSD Test for Seniority Variable

Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent Variable	(I) Seniority	(J) Seniority	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Differenced	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Teaching and teacher development	1-5 years	6-10 years	-.075*,b,c	.035	.032	-.144	-.006
		16-20 years	-.064*,b,c	.032	.044	-.126	-.002
Classroom visits and giving feedback	1-5 years	6-10 years	-.076*,b,c	.034	.026	-.144	-.009
		11-15 years	-.062*,b,c	.031	.049	-.123	.000
		16-20 years	-.063*,b,c	.031	.042	-.124	-.002
		21 years and above	-.082*,b,c	.031	.008	-.143	-.022

*p<0.05

When Table 10 is examined, it is found that there is a significant difference between the seniority groups and teachers' perceptions of instructional supervision behavior. In this direction, in "teaching and teacher development" sub-dimension, teachers whose seniority level was 6-10 years and 16-20 years think that instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals are more frequent compared to teachers whose seniority level was 1-5 years; and in "classroom visits and giving feedback" sub-dimension, teachers whose seniority level was 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21 years and above think that instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals are more frequent compared to teachers whose seniority level was 1-5 years.

Discussion

In this study, the instructional supervision that began to be carried out by school principals with the supervision practice that changed in 2015 in Turkey was discussed. The findings of the study showed that the perceptions of primary school, middle school, and high school teachers regarding teaching and teacher development were at the "low" level. Perceptions regarding classroom visits and providing feedback were at the "low" level for primary and high school teachers and "medium" for middle school teachers. Finally, the primary, middle, and high school teachers' perceptions of ISBSAS were at the "low" level. The reason why the school principals' instructional supervision behaviors were at the low level could be due to the fact that, as Burch and Spillane (2003) emphasized, the school administrators did not have enough knowledge about the instructional supervision behaviors.

In the research, a significant difference was found in favor of middle school teachers in terms of teaching levels in the sub-dimensions of "teaching and teacher development" and "classroom visits and giving feedback" among primary, middle and high school teachers. In other words, middle school teachers think that the instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals in the schools they work occur more frequently compared to primary and high school teachers. When the results are evaluated, it can be said that this difference in the opinions of primary and middle school teachers is mainly due to the fact that primary school teachers are working in a single classroom. However, middle school teachers can teach many classes both in different class levels and classrooms. Therefore, the school principal may have wanted to supervise the teacher at different class levels and classrooms. This may have led

middle school teachers to think that supervision activities occur more often directly or indirectly. The difference in the views of middle school and high school teachers may have been due to the difference between the levels of parents' participation in the education in middle and high school. As of the age group, the families of middle school students who need more help than high school students are more interested in education than the families of high school students (Erdener, 2014). This may have led to more frequent supervision of school principals in middle school. Along with this, the fact that high school principals spent more time in managerial work can be seen as one of the other factors in the emergence of this difference.

There was a significant difference between the age groups of teachers and their perceptions of instructional supervision behaviors on the "teaching and teacher development" sub-dimension. Based on the findings, teachers who are between the ages of 21-30 think that the instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals are more frequent in the "teaching and teacher development" sub-dimension compared to the teachers between the ages of 31-40 and 41-50. The reason of this finding can be explained by the fact that teacher development progresses in line with the experience. Teachers between the ages of 21-30 are in the early stages of their profession and are in the process of recognizing and defining many of their deficiencies. Under the influence of this situation, teachers between the ages of 21-30, aware or unaware, may have been more sensitive while evaluating the instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals.

Another finding of the study is that there is a significant difference between the seniority groups and the perceptions of instructional supervision behaviors of the teachers working in

primary, middle, and high schools. In this direction, in "teaching and teacher development" sub-dimension, teachers whose seniority level was 6-10 years and 16-20 years think that instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals are more frequent compared to teachers whose seniority level was 1-5 years; and in "classroom visits and giving feedback" sub-dimension, teachers whose seniority level was 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21 years and above think that instructional supervision behaviors of school principals are more frequent compared to teachers whose seniority level was 1-5 years. When the differences between the seniority groups are examined, it is seen that the teachers whose seniority level was 1-5 years think that instructional supervision behaviors of school principals in terms of both sub-dimensions were at the low level compared to the other seniority groups. This situation can be explained by the expectations of teachers, who are in the first years of their profession, from school principals. Teachers need more support in terms of professional development in the early years of their profession (Korkmaz, Saban, & Akbaşlı, 2004; Moir, 1999; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). However, school principals dealing with more administrative work within the existing bureaucracy in Turkey may not meet the expectations of teachers in the early years of their occupation in terms of professional development. As a matter of fact, the years in which teachers experience the most difficulties in their professional careers are known as the first years of their profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Hammond, 2005). Therefore, teachers with seniority between 1-5 years may have perceived the instructional supervision behaviors of the principal at a lower level.

There was no significant difference in the views of the primary school, middle school, and high school teachers on instructional supervision in terms of gender variable in the "teaching and teacher

development" and "classroom visits and giving feedback" sub-dimensions. In other words, the perceptions regarding the instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals do not differ in terms of the gender of teachers. It can be argued that the reason for this is that the instructional supervision behaviors exhibited by the school principals vary according to individual assessments.

Conclusion and Implications

Several studies in the literature have shown that modern instructional supervision practices have the potential to improve teaching (Blasé & Blase, 1999; Dufour, 2004; Glanz, Shulman, & Sullivan, 2006; Glatthorn, 1997; Hult & Segerholm, 2012; Lochmiller, 2016; Pansiri, 2008; Rous, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2014; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2014; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013; Tyagi, 2010; Zepeda, 2011). However, the bond established to ensure the direct student development by modern supervision is weaker (Glanz, Shulman, & Sullivan, 2007). However, most researchers and practitioners believe that instructional supervision can improve students' learning through the development of teaching. For these reasons, the instructional supervision activities actualized by school principals are very important for development of teaching and students. As a matter of fact, some researchers show that the time spent by the school administrators for the instructional supervision is positively related to the students' achievement (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013). This study aimed to determine the level of the education supervision authority recently delegated to school principals in Turkey depending on various personal variables. As a result, the ISBSAS perception of teachers in Turkey was found to be

at the "low" level in elementary school, middle school and high school. In addition, while there were significant differences in the variables of education level, age and seniority in the study, no difference was found on the gender variable. According to the results obtained, the research broadens the base of information regarding the supervision behavior of school principals and contributes to raising the awareness about the supervision behavior of school principals.

The results of this study have important effects on leadership practices related to the supervision behavior of school principals in Turkey. The existing bureaucratic and managerial roles attributed to the school principal in Turkey reduces the possibility of school principals entering the practice of instructional supervision. At this point, this study set out in Turkey shows that countries with a central education structure as Turkey may share a similar scenario. On the other hand, as is true in many developing countries, there is still less information about whether the school principals' instructional supervisory authority in Turkey will result in a difference in the students' learning outcomes and to what extent this difference will be. Therefore, additional research is needed in developing contexts regarding the link between instructional supervision behaviors of school principals and improving teaching.

In recent years, the importance of equipping school administrators with the skills they need to develop teachers' capacities to improve teaching has been emphasized (Lochmiller, 2016; Lochmiller, Huggins, & Acker-Hocevar, 2012). However, determining that the instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals are not at the desired level within the scope of this research may point to a practice that needs to be changed in a practical sense. In fact, both school administrators and teachers may benefit from the

change in current policies that will recognize other teachers especially in the process of providing feedback for teaching and teachers and benefit from these teachers in this process. As a matter of fact, this is consistent with previous research that emphasized the potential advantages of distributing leadership responsibilities to more than one person or the complete restructuring of leadership roles (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Lochmiller, 2016; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Furthermore, this approach accepts the limits of a single administrator's capacity to equally supervise all content areas (branches). Along with this, the retraction or revenge behavior of the teachers will be minimized against the malicious supervisions that the school administrator may exhibit (Demirkasımoğlu, 2018). Finally, knowing the instructional supervision behaviors exhibited by the school principals and the level of these behaviors can be a criterion for revealing the actualization level of the instructional supervision and this criterion can be very important for administrator selection and appointment. This approach to be adopted can provide a positive contribution to the accountability system of the relevant institutions as it is frequently emphasized in the literature (Datnow, Park, & Wohlstetter, 2007; Lochmiller, 2016; Marsh, Pane, & Hamilton, 2006; Snipes, Doolittle, & Herlihy, 2002).

Limitations

There are some limitations about this research. First, the ISBSAS used in this research cannot strictly limit instructional supervision behaviors of principal. It is also thought that the data obtained from the public schools located in Balıkesir and Bursa provinces of the South Marmara Region cannot reveal the level of instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals in the whole country in

a precise manner. Therefore, the inferences based on the research findings are limited to the sample rather than the whole. Subsequent research may be carried out in private schools that have recently become more widespread in the world or a comparison between the public and private schools can be made. Again, school administrators can be included in this research. This cross-sectional study cannot reveal the level of instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals for a long period. For this reason, future researches can address the instructional supervision behaviors of the school principals in a longitudinal manner and also their relation with motivation and organizational commitment that are considered to be related with the instructional supervision.

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Azerbaijan and European Higher Education Area: Students' Involvement in Bologna Reforms

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Abstract

This study explores the progress of the 14-year old Bologna reform in major Azerbaijani public universities. The focus of the study was to investigate the level of student involvement in the transformation process of the European Higher Education Area. The data for the research were collected from a survey conducted among 2,400 bachelor's and master's students, as well as through semi-structured interviews with university administrators and experts. The study mainly examines the key elements of Bologna process – degree structure, quality assurance, mobility, and social dimension. The study found that despite the remarkable progress in the development of higher education system in the country, much work still needs to be done at the institutional level to involve students in all stages of the reform process. Huge discrepancies and shortages are observed with respect to the role of students in the quality assurance process both at the external and internal level. In terms of the internationalization of institutions, formal strategies and targets, as well as sufficient funding, are not yet fully existent in higher education institutions. Meanwhile, students in the chosen universities are either unaware of student support services or unsatisfied with the provision of those services.

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Introduction

Immediately after gaining independence in 1991, improving the education sector and enhancing its quality has become one of the top priorities in Azerbaijan. As every other country in post-Soviet Eurasia, Azerbaijan inherited the Soviet educational system that had long faced problems. "Higher education (at that period) reflected the ideological and industrial aims of the Soviet regime and functioned to meet its socio-economic needs" (Ahn, E.S., 2016, p.8). Beyond of the use of teaching materials, textbooks or pedagogy leftover from former times, Azerbaijan had also been left with thousands of instructors, faculty and researchers trained in the old system. For the last 27 years, however, the country has made numerous attempts to transform the system and make it compatible with the development and experiences of other post-Soviet countries (Demographic and Health Survey, 2011).

Approximating the system of education to the European one had been one of the strategies of Azerbaijani government since the mid-1990s, culminating in its joining the Bologna Process Reform in May of 2005. Like many societies, Azerbaijan also "had a need for greater numbers of graduates with more relevant skills for the new global labor market. At a time when countries were facing these common trends and challenges, the idea of a European process was attractive, corresponding to the spirit of the times" (Crosier & Parveva, 2013, p. 21). Despite the positive sides and impacts of such a

movement, joining the process has also created many challenges, especially in higher education. This fundamental transformation within Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) had a significant effect on teaching and learning processes, thereby triggering conflicts between policy makers and faculty members as well as students and university administrators (Bargel, 2011). The National Report on Azerbaijan's progress in integration to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reveals that although the country has made a significant step forward in the higher education sphere, several gaps in the implementation of Bologna Process Reforms cannot be denied (BFUG, Azerbaijan Report, 2012-2015).

