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Research in Educational Administration & Leadership

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When the Demand for Educational Research

Meet Practice – A Swedish Example

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Abstract	Article Info
There seems to be an assumption that an enhanced scientific foundation, in form of an application of research results, leads to better quality in schools and also to better student outcomes. The objective in this article is to explore how this demand can emerge in an action research project as well as in school principals' daily life. This is done in form of a case study were a group of principals enters a partnership with a researcher in their quest to apply a scientific approach in their own and, in their teachers' professions. This study provides a pertinent example of how this demand can emerge in practice. The theory of practice architectures (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008) is used as an analytical framing. The research questions are as follows: 1) How do the principals understand and realise the demand of a scientific approach in their roles as pedagogical leaders? 2) What happens when a group of principals and a researcher enters a partnership? 3) What practice architecture affect the partnership between the principals and the researcher? 4) What practice architecture affect the principals' pedagogical leadership actions in their schools?	

Introduction

Education and schools have always caught the interest of politicians and other stakeholders, and the current situation is no exception. In the political arena, school issues have become increasingly important and can be fundamental for the decision of which political party people choose to vote for in a general election. That Swedish politicians want to participate in and influence what is happening in schools and classrooms is clear from the recent extensive reforms and as a result of this growing political influence, the road has been paved for solutions that use efficiency and social control as benchmarks. The intention of several of the reforms has been to influence school practice so that it reflects a more scientific and systematic approach. There seems to be an assumption that an enhanced scientific foundation, in form of an application of research results, leads to better quality in schools and also to better student outcomes (Kvernbekk, 2013). This assumption exists in many countries, not only in Sweden (Levinsson, 2017; Persson & Persson, 2017). This is an interesting development that raises some issues. Science itself has its basis in several different theoretical approaches, so what, explicitly, are the expectations anticipated in the 'modernized' Swedish Education Act from 2010 (Novak, 2019) with a phrase that points out that education should be based on research and proven experience (SFS, 2010: 800, chapter 1, p.5)? The Educational Act does not provide any guidance in how to interpret or realise this phrase (Persson & Persson, 2017; Rapp, 2017). This ambiguity is turning the demand into a challenge, especially for the principals and the teachers that are expected to apply a scientific approach and to use knowledge from relevant research and proven

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experience in their daily practices. Moreover, why is confidence in research so great today and what are the ideas behind this belief?

The research interest in this study emerged in an action research study where principals and a scholar explored 'pedagogical leadership' (ForsstenSeiser, 2019). The objective in the present article is to study how the demand for research and proven experience can emerge in practice. Focus group discussions (Yin, 2012) were used as the method of data collection. The study is designed as a participatory action research study (Kemmis et al., 2014a), carried out in a close partnership between five principals and a researcher, investigating the principals´ quest to apply a scientific approach in their own and in their teachers' professions. This study provides a pertinent example of what happened when this demand was put into practice, in form of actions. The theory of practice architectures (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008) is used as an analytical framing. The research questions are as follows: 1) How do the principals understand and realise the demand of scientific approach in their roles as pedagogical leaders? 2) What happens when a group of principals and a researcher enters a partnership? 3) What practice architectures affects the partnership between the principals and the researcher? 4) What practice architectures affect the principals' pedagogical leadership actions in their schools?

Background

Reforming School Systems

A scientific foundation has become a hallmark in many different national school systems. So, what are the concepts behind the idea that teachers' and principals' practices should have a scientific approach in their professions, in form of applied research or proven

experience? There are multiple publications that examine and problematise such discourses (see for example Arnqvist & Blossing, 2012; Håkansson & Sundberg, 2012; Kvernbekk, 2013; Levinsson, 2017; Rapp, 2017) which is positive as the demand for educational research should be met by research that critically explore and questions the presumptions that underpin the very same demand. However, my intention is not to make a contribution to, or a comprehensive review of, the existing literature. Instead I would like to explore how this demand can emerge in practice and for this purpose I have selected a limited number of references.

Drawing on some references, a possible explanation for the demand of science lies in the application of market principles to the school system reflecting how, in a globalised world, the population's educational level is an important competitive factor (see for example Alvesson, 2013; Biesta, 2019; Bridges & Jonathan, 2008). Through the introduction of market principles, the idea has been to enable a school system that is permeated by diversity and freedom, a system where everyone has increased influence. In the UK, marketisation started under Margaret Thatcher's government in the 1980s. One basic idea of this neoliberal reform was to expose school providers (or owners) to competition, which was supposed to encourage them to strive for higher qualities in their schools. Another argument was that by sending funding directly to local schools, the parents and students would be guaranteed the best value for money. In addition, school providers would not be able to rely on government grants; instead, they would have to become entrepreneurs who generated their own resources. There are similarities between the changes to the Swedish school system (Novak, 2019) and what happened in the English school system during the Thatcher government. Market principles are believed to contribute to high student outcomes, which, in turn,

enable desirable good scores in international comparisons. Another similarity is that despite the extensive market-based reforms, there remains in both cases something of a quasi-system because the states still set clear goals and standards (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2016). Regular inspections and requirements for transparency are another way for the states to maintain control over schools (Ekholm & Lindvall, 2008; Novak, 2019). This has resulted in local schools continuously carrying out different types of evaluation as a form of voluntary self-control (Jankowski & Provezis, 2012). Bridges and Jonathan (2008) note that the result of the reform work in England was that an excessively controlling system replaced the previous state-controlled system, which is the same pattern that is now recognisable in Sweden. Biesta (2019) emphasises that the current circumstance is not some evil plot but more the outcome of a range of intertwined events that, step-by- step, moved from laudable intentions to problematic consequences.

One decisive step was taken when the question of judgment about quality of education became translated into questions how we can measure the quality of education. A second decisive step was taken when the question of measuring the quality of education turned into the question how we can measure the quality of educational outcomes. The question which outcomes should be measured, soon turned into the question which outcomes can be measured, and so the good intentions of the social justice argument eventually turned into the current 'age of measurement', in which the key question is whether we are (still) measuring what is being valued, or whether we have reached a situation where many just value what is being measured, and take the latter as a valid indicator of the quality of education (Biesta, 2019, p. 261-262)

To summarise, today's education is regarded as an important competitive tool in society and between nations. At the same time, there is an assumption that research is the necessary path for reaching high-quality outcomes. The trust in market principles has contributed to a great focus on what the school 'produces' and 'delivers', with the desire for results that can be presented in the form of comparative statistics. The extent to which students succeed in comparative educational tests has a prominent place on the political agenda, both nationally and internationally. This in turn affects teachers and principals and how they understand research and perform their professions.

Knowledge, Human Activities and Form of Science

Research is an important part of teachers and principals' professional practices (Carlgren, 2015; Kemmis, et al., 2014a; SOU 2018:19). As educators, they are in the professions of learning, but at the same time appropriate educational research is not always visible in their practices and the provision of research can vary in quality and relevance. To explore this, we turn to history as history always plays an important part in social practices (Kemmis et al., 2014a). Plato was the first to classify scientific knowledge as safe, objective and therefore true. Aristotle extended the discussion by talking about knowledge linked to various human activities. I turn to Aristotle's thinking to discuss what forms of science have the capacity to improve teachers´ and principals´ professional practices.

Table 1.

Aristotelian Classification

Knowledge domains	Episteme	Techné	Phronesis
Aim (telos)	To seek truth	To make something (craft)	To do what is right
Form of human action	Theoria	Poesis	Praxis (practical wisdom)
Form of science	Theoretical philosophy	Applied science	Practical philosophy

(Francisco et al, 2021. p. 3)

Aristotle classifies three different forms of knowledge; 'episteme', 'techné' and 'phronesis' which all result in various kinds of human activities such as teaching and leading (see table 1). Each human activity is developed by knowledge produced throughout its own 'science' (Carr, 2009). Aristotle´s classification is relevant in discussing what form of science may be implicitly included in the demand for a scientific foundation in education (2010:800, chapter 1 p.5). The first form of knowledge is episteme, which is about seeking knowledge for its own sake and for the purpose of achieving eternal truth. The distinctive form of human action related to episteme is 'theoria' or contemplative action, informed by 'theoretical philosophy'. The second form is techné and the human action associated with techné is 'poesis'. 'Poesis' is a kind of action that constitute technical expertise. The aim is to produce or make objects or artefacts. Poesis is informed by 'applied science'. The third form of knowledge is phronesis and the human action associated with this is to act wisely, aiming at doing what is ethically right in specific

situations. The distinct form of human action associated with phronesis is 'praxis'. 'Praxis' is a morally committed action in which, and through which, values are given practical expression.

As 'praxis' is human actions closely connected with education (Carr, 2009) practical philosophy is the science that emerge as the form that is preferable to guide teachers and principals' professions. But this is not always the case. The growing interest of finding the best or most effective method have led the way to research in form of 'applied science' as most frequent in schools. (Levinsson, 2013). One explanation to this is to be found in the implementation of market principles in the educational system. The influence of politicians has resulted in evidence-based research being regarded as the most important resource to improve quality in schools because studies of this kind are often linked to efficient teaching and improved student outcomes (Kvernbekk, 2013; Levinsson, 2017). However, evidence is a rather difficult and controversial concept within the educational research field and school improvement studies show that evidence is often not sufficient in complex social practices such as schools (Crossouard & Pryor, 2012; Flygare et al., 2011; Forssten Seiser et al., 2014; Hirsh & Lindberg, 2015).

Biesta (2019) has reservations about today´s urge for evidence-based education, especially when the aim is to provide teachers with knowledge about what 'works' towards producing measurable outcomes. Kvernbekk (2013) on the other hand argue that evidence-based research should be included in educational practices, but used indirectly. Indirectly in this context means that evidence becomes essential in school first after teachers and principals identify a problem and then use previous studies and research results to analyse the problem and to plan actions with the help of evidence-

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based results. According to this approach, evidence can improve teachers' and principals' decision making and ensure that the actions performed are justified and reliable. This contrasts with evidence-based research in the form of theoretical philosophy (see Table 1), that is assumed to work independently of the context or situation

To summarize, research can become something that gives information and knowledge about how to act wisely, but misapplied it could be understood as something that is supposed to constitute and determine teachers' and school leaders' professional practices. There are different research approaches that have the necessary prerequisites for developing 'praxis' (see Table 1) and according to Carr (2009), action research is one of them.

Action Research

Action research is an approach that utilises a critical approach towards professional practice and the ability to produce knowledge (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) But as with research in general, there is a range of different approaches among action research practitioners, and different kinds of action research address different kinds of dilemmas and issues (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Carr and Kemmis (1986) have distinguished three forms of action research, building on Habermas's (1972) theory of knowledge-constitutive interests: technical, practical and emancipatory. In the field of 'technical action research', which is the frequent interest in many areas, the search for knowledge focuses on producing technical solutions for specific problems. This can be about providing resources for human survival, but in social contexts it is often about influencing individuals and institutions to act effectively. In other words, it seeks to achieve goals through well-utilised resources (Alvesson, 2013; Alvesson & Spicer,

2012). The researcher defines the problem and also designs the research process. An imminent risk in this kind of action research is that there is 'an outsider' that determines the character of the work. This form of research paves the way for technical applications where action research has been reduced to being just a method (Crossouard & Pryor, 2012; Forssten Seiser et al., 2014). This is a frequent approach and one possible explanation to its popularity could be its problem-solving character.

Unlike technical action research, 'practical action research' creates knowledge in the form of enlightenment, which is a form of knowledge that can inform and guide practitioners in ethical dilemmas. Within practical action research, the interest is in capturing a deeper understanding of phenomena, especially in the case of those phenomena that cannot be measured or read on the surface (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Practical action research aims not only to improve practice (as with technical action research) but also to enhance individuals' self-knowledge and awareness. In this approach, the collaboration between researchers and practitioners is greater than in technical action research, where the researcher's responsibility is to support and assist the practitioners in formulating research questions and encouraging self-reflection.

Habermas's (1972) third knowledge interest is the emancipatory. This interest aims at achieving a sort of liberating knowledge. Within this approach, independence and critical reflection is essential. If technical action research is primarily about improving practice, and practical action research complements a focus on individuals' understanding, then 'critical action research' differs in that its main intention is to gain a critical approach. In other words, the aim is to develop an understanding of how individuals

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are shaped (and shape others) based on habits, adaptations, ideologies and traditions (Kemmis et al., 2014b). Improving practice is seen as a possible side effect, but this is not the main purpose. Critical action research not only generates practical knowledge but also creates the ability to create knowledge. In this form of action research, practitioners and researchers share the responsibility for the process. The researcher's task in critical action research is to gradually transfer the research process to the participants, as the ideal is that the participants themselves should lead and implement the work. Within schools, critical action research is about empowering teachers and principals in their professional roles by developing a critical approach. When Carr is arguing that action research is an approach with qualifications for developing 'praxis' (see Table 1), this is the form of action research he is referring to. This is also the form that was the ideal in the current study.

Pedagogical Leadership

Current expectations and demand linked to principals′ pedagogical leadership are very high in Sweden today and can explain the participating principals' common interest to improve their pedagogical leadership (Forssten Seiser, 2019). The strategy they choose to explore was to enhance a scientific approach in their leadership and in their schools. In Sweden, 'pedagogical leadership' includes moral and social ideas in the meaning of community and solidarity and with a sense of participation, engagement, collaboration and critical thinking (Forssten Seiser, 2019; Stålhkrantz, 2019). On the other hand, the concept has lately been elaborated in closer conjunction with the New Public Management movement which involves professional accountability, competition and efficiency (Jarl et al., 2017; Moos, 2011; Säljö, 2016). Irrespective of

orientation, during the more than 70 years that pedagogical leadership has been used in Sweden, it has always been emphasized as the solution par excellence - regardless of what problems the school has faced. Despite its respectable age, the concept is viable and has definitely not lost its relevance (Svedberg, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The theory of practice architectures is used as an analytical tool to frame this study and analyse what happened in the partnership between the researcher and the principals and in the principals' pedagogical leadership when they tried to apply a scientific approach in their leading practices. According to the theory of practice architectures, a practice is understood as a socially established human activity constituted by the sayings, doings and relatings that 'hang together' in the project of a specific practice.

The theory holds that practices are prefigured by the practice architectures present, or brought into, a site. In other words, the practice architectures are what constitute the enabling and constraining preconditions for the conduct of a specific practice. The practice architectures operate and are realised in three intersubjective dimensions: (1) in the semantic dimension, (2) in the physical dimension and (3) in the social dimension (Kemmis, et al., 2014a). This means that when individuals interact with each other and the environment within a specific practice the interaction takes place in ways that already have been arranged and that affects how the interaction occurs. How these arrangements emerge depends on the intersubjective dimensions. In the semantic dimension, cultural–discursive arrangements appear through language and speech. With other words, these practice architectures enable and constrain the

'sayings' in and about a site. For instance, what form of research results and concepts are commonly and frequently used in the discussions (and which are not) between the researcher and the principals. In the social dimension, social – politic arrangements reveal how people relate to each other as well as to artefacts inside and outside the practice. These practice architectures enable and constrain the 'relatings' in a site. For instance, what or who decided what forms of research (see table 1) are seen as preferable for teachers and principals to use. In the physical dimension, material – economic arrangements become visible in the work that takes place. These practice architectures enable and constrain the 'doings' in a site. For instance, what strategies are used in the applications of research in educator´s professions.

The practice architectures, which can exist beyond the intentional actions of individuals, shape practice and are shaped by them, but the theory maintains that practices are human-made and socially established, and therefore highlights the role of participants in practices and in shaping practices (Kaukko & Wiklinson, 2018).

Data and Methods

Five principals entered the action research partnership with me as a researcher; three men and two women. The principals represented both elementary and upper secondary schools and the group met at the local university once a month for one and a half year. Each meeting lasted for three hours and the common project in the group was to learn about and, to improve their, 'pedagogical leadership'. Focus group discussions, which are a form of qualitative interview (Yin, 2012) were used as the main method of data collection. Twenty hours of recordings from the meetings were

transcribed and analysed with the theory of practice of architectures (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008).

Analysis

The recordings from the focus group discussions were transcribed and analysed in three types of analysis activity: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The first activity is a selective and focusing process that makes the data stronger and more solid. This was carried out in relation to the intersubjective dimensions; the semantic, the physical, the social. Actions (saying, doings, relatings) related to the partnership constitute this data. This coding led to the second type of analysis activity, were the data from the three dimensions were organised and compressed in a matrix (table 2). A process of transformation, in a chronological order, was identified and visualized in form of three stages: the establishing, the testing, the examining, where the name of each stage characterises what happened during different periods of the transformation. As a complement, the stages were analysed with Kemmis´ and Carr´s (1986) forms of action research (table 2). In the third analysis activity, thick descriptions (Yin, 2012) were constructed describing identified actions and practice architectures. The narratives focus on the principals' understanding of how to understand and realise the demand in the Educational Act (2010:800, chapter 1, p.5) and what happened in the 18-month long partnership. The final descriptions involve research questions three and four, focusing on the practice architectures that enabled and constrained the actions concerning the partnership and the principals' leadership actions in them strive to enhance a scientific foundation in their schools.

Table 2.

The Action Research Process

THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS	INTERSUBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS			Dominating form of action research and knowledge interest
	The semantic (sayings)	**The physical** (doings)	**The social** (relatings)	
The establishing stage 0-6 months	The dominant understanding of how to realise the demand for a scientific foundation in schools is connected to implementing evidence-based teaching and leading methods	The researcher is the active part by planning and leading the regular meetings that are held at the university.	There is a knowledge hierarchy in the group, the researcher is seen as an expert and scientific knowledge is regarded as 'the truth'	**Technical**
The testing stage 6-12 months	The principals reflect on how educational research can be used to improve the quality in practice	The principals are active at the meetings, reporting the action that is carried out in their schools	Everyone´s knowledge is respected and everyone is allowed (and expected) to contribute in the dialogues	**Practical**
The examining stage 12-18months	The dominant understanding to apply a scientific approach is to act systematic: plan, act, analyse, evaluate	The results from the principals' actions are critical and collective examined and jointly analysed in the group, conclusions are drawn	The power relations in the group are equal. 'Practical' and 'theoretical' knowledge is regarded as equal important in the study	**Critical**

The Eighteen-month Long Partnership

To respond to the first and second research questions the partnership between the researcher and the principals is described in form of a narrative. Quotes from one of the principals, expressed in the different stages of the partnership, are included in the description.

The first six months of the partnership, 'the establishing stage', was devoted to explore how different scholars perceive and describe principals' pedagogical leadership. This was, among other things, carried out by reading and discussing academic texts, selected and presented by the researcher. During this initial time, there was an expectation that the researcher should teach the principals how to become a successful pedagogical leader.

The fact that we are at a university, and doing this, makes it trustworthy, and gives the work credibility (Principal 1)

This expectation resulted in the researcher taking the active part and doing most of the talking at the meetings. Another significant pattern was that the principals often took notes when the researcher spoke. The interactions in the group were very supportive and even when there were obviously dissimilar understandings or opinions no critical questions were raised at this stage of the process. When the principals talked about the demand in the Educational Act (2010:800, chapter 1 p.5) they often ended up in sharing examples of different teaching methods that were claiming to be evidence-based.

After approximately six months of partnership, the activity pattern at the meetings transformed into 'the testing stage'. The change appeared after the group had reached an unforced consensus about what area they should address to improve their pedagogical leadership. The focus should be on enhancing a scientific foundation in their schools by applying a scientific approach in their leading. Therefore, the principals were called on to, based on their own understanding, execute various actions to apply a scientific approach in their pedagogical leadership. This turned out to be difficult and the result often unsuccessful as the dominating activities was trying to implement evidence-based teaching methods in their schools. The

teachers were often unwilling to change their way of teaching, based on the premise that this method is evidence-based.

You think that you can implement a teaching model… If we all do the same thing, the result will be the exactly the same… But that is not the case! (Principal 1)

Unexpectedly, these failures led to a positive improvement in the interactions in partnership. The failures contributed to everyone becoming engaged and interested in how and why the actions had turned out the way they did. Every action was jointly analysed and evaluated in the group, and collective conclusions were also drawn. One conclusion was that a majority of teachers question and challenge teaching methods that are introduced by the school's principal. How is that? The principals' actions dissolved the knowledge hierarchy that was previously dominant in the partnership and from this stage everyone's advice or knowledge were equally respected and highly valued. Instead of being eager to get instruction from the researcher, the principals wanted to discuss and problematise the prevailing scientific discourse.

In the last stage, 'the establishing stage', a critical approach had developed in the group. No one longer was hoping for a best pedagogical leadership model, and the idea of implementing an evidence-based teaching model that should suit all teachers, seemed a very unwise strategy. On the contrary, the principals' actions had revealed the significance of the context and the situation in complex social practices as a school. In this last stage of the action research process the principals reflected on how the collaboration and the partnership itself had resulted in a scientific and systematic approach.

Our meetings have given me the opportunity to get a distance to my daily work. To rise a level … to compare my experience with yours … and to use theoretical frame works … this has been important. (Principal 1)

The principals found that they had become more systematic in planning, acting, analysing and evaluating. Furthermore, they noted that they had established a scientific language and become better at drawing conclusions. They no longer saw research results as the answer to all current dilemmas and problems, instead they saw that a systematic approach was a way to enhance the scientific foundation in their schools as well as in their leadership. Finally, they reflected on how their partnership had contributed to a deeper understanding and sense of confidence in their role as pedagogical leaders.

Enabling and Constraining Practice Architectures

This final level of data analysis involves analysing research questions three and four, focusing on the practice architectures that enabled and constrained the actions concerning the partnership and the principals' leadership actions in their effort to enhance a scientific foundation in their schools. One explanation to what happened during the first six months of the partnership is to be found in the semantic dimension where a technical knowledge interest (Habermas, 1972) initially was dominating the sayings in the group. Among other things, this appeared in the principals describing and exchanging different evidence-based teaching methods that claims to improve students' outcomes and also in the wish that the partnership with a researcher would provide access to a 'scientific pedagogical leadership model'. Technical knowledge interest also includes the perception and tradition that researchers know best. From a social perspective this is a social-political arrangement that affects the relations and interactions in the group, and gives the researcher a

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form of higher hierarchical knowledge role. This explains why the researcher was the one doing most of the talking during the establishing stage, and why the principals were taking notes in their effort to catch 'the right answer'. The fact that the meetings took place at the university, as a material–economic arrangement, reinforced the sense of a scientific truth being present and accessible.

As a critical and emancipatory approach is the ideal in action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), this pattern was a problem. Habermas's idea of communicative rationality (1996) was therefore used as a 'tool' to improve the partnership. Unlike instrumental rationality, communicative rationality aims to achieve mutual understanding and it is a rationality that rests on democratic foundations. As a result of the principals' actions to enhance a scientific foundation in their schools, the idea of 'a best pedagogical leadership model' began to appear unreasonable. Such a model would reduce pedagogical leadership to something uncomplicated, which was not at all consistent with the principals' own experiences. Based on the democratic dialogues in the group, it became clear that the knowledge that pedagogical leaders need is the ability to make wise decisions in morally charged situations, which is something completely different from a technical expertise that can be performed by reading and following instructions. However good and well-formulated speeches are not enough, the credibility of a person depends on how consistent the person's actions are. At the meetings, when the principals presented their actions and their consequences, this brought about a great change in all three intersubjective dimensions. For one thing, the meetings now started to evolve into communicative spaces. As the principals began to describe their actions, the interactions in the group were distinctly improved. When a principal presented his or her actions, the others were active in

raising questions, reflecting and analysing. The actions also resulted in concrete improvements in the principals' schools. One example is that the teachers became more included in the schools' pedagogical leadership since the actions revealed that pedagogical leading is strengthened when it becomes a shared responsibility at the local school.