Although a two-tier system in higher education in Azerbaijan was introduced earlier in 1993, only after signing the Bologna Declaration, the country started to implement ECTS. Thus, students who accumulate 240 credits during the first cycle are eligible to apply for a master's degree. This cycle in turn, lasts for two years and requires 90-120 credits. Students who hold a master's degree may apply for doctoral degrees as well. As of today, Azerbaijan has yet to implement any credit system in regard to doctoral degrees (BFUG, Azerbaijan Report, 2015). In fact, this cycle in the degree structure element of the Bologna process requires more attention for further improvement. The current situation related to the third cycle is that upon completion of doctoral studies and successfully defending a dissertation, a person becomes a Ph.D., which is the same degree as *Kandidat* in the old system. Ph.D.s in turn, need to defend another dissertation if they want to receive the title of Doctor of Science. This is not consistent with Western standards, since there is no other title of Doctor of Science in Europe or US. This led to the concern that the change happened predominantly in the shift from the name *Kandidat* to Ph.D., while the system remained virtually the same (Aliyev,

Valiyev, Rustamova, 2011). What is more important is that the third cycle is essentially a traditional supervision-based doctoral education, and there are no systematized doctoral programs in Azerbaijan (BFUG, Azerbaijan, Report, 2012-2015) as opposed to some other post-Soviet countries, such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia and Kazakhstan, who "have abolished the second Soviet doctorate" (Huisman, Smolentseva, Froumin, 2018, p.17).

Beyond the degree structure issues faced by universities, the concern of quality is another aspect that needs to be addressed in Azerbaijani HEIs. Considered to be one of the cornerstones of Bologna process, quality assurance (QA) also requires special attention in the analysis of the reform. This element of the Bologna process was highlighted during the meeting of ministers in 2015 and resulted in the adoption of two important documents: *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA* and *European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programs* (Bologna, Ministerial Conference, 2015). The acceptance of these documents shows how seriously the QA is regarded and how actively Bologna signatory countries should act to guarantee that those policy documents are implemented. The 2015 Bologna Implementation Report accepted that improvements had been achieved in the quality assurance system of Bologna signatory countries, especially related to teaching, research and internationalization. Nevertheless, the other main aspect, particularly the involvement of student stakeholders, revealed that reforms were not progressing at the necessary speed (European Higher Education area in 2018). The Bologna Process Implementation Report (2018) gathered information about students' involvement in quality assurance activities in different countries, and the data for Azerbaijan shows that students do not participate at all or if they do, only in one level of the external review. It was also stated in another source that,

"in the area of quality assurance in some countries no improvement could be reported, as still no system for quality assurance is in place." (Bologna with Student Eyes, 2005, p.4). Unfortunately, Azerbaijan was among the countries listed on the 2018 Report (Bologna Process Implementation Report, 2018, p.138). As our study mainly focuses on the students' participation in the reforms, their role in the quality assurance mechanism needs special attention. According to the report (BFUG, Azerbaijan Report, 2012-2015), it is advisable that students take part in the governance structure of National QA agencies, observe external review teams, and participate in follow-up procedures. However, they must fully participate in the preparation of self-evaluation reports. The involvement of the academic staff, nevertheless, is required in all of the abovementioned areas. Regarding the internal evaluation process, all the HEIs must create their internal evaluation system and actively involve students in this process.

Mobility of students is considered another important sign to the successful implementation of Bologna process (Bargel, 2011). It is understood as a powerful way to promote mutual understanding and employability of graduates. However, very few Bologna member countries "ensure full portability for students" (Bologna Process Implementation Report, 2018, p.243). Student mobility should not be only understood as the number of incoming and outgoing students, it is also the internationalization of higher education institutions through policy documents and strategies. According to the Bologna Process Implementation Report (2018, p. 245, 251), in Azerbaijan, no national strategy exists for promoting mobility and internationalization of HEIs, and neither are there mobility targets for outgoing students.

Finally, social dimension, the last important tool of Bologna Process, focuses on equal access to education: developing learning opportunities for socially and physically disadvantaged groups by providing them with aid or counselling services (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). EHEA ministers emphasized social dimension in higher education at the meeting in 2015, expressing their hope to see inclusive societies by 2020 (Bologna Process Implementation Report, 2018). Public responsibility of higher education is explained as the responsibility of it to provide accessible legal and financial infrastructure getting education. This accountability is closely connected to the social dimension, which is mainly about equity equal access opportunities to higher education (Kooij, 2015). In Azerbaijan, handicapped students (1st and 2 group), orphans, people internally displaced from their native lands as a result of military conflict, and students whose parents died during the war with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh receive scholarships in the form of free study in state HEIs (BFUG, Azerbaijan Report, 2009-2012). However, the institutions do not have special departments or designated people to provide counseling, psychological help, mentorship and other services.

So far, the main gap related to the examination of the reform, however, is that there have been no empirical studies conducted which analyze the process through the students' perspective. It is necessary to learn how this reform has affected Azerbaijani students. The purpose of this study is to explore the implications of 14-year old Bologna process in selected public universities with particular emphasis on degree structure, quality assurance, mobility, and social dimension. Moreover, the researchers are trying to find out how students perceive and understand this process, how they are able to benefit from it as well as to see the consistency of reforms in the

country. This is also necessary for seeing how compatible the Azerbaijani higher education institutions are to European Higher Education Standards.

Successes and Downsides in Implementation of Bologna Reform

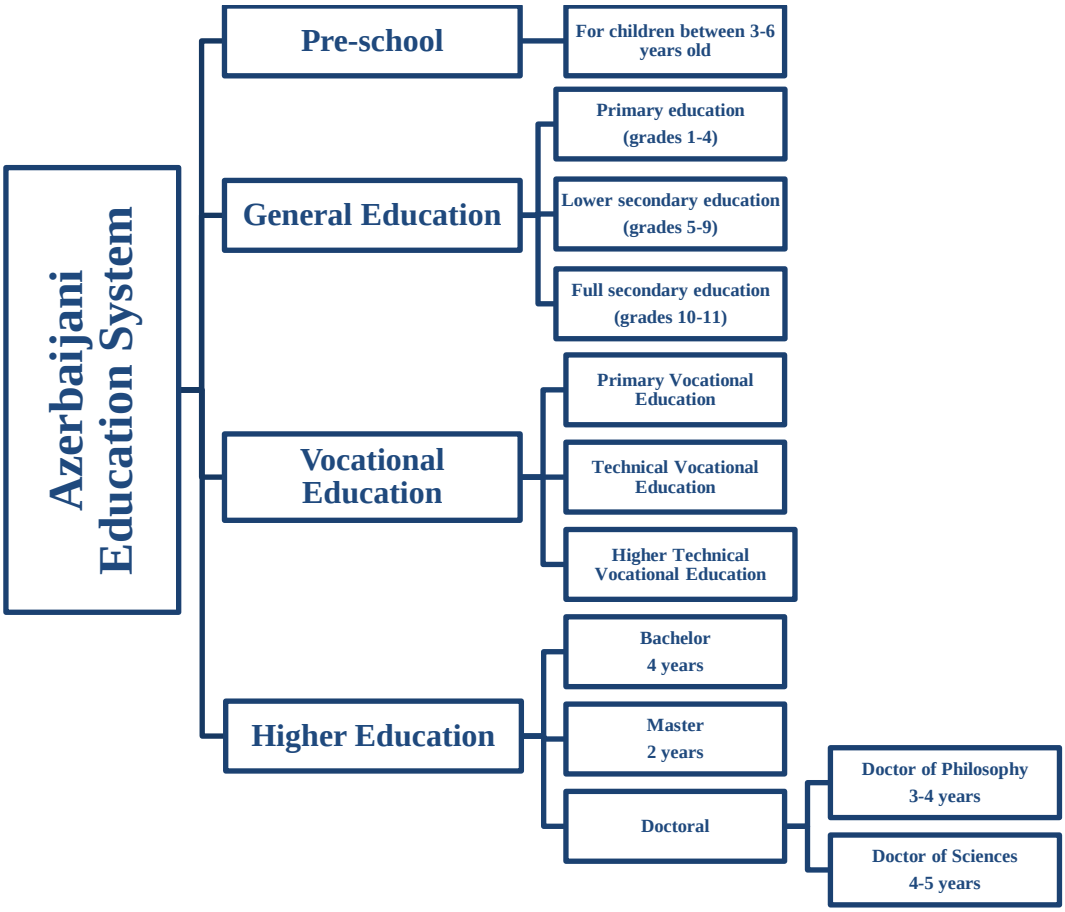
On May 19-20, 2005, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova became new participating countries in the Bologna Process (Bergen Communique, 2005). Analyzing the last fourteen years, we can state that this process was not smooth nor entirely successful.

Degree Structure

Even before signing the Bologna Declaration, Azerbaijan started implementing a three-level system in its higher education institutions. Already in 1993, Azerbaijan had moved to a three-cycle system. The five-year diploma equivalent degree was split into the Bachelor's degree (4 years) and Master's degree (2 years). The Doctoral degree, however, was initially not reformed at all. The biggest challenge that clouded these reforms was poor and unprepared implementation. Thus, the five-year diploma program was squeezed into a four-year schedule, while master's programs lacked curricula and research approach. Today, the system of education in Azerbaijan functions as follows:

Figure 1.

Structure of the Education System of Azerbaijan



It must be noted that after completing both lower secondary education and full secondary education, students can chose to go to the vocational education. However, to be eligible to chose higher education, they have to complete grade 11. Azerbaijani legislation allows to apply for higher education after completeing the vocational education and vice versa.

Review of Literature

Despite the fact that Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova joined EHEA in the same year with Azerbaijan and share certain political, geographical, cultural, and economic commonalities, there is a significant variation in the level and pace of reform implementation in each of them. Peculiarities of each country had an inevitable impact on the reform procedures. All these countries currently implement three-cycle degree structure in their HEIs with the use of European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which is "a tool of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) for making studies and courses more transparent and thus helping to enhance the quality of higher education" (ECTS User's Guide, 2015, p. 6). Although in all of these countries, the Doctorate level is included in the Degree structure, similar to Azerbaijan, they generally do not use ECTS during the study period. Only in Georgia, PhD students are awarded 180 ECTS within three years of study (The Bologna Process in Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine and Turkey, 2014). It would not be right however, to compare degree structures of national HE systems because the types of HEIs, age group of students, curricular aims, and labor market opportunities may well affect the process (Witte, 2006).

The main purpose of the implementation of the three-cycle degree structure was to provide students with necessary qualifications accepted by the labor market upon finishing the first cycle. In other words, bachelor's degrees must prepare students for employment (Sursock and Smidt, 2010). Master's degrees in turn, were seen as the route to career enhancement. Thus, to improve study programs so that they cultivate graduates with the qualifications demanded by the labor market and to enhance the global

competitiveness of European higher education system are the focal points of the Declarion (Kehm & Teichler, 2006). According to Luchinskaya and Ovchynnikova (2011), in Ukraine, only 14.4 % of students with a bachelor's degree can get a job after the first cycle, while the majority continue to the master's level due to the perception of 4-year degree programs as incomplete or insufficient for the labor market. A similar study must be conducted in Azerbaijan because, as one of the Post-Soviet countries striving to integrate its tertiary education into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), Azerbaijan has been implementing Bologna process reform for 14 years, and there is a need to identify the progress and the areas for improvement thus far.