Through the actions, the group's dominant knowledge interest changed, moving from technical to emancipatory. These changes contributed to more energy and commitment, and the responsibility for the partnership became shared. Expectations from politicians were problematised, as were researchers' different point of view. As a consequence, one conclusion drawn was that politicians at the municipal level, can actually limit pedagogical leadership when they impose assessment as a form of 'window dressing' that erects a nice facade towards the rest of society. These kinds of assessments steal time from the school's core activities and are therefore counter-productive in relation to student learning. Similarly, models and methods that promise success regardless of context and situation were analysed and evaluated.

Activities of this nature are seen as emancipating, as they made it possible for the participating principals to free themselves from structures, assignments and other factors that constrain their pedagogical leadership. The principals felt that they became better equipped to meet unreasonably ambitious expectations and demands, as they no longer regarded research and government texts as instructions. The principals developed their ability to problematise and analyse, and they could distinguish factors that both enabled and constrained their pedagogical leadership.

Discussion

In the same way that a technical interest can attract attention from elsewhere, there is a risk that an excessively one-sided demand for educational research may limit the creativity and inventiveness of teachers, principals and researchers. Instead of striving to do things in the best way, they should be focusing on doing things the right way. Therefore, I claim that the prevailing scientific discourse needs to be analysed and wisely handled within schools. Two main directions can be distinguished (SOU 2018:19), from an Aristotelian classification described as applied science and practical philosophy (see table 1). The first advocates a more technical, or evidence-based, approach, a line that risks marginalising professionals by reducing school leaders and teachers to uncritical users and executors of research. The second direction distinguishes a scientific approach that is emerging within schools, which acknowledges that principals and teachers are the ones best suited to determine important issues in a complex social practice. This approach is in line with both the empowering aim of critical action research and the assumption that principals' and teachers' participation is necessary for sustainable school improvement efforts. By contrast, politicians tend to prefer technical action research on the grounds that this approach is often perceived as an effective method for improving schools (Levinsson, 2013). However, research based on a technical approach threatens to be 'the new silver bullet of school reform' (Anderson & Herr, 1999, p. 14), that is, a quick and simple solution to schools' often complex and complicated dilemmas.

A reading of Habermas (1996) helps us to theoretically understand the development of national school system reforms whereby efficiency and high outcomes have been placed in the

foreground. Habermas's analytical model divides our day-to-day lives into two spheres: lifeworld and systemworld. The lifeworld is where we have our social relations and interactions with family and society at large. It is based on a tactile fund of shared meanings and understandings that enable us to perform actions that we know others will comprehend. Thus, the day-to-day actions that we perform in the lifeworld are generally communicative in nature. By contrast, the systemworld consists of strategic actions and anonymous relations, essentially driven by money and power. According to Habermas, the systemworld, which is based on and has emerged from the lifeworld, is now threatening to colonise the lifeworld, as the lifeworld is increasingly permeated by instrumental rationality. Instrumental rationality is rationality that aims to find the most effective means to achieve predetermined goals. School improvement and school leadership are complex and elusive phenomena, but contradictory the dominant part of the current research in these fields has a clear technical interest (Gunter & Ribbins, 2003). This technical interest can to some extent be explained by politicians' great commitment to this type of research. But just as with most models and theories, difficulties arise when they are implemented at the local school level. Perhaps the explanation for this is that a technical knowledge interest is not enough to understand complex social phenomena such as pedagogical leadership and how to enhance a scientific foundation in schools. Another problem with this kind of development is that it often lacks consideration of basic components such as participation, engagement, shared responsibilities, non-hierarchical relations and the emancipatory aim of empowering individuals.

The participating principals were concerned about the way schools are changing in Sweden. Politicians give instructions stating

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that teachers should apply teaching methods that promise better student outcomes, but the requirement for high outcomes rests heavily on the school principal. Often, the methods advocated are trendy and popular. Such directives rarely emanate from the needs of the local school but are based on a tradition that there are optimal teaching methods and models that benefit everyone. This is problematic, as the ideas of universal validity and transferability have proven to have poor success within schools (Flygare et al., 2011; Hirsh & Lindberg, 2015; Forssten Seiser, 2017; 2019). Moreover, there is a realisation that teaching and learning should not be driven by measures of economic efficiency. Such approaches, which are designed to 'make things happen' rather than 'let things happen' (Mahon et al., 2017), can have significant consequences in terms of what enables and constrains school improvement.

Principals and teachers have to act in response to political assignments, and there are certainly problems in school arrangements that can be traced back to such demands. But some of the problems also come from the professionals themselves. If principals and teachers do not see any possibility to influence the developments that worry them, there is a risk that they may implicitly hand over responsibility for the school's development to the decisions of others. Alternatively, teachers and principals may get stuck between political demands for more efficiency and the idea of a school based on democratic values.

The picture that is visualised in this text is that different actors understand the demand for research and proven experience in schools in various ways. It is a development that provokes teachers, principals and researchers to reflect on and raise critical questions collectively and continuously. Teachers and principals are those

engaging in students' day-to-day life in schools, so their participation in building knowledge about life in schools is necessary. Teachers and principals have a great responsibility to ensure that work in schools is based not only on research but also on ethical and moral perspectives, or in other words to take actions for 'praxis' (see Table 1). Emancipatory knowledge emphasises independence and the ability to stand up for opinions that are well thought-out. Where technical interest fails, a critical and emancipatory perspective can be empowering, contributing to the avoidance of an uncritical adoption of methods that promise high outcomes. Perhaps the best response to the demand of research is to be found in the variety and complexity of the school, as principals and teachers strive to conquer inequalities and work with solutions suited to the context and situation.

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A Thematic Literature Review about Academic Leadership Development: Exploring and Comparing Latin American with Non-Latin American Leadership Literature

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Abstract	Article Info
This report is part of the International Study of Leadership Development in Higher Education project (ISLDHE) project which is examining leadership development for university leaders. This paper presents an update to our original exploration of the literature about university contexts and leadership development, but also compares the themes as they relate to Latin American countries and those emerging from other countries. We identified the skills that university leaders should have to appropriately manage the challenges of contemporary universities. We also report on themes pertaining to currently available leadership development programs. The review showed a high coincidence in the skills required for leaders in Latin American contexts to those in non-Latin American universities. We noted that the lack of clarity in the characteristics and formats of optimal leadership development programs were pervasive throughout both	

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western and Latin American literature; however, there was a distinct lack of research on leadership and leadership development emerging from Latin America. One significant difference in Latin American leadership literature was the emphasis on senior leadership levels, whereas in non-Latin American countries, leadership and power were more distributed to decanal and head of department levels as well as senior leadership levels.

Introduction

This paper emerges from the *International Study of Leadership Development in Higher Education* project (ISLDHE) which is focused on exploring the availability and effectiveness of academic leadership development (LD) with the intent to inform the design of optimal programming for heads of departments, deans, and leaders at the senior levels of universities. The ISLDHE research questions encompass: 1) How effective are current programs? 2) How can we optimally support our leaders' development to ensure increased leader-efficacy, success, and job fulfilment within dynamic university contexts, with a view to ensuring a nexus between theory and practice? 3) How should contemporary university leadership be conceptualized and theorized? and 4) How can these pragmatic and theoretical insights influence optimal LD programming?

In the early stages of this project the Canadian team undertook a literature review that explored the established knowledge base about the themes of university leadership in terms of their roles and

responsibilities, leadership contexts, skills and capacity required by leaders, and suggested or actual LD programs (Scott et al., 2016b) in the English language literature. We did not originally set out to explore these themes in relation to particular countries, rather we examined all countries and research where these themes were present, so none were excluded. At that time, we found studies from: Australia, New Zealand, U.K., and the U.S. Our original literature review examined the knowledge base up to and including studies published in 2015. This current review encompassed the more recent literature from 2016 onward. Interestingly, we found there was more research from a broader range of contexts than previously, which was exciting to see that interest and research was growing in the area of leadership and LD in universities.

As the ISLDHE team expanded with new collaborators joining the project from different countries, we encouraged new members to undertake a literature review on leadership and LD trends and issues specific to their own national contexts. This was largely in acknowledgement of potential cultural differences in governance and institutional expectations for leaders, and to scope leadership development programs and approaches that were occurring in their institutions and countries and/or what LD was being suggested and why. Additionally, as many of our collaborators have varied discipline backgrounds (other than education and leadership), their knowledge of leadership and LD tends to be largely experiential. Consequently, undertaking a literature review provides a useful introduction to the leadership field in general, serves as a valuable foundation for contextualizing their project findings, and enable interesting insights with other national settings within the project.

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This paper resulted from a year-long "visiting scholar" collaboration between the Canadian co-chairs of the project and a new member from Chile. This collaboration provided opportunities to explore university leadership in Chile, and through her cross-national networks, other Latin American countries. As the co-chairs are Anglophones, this was a novel opportunity to explore the Spanish-based leadership literature and gain new insights into university leadership and governance, and LD in Latin American countries. Kri found leadership studies in the following Spanish-speaking countries: Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Cuba, Latin America (studies which drew upon all 20 countries), Mexico, and Venezuela. Through our collaborative literature search we found studies not only from: Australia, New Zealand, U.K., and the U.S., but now research was emerging from Europe, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Sweden. This provided opportunities to compare and contrast the English language literature with the Spanish Latin American literature. We also examined the types (methodological) and scope of the research studies that were emerging on LD post our original foray into the literature as this had not been within our original review.

We found there had been a flurry of research in the late 1990s which focused on the complexities of leadership. Most of these studies emerged from the U.S. and U.K. contexts (Gmelch, 2015; Maghroori & Powers, 2004; Montez & Wolverton, 2000; Pounder, 2001; Wolverton & Gonzales, 2000; Wolverton et al., 1998), but little research was emerging from the Canadian context (Acker, 2014; Eastman, 2006). This was an important point given that Canada has a very different higher education (HE) system due to it provincial rather than federal jurisdictional governance. There was a lull in research in the late 2000s, but interest ignited later in 2010 through

2020 with research focused on leaders' skills and responsibilities and in LD within this ever-changing HE landscape (Dopson et al., 2019; Kenner & Pressler, 2011; Martin, 2015; Isaac et al., 2009; Scholkmann, 2011; Wilkes et al., 2015) particularly pertaining to the reduction in funding to universities (Davies & Thomas, 2009; Hodson, 2010). Much of the research identified the failure of leaders to adequately respond to the myriad of challenges facing them within this new ambit (Rosser et al., 2003; Werner, 2009) with many advocating LD (Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, 2008; DeZure et al., 2014; Nies & Wolverton, 2000; Tang et al., 2013). Overall, the findings of our initial literature review revealed five main themes: leadership is important; the influence of contexts, change, and the challenges these represent to leaders; the importance of leadership theory to guide practice; and finally, LD is crucial to effective practice.

First, *leadership is important*. Formal leaders hold power over policy and procedures, workload allocation (Maclean, 2016), reward and recognition processes (Ramsden, 1998), vision and mission, motivation and wellbeing (Watts & Robertson, 2011), and set the tone of a faculty. Indeed, they are pivotal to the faculty's teaching and research outcomes (Ramsden & Martin, 1996), financial sustainability (Shahmandi et al., 2011; Wolverton & Poch, 2000), culture (Vatanartiran, 2013), and organizational reputation (DeFleur et al., 2010; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Therefore, effective leadership is crucial to institutional viability.

Second, *contexts, change, and the challenges these represent for leaders*. Leading the academy has always been challenging, but there have been many international influences that have altered university leaders' responsibilities (Davies & Thomas, 2010; Scott et al., 2016a;

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Wolverton et al., 2001). Change influences include: globalization; global economic trends, and the rise of neoliberalism–the economic principle of privatization rather than services as a public good (Apple, 2006, 2013; Osei-Kofi, 2012); technology, the rise of the knowledge economy (Marginson, 2009); migration of peoples; and national/international competition (Marginson & van Der Wende, 2007a; Marginson & van der Wende, 2007b; Rajagopal, 2009; Toakley, 2004); and others. These changes meant less funding for universities (Doyle & Delaney, 2009; Eastman, 2006; Marginson, 2000, 2003, 2006), greater accountability for outcomes (Almayali & Ahmad, 2012; Clark, 2009; Pounder, 2001; Rosser et al., 2003), increases in fee-for-service programs, international student markets (Webber & Scott, 2008), and university competition (Cudmore, 2005; Marginson, 2009) to name a few. Consequently, leaders must rise to these challenges, become change agents (Northouse, 2019; Kouzes & Posner, 2012), be enterprising and entrepreneurial (Alstete, 2014), all while supporting their staff to make the adjustment to this changed academia.

Third, *leaders' influence on academic culture and outcomes.* Universities are unique workplaces in that their outputs are in human capital and knowledge production (Marginson, 2009). Their organizational cultures are shaped by academic reward systems (Horn, 1999; Wyman, 1973), philosophies (Kligyte & Barrie, 2014), collegial governance processes (Stensaker & Vabø, 2013), academic empowerment (DeBoy, 2015; Opstrup & Pihl-Thingvad, 2016), job security (Mysyk, 2001), and also by leaders' approaches (Bratianu & Pinzaru, 2015). The touchstones of academic identities are supreme research prowess (Smyth, 2017), teaching excellence (Prosser & Barrie, 2000; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Trigwell & Prosser,1991), academic freedom (Messier, 2017), and collegial/shared governance (Pennock et al., 2016). Destructive and toxic leadership approaches

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damage academic cultures and deleteriously impact productivity (Thoroughgood, 2018; Ramírez & Hyslop-Margison, 2015; Webster, 2016). Hence, leaders must meet accountability expectations for quantity and quality outcomes, while simultaneously creating constructive workplaces.

Fourth, *the importance of leadership theory to guide practice*. Even though the leadership literature abounds with theories that capture valuable and important dimensions of leadership, few LD studies used leadership theories other than in passing. Transformational leadership theory (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, 2019) and authentic leadership theory (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) were the most frequent theories applied to university leadership, but these were rarely mentioned in LD programs. This was likely due to these theories' focus on relationship- and trust-building as an antidote to destructive or toxic leadership (Smyth, 2017; Thoroughgood, 2018; Webster, 2016). Curiously, few advocated for including leadership theory into LD programming (Dopson et al., 2019). Likewise, there was no mention of developing an evidence-based leadership theory specific to HE, thus our project's aim to potentially inform theory was filling a gap in the literature.

Fifth, *leadership development is crucial to effective practice*. Most authors advocated for LD to promote particular knowledge, skills, or attitudinal development, and there were calls for the establishment of more extensive, systematic, and more effective LD (Nica, 2013; Ortrun & Louw, 2014). Even so, few outlined optimal program content, processes, and/or delivery (Morris & Laipple, 2015; Shahmandi et al., 2011; Shahmandi et al., 2012). The most prevalent LD was mentoring or executive coaching, but, although valuable, they were reported as expensive, time-consuming, and difficult to

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establish and sustain (Baartman, 2011; Commodore et al., 2016;
DeZure et al., 2014; Green & Ridenour, 2004; Kleihauer et al., 2012;
Nies & Wolverton, 2000). Consequently, LD was confirmed as an
important research topic (Erkutlu et al., 2011). Specifically, more
research was needed to identify what knowledge, skills, attitudes,
and delivery formats, were needed for effective leadership, and
efficacious and authentic leader development.

From this earlier review, our parameters for this "update"
review included universities new functions (the context), leadership
skills and capacities (to flow into LD content programming), and
studies about LD (for delivery/formats information) (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Literature Analysis Framework

Framework for the identification of leadership development needs at the universities	
1. New function and leadership roles	1.1. Universities
	1.2. Leaders
2. Leadership skills	2.1. Theoretical
	2.2. Case studies (pragmatic-leaders' insights)
3. Leadership development	3.1. Identification of the necessity for programs
	3.2. Program descriptions or evaluation

1. *Universities' new functions*: This explored the contextual changes
    specific to both senior leadership and middle level leaders, which
    were categorized as: (1.1) Universities – institutional concerns
    and context; and (1.2) Leaders' concerns.

2. *Leadership skills and capacities* essential for successful leadership.
    These were defined theoretically, based on the literature, a
    review of leadership theories, or from pragmatic cases drawn

upon leaders' experiences. Therefore, the categories were identified as: (2.1) Theoretical and (2.2) Case studies.

3. *Leadership development* referred to the explicit mention of LD programs specific to university academic leaders. Two categories were identified: (3.1) Leaders' needs, and (3.2) Program descriptions and/or evaluations of programs. Thus, 3.1 related to proposed program content whereas 3.2 related to actual programming.

New Functions and Leadership Roles Universities

Our updated literature review affirmed previous findings that "universities globally are facing novel challenges, as they become larger, more complex and multi-functional organisations" (Dopson et al., 2019, p. 219). For example, neoliberalism, globalization, and the marketization of HE, have radically impacted the functioning of universities throughout the world and also influenced leadership roles (Apple, 2000, 2006, 2017; Marginson, 2003, 2006; Smyth, 2017). Indeed, we identified that these contextual factors are now more widespread, impactful, and are revisioning academic work and leadership – not for the better. For example, Smyth (2017) identified "zombie leadership" leads to "pathological organizational dysfunction" (p. 5). He explained this as leaders and administrators taking an unquestioning stance in their acceptance of the neoliberal agenda. He indicated this dysfunction has led to "enormous suffering and degradation" (p. 6) for academics and negative impacts on academic careers, workload, and mental health and wellbeing.

Of course, the realities of each country are different and these influences have occurred with varied emphases and timeframes. Even so, it was possible to identify important similarities and differences in the HE sectors across different countries. For example,

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neoliberal principles have a stranglehold in western nations (e.g., U.K., U.S.A., Australia), but in recent times, neoliberalism has seen some reversals in Chile with community protests about equal access to HE, the burden of student fees, and so on (Rodriguez-Videla, 2018). So, while universities around the world seemed to face the similar contextual challenges, the stages of intervention, strategies, and solutions were different in various national contexts (Berbegal-Mirabent et al., 2015; Marginson, 2002).

Over the past two decades, neoliberalism has led to decreases in public funding (Apple, 2017), and greater competition in job markets leading to increased demand for university qualifications for social mobility (Universities UK, 2016). Less government funding has forced universities to economize and to seek new revenue sources (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Hempsall, 2014). For example, in Australian, U.K., and U.S., international students have become a lucrative new market (Marginson, 2002), whereas in Latin America, industry partnerships have been sought to create entrepreneurial opportunities (Berbegal-Mirabent et al., 2015). In Latin American countries (e.g., Chile), increases in local students was in response to government policies promoting equity and social mobility (Bradley et al., 2017). However, when students present with varied abilities and preparation this increased teaching complexities.

For two decades, international students have been an essential source of funding for many western nations (Marginson, 2002, 2009). However, overreliance on this revenue source has created a pivotal sustainability risk factor. This was demonstrated recently in Australia and the U.K. where HE sectors have experienced a "catastrophe" with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overseas students have been unable to cross borders into Australia and the U.K., which

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has caused a collapse in usual university operations (Beard, 2020; Packham, 2020; Robinson, 2019). It is yet to be seen if the impact of COVID-19 will result in a re-assessment of government funding models for HE sectors around the world, or will this cause a contraction in many HE sectors?

A worldwide trend has been for greater accountability and transparency in the use of resources (Carballo, 2019; Floyd & Preston, 2018; Hodson, 2010; Preston & Floyd, 2016). Quality assurance (QA) systems with emphases on ranking, metrics, and performance measurement generate new operational units to monitor, report, and manage these processes. These QA systems are crucial for proving quality, marketing, and for ongoing funding, but add additional complexities for leaders (Herbon & Vivas, 2015). Another powerful form of accreditation has emerged from industry demands, wherein industries have influenced university curricula to assure graduate employability (de Paor, 2016; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Ruben et al., 2018).

Globalization and the integration of technologies, for operations, teaching, and engaging partner organizations, were newer challenges for universities particularly in Latin America (Cifuentes & Vanderlinde, 2015; Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Ruben et al., 2018). The extent of technological integration in Latin American countries was different to western nations due its incipiency in these contexts.

Internationalization was a newer theme in Latin America, where its purpose was to meet the expectations of quality assurance/rankings metrics (Huerta-Riveros & Pedraja-Rejas, 2019; Ortega & Freites, 2017; Sanchez, 2016). However, in Australia and other western contexts, some argued this was simply applying an

educational "quality" rationale to a pragmatic funding imperative (Marginson, 2002, 2006). So, how do these contextual changes to university functions influence leaders' responsibilities?

Leaders' Responsibilities

Previously, leaders' roles and responsibilities related to coordinating teaching and research activities within the university (Wolverton et al., 2001). Leaders' responsibilities are now more complex, diverse, and more externally-oriented (Davies & Thomas, 2009, 2010). For example, contemporary leaders have major decision-making responsibilities (Morris & Laipple, 2015) and these have far-reaching impacts. For example, in Canada, leaders must manage large casualized (and fragmented) academic workforces (Jones, 2013). Their external focus is frequently linked to funding, where leaders must be more entrepreneurial and network with external stakeholders – universities, communities, industries, and business sectors (Bradley et al., 2017; Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Preston & Floyd, 2016). This was similar to the Latin American context with its emphasis on public engagement and outreach; however, in Latin America this is the purview of senior leaders, not deans (Lopez, 2013; Vega et al., 2015).

Another challenge linked to neoliberalism is the need to raise faculty's performances in national/international rankings, and to establish evaluation mechanisms to track ranking and performance metrics (Lamm et al., 2018).

With these new complexities, "heroic" leadership styles were reported as inappropriate; rather, shared or distributed leadership (Wang & Sedivy-Benton, 2016), transformational (Kouzes & Posner, 2019), and authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) were identified as more viable for contemporary universities. These were

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advised due to their enhanced relational and consultative approaches. Jones et al. (2017) indicated distributed leadership was useful due to the scope of contemporary leadership roles and the complexities. Indeed, in the Latin American case, there is a distinct need for shared leadership (Carballo, 2019; Cardiel, 1999; Vega et al., 2015), particularly given the supreme power of the superior authorities (i.e., the rector).

Leadership Skills

In many universities in the world, leaders are generally selected based upon research prowess, not necessarily for their management and leadership skills (Wang & Sedivy-Benton, 2016; Wolverton & Gonzales, 2000; Wolverton & Poch, 2000). This criterion (i.e., scholarship) can create a disconnect in preparation and skill development for effective leadership (Tang et al., 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2013; Wolverton et al., 2007).

In exploring requisite leadership skills, we found two main approaches: 1) theoretical discussions of useful skills, and 2) pragmatic accounts where leader-participants provided insights from the field. Curiously, we found most Latin American literature had a theoretical orientation with only small-scale case studies, whereas western literature tended towards empirical studies (including qualitative and/or quantitative) with larger participant numbers.