It is stated in the national report that the Ministry of Education provides all the HEIs with the necessary recommendations and instructions regarding the integration of learning outcomes into the curricula of all programs. It is also claimed that the staff working in the field of assessment and evaluation are provided with trainings on student-centered learning and learning outcomes. Among the three cycles in Azerbaijani education system, the second cycle has the most share in joint programs (60%). In the first cycle, it is 40% while in the third there are no joint programs at all. Joint programs most commonly exist in international law, engineering, and tourism fields (BFUG, Azerbaijan Report, 2012-2015). Although the Bologna National Report may present quite optimistic results for the country, there are certain actions that need to be taken, such as reforming HE curriculum to accommodate the needs of employers and students, increase student, faculty, and staff mobility, enhance internal and external review processes, etc.

Quality Assurance

In Azerbaijan, quality assurance and accreditation of higher education institutions and programs are implemented by the Accreditation Commission (Akkreditasiya Komissiyası) under the Ministry of Education. This Commission evaluates the results of the quality assurance process and sends the final version to the institutions themselves and the Ministry of Education (Overview of the Higher Education System, Azerbaijan, 2017, p. 25). The Bologna Process Implementation Report (2018) displays the results of the research conducted about the requirement to develop and publish a strategy for internal quality assurance. Sadly, Azerbaijan is among the 15 systems which have not developed any legal obligations for HEIs regarding this issue. When it comes to external quality assurance system, government is the key responsible body. However, several countries such as Albania, Latvia, Malta, Cyprus, Ukraine, etc. have made significant gains in developing external quality assurance agencies since 2015 (Bologna Process Implementation Report, 2018). As our main focus in this study is to learn the level of student involvement in different stages of Bologna reform, we researched what had been reported about Azerbaijani students' participation in the external quality assurance procedures. Unfortunately, the Report shows that there is no available data on Azerbaijan with regard to this issue. Additionally, Azerbaijan is reported among the countries with no established reliable quality assurance system, whereas the situation in the countries which joined EHEA in the same year is much better. In Ukraine and Georgia, for instance, the quality assurance system operates at least nationwide. This fact shows that a lot is still to be done with regards to quality

assurance system in Azerbaijan to make it compatible with European standards.

Mobility

"One of the hallmarks of the Bologna process is to enable and increase the mobility of students" (Bologna with Students' Eyes, 2005, p. 32). To measure the success of the process, one can look at the degree to which active student exchanges are happening among Bologna signatory countries (Vögtle & Windzio, 2016). Teacher and student mobility is also highlighted in the State Program on Reforms in the Higher Education System of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2009). HEIs with the support of the Ministry of Education, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Justice are expected to establish and enhance the mechanism on mobility and recognition of documents which is aligned with the principles of the Bologna process. However, our country does not have a formal national strategy for internationalization of higher education. Despite this gap, higher education institutions in Azerbaijan build international partnerships through exchange programs, joint research activities as well as joint projects and events. Nevertheless, these fragmented steps are taken only at the institutional level without any state budget for funding (BFUG, Azerbaijan Report, 2012-2015). Among several obstacles related to the mobility issue, funding, recognition, and language are the most remarkable ones, according to the National Report (BFUG, Azerbaijan, Report, 2012-2015). Similar to Azerbaijan, Georgian universities also promote the mobility of their students not with the help of state funding, but more through EU projects, such as Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus +. Despite this, there is a positive change in the number of outgoing and incoming students in Georgian HEIs (Lezhava, 2016). In Turkey, as opposed to Azerbaijan, the number of

incoming students is increasing as a result of Erasmus programs and partnerships with such post-Soviet countries as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, etc. (Yagci, 2011). This positive trend in mobility can be explained by successful implementation of recognition elements, such as the Diploma supplement, Lisbon Recognition Convention, and National Qualification Framework. Yet, Turkey also experiences issues related to funding, language, and insufficiency of courses in common languages for incoming students (Yagci, 2011).

Social Dimension

How inclusive is the higher education in Bologna signatory countries? Do young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have an equal access to higher education? Are students supported with various services in their institutions? These questions have been in the spotlight since social dimension was emphasized by EHEA ministers in 2001 in Prague. There is a need, therefore, to examine how successfully Azerbaijan considers this element in the reconstruction of its HEIs. The National Report of Azerbaijan states that no concrete measures have been taken yet to ensure inclusiveness in higher education. Neither are there any quantitative goals about entering, continuing, and finishing the study in HEIs. (BFUG, Azerbaijan, 2015). Overall, this issue cannot be considered completely solved in many European countries as well, despite the fact that they signed the Declaration long before Azerbaijan. For instance, problems with democratic access to higher education are reported in countries such as Estonia, Belgium, Germany, and Slovakia. Bureaucratic procedures in social support application are said to be prevalent in France and Lithuania (Bologna with students' eyes, 2005). Regarding education support and guidance, the

documents reveal that few Azerbaijani universities have career centers. However, no information is available about other guidance and counselling services in Azerbaijani universities (Overview of the Higher Education System, Azerbaijan, 2017). In Turkey, as opposed to Azerbaijan, the General Directorate of Higher Education Credit and Hostels Institution and the universities provide disadvantaged students with subsidized accommodation, food, and health care services, which existed even before the implementation of Bologna reforms (Yagci, 2010).

Data Collection and Methods

This article primarily employed data with the help of mixed method design, since we agree with the idea that "mixed methods design is that the combination of both forms of data provides a better understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data by itself." (Creswell, 2012. P.45). The design employed data collection through surveys among students from several institutions (See Appendix) and in-depth interviews for qualitative analysis. The reason of employing such method is possible problems with validity of surveys, and reliability of interviews. Moreover, some observations from personal experience were used too. All three methods (triangulation) helped to offset problems with each other. Researchers conducted th pilot study among thirty students to check the validity of the instrument of data collection. The anonymity of the survey and interview respondents were ensured.

Student Surveys

The first data collection method is the survey that was conducted October-November of 2018 over a four-week period. The researchers first selected six major state universities based on their

positions in the national ranking and number of students. All the selected universities—Azerbaijan State University of Economics, ADA University, Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University, Azerbaijan University of Languages, Azerbaijan Technical University, and Baku State University—implement Bologna principles. Surveys were mostly conducted among students of third and fourth years, as well as master's students, since they are the most competent respondents with several years of experience being a student. First and second year students of the bachelor's level were excluded from the survey on the grounds that they might not have enough knowledge about the reform process. The survey used non-probability sampling, namely, convenience sampling, selecting participants because of their availability and representing a group of people needed for the current research (Creswell, 2012). The researchers chose the groups and sections with classes during the day from specific department and schools. The survey procedure followed the standard procedure used in the country: the surveys were introduced to the ongoing class; the purposes of the survey were explained in detail during the next 3-5 minutes and the survey was distributed. The survey was conducted anonymously. The questionnaire contained items covering different aspects of the students' education background; their perception, knowledge and competencies. The average expected margin of error varies between the departments [technical vs non-technical], but none are greater than 5%. Within the period of 30 days, researchers distributed self-administered surveys in the groups and covered around 2,400 students. The surveys were distributed in the Azerbaijani language. The researchers and people controlling the survey process were able to control the absence of interactions between survey participants to eliminate interaction problems.

The survey used by the researchers contained items covering different aspects of the Bologna process, such as degree structure, quality assurance, mobility, and social dimension. To measure the participation of students as one of the main stakeholders in the reform process, the researchers asked 16 close-ended questions, the answers to which could reveal the situation through students' eyes. The questions in the questionnaire were based on data derived from the National Report regarding the Bologna process implementation in Azerbaijan 2012-2015 and Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). Four general demographic questions were followed by two questions related to ECTS and student workload, four questions about the Quality assurance, more specifically related to students' role in internal evaluations and one question to measure employability after the first degree cycle. There were three questions about student mobility and one about joint degrees and programs as well two questions linked to social dimension. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete and was piloted before being conducted.

To learn about the students' awareness, experiences, and perspective on the implementation of ECTS, the researchers asked questions about the number of credits for the degree cycle and student workload and teacher-student contact hours. To know if the students took part in the design or reconstruction of curricula, the researchers asked them to evaluate their participation in the process on a 4-point scale, with 1 being fully involved, 2 partially involved, 3 not involved at all, and 4 not informed about any redesign or change in the curriculum. What is more, to measure if the students were ever involved in the evaluation of the institution, the teachers, the program, or the subject, the researchers included 3-point scale question, where 1 stood for full participation, 2 for partial

participation, 3 for no participation at all. Also, to learn how students evaluate the first cycle as sufficient for finding a job, the questions: *It is possible to find a job without a master's degree; It is possible to find a job without a master's degree in limited organizations; There is no need for a master's degree to find a job* were asked using Likert Scale to allow the respondents to indicate how much they agree or disagree with the particular statements. Remaining questions required mainly Yes/No answers. If the respondents did not have any opinion regarding the issues stated in the questions, they could choose "do not know" or "have no information".

Expert Interviews

Beyond the surveys, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with experts from different areas of the education sector. Data were also collected via semi-structured interviews, which took place at the venues the respondents had chosen and ranged in length from 45-60 minutes. The interview questions were related to the main elements of Bologna process – degree structure, recognition, mobility, quality assurance, and social dimension. Each interview was recorded and transcribed to be used in the analysis of the data. The interview was held based on 11 open-ended questions, the answers to which could shed some light into the issues of the Bologna process implementation in Azerbaijani universities. Confidentiality of the respondents was ensured.

Limitations

The main limitation related to this study is the method of data collection. The researchers used mostly non-random probability sampling among the students of the main universities of Azerbaijan. However, all of these universities are located in Baku and regional

universities were not included in the study. Moreover, many small and medium-scale universities were not covered due to the limited time and resources. Despite the fact that the surveys were anonymous, the impact of factors such as administrative influence (surveys were conducted during class time) could not be ruled out. However, these factors do not greatly undermine the reliability of the data and could be basically generalized to the larger student population.

Results

Quantitative Data

The collected data was analyzed in several main steps. Initially, descriptive statistics was used to show the demographic information for all participants (See Table 1). Mean age of the respondents was 20.

Table 1.

Demographic Data of Respondents

		Demographic Variables			
HEIs	**Total # of respondents**	**Male**	**Female**	**BA**	**MA**
ADA University	645	12.79%	14.08%	25.83%	1.00%
Pedagogical University	506	7.46%	13.63%	21.08%	0.00%
University of Languages	371	1.13%	14.33%	15.46%	0.00%
Technical University	140	4.54%	1.29%	3.50%	2.33%
Baku State University	157	0.92%	5.63%	6.54%	0.00%
University of Economics	581	16.71%	7.50%	22.88%	1.29%
Grand Total	**2400**	**43.54%**	**56.46%**	**95.29%**	**4.63%**

Furthermore, we asked questions about the number of credits earned during the first and second degrees to see if the process was understood by students. As a rule, first-cycle programs fall under the category of 180-240 ECTS model and second cycle under 90-120 ECTS. However, the alarming issue is that nearly half of the respondents have absolutely no idea about the number of credits earned during the studies. (See Table 2).