Theoretical Insights

Although there are many theoretical studies about leadership skills and styles, there were few directly related to HE contexts. Wang and Sedivy-Benton (2016) explored the differences in HE contexts, cultures, and how leaders are appointed from the academic ranks to explain why many leadership theories do not apply. Thus, they

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posited requisite skills to be *leading people, managing operations*, and *developing positive cultures*.

Bradley et al. (2017) undertook a theoretical analysis of Australian middle level leaders and identified the complexities related to *navigating* academic and non-academic staff interests, and *mediating* the competing demands of senior leaders (superordinates) and academics (subordinates). Therefore, *consultation* was important as top-down approaches were not always effective. They also noted difficulties in balancing administration and academic activities (*setting and balancing priorities*).

In the Latin America literature, Ortega and Freites (2017) defined university management, and detailed the complexity of university functions. They noted the need for *transformational leadership*, given the global and local realities facing Latin American universities. Their theoretical construct for university management included: teaching, research, community and cultural service (*networking and communication*), and administration (*managing people and processes*). Falcón (2016) presented a *management* model for Venezuelan universities, while Sanchez (2016) posited the importance of *strategic planning and management*.

With a greater focus on leadership (and not administration) Pedraja-Rejas et al. (2018) established the relationships between leadership style, academic culture, and the quality of the institution and discussed skills such as *communication, interpersonal capacities*, and *relationship building*. Likewise, Carballo (2019) reflected on why shared leadership (*collegiality and consultation*) was better than individualized leadership in HE. Carballo reported that the vast majority of LD programs focused on personal skills, but recommended a shift towards shared leadership. Even so, these

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authors did not provide specifics about proposed LD programs or how shared leadership could be promoted.

Case Studies

Among the pragmatic studies, there was considerable variation in participants (e.g., deans, vice chancellors, etc.), whereas in the Latin American cases they referred more to senior leaders (e.g., rectors) or did not differentiate between leadership levels.

Franken et al. (2015) discussed middle level leadership in Australian universities, while Hempsall's (2014) study included institutions in Australia, U.K., and the U.S. These studies showed the need for distributed and transformational leadership, and emphasized the importance of *relationship-building skills* and the capacity to *build trust*. Vilkinas and Ladyshewsky's (2014) Australian study about academic directors (middle level leaders) identified: *knowledge and experience* of the program and discipline, *marketing* skills, *interpersonal and communication* skills, and the *ability to influence others* (*persuasiveness*) as important to leadership performance.

Morris and Laipple's (2015) American study established that leaders (e.g., academic deans, directors, associate deans, and department chairs) who had taken courses in business administration, human resources, and leadership, felt more prepared than those who had not. The skills they identified as important were: the ability to *set clear expectations*, *consistency*, and *proactivity*, meeting commitments (*reliability*), and having a focus on critical activities (*prioritization*). Moreover, Cleverley-Thompson (2016) examined the self-reported entrepreneurial orientations of American academic deans, and highlighted *team-building* and *proactivity* as very important. Similarly, in Sweden, Söderhjelm et al. (2018) iterated the

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importance of *team-building* at the departmental level and described a group training intervention as academic leadership.

In seeking to clarify key leadership skills, we also found research from non-western contexts such as India, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia (Alghamdi et al., 2016; Choudhary & Paharia, 2018; Jooste & Frantz, 2017; Ngo et al., 2014). In the Saudi context, Alghamdi et al.'s (2016) study established key skills as: *personal and interpersonal* capabilities, *self-organization*, *flexibility* and *responsiveness*, *strategy*, *diagnosis,* and *empathy*. In India and South Africa, the importance of *teamwork*, *decision-making*, *adaptability to change*, *visioning*, *communication*, and *contextual understanding* were highlighted (Jooste & Frantz, 2017; Ngo et al., 2014). Ngo et al. (2014) emphasized value-based leadership approaches, such as *consultation*, *consensual goal-setting*, *team leadership*, and *trust-building*, as important for Indonesian deans.

In the Latin American literature, leadership skills were largely those of the rectors. Ganga et al.'s (2018) study of Ibero–American universities (a survey of 800 leaders (1) rectors, vice-chancellors, provosts, and (2) career or program managers) identified the importance of effective leadership in achievement of institutional objectives. They highlighted the importance of *team-building*, *cognitive flexibility* and *openness* to the team's suggestions, navigating competing interests (*fairness*), and being *trustworthy*. Likewise, Fabela-Cárdenas and Garcia-Treviño's (2014) Mexican study presented a model of influential factors for educational quality. They highlighted cognitive capacities such as *analysis*, *problem-solving,* and *fiscal entrepreneurship*, as well as relational abilities such as *capacity building* of others and *networking* with industry partners. Similar to Ganga et al., (2018), Fabela-Cárdenas et al. (2014) found that the

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power and influence of rectors was important, but these were not considered the most relevant. Indeed, faculty/school management, curriculum design, infrastructure, and the teaching and learning strategic plan were predominant for success. On the other hand, Torres and Torres' (2015) Mexican study identified that mechanistic (or bureaucratic) management (over controlling management) was detrimental to teacher development and highlighted the importance of *shared leadership* and *collaboration*.

Aligned with Ganga et al.'s (2018) findings, Contreras et al. (2018) indicated that university senior leaders' skills were fundamental to effective management, particularly given current complexities. They analyzed the pre- and post-graduate training of directors of Chilean universities and found their backgrounds were in the social sciences, technology, or engineering not in leadership or management which highlighted their lack of preparation for leadership. Raschio et al.'s (2019) analysis of two Argentinian rectors' leadership experiences emphasized the importance of: *strategic planning, networking, teamworking*, and *understanding the institutional culture*. They asserted that leaders needed adequate training, ideally prior to assuming leadership positions. Cifuentes and Vanderlinde's (2015) Columbian study reiterated the importance of *strategic planning* particularly related to leading technological innovations. de la Garza et al.'s (2017) and Gonzalez-Rodriguez's (2018) Mexican studies (quantitative and qualitative, respectively) focused on the *personal and interpersonal skills* of leaders and de la Garza et al. (2017) linked these to quality leadership. They emphasized the importance of *making difficult decisions*, engaging in *confident risk-taking*, and taking *responsibility for their decisions*. They also noted the importance of using *interpersonal skills* to *mediate competing stakeholder perspectives*; and other valuable skills were *self-organization, communication skills*,

and the *ability to build trust*. Gonzalez-Rodriguez's (2018) Jalisco and Mexico City study about rector-level leadership, established a typology of leaders citing the following skills as pivotal: *decision-making*, *management* capacity, *communication* skills, *visioning*, and *attachment to institutional values*. Table 2 displays a synthesis of the main skills found in this literature review.

Table 2.

Synthesis of the Main Leadership Skills and Capacities noted in the Literature Review

Comparing Latin American & Non-Latin: Expected Capacities of University Leaders	
Latin American literature	**Non-Latin American literature**
Cognitive capacities	**Cognitive capacities**
Strategic planning and management (5)	Strategic planning and management (3)
Make decisions (4)	Make decisions and focus on critical activities (1)
Networking (3)	Diagnosis of needs and direction (1)
	Ability to set clear expectations (1)
Understands the culture of the institution (3)	
Understand the global and local context (2)	Understand the context (2)
Lead the introduction of technologies (2)	
Taking responsibility for their decisions (1)	
Conflict management (1)	Difficult decisions and conflict management (1)
Risk management (1)	
Visioning (1)	Visioning (1)
	Marketing (1)
	Responsiveness (1)

Affective-related skills	Affective-related skills
Self-organization (3)	Self-organization (5)
Team-working (2)	Team-building and team-working (2)
Communication skills (2)	Communication skills (2)
Understands and meditates competing stakeholder perspectives (2)	Manages the tensions of the differing demands and expectations (1)
	Navigating academic and non-academic staff interests (1)
Ability to build trust (1)	Relationship-building and capacity to build trust (1)
Working constructively (1)	
	Proactivity (3)
	Interpersonal skills (2)
	Flexibility and adaptability to change (1)
	Consistency and meets commitments (1)
	Empathy (1)
	Ability to influence peers (1)
	Balance in administration and academic activities (1)
Confidence in risk-taking (1)	

Note: These skills and capacities have been presented in order of frequency and/or were prioritized according to this updated review. We have presented the Latin American skills/capacities as they align with the original skills/capacities. Where skills/capacities are presented alone, this indicates these were not articulated in the other data set.

Affective-related skills *– this denotes skills or capacities which influence emotions and organizational culture.*

Cognitive capacities *– these indicate skills or capacities which require cognition, understanding, critical thinking, and/or identifying relationships and complexities.*

Latin American Countries *– this encompassed leadership literature from Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Cuba, Latin America (studies which drew upon all 20 countries), Mexico, Venezuela.*

Non-Latin American Countries *– Australia, Europe, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, U.S., South Africa, Sweden (and other countries which are not considered part of the West, and are not part of Latin America – i.e., India, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia).*

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Overall, across both the western and Latin American literature, the cognitive-related (*thinking*/*mental*) skills that were most frequently cited included strategic planning and management processes; and surprisingly, the capacity to make decisions and to problem solve. Decision-making was also linked to making difficult decisions especially during a crisis. Less surprising was the need for leaders to understand the context in which they operated which was also frequently linked to making good decisions. In the Latin American context, understanding the culture of the institution and the capacity to lead the introduction of technology were also important cognitive capacities. In terms of affective-related skills (*emotions*), the leaders' capacity to organize themselves was the most frequently cited skill. Team-working, team-building, communication, and interpersonal skills were also deemed important and highly inter-related.

It was curious that there was so much alignment between the skills and capacities cited in the Latin American literature to that of other countries, given differences in cultures and context it may have been expected to see a shift in requisite skills and capacities. The main differences that appeared in the Latin American literature revolved around: networking (3), understanding the culture of the institution (3), leading the introduction of technologies (2), taking responsibility for their decisions (1), and confidence in risk-taking (1). These will be interesting dimensions to explore in the next stage of our project in Chile (and with selected Latin American partners) to identify if there are other cultural factors that are influencing the need for these skills and capacities. When examining the more westernized contexts, there appeared to be greater emphasis on the affective-related skills such as: interpersonal skills (2), flexibility and adaptability to change (1), consistency and meeting commitments (1), empathy (1), and ability to influence peers (1). Many of these, influence the leaders' capacity to

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build trust and are directly linked to the literature on culture and destructive forms of leadership. This raises the question of whether negative leadership is more prevalent in westernized contexts? Again, another interesting dimension to explore in subsequent phases of our study.

Leadership Development

Arguably, given the emphasis of this literature review to promote our understandings of leadership development (LD) content and delivery, this section is probably the most pertinent to our study. We found LD was prevalent in universities, but frequently for undergraduate students, non-academic managers, or in business. There were few studies related to academic LD, but happily this topic appears to be drawing more interest (Alghamdi, 2016; Commodore et al., 2016; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Lamm et al., 2018; Mattar et al., 2018; Morris & Laipple, 2015; Preston & Floyd, 2016; Ruben et al., 2018; Söderhjelm et al., 2018). This reinforced our earlier review (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Baartman, 2011; DeZure et al., 2014; Hempsall, 2014; Isaac et al., 2009; Nica, 2013; Ortrun & Louw, 2014) that LD appears to be recommended to: 1) address the complexity of university contexts, and the new functions of universities as a result of neoliberalism impacts, globalization, and the massification of university education; 2) provide support for leaders who require new knowledge, skills, and attitudes for their leadership roles; and 3) to overcome toxic or destructive leadership approaches which damage organizational cultures and employee's productivity. Reinforcing our previous findings, this updated review revealed a lack of detail about program design, content, or delivery. Indeed, there were only a couple of papers which presented program evaluations which offered specific details of programs (Alghamdi, 2016; Lamm et al., 2018).

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Identification of the Necessity for LD Programs

The literature affirmed that LD was necessary for effective and relational leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; DeZure et al., 2014; Dopson et al., 2019; Erkutlu et al., 2011; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Kenner & Pressler, 2011). Indeed, Dopson and her colleagues (2019) identified that more research is needed into LD, into designing systematic and sustained LD, for including a stronger theoretical basis into programming, and to evaluate LD programs.

An important issue in leadership within HE is that leaders are frequently appointed from within the academy. However, in some in private institutions, the leaders are administrators appointed by the owners (Hamlin & Patel, 2017). In the latter case, being a leader in HE was more likely to be a leadership career pathway (as opposed to an academic or researcher pathway) for which there are formal LD programs (Lamm et al., 2018). Consequently, it is to be expected that leaders who have received academic preparation (to become a scholar or university teacher) may not have the knowledge and skills for leadership unlike those whose career pathway is leadership and management. Thus, for those who are initially scholars selected for leadership there is a greater need for LD, as this role is very different to that of scholar or teacher.

In the U.K., Preston and Floyd (2016, Floyd & Preston, 2018) took a retrospective perspective and explored what LD associate deans had experienced. Over half (60%) of respondents reported having little or no training, while 24% indicated that their LD experiences had been "sporadic and unsatisfactory" (p. 276); hence, programs needed to be more relevant to leaders' roles and their participants wanted "informal peer group learning" (p. 276). Similarly, Hamlin and Patel's (2017) comparative French–English

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university leadership study, examined positive and negative leadership behaviors and concluded LD programs were important to overcome negative leadership. They did note though that existing programs (primarily in business schools) were inadequate and informal programs were also needed. Stensaker and Vab (2013) recommended LD programs be matched with universities' strategic plans to ensure that leaders' preparation and resourcing of programs were aligned to ensure institutional outcomes could be met. Most articles recommended a range of skills for optimal leadership, many of which were identified in the skills section of this paper. Additionally, Franken et al. (2015), Lamm et al. (2018), Mattar et al. (2018), and Morris and Laipple (2015) all advocated for contextualized and individualized LD. Mattar et al. (2018) emphasized coaching as an optimal approach because coaches encouraged leaders to engage in meaningful problem-solving and to assist in leader-identity development through guided self-reflection.

We found only two papers on LD from the Latin American context (Aristimuño & Guaita, 2011; Moreno & De Armas, 2018). These studies reported on essential leadership characteristics and recommended LD. However, again these did not elucidate content or delivery of programs.

Program Designs

From this updated review and our earlier one, authors recommended both formal and informal programming options to allow greatest flexibility for leaders. In a study conducted in across Australia, U.K., and U.S., Hempsall (2014) showed that there was considerable variability in LD programs and indicated the need for greater consistency and integration within each institution. Bradley et al. (2017) identified two types of Australian LD programs: formal

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training and experiential learning. The formal programs covered: mentoring, networking, understanding the macro context, leadership skills, and active and reflective leadership. Experiential learning consisted of on-the-job learning and learning from critical incidents, although we would argue that mentoring and networking are also experiential. Preston and Floyd's (2016; Floyd & Preston, 2018) U.K. study found that the training associate deans received was insufficient and largely focused on managerial tasks rather than on leading such as: budgetary training, university systems and procedures, chairing meetings, human resource and staff management, strategy, and time management.

Morris and Laipple's (2015) large-scale, quantitative study (i.e., 1,515 U.S.A. university administrators) found that leaders who had taken courses in business administration felt more prepared for their administrative role. However, the main LD strategies were: seeking advice from senior colleagues, professional reading about administration and leadership, mandated seminars/workshops, external seminars, and/or consultation services.

The U.S. literature was quite varied given the variance in university types and state differences. Jaffe (2017) analyzed two LD programs for aspiring leaders in two U.S. universities. The content included: organizational policies, structures, and processes; resource allocation and budgeting; critical issues in HE; project development; and use of technologies. Similarly, Ruben et al. (2018), and Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) discussed their two-year LD program at Rutgers University which focused on: "1) leadership, organizational, and communication theory and practice; 2) professional and leadership development concepts and best practices; and 3) an inventory of contemporary challenges and opportunities in the U.S. Higher

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education in general, and Rutgers University in particular" (Ruben et al., 2018, p. 243). Another U.S. LD program was LEAD21 which appeared to be a significant national program. This was a nine-month program focused on: leading change, collaboration, conflict management, and effective communication. Lamm et al. (2018) conducted a 'three-generation of participants' (i.e., 255 participants) evaluation of the LEAD21 program to explore its effectiveness in developing leaders' change leadership. They reported success in increasing leaders' change agency, however, their evaluation methodology and how the program influenced change agency was not elucidated. In Saudi Arabia, Alghamdi et al. (2016) reported on the Academic Leadership Center which provides LD to university leaders. They found that leaders preferred learning and teaching conferences, HE leadership seminars, and "on-the-job" learning. Seale and Cross (2016) noted many South African universities do not have strategic approaches to LD and presented a LD framework to address this deficit. Their framework considered the new functions of university deans, especially contextual factors, leadership capacity, and "leadership capital" (i.e., leaders' prior preparation).

Despite this review, it was not possible to definitively establish which were the most appropriate programs and content for leadership preparation. While we found similarities in requisite skills, the best way to achieve the development of these remained undetermined. There was also a lack of detail about what form of LD delivery was optimal. There was also no information about whether cultural context influenced LD processes or ideal delivery. In the Latin American literature, we did not find any articles related to LD programs or evaluations. Therefore, LD remains unchartered, but important, territory within the Latin American context.

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Discussion of Future Research Dimensions

In the literature reviewed both previously and in this updated review, we observed that many universities have been similarly influenced by change throughout the world. For example, the need for entrepreneurship to establish new sources of funding due to governments' reduction in support; the rise of greater accountability and new quality assurance systems; the increase of students entering universities, many of whom have complex learning needs; the integration of technologies; globalization and internationalization; and the need for greater alignment with industry's expectations for graduate capacities; are new challenges that universities and their leaders must face (refer to Appendix A for a summary). An important point for later stages of the study will be to explore cultural and contextual variation in how these change agenda are enacted in different national settings.

This updated review emphasized the contextual complexities for leaders and universities. Given the new functions and contextual factors we found, we noted that contemporary leaders must acquire different skills to those of their predecessors. We did find cultural differences between the Latin American HE situations to universities in Australia, Europe, North America, U.K., the Middle East, and South Africa, although in all cases the need for new leadership skills remained. One clear difference was that in most Latin American universities, leadership was focused predominantly on the "superior authorities" – the rector level – rather than at the dean or associate dean level which was more prevalent in the other national contexts (Contreras et al., 2018; Fabela-Cárdenas et al., 2014; Ganga et al., 2018; Raschio et al., 2019). This may explain why in Latin America, authors advocated for shared/distributed leadership (Carballo, 2019; Cardiel, 1999; Vega et al., 2015). Even so, these same authors noted the

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difficulties of shared/distributed leadership due to the supreme authority of the rectors, and potentially represented a conundrum where one leads to the other and vice versa. Despite the differences in where power and control were vested, our analysis revealed there was alignment related to the skills needed for effective leadership across the different countries represented in the review (please refer to Appendix B for a summary of these essential leadership skills and capacities). Indeed, the dearth of literature about LD programs in the Latin American case indicated that this was an important area of study. It will also be interesting and important to gain insights into any further cultural, system, and contextual differences as we move forward with this study in Chile and other Latin American contexts.

Similar to our earlier review, we observed frequent calls for LD because of the complexities of contemporary academic leadership. Most also indicated that preparation for scholarship was insufficient and different to that required for leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; DeZure et al., 2014; Dopson et al., 2019; Hempsall, 2014). Despite the consensus on the need for LD programs, few papers deepened the themes or reported on optimal methodologies that programs should encompass for maximum impact (Dopson et al., 2019; Hempsall, 2014). Unlike our previous review, in this review we found a few established programs that provided some detail and had been established long enough to warrant evaluation (Alghamdi et al., 2016; Bradley et al., 2017). The duration of these programs ranged between nine months to two years, however, even though these programs appeared to be successful, the viability of protracted programs would need to be considered given how time-poor leaders are. Therefore, optimal delivery approaches (while considering program duration) are worth studying to ensure viability for busy leaders. For a summary of our LD findings please refer to Appendix C.

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An aspect that was not overtly addressed within the limited
literature on existing LD programs was if the content of LD should
vary respective of career stage. That is, should the content be
different for aspirants as opposed to novices or experienced leaders?
This variability in LD content according to career stage was an aspect
that was established in the International Study for the Preparation of
Principals (ISPP) (Webber et al., 2014; Webber & Scott, 2013). It also
raised the question as to whether more managerial-oriented content
would be more useful at the associate dean level and more
leadership-oriented content should be aimed at deans and senior
leaders such as rectors, vice chancellors/presidents, and presidents.
However, Preston and Floyd's (2016; Floyd & Preston, 2018) study
seems to counter this proposition as associate deans did not find the
management-oriented LD all that useful.

Another curious aspect to emerge from both our previous and
current literature reviews was that there was almost no mention of
leadership theory (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2019)
either as a suggestion for inclusion into LD or in program designs.
Some authors discussed the importance of reflection and formation of
leadership identities, but they did not indicate appropriate theoretical
foundations for leaders' values and beliefs. Considering the amount
of literature that described destructive and toxic leadership
(Thoroughgood et al., 2018; Smyth, 2017; Webster, 2016) and its
impact on cultures and effectiveness, founding leaders' values on
authentic and relational leadership theories should be important. This
will also be an aspect worth further exploration in later stages of our
study.

In this most recent review contextual commentaries highlighted
the ubiquitousness of technology and the importance of a range of

technologies to universities. This has been further illustrated throughout the COVID-19 crisis where universities have had to move their teaching, research, supervision, and daily operations into online delivery platforms. Even so, there was no discussion of technologies to support leaders' development. This appears to be an interesting omission given a) how universal technology is, b) the opportunities for privacy, confidentiality, and individualized support, and c) the flexibility of being able to access LD how and when it is convenient to the leader. Hence, it will be interesting to explore if there is leader-receptivity to engaging in LD through a technological delivery interface, and if so, what types, content, or approaches would be conducive? Alternatively, if not, why not?

Conclusion

The findings from this literature review have provided a useful update to our previous literature review (Scott et al., 2016b). It also provided useful insights into leadership and LD in Latin American in preparation for our study to commence in Chile and potentially in other Latin American contexts. We will also be drawing upon the insights offered in these literature reviews to inform the development of subsequent questionnaires and interview instruments which are planned for the next stage of our research – surveys with university leaders. We anticipate that the literature review and surveys will subsequently inform our recommendations for LD programs to ensure maximum pragmatics, and potentially, inform theoretical contributions to the HE field of study.

With the background presented in this paper, we identified there has been a shift in the functions that universities and that leaders must have different skills to equip them for leadership in these complex environments. We also observed there was

considerable alignment across different countries in terms of the challenges that leaders face, although we will remain mindful to explore the important cultural differences and institutional nuances that may emerge. There was also a general agreement that academic leaders needed leadership preparation and development to ensure they had the necessary skills to be successful. We also observed that there was a series of skills that university leaders must have for success and effectiveness.

Taking all of this into consideration, our projected next steps will be to engage leaders (at different levels in universities) to identify their perspectives about what they want and need in LD, and then to recommend and/or establish LD programming that meets these expectations. However, from this literature review there was insufficient consensus to establish a priority list of content and what delivery formats were optimal and why. Hence, the next stages of the project – surveys and interviews with leaders in each participating country – will be essential to exploring from a personal perspective what LD is optimal for leaders.