The survey also shows that the participation of students in the designing of the curricula of study programs is not active enough to influence the reform process. To be more specific, more than half of the respondents claim that they did not participate at all in the process of redesigning the curricula, and twenty-eight percent of students state that they did not have any idea about the curriculum design or reform (See Table 2).

Table 2.

Student Participation in Curriculum Design and Knowledge about ECTS

% of Students' Participation in Curriculum Design					**% of Students who are informed about credit hours**		
Participated	Partially Participated	Did Not Participate	No Idea	TOTAL	Students who know	Students who don't know	TOTAL
3%	12%	57%	28%	100%	55%	45%	100%

Another debated issue regarding degree structure is the employability of graduates. The researchers wanted to know if the respondents see themselves as ready to start out in employment when graduating from the first cycle. The results of the survey show that 34 percent of the respondents strongly disagree and 25 percent disagree that it is possible to enter the labor market without finishing

the second cycle whereas 25 percent agree and just 7 percent strongly agree with this statement. Overall, 55 percent of students think that even if you can start employment life without a master's degree, job opportunities will be very limited, and only 34 percent sees the situation more optimistically. 11 percent however, stay undecided regarding this issue.

One more crucial element of Bologna reform is the student involvement in quality assurance. The researchers wanted to know if students from sample universities were involved at all levels of internal reviews, such as evaluation of the institution, faculty, program, and courses. Hence, the results display that the students are mainly asked for their opinions related to faculty and courses in their HEIs. The students are rarely involved in the evaluation of the institution and are mainly excluded from the program evaluation (See table 3).

Table 3.

Student Involvement in Internal Evaluation Process

Evaluation of	% of students participated	% of students partially participated	% of students did not participate	TOTAL %
University	42%	30%	28%	100%
Instructor	40%	33%	27%	100%
Course	18%	31%	51%	100%
Program	38%	30%	32%	100%

When it comes to student mobility, which is one of the significant aspects of Bologna process, the majority of the students claim that (more than 90 percent of respondents) they have never been abroad in any training, exchange, or internship programs. It was also interesting for the researchers to discover how well Azerbaijani

universities, which strive to be a part of EHEA, have succeeded in the offering financial support to the students to study abroad or start and continue their study at home. As a result of the survey, students (36%) state that they do not receive any type of support to study abroad or they (36%) simply do not have any information about any kind of financial support. Regarding studying in the home country, the most popular types of support are scholarships and tuition waivers.

It is also significant to note that different services provided by the HEIs can help students with further employability, mobility, and overall achievement during the years of study. Thus, the researchers asked relevant questions to see how the Azerbaijani students evaluate the existence or implementation of necessary services. To the question of whether career guidance services, psychological consultancy, or additional foreign language courses exist in the sample universities, overall answers were "no". The only support service that the majority of students answered positively is the awareness of activities about opportunities to study in foreign countries. The distribution of the answers among the universities is clearly shown in the table below:

Table 4.

Existence of the Student Support Services in the Sample Universities

	Career Service	Guidance	Psychological Support		Foreign Courses	Language	Study Awareness	Abroad
University	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**
ADA University	1.04%	25.83%	23.58%	3.29%	4.04%	22.83%	3.42%	23.46%
Pedagogical University	16.96%	4.13%	16.58%	4.50%	13.79%	7.29%	13.04%	8.04%
University of Languages	14.29%	1.17%	12.50%	2.96%	6.96%	8.50%	6.21%	9.25%
Technical University	4.88%	0.96%	5.71%	0.13%	5.13%	0.71%	4.42%	1.42%
Baku State University	6.17%	0.38%	5.88%	0.67%	5.00%	1.54%	5.54%	1.00%
University of Economics	14.75%	9.46%	20.96%	3.25%	19.67%	4.54%	11.79%	12.42%
Grand Total	**58.08%**	**41.92%**	**85.21%**	**14.79%**	**54.58%**	**45.42%**	**44.42%**	**55.58%**

Qualitative Data

For the purpose of supporting the quantitative part of the research and to gain some insights regarding the student involvement in the Bologna reform, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted among education experts (See table 5). The experts chosen for the interviews are working for university administration for the last 5-10 years. Additionally, one head of NGO and one expert from the ministry of education were interviewed. They have unique and deep knowledge of the problems of university. The respondents were reached via email. The interviews were conducted at their workplaces. The respondents were sent Informed Consent Form prior to the interviews. The interviews ranged in length from 45-60 minutes and were conducted in English. Upon the

agreement of the respondents, the interviews were recorded. The data collection lasted for two-week period. Overall, ten questions were asked three of which were related generally to the changes in HEIs within the framework of Bologna reform, and the rest specifically related to the implementation of the elements of Bologna process. The data was transcribed and analyzed based on the themes taken from literature review and the quantitative data. Later, the results from the interviews were compared with the results of the survey.

Table 5.

Interviewee Demographics

	Gender	Position
1. Interviewee # 1	Male	Education expert currently working in the ministry of education
2. Interviewee # 2	Male	Vice-Rector of one of the universities in Azerbaijan
3. Interviewee # 3	Male	Dean of department in one of the universities in Azerbaijan.
4. Interviewee # 4	Female	Head of NGO
5. Interviewee # 5	Female	Head of Education Department in one of the universities in Azerbaijan

Discussion

In the current study, we looked at the Bologna process through students' eyes and explored how key universities of Azerbaijan have transformed their Soviet model of instruction into European standards, particularly by putting students into the center of the whole reform process. The interpretation of the findings shows that structurally, the performance of Azerbaijan in the process of harmonizing its HE system to EHEA can be considered somewhat successful. Yet shortcomings related to the content of the reform

cannot be denied. Currently, the universities in Azerbaijan implement the Bologna degree structure. Similar to the other neighboring countries which joined Bologna reform process in the same year as Azerbaijan, the study programs in the country use 180-240 credits at the Bachelor's level and 90-120 at the Master's level. The main purpose of the implementation of the credit system was to "create degrees that will have both an academic and a labor market perspective" (Bologna with student eyes, 2005). However, "in a few countries, only a minority of first-cycle graduates continue directly into the second cycle although this does not necessarily mean that the Bachelor is accepted by the labor market. For example, in Hungary, national regulations mean that only 35% of first-cycle graduates can continue to the second cycle, yet students holding bachelor's degrees express concerns for their future and the possibility of finding relevant jobs" (Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.40). Our research findings support the idea stated by Sursock and Smidt. Azerbaijani students mostly do not feel ready for employment after finishing the first cycle. According to the Bologna Implementation Report (2018), a similar situation is observed in Moldova as well. Graduates with only bachelor's degrees are more likely to face unemployment problems than those with master's degrees in Moldova. The report also shows that 75-100% of Ukrainian bachelor's degree graduates tend to enter a second-cycle program within one year of graduation like Azerbaijani students. Thus, although Azerbaijan was not very much challenged by implementation of three-cycle degree structure, deeper analysis shows that there is still need for improvement in the content of the degrees.This issue is also evident when we consider the fact that the number of credits earned in the first cycle of all examined universities is 240. It means that mainly the "old type of degrees was put into a new structure" in the form of 240 credits, which means that there is

no substantial difference in the content and length of the programs in comparison with the old system (Bologna with student eyes, 2005). Thus, we must be careful to speak about comprehensive content reform in the study system of Azerbaijani universities.

Another concern is related to the students' awareness and knowledge about the gained credits during their study cycle. Our research shows that nearly half of the respondents (43%), who are in their third or last year, do not have any idea about the number of credits they need to gain in order to get the degree. The question arises now as to whether we can really claim that students are well aware of the rules of allocation and accumulation of credits. Furthermore, it was alarming for the researchers to find out that the students from surveyed universities could not simply provide solid and accurate information about the formal and informal workload that is required within their study programs. This shows that although ECTS is used in Azerbaijani universities as the way of assessment, it is questionable as to what extent it substantively provides evidence about open dialogue among students, teachers, and administrators to promote a student-centered approach. The importance of the student involvement in dialogue is also stated in the ECTS Guide (2015), which highlights that in the general principles of learning, teaching, and assessment, "all stakeholders should be involved in constructive discussion of program design and delivery. Student representatives should participate in such discussions with full voting powers" (p.27). Similarly, Georgia, one of the countries which joined Bologna with Azerbaijan, accomplished the introduction of ECTS. However, the evaluation done by the Center for Social Sciences, estimates that ECTS in Georgian universities may not always be aligned with student workload, and the process can

mainly be evaluated as a formal requirement of accreditation process only (Lezhava, 2016).

Qualitative data also highlighted the problem related to ECTS. One of the respondents, who is the administrative figure, and who is involved in the issues related to HEIs in Azerbaijan stated:

> *Our universities are not fully implementing some EHEA requirements, and the best example is the distribution of workload. Although Azerbaijani universities started the reconstruction of their study programs in 2014, it was merely a the decrease in the number of subjects, whereas the number of hours remained the same. The students must accumulate exactly 30 credits each semester regardless of the number of subjects.*

This fact displays an obvious gap in the regulation of allocation and accumulation of the credits in Azerbaijani universities.

According to another interview respondent,

> *Azerbaijani students do not have a chance of flexibility regarding credits.Unlike their European peers, our students cannot take extra credits from upper courses if they have time for it. The earliest they can get their bachelor's degree is after four years of study. Although in Azerbaijani universities, there is an opportunity of 30+8 credits, it is mainly understood and used in the cases such as compensation of students' failed courses.*

This idea contradicts the survey response shown in National Report (2015), where it is stated that well-performing students can take subjects from the subsequent year's programs. According to ECTS Guide (2015), "a flexible program structure is essential to allow for students' choices and meet different needs, e.g., opportunity should be given for developing personal learning pathways and optional activities should be offered" (p.27). In addition, an appropriately designed ECTS mechanism "enables combining learning experiences within an institution, […], adapting to the

specific pace of studies, or completing only certain components of program" (The European Higher Education Area in 2018, p.52). Hence, based on the above-stated ideas, we can imply that Azerbaijani universities have not achieved much progress with respect to student flexibility, choices and needs related to ECTS.

The importance of student support services has been emphasized by the Bologna Declaration, since these services can help potential and current students to identify their study and employment path (Trends, 2010). Therefore, the researchers were interested if support services such as career guidance, psychological support, additional foreign language services, and information services about studying in foreign countries are existent in the sample universities. Disappointingly however, both quantitative and qualitative data reveal that there is a huge gap in provision of these services in Azerbaijani universities; There is need for more enhanced student services, especially, career guidance and counselling services because they "play a key role in widening access, improving completion rates and preparing students for the labor market" (as cited in Trends, 2010, p. 83). Fostering employability of graduates of every cycle was a point of focus at the ministers' meeting in 2015 as well. The ministers emphasized that "…at the end of each study cycle, graduates possess competences suitable for entry into the labor market which also enable them to develop the new competences they may need for their employability later in throughout their working lives" (Bologna, Ministerial Conference, 2015, p.2). Current study, nevertheless, reveals that Azerbaijani universities do not cultivate young people with competences and skills demanded in the labor market, since most of respondents do not feel confident in terms of skills and competencies to start a job after getting a bachelor's degree. Surprisingly, this is also a problem in developed European countries

such as Germany. Similar kinds of research was conducted there, and great number of students articulated their uncertainty regarding the possibility of getting professional qualification after the first cycle, thus planned to continue their studies with a master's degree (Bargel, 2011).