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Appendix A – Contemporary Universities Contexts and Leadership Roles

Contemporary Universities' New Functions and Leadership Roles	
New financing mechanism; Increase in the number of diverse students; Quality assurance and accountability system; Globalization and internationalization; Use of technologies; Strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation; Networking; Ranking improvement; Decision-making responsibilities.	
Latin American	(Carballo, 2019), (Cardiel, 1999), (Cifuentes & Vanderlinde, 2015), (Herbon & Vivas, 2015), (Huerta-Riveros & Pedraja-Rejas, 2019), (Lopez, 2013) (Ortega & Freites, 2017), (Sanchez, 2016), (Vega et al., 2015).
Non-Latin American	(Bradley et al., 2017), (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016), (de Paor, 2016), (Floyd & Preston, 2018), (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017), (Hempsall, 2014), (Jones et al.,2017), (Jones, 2013), (Lamm et al., 2018), (Morris & Laipple, 2015), (Preston & Floyd, 2016), (Ruben et al., 2018), (Wang & Sedivy-Benton, 2016)

Kri, Scott, & Scott (2021). A Thematic Literature Review about Academic
Leadership Development....

R E
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Appendix B – Essential Leadership Skills and Capacities

Comparing Pragmatic and Theoretical Research in Latin American and Non-Latin American Literature

Case Studies

Relationship and trust-building, team-building and team-working, empathy, communication skills, decision-making, difficult decision making, conflict management, visioning, networking, marketing, contextual insights, navigating competing interests of different stakeholder groups, ability to influence peers, ability to set clear expectations, technological leadership, consistency and meets commitments, proactivity, prioritization, flexibility and adaptability to change, diagnosis of need and direction, understand de context, understand culture, self-organization, work constructively.

Latin American	(Cifuentes and Vanderlinde, 2015), (de la Garza et al., 2017), (Fabela-Cárdenas and Garcia-Treviño, 2014), (Ganga et al., 2018), (Gonzalez-Rodriguez, 2018), (Raschio et al., 2019), (Torres and Torres, 2015).
Non-Latin American	(Franken et al.,2015), (Hempsall, 2014), (Vilkinas & Ladyshewsky, 2014), (Morris and Laipple, 2015), (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016), (Söderhjelm et al., 2018), (Alghamdi et al., 2016, Choudhary & Paharia, 2018), (Jooste & Frantz, 2017), (Ngo et al., 2014)

Theoretical

Strategic planning and management, managing tensions, balance in administration and academic activities, shared and transformational leadership, navigating academic and non-academic staff interests

Latin American	(Carballo, 2019), (Falcón, 2016), (Ortega & Freites, 2017), (Pedraja-Rejas, Araneda, Bernasconi, & Viancos, 2018), (Sanchez, 2016).
Non-Latin American	(Bradley et al., 2017), (Odhiambo, 2014)

Appendix C – Leadership Development Findings

Leadership Development – Latin American and Non-Latin American Literature

General characteristics:

Adjusted to the need of each leader, Contextualized to each institution, Mentoring and coaching, Learning on-the-job.

Specific subject:

Budgetary training, University organization procedures, Conflict management, Leading and managing staff, Team working, Effective communication, Leading change, Collaboration, Entrepreneurship, Networking, Time management.

Non-Latin American	(Alghamdi et al., 2016), (Bradley et al., 2017), (Dopson et al., 2019); (Floyd & Preston, 2018), (Franken et al., 2015), (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017), (Hamlin & Patel, 2017), (Hempsall, 2014), (Jaffe, 2017), (Lamm et al., 2018), (Mattar et al., 2018), (Morris & Laipple, 2015), (Preston & Floyd, 2016), (Ruben et al., 2018), (Seale & Cross, 2016), (Stensaker & Vab, 2013).
Latin American	(Aristimuño & Guaita, 2011), (Moreno & De Armas, 2018)

The Effect of Bureaucratic School Structure on Teachers' Job Satisfaction: The Mediator Role of the Organizational Justice

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Abstract	Article Info
The purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of organizational justice in the effects of bureaucratic school structure on teachers' job satisfaction. For this, we reached 449 teachers working in the city centre of Mersin. Enabling School Structure, Organizational Justice, and Job Satisfaction Scales were used to collect the study data. Results revealed that teachers thought the schools they worked in had a moderate level of enabling bureaucratic structure and a low obstructive bureaucratic structure. A weak association was found between bureaucratic school structure dimensions and job satisfaction, while a moderate association was found between bureaucratic school structure dimensions and organizational justice. Besides, a weak association was found between job satisfaction and organizational justice. Structural equation modelling was conducted to examine the mediating role of organizational justice in the effect of bureaucratic school structure on job satisfaction. Results revealed that organizational justice acted as a mediator in the effects of enabling bureaucracy on job satisfaction. However, because the obstructive bureaucratic structure did not have any meaningful effect on organizational justice perception, it was not possible to mention its mediating effect.	**Article History:** *Received* March 04, 2019 *Accepted* February 13, 2021 *Keywords:* *Enabling bureaucracy, Obstructive bureaucracy, Organizational justice, Job satisfaction*

Introduction

Bureaucracy is considered an organizational model that evokes a negative and hierarchical order related to organizational structures. Organizational structure is the most primary factor determining the attitudes and behaviors of the individuals in the organization (Owens, 2004). Hoy and Miskel (2010) stated that schools contain many characteristics of bureaucratic organizations. Therefore, schools can be identified as bureaucratic organizations, and these structures may be enabling or obstructive. It is possible to say that the bureaucratic structure positively or negatively affects schools depending on whether it is enabling or obstructive (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Schools have a role in developing knowledge and problem-solving skills, and the fulfillment of their functions is considered socially necessary. The effectiveness of schools depends on their having to enable structures (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000). Since their goals are to improving the quality of their outputs, increasing student performance is the final goal for schools. The enabling school structure positively affects student achievement (Mitchell, 2020; Mitchell & Tarter, 2011). Considering teachers are at the center of the education process, it can be said that they are one of the essential factors affecting school output (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Hoy and Tarter (2004) emphasized that teacher perceptions related to school performance were significant in school efficiency.

Teachers' job satisfaction levels increase the quality and effectiveness of school outcomes (Hardy, Woods, & Wall, 2003) and

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are a crucial indicator of successful schools (Gamay & Ancho, 2019). On the other hand, teachers' justice perceptions regarding the functioning of the school increase their confidence in the school (Nojani, Arjmandnia, Afrooz, & Rajabi, 2012; Yean & Yusof, 2016), improve their performance (Yean & Yusof, 2016), and increase student achievement (Peter, Kloeckner, Dalbert, & Radant, 2012).To reveal the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and organizational justice perception, which is thought to have significant effects on teacher performance and student achievement, is essential. Furthermore, their relationships with the school's bureaucratic structure may provide substantial clues to achieve effective school outcomes. In this context, the current study aims to reveal the relationships between schools' bureaucratic structure and teachers' job satisfaction and organizational justice perception.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Bureaucracy as a concept was first used in France in 1745 by Vincent De Gournay. However, although it is thought to have existed in an organizational sense since the first periods of history, Max Weber first used the concept in the management and social sciences literature in its current meaning. Bureaucracy is a concept that is formed by the combination of the words of "bureau" and "cratie"; it means the use of authority by offices (Buluç, 2009). It emerged as a management style based on preventing confusion and disorder in organizations. According to Weber (1947), bureaucracy offers an ideal organizational structure for organizational effectiveness. For this reason, Weber emphasized the necessity of organizations' having bureaucratic characteristics to function efficiently and to achieve their goals (Aydın, 2010).

Weber (1947) emphasized the primary characteristics of bureaucracy: authority hierarchy, labor division, objective standards, technical competence, intensive use of rules and regulations, business conduct, and specialists' employment based on career. He evaluated bureaucracy as the most valid form of organization for organizational structure and stated that the work is too complicated for only one person to do in the organizational structure. Therefore, there is a division of labor that provides specialization that enables more competence, and as a result, efficiency increases (Aydın, 2010).

Specialization enables people to increase their knowledge, understanding, and experience by focusing on the same task for a long time and performing each task for a long time. In addition to being functional since it provides principles to be applied, reaching goals, and being efficient; Weber's model, which provides an ideal bureaucracy, is also criticized for producing monotony, lack of morale, excessive conformity, and rigidity, for causing displacement of objectives, blocking and distorting communication, alienating and exploiting employers and preventing innovation. Weber's bureaucracy does not consider cultural differences and regards attitudes towards work as related to race. In addition to these, feminists criticize bureaucracy for being a man's innovation that rewards masculine virtues such as competition, power, and hierarchy and puts into trouble feminine values such as cooperation and equality (Hoy & Miskel, 2010).

Hoy and Sweetland (2001) stated that bureaucratic organizations have two primary characteristics: a formalization, and the second of which is centralization. Formalization is the organization state with written rules, regulations, procedures, and policies (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). Centralization is the focus of

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organizational decision-making mechanisms. While high centralization means that decisions are mostly in a few people's hands, decision-making is spread and shared by many people in low centralization. Authority hierarchy with high centralization classically refers to authority's concentration at the top and the flow of command from top to bottom (Hoy, 2003). High centralization is generally obstructive, and the seniors' orders are accepted without questioning, and compliance is guaranteed (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Adler and Borys (1996), who observed that employees love good structures, rules, and procedures, while they do not like the bad ones, proposed a comprehensive and up-to-date theoretical analysis for bureaucracy called obstructively and enabling. The *obstructive perspective* advocates that bureaucratic organization structure prevents creativity, creates dissatisfaction, and decreases employees' motivation. This view, which sees problems as an issue, predicts top-down and one-way communication (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). In the *enabling perspective*, it is thought that bureaucracy provides the desired guidance and determines responsibilities, employees do not experience role ambiguity, and they are more effective. Enabling bureaucracy helps employees in finding solutions to problems (Hirschhorn, 1997). The efficiency of rules and procedures results from the fact that they reflect the best practices, and they guide the employees in fighting surprises and crises (Adler & Borys, 1996). Hoy and Miskel (2010) stated that enabling bureaucracy helps and guides instead of obstructing, and it solves problems instead of punishment. Enabling bureaucracy is based on producing solutions that respond to problems encountered, not abiding by the rules blindly. For this reason, bureaucratic structures, which provide solutions, not problems, are needed.

Bureaucratic features are seen more or less in all organizations that continue their existence. Schools are also bureaucratic organizations (Watts, 2009; Weber, 1947). In Turkey, schools are in the bureaucracy of Ministry of National Education (MoNE), and their activities focus on MoNE's policy. Because Turkey owns a tightly centralized and hierarchically oriented education system (Çelik, Gümüş, & Gür 2017). The structure, rules, and procedures thatdefine organizational life in schools are governed by laws, codes, and regulations issued by the MoNE. Therefore, school structures in Turkey are affected by the MoNE's policy. However, schools' main problem is not whether schools are bureaucratic or not, but whether their bureaucratic structures function effectively or not (Okpogba, 2011). School bureaucracy should develop and implement standards, and ensure equity and be relevant to learning and support rather than adaptation (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Like in all organizations, obstructive rules and procedures in schools punish employees instead of rewarding productive studies. However, enabling rules provide opportunities to help teachers do their job. Bureaucracy may be beneficial for the organization if it facilitates the employees' work and removes the job's obstacles. However, if it makes it difficult for them to do their job, it will have dangerous consequences for the organization. For this reason, showing bureaucracy alone as good or bad in terms of organizations does not seem like a correct discourse. The bureaucracy expresses the work to be done by each individual, enables professional progress according to competence, and ensures that decisions become rational by clearing emotions. On the other hand, it may cause some communication problems and the organization to lose its flexibility. Therefore, whether the bureaucracy is good or bad depends on the situation. Finally, Labaree (2020) stated that bureaucracy is not

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personal but for the whole organization, resulting in a more egalitarian and democratic school environment.