Mobility of students and faculty is also in the center of attention of EHEA. "A supporting pillar of the European Higher Education Area will be called into question, if the exchange of students – i.e. the possibility of students to study some time abroad – is not working properly" (Bargel, 2011, p.17). It can be noted from the findings that this goal of Bologna Declaration has not been sufficiently implemented in Azerbaijani universities, since majority of the respondents stated that they had never been abroad for any training, exchange, or internship purposes. The idea is somehow supported by one of the interview respondents, who does not see any structured mechanism in Azerbaijani universities providing real mobility opportunities, which is not only about the number of outgoing but also incoming students. Additionally, the National Report (2015) indicates funding, recognition, and language as the main barriers for incoming students, and funding obstacles for outgoing students. Although mobility is the aspect of the Bologna process which needs more development in Azerbaijani HEIs, the representative of the administration highlighted the positive steps taken on the way to student and faculty mobility. According to him,

> *It is optimistic that Azerbaijani universities have departments of international relations, which perform more dynamically in comparison with the other departments and which attract useful projects into their institutions. Erasmus + and other EU funded projects can be a good example of the case.*

Another interview respondent holding an administrative position at the Azerbaijan State Economic University also spoke positively about student mobility, emphasizing the fact that if 4-5 years ago, the number of students going abroad with student exchange programs was very few, today this number has scaled up significantly.

"One of the unique elements in the policy making in the Bologna process is the underlying partnership attitude" (Bologna with student eyes, 2005, p. 49). As students are among the main stakeholders of higher education, their active and full participation in governance was emphasized in Berlin by the ministers (Realizing the European Higher Education Area, Berlin 2003). Thus, our survey attempted to examine the extent to which Azerbaijani students are involved in the evaluation process of the university, faculty, program, courses as well as in the reconstruction or design of curriculum. It must be stated that at HE level, Azerbaijani students mostly actively participate in the institution, faculty, and program evaluation processes. As stated by one of the interviewees, who holds an administrative position in the education department in one of the universities,

> *Students are actively involved in the evaluation process of teachers. This process is conducted anonymously through an electronic system. Nevertheless, the results of the survey show that in curriculum reform and course evaluation level, the students' involvement is non-existent.*

The main issue here can be related to the problem in acceptance of students as equal partners by other stakeholders. The results imply that Azerbaijani HEIs are not yet ready for this, as opposed to Nordic or Baltic countries where students are considered as partners and not only as clients (Bologna with student eyes, 2005). The idea was also

accentuated in the meeting of the ministers on 14-15 May, 2015. With the purpose of enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching, the Communique stresses that students must be as actively involved in curriculum design and quality assurance as the other stakeholders. Our findings confirm the fact stated in the Bologna Process Implementation Report (2018) that the quality assurance system in Azerbaijani universities is not yet ready to be considered well-matched with European standards, at least in terms of student involvement in the process.

The access to higher education both at home and abroad by under-represented and vulnerable groups and support for its completion is the issue which was particularly highlighted in the last meeting of ministers in France (Paris Communique, 2018). In our research we attempted to examine how social dimension is considered in Azerbaijani universities from the perspectives of the students. As the findings expose, our students are either pessimistic about the level of the support or they simply have no information about any support available. According to the local expert, social dimension is a very extensive issue, which covers equity and equal opportunities in HE. Particularly, in terms of physical and geographical accessibility and learning materials, Azerbaijani universities cannot claim that they are extensively considerate about vulnerable student populations. Tuition waivers and scholarship opportunities provided by the government for disadvantaged groups, which was mainly mentioned by the participanting students as the only support type, are not actually a real showcase of social dimension. Inclusion of under-represented social groups in another post-Soviet country, Ukraine, who joined Bologna process in the same year with Azerbaijan, is considered based on geographic location and disability. Quotas, distance learning opportunities and

financial support are presented by the Ukrainian government with the aim of reducing the under-representation of disadvantaged groups in HE (The Bologna process in Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, and Turkey, 2014). When it comes to Azerbaijan, as stated by the expert, we have yet much to do to claim that we have achieved the goal of social dimension successfully. Another respondent also said that the support for disadvantaged group of students is mainly provided at the level of student unions rather than at the macro level.

Conclusion

In the present study, we explored how students in Azerbaijani key public universities are involved in the reform process based on the main Bologna principles, such as degree structure, quality assurance, mobility, and social dimension. The analysis of the comprehensive survey results provided insights into how knowledgeable students are and what their experience is with regard to the transformation in HEIs in Azerbaijan. Quantitative and qualitative results allow us to claim that significant changes prompted by Bologna process have occurred in the Azerbaijani higher education system overall. A closer look however, demonstrates that some major areas still require more thorough attention and examination to align the Azerbaijani higher education system with European practices. Although the reform in degree structure can be accepted as successful in terms of using ECTS, more flexibility within studies should be provided to make the overall system more student-oriented and provide freedom to students to determine their study path. Also, active student participation within HEIs with more focus on student involvement in decision-making

bodies with the aim to have their opinions on topics such as evaluation and curriculum reform should be one of the priorities in the process of development. Within the dynamic practice of transformation in Azerbaijani universities, there still remain problems that need to be tackled in order to ensure the meaningful transition of Azerbaijani HEIs into EHEA. Employability of students after finishing the first cycle must be a central concern of authorities and institutional leaders while restructuring the study programs, since the research shows that our students are doubtful about their chances to find a job after receiving a bachelor's degree. Closely related to this issue is the gap existing in the student support services in Azerbaijani universities. Based on the present research findings, it can be concluded that we have yet to convincingly address this gap, at least in the eyes of 2400 Azerbaijani students. We suggest that our institutions devote more attention to the development of career guidance services, introduction of additional language courses, as well as opportunities of study flexibility. As we can see from the results, merely switching to a new structure in study programs is not enough to develop high quality professionals meeting the demands of the modern labor market. Identifying the gaps in the programs and integrating top competences into curriculum of the study programs should be the focus of HEIs. A paramount stress should also be put on the role of students in the governing bodies to hear their suggestions and opinions with regard to workload, curriculum, and concerns related not only to faculty and institution but also to program or course in general. In brief, the students' role in various stages of Bologna reform cannot be underestimated because, "since the Prague summit in 2001 student involvement is one of the action lines in the Bologna Process. However, current developments may

give the impression that it is rather not the case" (Bologna with students' eyes, 2005, p. 6).

The findings of this articles can be extremely useful for the countries of the former Soviet Union republics. Due to of similarity of education systems, these countries will share the same problems as Azerbaijan and solutions could be also applicable. Meanwhile, structure of labour market and student competences are the same across the countries, and we expect that findings in Azerbaijan may give some suggestions for researchers in other countries to conduct the similar research.

Since this research provides data collected mainly from the student body of six state universities, further studies are needed to examine faculty perspectives and samples from more universities to see similarities and differences in their experiences related to the reform process. A larger sample of administrators can also shed more light on the effectiveness of integration into EHEA from the policy-making perspective, and the triangulation of the findings can provide more accurate and convincing data. Furthermore, in future research, statistical analysis can be done to determine the main variables affecting the results among sample universities.

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APPENDIX

Survey Questions

1. **Age:**
2. **Gender:**

☐ Male ☐ Female

3. **University you study at:**

☐ Baku State University
☐ Azerbaijan University of Languages
☐ University of Economics
☐ Azerbaijan Pedagogical University
☐ ADA University

4. **Current degree of study:**

☐ Bachelor
☐ Master
☐ Doctorate

5. **What is the number of credits in the degree you study?**

☐ 90-120 ☐ 180-240 ☐ Have no information ☐ other (please specify):

6. **Please indicate estimated number of hours you spend per week on the following learning activities (including preparation time):**

Learning activity	*Time spent per week (hrs)*
Formal courses (lectures, seminars, etc.)	
Studying by yourself (outside university)	
Lab works	
Reading (articles, books, book chapters etc.)	
Projects (presentations, reports, research etc.)	
Term papers	
Other (please specify):	

7. Which of these services does your institution provide?

- ☐ Career guidance services
- ☐ Psychological Counselling services
- ☐ Information on study opportunities in foreign institutions (e.g. exchange programs)
- ☐ Additional Language training
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

8. Your opinion about the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is impossible to get a job without Master Degree	○	○	○	○	○
It is possible to get a job without Master degree but not in many organizations	○	○	○	○	○
There is no need for Master degree to get a job	○	○	○	○	○

9. Have you, during your studies:

	Yes	No
Done any course abroad	○	○
Studied abroad	○	○
Done internship abroad	○	○

10. To what extent are you involved in the design of the curricular?

- ☐ Fully involved ☐ Partially involved ☐ Not involved at all
- ☐ Have no information about it at all

11. To what extent have you been involved in the evaluation of the following:
(you can choose more than one)

	Fully involved	Partially Involved	N Not involved at all
University	○	○	○
Faculty	○	○	○
Program	○	○	○
Course	○	○	○

12. Do joint programs/degrees exist in your institution?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Have no information

13. Does your university provide financial support opportunities to study abroad? If not, skip question 14 and go to question 15.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Have no information

14. In which form is this support provided:

_____

15. Does your university provide financial support to start and complete your studies in your country? If not, skip question 16 and finish the survey.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Have no information

16. In which form is this support provided?

☐ Grants

☐ Loans

☐ Exemption from tuition fee

☐ Other (please specify):

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The Lived Experiences of Faculty Members with Disabilities in Turkish Universities: Implications for Higher Education Leadership and Management

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Abstract

One of the most neglected forms of diversity, disability, often results in discrimination in a community. Nevertheless, more higher education institutions are working toward creating more inclusive settings, even though this work predominantly regards students with disabilities, not much of faculty members. The study examined the faculty members' lived experiences with disabilities in their work-life in higher education institutions in Turkey. Faculty work and disability are the two main issues of this study. While the social model of disability mainly guides the research to examine the concept of disability, faculty work theory helps to contextualize the concept in a higher education setting. This study is phenomenological research carried out with semi-structured interviews with 15 participants. Overall results showed that the faculty members mostly experience exclusion shaped by colleagues, administrators, and institutions. Both encouraging and inhibiting faculty members' experiences depend on their colleagues, university, type of institution, type of disability, and mainly the administrative attitude. To promote faculty members' full participation in academic life, higher education

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leaders are expected to restrain the exclusion of the faculty members with disabilities and be committed to offering complete accessibility on campuses.

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Introduction

"Don't disable people who are already disabled."

TRT2 Yeryüzleri: Muhammed Yalçın (2019)

Individuals with disabilities have been left with no other choice than struggling against disabling societies created with stigma, prejudices, and discrimination throughout history. Socially reproduced attitudinal and environmental barriers have prevented individuals with a disability to participate in daily life as freely and independently as possible. To be free and independent in everyday life, individuals with disabilities face attitudinal and environmental barriers that are socially produced and reproduced. While universities are getting more diverse places, the faculty members with disabilities are still forced to stand up for their legitimate right to be a part of universities and hide their disability to have active roles in academic work-life (Waterfield et al., 2018). The faculty members with disabilities are excluded from some significant parts of their work, provided with inadequate support by their institutions, are expected to work hard to confirm their competency for their positions, and are treated differently in academia (Waterfield et al., 2018). Thus, we need to advocate for their rights and highlight the

importance of inclusiveness for all higher education members, including faculty members with disabilities. This study examines the lived experiences of faculty members with disabilities in higher education institutions in Turkey.

There are three primary laws in Turkey that assure the legitimate rights of individuals with disabilities: The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, the Turkish Disability Act No: 5378 (TDA), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, it can be inferred that the faculty members with disabilities are basically invisible to higher education institutions in Turkey since there are no available statistics on their numbers or working conditions. More than six hundred million people, which is nearly 10 percent of the world population, have some disability (Quinn et al., 2002). The statistics of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) presents that about ten thousand students with disabilities graduate from universities every year in Turkey (Yükseköğretim Bilgi Yönetim Sistemi, 2018). On the other hand, the exact number of faculty members with disabilities at universities in Turkey is unknown to the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Thus, to explain the problems, ensure the presence, and elaborate on the value of faculty members with disabilities, this study seeks to contribute to higher education studies and the policymaking process. Discovering and reflecting upon their work experiences and work-life issues will help create inclusive universities as inclusive workplaces for faculty members. Rather than working on some postulated problems or solutions, this study will let the decision-makers face the main problem areas by relying on the experiences of faculty members with disabilities. We need to promote a more profound understanding and acknowledgment of disability at all educational service levels in higher education.

This study seeks an answer to "How do the faculty members with disabilities experience academic work-life in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Turkey?" This research has two main issues as faculty work and disability, and it is built upon two main theoretical aspects. While faculty work is discussed through the interactive relation between self-knowledge and social knowledge of Blackburn and Lawrence (1995), the concept of disability is elaborated through the social model of disability by Oliver (1996).

Faculty Work in Higher Education

Faculty members are the operating core of higher education institutions. According to Marsh and Hattie (2002), they are expected to carry out four responsibilities: teaching, research, administration, and community service. HEIs are success-oriented work environments, where we can talk about two main factors impacting their work behavior and productivity: *individual faculty characteristics* and *the environment*. Individual faculty characteristics are considered with regard to *socio-demographic characteristics* (age, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.), *career* (academic discipline, preparation of career, type of institution, etc.), *self-knowledge* (understanding of self, self-referent, etc.), and finally *social knowledge* (how individuals perceive their environment). In terms of properties of the environment, they discussed three main features: *environmental conditions* (the structural and normative features of the university), *environmental response* (different formal feedback that faculty receive), and *social contingencies* (events that happen in faculty members' life and affect their work) (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

The faculty members' performance and motivation depend on the continuous interactivity between their self-knowledge, which includes their self-perception of academic roles, commitment,

competence, and preference for work effort, and their social knowledge, which consists of their perceptions of the work environment and professional relations) (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). These key premises provide a baseline for this study in understanding faculty members' work environment, how they change their self-understanding as well as their self-referential thoughts. Eventually, these key premises may offer us an explanation for faculty members' motivation or job satisfaction that will affect their knowledge production, teaching performances, or engaging with the community.

Disability Models

We know that disability is a complex concept explained through various definitions according to different interpretations or perspectives. According to the medical model, disability is described through a medical understanding and stated as a personal issue stemming from a medical problem such as a mental or physical disorder. The medical model emphasizes the functional limitations of a disabled body, and these limitations are expected to be healed. Since the medical model sees disability as a bodily abnormality, treatment implies the normalization of the body. However, we focus on the social model of disability in this study (Oliver, 1996). Within this framework, a disability includes all the limitations of individuals with disabilities, such as negative discrimination, judgments, biases, isolating systems, and lack of accessible accommodation and transportation (Oliver, 1996).

The social model reveals the discrimination against, social exclusion, and oppression of individuals with disabilities in society. Social model theorists object to the medical model of disability since they differentiate disabilities from illnesses. This model explains

disability based on social interactions between people with disabilities and their environment. This model describes disability depending on the impacts of bodily functions, social interaction, and environment while minimizing the effects of biological factors. The emphasis is on the social practices and organizations which hinder individuals with disabilities.

World Health Organization (2002) states that "disability is the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)" (WHO 2002, 4). Turkish Disability Act (TDA) states in article 3, "Disabled is the person who has difficulties in adapting to the social life and in meeting daily needs due to the loss of physical, mental, psychological, sensory and social capabilities at various levels by birth or by any reason after that and who therefore need protection, care, rehabilitation, consultancy, and support services" (Turkish Disability Act No 5378 2005).

According to the literature, there are controversial perspectives on accommodating employees with disabilities in the workplace. Most individuals with disabilities do not require special arrangements in workplaces, and there is no financial difference between hiring a person with a disability and one without a disability (Ellner & Bender, 1980). However, teachers with disabilities working at supportive workplaces are provided with extra breaks, support for course materials and evaluation, alternative methodologies, secretary services, and technological support (Anderson & Karp, 1998). Besides, supportive administration is needed to provide accessibility

and supportive accommodation for individuals with disabilities (Anderson & Karp, 1998).

Workers with disabilities are exposed to problems stemming from attitudinal barriers (including negative discrimination, segregation, and exclusion by their colleagues) and environmental barriers (including lack of accessible transportation and accommodation at work) (Carter et al., 2011; Jenkins & Rigg, 2004; Lindsay, 2011). Having accessible accommodation at work reinforces job satisfaction, productivity, and integration, along with psychological and physical wellbeing (Charmaz, 2010; Lindsay et al., 2018; Solovieva et al., 2011). Many individuals with disabilities do not want to disclose their disability to refrain from stereotyping, excluding, or discriminatory reactions like being treated as incapable or dependent (Blockmans, 2015; Lindsay & Cancelliere, 2018). On the other hand, some others claim disclosing disability may minimize or hinder stereotyping (Blockmans, 2015). Lindsay and Cancelliere (2018) state that both the administrators and colleagues working with an individual with a disability and a worker with a disability should be ready to make sense of their capabilities, needs, and alternatives.

Faculty Members with Disabilities

There is very limited research on faculty members with disabilities and their work-related experiences. However, within this scarce literature, some significant studies should be highlighted. Neca, Borges, and Pinto (2020) presented a literature review of research on teachers with disabilities, including fifty-three articles between 1990 and 2018. They emphasize the underrepresentation of teachers with disabilities in educational communities, the lack of studies on educators with disabilities in inclusive education studies, and the need for research on teachers with disabilities. They also

emphasize the need for the existence of teachers with disabilities at schools to change the negative assumptions of disability to manage a social change. Likewise, Ashcraft (2008) verifies that there are not many studies on the career boundaries of faculty members with disabilities. Williams and Mavin (2015) highlight the significance of career boundaries that can reinforce or restrict the career goals of the faculty members with disabilities.

It is also essential to see the impact of leadership practices on the experiences of these terms. Leadership practices shape the work behaviors in a workplace, and educational leadership is not an exception. Erdemir, Demir, Öcal, and Kondakçı (2020) presented a statistically significant relationship between mobbing in academia and leadership behaviors; as long as the faculty members face positive leadership, they are less likely to face mobbing. Effective leadership practices, including open communication, reasonable understanding, flexibility, and the appropriate role and authority distribution, are essential to ensure motivation and commitment (Pashiardis et al., 2011). Educational leadership for social justice offers fairness in educational rights and equal access to society's educational opportunities (Hill-Berry et al., 2019).

Most research on the social aspect of disability focuses on such critical issues as mobbing, humiliation, and discrimination. That is why elaborating on these terms will be helpful to make sense of the rest of the article. Davenport, Schwartz, and Elliott (1999) explained mobbing as "a malicious attempt to force a person out of the workplace through unjustified accusations, humiliation, general harassment, emotional abuse, and/or terror" (p. 40). Mobbing, regardless of the sector, mostly takes place in workplaces dominated by tight institutional and hierarchical structures (McCulloch, 2010).

However, mobbing is not limited to business organizations; the percentage of mobbing in academia can reach 65% (Raskauskas, 2006).

Czarniawska (2008) defines humiliation as a kind of bullying that is a significant factor in forming and shaping a character. There are many ways to humiliate workers (Kożusznik, 2016). : treating them like a child or a servant; making them do something which is out of their job description; forcing them to do something immoral or illegal; discussing personal issues in public; forcing them to admit their mistakes or apologize in public, and directly insulting or swearing. Kożusznik (2016) also emphasizes that humiliated people tend to view themselves as a failure and constant humiliation at work causes a decrease in self-esteem.

Race, ethnicity, behavior, appearance, or sexual orientation can be presented as excuses for discrimination (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Discrimination in recruitment and hiring has always been an ongoing concern for economic justice, inequality, and workplace relations. Coffman, Exley, and Niederle (2018) present such obvious evidence of discrimination against women that female employees are significantly less likely to be hired than equally competent men. While disability can be used as an excuse for discrimination, gender can even worsen it. This double discrimination means that female workers with disabilities can face double discrimination and experience a much different work-life than men (Habib, 1995). While most university students are female, women remain underrepresented in higher education institutions in the US at senior leadership levels (Cook, 2012). Likewise, only 35% of full-time faculty members at HEIs are women in the US (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Besides, only 26% of university rectors are

female in the US (Colorado Women's College, 2013). There is a possibility that female faculty members with disabilities cannot decide if their experiences are due to their gender, disability, or an irrelevant reason. This case is explained by the term 'attributional ambiguity,' coined by Crocker et al. (1991) to explain a case when individuals of underrepresented or minority groups cannot be sure if their both positive and negative interactions stem from their underrepresented status or totally unrelated causes. According to Brower, Schwartz, and Jones (2019), gender-based attributional ambiguity exists among deans in US higher education and causes a burden to female academics getting administrative positions at universities.

The significance of including individuals with a disability is also emphasized in the Guideline of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2012), which state that the teaching staff should be diverse, including teachers with disabilities, in schools in the Member States to show the social and cultural diversity of society. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) emphasizes that a standard school with inclusive orientation is the essential way of struggling against discriminatory practices, thriving welcoming communities, forming inclusive societies, and providing education for all. Moreover, the policymakers at all levels are expected to present their dedication to inclusion and encourage the students, teachers, and everyone to provide positive attitudes towards individuals with disabilities (UNESCO, 1994). Besides, inclusive orientation should cover all individuals at school. Inclusive orientation at universities requires inclusive practices for the students and the instructors and administrative and support staff.

This literature review emphasizes the requirement of inclusive practices everywhere, including HEIs. Besides, it reveals the need for disability studies in HEIs for the students and the faculty members. Under the YÖK regulations, there are services for people with disabilities, mostly serving students. Yet, faculty members with disabilities are not provided enough services, and a supportive work environment, as their needs are different. Thus, the current research is particularly significant in providing insights on faculty members with disabilities, revealing the challenges they go through, and feeding inclusive practices in HEIs.

Methodology

This research aims to explore the way faculty members with disabilities experience academic work-life in higher education in Turkey. In this phenomenological research, the shared phenomenon is having a disability, and the specific group is the faculty members in Turkey. The focus is on the lived experience of the target population. Due to the lack of available data sources to know and access faculty members with a disability in Turkey, "snowball sampling" was chosen to get in touch with the potential participants. Conducting the snowball sampling and reaching the participants took a long time. The researchers started with one participant, asked to be directed to another possible participant, and went on with their network.

A total of 15 participants who work at universities as faculty members and have a visible physical disability agreed to participate in the study. Out of 15 participants, only three participants are female. The participants' ages differ between 30 and 58. Their work experience lasts for between 3 months and 32 years. Four Professors, two Associate Professors, five Assistant Professors, three Research

Assistants, and one Instructor participated in this research. Six participants are either blind or visually disabled, four participants are wheelchair users, and five have upper or lower limb(s) disability. Four participants became disabled while working in their current position. Eleven participants have already had a disability before working. Seven were born with a disability, while eight had a disability later on.

For the ethical approach, individual demographic information is not given in detail. The number of faculty members with disabilities is thought to be few, and sharing any personal data may cause breaking the participants' anonymity. All the participants were assured that any information that can reveal their identity would not be shared, and their anonymity and confidentiality were secured. The participants' identities are covered to abstain from possible enforcement of administrative and political sanctions. This study aims to raise the voice of faculty members with disabilities. Thus, as many quotes as possible are quoted while reporting the results, instead of summing up them.

We developed the interview protocol based on Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) faculty work model and the social model of disability to explore the nature of faculty work experience concerning disability. The faculty work model directed the study to focus on the participants' tasks and responsibilities at higher education institutions. The social model of disability guided the study to focus on the barriers stemming from the people and environments. The interview protocol consists of the following sub-sections: a) *demographic information; b) educational life experiences; c) recruitment process; d) professional relations with the administration, colleagues, students, and administrative staff; e) job satisfaction, and f) accessibility.*

Two experts on disability and counseling psychology have reviewed the interview protocol. Accordingly, necessary adaptations and changes related to counseling psychology and higher education have been made according to their feedback.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is used to analyze the collected data and interpret the interviews. In this study, the aim is to reveal the participants` interpretations of their lived experiences reflexively. To understand a shared phenomenon, considering the experiences from the perspectives of individuals who have experienced it is essential. IPA aims to discover the core of the shared phenomenon to understand the nature of the sample's lived experiences instead of merely generalizing the population's results (Willig, 2008). Thus, IPA necessitates analyzing each case through each participant's perspective, relying on each unique context rather than making a rough generalization (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The interview transcripts were analyzed with ATLAS.ti 7, a qualitative data analysis software, to conduct a systematic data analysis. This software supported the researchers to code, create code lists and themes, and track the codes. The researchers used this software to reveal the codes' connections and the codes' and themes' interactions and create thematic categories.

Results

In this section, the experiences of faculty members with disabilities will be reported under three themes - *Job Recruitment*, *Professional Relations,* and *Overall Job Satisfaction.*

Under the *Job Recruitment* theme, it is critical to emphasize the difference between the participants' experiences as having a disability before and after the application. Some were invited by the university

and did not face many problems. The participants who already had a disability before the recruitment had various experiences. Most of the ones with a disability went through the standard job application and recruitment processes and encountered negative discrimination:

> *"I faced many problems finding a job. At first, I specifically applied for the top positions at public institutions, but I got rejected because of my disability. Then I applied for positions at universities, and I got accepted. Then, they called me to visit them and directly told me: "We do not want you here; you are handicapped, and you are supposed to know who you are and what your capabilities are."*
>
> *"I am an expert in my field; consequently, I easily got this position. But if I was in a different field, it could have been different. If there are some other candidates, they do not prefer the one with a disability to not handle assisting".*

Alternatively, the participants, who have taken the central exams and programs, think if they had a standard job interview, they would not have been hired:

> *"I studied abroad with a program, and when I came back, my position was ready. Yet, the university could have made a problem. My department needed faculty members, and I got my job regardless of my disability. On the other hand, I am sure that if I went through the standard procedure, it would have been harder. Even after getting accepted, I faced the administration's reactions like, "How did we accept you? Why did we make such a mistake?"*

Some of the faculty members with disabilities mentioned other job opportunities that they had the legal right, and they were not hired because the institutions regarded their disability as a burden:

> *"I was appointed as a teacher like everyone with the KPSS exam in the same year, but I was not assigned to work with them at the same time. They invited me to a commission in Ankara. They were going to decide whether I was capable of teaching or not. Moreover, when everyone was assigned in*

September, I started in November. For sure, there were other candidates with disabilities who were assumed to be not capable of teaching and not appointed".

Regarding the recruitment process, it was clear from the participants' statements that the job interviews were up to the interviewer's judgment. Interviewers can make decisions upon non-academic causes as long as they handle the process by the book. Some interviewers used the participants` disabilities as excuses against them. Some interviewers were prejudiced against disability. Some were reluctant to take responsibility due to a lack of knowledge about supporting disability. Some were basically unwilling to handle extra effort to accommodate the disabled or make the required adaptations since none of Turkey's universities is fully accessible. After academic life, individuals with a disability are precluded at the job application or job recruitment steps. Thus, the subjective recruitment process explains why the number of faculty members with disabilities is respectively low. This finding emphasizes the immediate need for an objective and transparent recruitment process.

Reflecting upon the *Professional Relations* theme, the social interactions of the participants at work are analyzed to interpret disability in a social context and universities' social structure. Most of the findings depict negativity that can be explained through discriminatory practices, social exclusion, social oppression, unfair treatment, abusing disability, prejudice against disability, and mobbing. Meanwhile, positive findings can be explained through the objective approach, social inclusion, and social and environmental support. Professional relations here will be reported under four sub-themes: *relationships with administrators, colleagues, students, and administrative staff.*

The most striking and unfortunate finding on the relationship with administrators is that almost everything is directly related to the higher education administrators' understanding and subjective judgments of disability. There is a range of negative experiences of faculty members concerning their former or current administrators:

"The current vice-rector is really careful about accessibility due to his understanding and concern. When he leaves, and someone else comes, the situation can get worse, and we can have more problems".

"I was not disabled when I first started as a research assistant. I waited for the assistant professor position for a long time and found out that my dean did not want me to get it. Then, I talked to the rector and got the position that I deserved. After that, my dean started mobbing".

Beyond the negative attitude from the administrators, some faculty members were exposed to mobbing, discrimination, social exclusion, and oppression due to personal judgments of administrators:

"At first, the department chair said, "now that you are blind, I talked to the rector, and he does not want you to work here. And I don't want to work with you. I let you think for a year. You can quit, retire or find another university". Then I went to the rectorship. The rector was kind and understanding to me. He did not know anything about this issue and helped me. It was all the plans of the department chair".

"Academia is cruel. I have been exposed to mobbing for sure. It does not matter how much I am successful and deserve my position. I have always been ignored because of my disability".

"I got aware of my disability when I started working here. The people at work behaved so badly that one day I came home, looked in the mirror, and I thought: "you are just a worthless disabled person; you cannot talk." I made myself shut up. I have faced each kind of mobbing. I was given much more responsibilities than the average workload. My health problems have gotten worse, and I was not able to walk. I even thought about quitting the job ".

Few faculty members have had a supportive and inclusive attitude from their administrators:

> *"The rector asked me to work at the Disabled Students Unit. I am always in touch with the administration on disability and accessibility. That is why I have been a part of decision-making processes such as preparing the strategic plan".*

The second sub-theme, *relations with colleagues,* has a more positive and inclusive perception than the relations with administrators, even though there are still some apparent issues that emerged from colleagues' interactions. Only a few faculty members explicitly stated that they have fair and democratic decision-making in their work environments, supportive and inclusive practices in the academic studies:

> *"There is no difference between young or old, novice, or experienced here. We have a fair workplace here".*
>
> *"I got disabled when I was working here. My colleagues could have excluded me or forced me to retire. All my colleagues have supported me. There may be an influence of the organizational culture. If I were working at another institution, they would have excluded me".*

However, due to the nature of academic life, such as competition or conflict of interests, some faculty members experienced negative incidents with their colleagues. Some of them even faced social exclusion:

> *"I have never abused my disability, but my colleagues tried to exploit my disability. Some claimed I could not carry out some duties due to my disability, and they could get those tasks or positions. Most people have abused my disability for their benefit".*
>
> *"One of my colleagues claimed that I was included in these studies due to my disability rather than my success."*

Some participants explicitly emphasized that disability studies are exploited for the sake of getting benefits from the situation:

"There are many people who exploit the disability field. As long as they can get a benefit out of a study, they will join."

"Relationships are mostly fake. As long as they have a possibility of profit over you, they act like helping you to show off in the community. But they do not care when you are alone".

The last two sub-themes – *professional relations with students and administrative staff* – will be presented together. Most of the participants mentioned they were effectively communicating with students. Besides, they stated that the administrative and auxiliary staff were generally supportive. However, some statements highlight that the auxiliary staff was acting disrespectfully or careless about their responsibilities for those participants:

"The previous dean told all staff not to contact me, I had limited communication with the others. Due to the dean's order, even the cleaners did not clean my office properly".

"I mostly thought that the auxiliary staff was acting like I was at a lower position than the other academics."

The third theme, *Overall Job Satisfaction*, is built upon the work experiences and their impact on self and social knowledge. In other words, as long as the participants have effective, inclusive, and supportive relations with their administrators and colleagues, their belongingness and motivation levels increase. When they are exposed to discrimination or mobbing by the administrators or colleagues, they perceive the social environment as excluding and hindering, causing a decrease in belongingness, motivation, and self-confidence. The participants are satisfied with their teaching duty and relations with their students. Some of them created ways to adapt the lectures according to their capabilities and classroom restrictions. In terms of

job satisfaction with the academic work, participants stated that they are satisfied with the nature of academic work, particularly with their community service roles where they can advocate for disability rights:

> *"I have worked in the Disabled Students Unit for years. We prepare e-books and audiobooks. We have a lot of voluntary readers and members with visual impairment. Meanwhile, we also help our students with disabilities on our campus. Our students can access documents in big points or Braille or tactile shape. We provide personal adaptation letters for each student to the faculty members. I can say we mostly work on community service".*

However, most participants are not satisfied with their research roles due to negative experiences at work. Besides the environmental barriers preventing their access to research, those problems may also arise from their exposure to social exclusion or oppression from the administrators:

> *"I quit academic studies. All my experiences have led this way. I am exhausted, and I do not have the energy to do anything. I offered joint research to my colleagues a few times, but they did not accept. They did not include me, and I work on my own. ".*

In summary, the lived experiences of faculty members are unpleasantly striking. They reveal that their experiences highly depend on the institution, the administrators, the physical environment, type, and the time of disability. How faculty members experience job recruitment, professional relations, and job satisfaction are affected and explained by the above dimensions. In other words, the process of job recruitment can be influenced by the fact of whether a faculty member already has a disability or not. Similarly, their work environments can be defined as supportive or disabling depending on administrators' perception, like the department chair, dean, or rector in the institution.

Discussion

Neca, Borges, & Pinto (2020) stated that there was an emphasis on specific topics such as life trajectories but a lack of attention to others' opinions about teachers with disabilities within the existing limited literature. This study emphasizes the participants' interpretations of the surrounding people's (students, colleagues, and administrators) opinions and conditions of the given context. What needs to be highlighted here is that faculty members' experiences significantly vary according to their university, type of institution, colleagues, primarily administrative attitude, and type of disability. The administrators have the most significant impact on both social interactions and environmental conditions at work. For instance, when the current rector is careless about an accessible campus, the next or previous rectors may be willing to provide whatever is needed for universal design on campus. The private universities mostly invite the faculty members, know the possible barriers beforehand, and are ready to give support and accessibility.

In line with the literature review, the severity and overtness of the disabilities seem to affect the experiences since the participants with mild disabilities experience more positivity than those with severe disabilities. As Bordieri and Drehmer (1987) stated, decision-makers' attitudes towards people with a disability vary according to the severity and type of disability. Besides, the overtness of disability can also change those attitudes (Gouvier et al., 1991). The combination of the prejudices against both disability and feminity results in double discrimination, and it is inferred that female faculty members with disabilities are exposed to double discrimination. The experiences of a male and a female participant with the same disability type with the same administrators at the same university

context were totally opposite. It seems that the only difference was gender discrimination combined with a disability to cause these contrasting experiences in line with Marks' (1999) statement. Besides, there are more males than females among the faculty members with a disability. Moreover, in line with Habib's (1995) study, female faculty members with a disability face more social barriers, exclusion, and isolation. A recent study also aligns with the literature emphasizing that female faculty members are exposed to mobbing more than their male colleagues, and the male-dominant cultural context of Turkey strengthens mobbing towards women (Erdemir et al., 2020). Yumuşak (2013), Akın and Karabacak (2014), Özçelik (2015), and Gezer (2015) emphasize in their studies that female teachers face mobbing more often than their male colleagues. This research has some evidence that mobbing depends on the victim's gender, and female faculty members with disabilities might face double discrimination.

In this study, we found that the administration mostly shapes the faculty members' social knowledge, and the administration directly shapes even social interactions among colleagues. A study conducted in Turkey on the job satisfaction and work conditions of teachers with disabilities reveals that teachers' job satisfaction depends solely on free mobility and accessibility (Kış et al., 2012). However, this study shows that professional relations at work, besides accessibility opportunities, significantly shape the faculty members' job satisfaction. Colleagues and administrators are expected to respect the needs and capabilities of the faculty members with disabilities to create a fair workplace for all in line with Lindsay and Cancelliere's (2018) study. Between 2013-2015, a total of 5890 people reported mobbing cases to a call line (ALO170), and most of these plaintiffs were teachers at public schools and faculty members

at state universities (Kılıç, 2013). The participants of this study confirm that mobbing widely takes place in Turkish academia and gets stronger in disability.

The faculty members` both self-knowledge and social-knowledge are shaped by the professional relations with administrators and colleagues. Meanwhile, the findings suggest that while the administration directly affects the self and social knowledge, it also indirectly affects the relations with colleagues and administrative and auxiliary staff. Moreover, the interviewer's personal judgment and prejudices were involved during some participants' job interviews, resulting in preclusion. As Cole and Lewis (1993) mentioned, the decision-makers can make a decision based on their personal judgment as long as the decision is made by the book. Besides, acquaintanceship significantly influences both the decision-making and accommodation as depicted in the results. On the other hand, confirming Keller's (1998) statement that the decisions can be established upon non-academic reasons, the administrators who are prejudiced against disability cause exclusion of the faculty member from academic studies. The fact that most participants mentioned "invisible" to define their existence and feel ignored or seen as a minority confirms the statement of Williams and Mavin (2012) that individuals with disabilities are generally "theoretically invisible" at work.

In line with Waterfield et al.'s (2018) research, most participants stated that they frequently have to prove themselves productive, successful, and capable. Besides, this study confirms Roulstone and Williams` (2014) and Bulk et al.` (2017) studies emphasizing that people with disabilities experience discrimination if they mention disability to get accessible accommodations. In line with Lindsay and

Cancelliere's (2018) and Blockmans` (2015) research, many individuals with disabilities are unwilling to share their disability because they do not want to be seen as incompetent or dependent face social exclusion or discrimination. It is inferred from the findings that many candidates were not hired for the faculty member positions since either the interviewers were prejudiced against disability or did not know or want to provide adaptations for accessibility.

It can be claimed that none of the universities in Turkey is entirely accessible. Universal design is needed everywhere, including the universities. The universal design can be explained as the design of items, places, and surroundings equally accessible to all people regardless of disabilities, ages, conditions, or capabilities (Story et al., 1998). Higher education administrators are expected to provide the necessary accommodation until the universal design is accomplished. The reflections as self and social knowledge have an impact on one's job satisfaction. The findings imply that none of the participants is completely satisfied with their job regarding the four faculty work domains. On the other hand, those who are content with accessibility and relations at work feel more satisfied with their jobs and have higher job satisfaction. As expected, mobbing, humiliation, discrimination, and exclusion have a negative impact on self-knowledge, self-esteem, and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that the higher education institutions in Turkey lack a systematic and consistent approach and understanding of the needs of faculty members with disabilities. Page (2003) suggests higher education leaders should have five essential

features to create a diverse community: *commitment to understanding diversity and fundamental values, a culture of trust, developing ways of providing mobility to diverse groups, and being accountable for the success and failures of the organization*. The study results show us that promoting diversity through inclusive practices is needed, and academic leadership can be crucial for higher education institutions. The policymakers, higher education administrators, and managers are expected to prevent the social barriers caused by colleagues, administrators, and environmental barriers stemming from the disabling workplaces. They are expected to listen to the disabled individuals' expectations and act upon them.

Recommendations for Leadership and Management in Higher Education

Based on the results of the study and the above-mentioned vital features, the following suggestions were developed.

- The Turkish Higher Education Quality Council must secure the standard rules and regulations for recruitment and work environment, and keep track of the implementations of these rules and regulations on a bright and regular basis as part of the external evaluations.
- The existence of inclusive practices at universities should not depend on those in administrative positions and on their misguided judgments; thus, higher education administrators should be trained to embrace more inclusive practices for faculty work life.
- All stakeholders of higher education institutions should be trained and advocate the rights of individuals with disabilities and other types of diversity.

- The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) mandated Disability Units should serve students with a disability and all members of higher education institutions.
- Higher education institutions should be arranged according to universal design, and individuals with disabilities should not be forced to request an accommodation.

Suggestions for Future Research

Some suggestions can be considered for future research:

- Further research can be carried out to increase the generalizability of the results since the results of this qualitative research cannot be generalized.
- The researcher was supposed to collect the participants' interpretations and then interpret those interpretations accordingly due to the nature of phenomenological research. For a different method, observations or field-notes can provide further information.
- This study only covers the academic staff of higher education. Another research, including the administrative staff, can be conducted to include all individuals at universities.
- Comparative research on K-12 and Higher Education can be conducted since there are many differences between the experiences of faculty members with a disability based on this study and K-12 teachers with a disability according to some other researches.

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Book Review

Academic Libraries and Toxic Leadership

By: Alma C. Ortega

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Book Review

In context of defining leadership not only in general but also in terms of academic institutions there are in excess of 100 leadership definitions (Riggs, 2001). Although, in leadership literature, it is dominant to focus on the positive side of leadership, there is a growing literature emphasizing that leadership and management may not always be associated with "good" (Cohen, 2018). In this sense, discussing academic libraries and toxic leadership -both of which are overshadowed- in context of leadership in academic institutions should be taken into consideration more.

Alma C. Ortega (2017), based on research (produced from her doctoral dissertation), discussed that librarianship and academic librarianship in a special sense are not included even in informal

literature such as an academic or personal blog. In the preface, the author further explains this as follows:

> *Academic libraries as part of a university or college are seen as a piece of the puzzle of higher education, but they are really never thought about (unless it is accreditation time). They are not in the consciousness of most administrators, or even of most students (p. vii).*

In addition to this, the author describes her work as "courageous" work. In my opinion, it can be described as "courageous" considering that it covers a dynamic, but a previously ignored subject and it draws attention to destructive-toxic leadership behaviors in these structures contrary to the positive-constructive leadership phenomenon in common literature. One of the strengths of this book is that Alma C. Ortega is a librarian herself and knowledgeable about librarianship, library management, library staff, and the perspectives of libraries, and the existing situation is reflected by someone within this field.

> *They know the academic library as a service, they call anyone inside the library building a librarian. Many of them do not know a master's degree is needed to become a librarian; much less do they know that many of these librarians are faculty members at their institutions. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that they have no idea of (or interest in) how an academic library is managed, much less led (p.vii).*

It is clear that the organization of the book offers logical integrity and readability in terms of presenting the problem, the role of the author as a researcher, literature review, transition from an overview of leadership to the problem at hand, and toxic leadership correlation. In the first chapter of the book, which consists of 6 chapters in total, the questions of "What is leadership?" and "What is toxic leadership?" are attempted to be answered with an academic style by providing

references to the literature. In this chapter, it is emphasized that there are only a few research carried out on the subject of library and information studies, and, critically, leadership is seen as a positive phenomenon.

In the second chapter, the author focuses on how to recognize a toxic leader and its destructive effects on the library (service, atmosphere, staff).

> *Toxic leadership requires egregious actions taken against some or all of the members, even among peers, of the organization a leader heads; actions that cause considerable and long-lasting damage to individuals and the organization that often continue even after the perpetrator has left the organization (p.6).*

In addition, the author provides guidance on what situations actions cannot be regarded as toxic leadership behavior even when they are similar (toxic-like) behaviors (p. 23).

> *Toxic leadership includes egregious actions of any kind including but is not limited to: demeaning, shunning ignoring, bullying, mobbing, gas-lighting, overworking, backbiting, berating, among others. Librarians must remain vigilant to see if these behaviors are happening to any of their colleagues or themselves. Sometimes it can be confusing to figure out if a supervisor is actually a toxic leader (p. 22-23).*

I think the table (*Table 2.2, p.23*) presented by the author is more than useful. This is because there are no specific patterns of behavior to identify a leader as toxic. Thus, it is quite difficult to easily describe toxic leaders in the context of the behaviors put forward. For example, as Reed (2004) points out, every leader who speaks loudly, is determined and demanding is not necessarily a toxic leader. Sometimes, leaders who seem soft and sincere can be toxic, too.

In the third chapter, ways to deal with a toxic leader and his/her behaviors, whom to talk to in these situations, who remain inactive in the presence of the toxic behaviors of the leader, the consequences of being inactive against toxic leader behaviors and the reasons for abiding by a toxic leader are discussed.

> *I can't go anywhere else really. My family is all here, in the area. Withstanding my boss would be harder if I did not have them near me (p. 34).* ***(Conformers)***

In this sense, it is seen that participants display similar behaviors as defined in the "colluders and conformers" group of "susceptible followers" category in the toxic triangle suggested by Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser (2007).

> *If you were one of his cronies you were treated quite well, you basically could come and go as you pleased, you could not do your job particularly well and you'd still get very high recommendations and good raises (p. 35).* ***(Colluders)***

In the fourth chapter, *Regaining the Control of the Library*, the importance of sustaining a toxic leader-free library is discussed. This is because the situation will not change for the better once the toxic leader or immediate threat is removed or isolated. Thus, the author offers to establish mechanisms to prevent the emergence of another toxic leader. It is emphasized that, otherwise, the recently resolved situation may recur soon.

The author has modeled the fifth chapter of the book as the healing process of the library without the toxic leader by suggesting that the effect of toxic leadership may be stronger than expected. If the toxic effect created by the toxic leader is not cleared in a healthy recovery period, it is suggested that a toxic leader may recur, or a resident-chronic toxic atmosphere may be created within the organization.

The last chapter of the book focuses on the embodiment of the toxic leadership phenomenon through four case studies. In this regard, the author attempts to present the toxic leader behaviors to the readers in the context of daily life and by embodying these behaviors.

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