Organizational structure can be defined as the sum of the coordination created for a specific labor division and carrying out all works in harmony (Mintzberg, 2014). It is anticipated for rules, procedures, and roles resulting from the school's bureaucratic characteristics to be influential on teachers' behaviors and attitudes towards their professions (Cerit, 2012). Because teachers' perceptions, who are impressed by the school's bureaucratic structure, and influence this structure, on the bureaucratic system may cause differentiation in their attitudes and behaviors (Karaman, Yücel, & Dönder, 2008). In this context, a school's bureaucratic structure can be seen as a supportive force that enables it to function effectively. It can be said that teachers' job satisfaction will be highly affected by the school's structure and functioning in which they work (Yılmaz & Beycioğlu, 2017). Job satisfaction is the satisfaction an individual feels in being in the same environment as his/her colleagues and the happiness brought by the contribution they provide to the job (Eren, 2015). In terms of teachers, job satisfaction can be expressed as teachers' attitudes towards the school and students (Demirtaş & Nacar, 2018). Teachers desire to get individual and professional satisfaction by performing their routine tasks (Ömeroğlu, 2006). Low job satisfaction can cause unhappiness and low performance in individuals, in addition to a decrease in organizational motivation and low morale. As a result of this, low job satisfaction can cause a decrease in organizational efficiency and deterioration in the individual's physical and mental health (Gedik & Üstüner, 2017). However, individuals with high job satisfaction may positively affect organizational terms (Haryono, Ambarwati, & Saad, 2019). Furthermore, they may also show noteworthy performances for their

organizations to succeed (Ahmad & Jameel, 2018; Awang, Ahmad, & Zin, 2010; Jameel & Ahmad, 2019). It is because known that job satisfaction affects performance (Awang et al., 2010). Therefore, teacher job satisfaction is accepted as a significant variable in terms of the functioning of schools.

Organizational justice is about employees' assessing their organizations' fairness and about how these evaluations affect other elements in the organization (Moorman, 1991). Organizational justice is how fairly an organization treats individuals and their perceptions about this (Greenberg, 1987). Hoy and Tarter (2004) stated that the raw material processed in schools is humans, and therefore, organizational justice is crucial in terms of schools. The organizational justice perception causes employees to feel valued for the society and to show positive behaviors, while the injustice perception causes worthlessness and negative behaviors and prevents the organization from reaching its goals (Cihangiroğlu & Yılmaz, 2010; İyigün, 2012). Greenberg (1987) defined organizational justice as the structure that can explain many organizational behaviors. It is admitted that teachers' organizational justice perception is significant for schools due to its potential for turning into positive behaviors.

It can be said that the number of studies examining the relationship between bureaucratic school structure and attitudes and behaviors in schools is increasing each day. Studies results which examine the relationships between school structure and school effectiveness (Çalık & Tepe, 2019), job satisfaction (Bozkuş, Karacabey, & Özdere, 2019; Soler, 2000; Zembat, Şahan, Bayındır, Yılmaz, & Tunçeli, 2014), organizational citizenship behavior (Alev, 2019; Dönder, 2006; Mitchell, 2018), school managers' leadership

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styles (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020; Buluç, 2009), professional behaviors of class teachers (Cerit, 2012), teacher professionalism (Karaca, 2015; Mitchell, 2018), organizational silence and cynicism (Demirtaş, Özdemir, & Küçük, 2016), trust in colleagues and effectiveness of teaching (Okpogba, 2011), teachers' attitudes towards school (Ömeroğlu, 2006), teachers' academic optimism levels (Çalık & Tepe, 2019; Mitchell, Mendiola, Schumacker, & Lowery, 2016; Özdemir & Kılınç, 2014), awareness and teacher competence (Watts, 2009) and teacher self-competence (Kilinç, Koşar, Er, & Öğdem, 2016) show the importance of bureaucratic structure in terms of schools.

Teachers' perceptions of the rules and procedures they encounter while doing their job are significant for their positive attitude towards school. It is expected that teachers who perceive that these rules and procedures are facilitators have a high perception of school justice. However, it is inevitable that teachers' perception of justice, who perceive rules and procedures as obstructive, will also be negatively affected. The teachers who perceive an obstructive structure stated that there is an unfair administration in their schools (Yılmaz & Beycioğlu, 2017). Bureaucratic culture is the predictor of organizational justice (Çelik, 2018), and the organizational justice perception is positively affected by the organizational structure (Marjani & Ardahaey, 2012). Therefore, it is possible to say that teachers' perceptions of organizational justice are related to the bureaucratic structure they perceive.

It is thought that the schools' bureaucratic structure has a significant role in delimiting teachers' job satisfaction levels (Altınkılıç, 2008). Because the individual aspect of schools is more sensitive than their organizational aspect, for this reason, the bureaucratic structure of the school plays a vital role in the job

satisfaction of teachers working in school organizations that put people in the center (Bursalıoğlu, 2012). Study results showing that teachers' job satisfaction is related to school principals' bureaucratic management style (Gamay & Ancho, 2019) show that teachers' job satisfaction is closely related to schools' perceived bureaucratic structure.

Organizational justice and job satisfaction relationship are one of the most studied topics in the literature. Overall, the studies' results show a positive and significant relationship between these variables (Laith, Alaa, & Abd, 2019). Positive organizational justice perception may increase job satisfaction (Bayarçelik & Afacan Fındıklı, 2016; Haryono et al., 2019). Employees with a high organizational justice perception make more effort to improve organizational performance (Bayarçelik & Afacan Fındıklı, 2016), and high organizational justice increase organizational citizenship behavior (Alanoğlu & Karabatak, 2020). Besides, it can be said that the relationship between teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and job satisfaction levels, and the bureaucratic structure of the school, which are considered significant in terms of the effectiveness of schools and student performance, are not adequately examined in the literature. Therefore in the present study, it was aimed to determine the mediating role of organizational justice in the effect of enabling and obstructive bureaucratic structures of schools on job satisfaction. To achieve this aim, an answer was sought to the following question: *Does organizational justice influence the effects of bureaucratic school structure on teachers' job satisfaction?* The basic model, including the hypotheses and research variables created within the study's scope, is as in Figure1.

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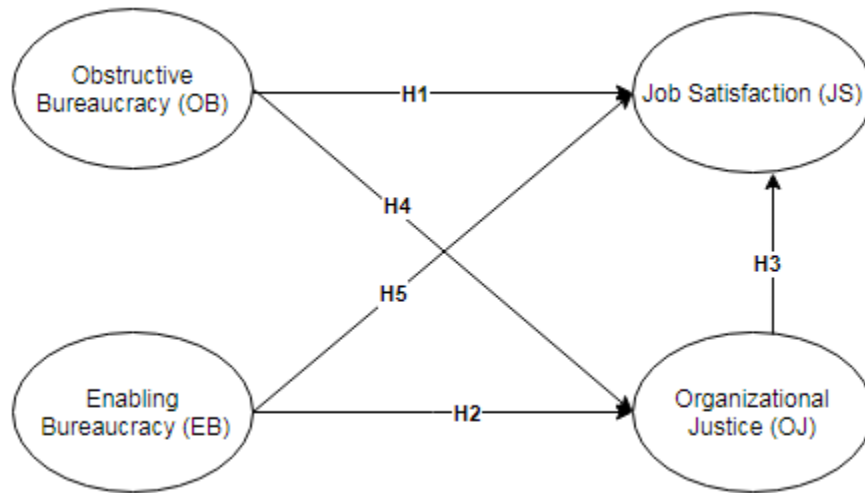
Figure 1.

Research Model and Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Schools have an obstructive bureaucratic structure affects teachers' job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Schools have enabling bureaucratic structure affects teachers' job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Teachers' organizational justice perception affects their job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Schools have an obstructive bureaucratic structure affects teachers' organizational justice perception.

Hypothesis 5: Schools have enabling bureaucratic structure affects teachers' organizational justice perception.

Method

Research Design

This study was prepared in a cross-sectional survey model within the scope of quantitative research methods. The cross-

sectional research model is similar to taking a photograph of the population in a specific period. This type of survey is often used to determine prevailing traits in a population at a given time (Levin, 2006). Identifying relatively more simple relationships in social relationships seems to be important in understanding more complicated processes. Based on this fact, determining the effects of schools' bureaucratic structures on teachers' attitudes may be useful in understanding schools' organizational life. In this study, a cross-sectional survey model is used to estimate the relationships between these variables. It is thought that the mediator role of organizational justice in determining the effect of bureaucratic school structure on job satisfaction can be predicted with this model.

Population and Sampling

The study population consists of 3194 teachers working in 65 high schools in the city center of Mersin during the 2016-2017 academic year. The simple random sampling method, one of the random sampling methods, was used to determine the teachers who would express their opinions in the study. With this method, each individual in the population has an equal chance to be selected as a sample (Kuş, 2009). Within the study's scope, high schools in Mersin and the number of teachers working in these schools were listed. A total of 550 questionnaires were applied to the teachers randomly selected by the researchers to reach a sufficient sample size. 492 of 550 questionnaires distributed to teachers were returned, 43 forms that were found to be filled irregularly and carelessly were eliminated, and the scale forms filled in by a total of 449 teachers were analyzed. The population's ratio was found at an acceptable level for 449 teachers at 98% confidence and 5.09% error level.

When the demographic features of the teachers constituting

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the sample were examined, it was found that 50.11% (n = 225) were women and 49.89% (n = 224) were men; 86.64% (n =389) were undergraduates and 13.36 % (n = 60) were postgraduates; 58.57% (n = 263) were education faculty graduates and 41.43% (n = 186) were graduates of other faculties; in addition, it was found that 10.02% (n = 45) of the teachers had 1-5 years of working experience, while 10.24% (n = 46) had 6-10 years, 12.92% (n = 58) had 11-15 years and 66.82% (n = 300) had 16 years and more working experience.

Instrumentation

"Enabling School Structure", "Job Satisfaction", and "Organizational Justice" scales in addition to a Personal Information Form including the demographic features of teachers were used to collect the data to be used in the study. Information about the scales is given below.

Enabling School Structure Scale; To examine the bureaucratic structure of the schools the teachers were working in, Enabling School Structure Scale, which was developed by Hoy and Sweetland (2000) and adapted into Turkish by Buluç (2009), was used. The 5-Likert type scale is rated between Never (1) and Always (5). The scale consists of 12 items that measure whether the bureaucratic structure in schools is enabling or obstructive or somewhere in-between while teachers are doing their work. In the study conducted by Özer (2010) to analyze the factor structure of the scale, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), the value was found as 87, Bartlett's test of sphericity (p = .00) was found as 5145.79. The two-factor structure of the scale was tested with Bartlett's test of sphericity. As the sphericity was found to be meaningful (p <=. 00), the two-factor structure was confirmed. As a consequence of the factor analysis, the total variance of the scale explained according to two factors was 53.76%. The scale's internal

consistency coefficients were found as .83 for the first dimension and as .81 for the second dimension. In the present study, for the two-dimension structure of the scale, the KMO was found as = .89, Bartlett's test of sphericity (df = 66; p = .00) was found as 2810.80. The internal consistency coefficient was calculated .83 for the first dimension and .87 for the second dimension, and the scale explained 59.87% of the total variance. As a consequence of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), one item (item 6) from the first dimension and two items (items 8 and 11) which gave high error connections with other items were excluded from the scale, and the fit values obtained (x^2/df=3.89; GFI=.95; AGFI=.91; CFI=.97; NNFI=.96; NFI=.97; RMSEA=.08 and SRMR=.04) indicated that model fit was acceptable.

Organizational Justice Scale; the scale consisting of one dimension and ten items was developed by Hoy and Tarter (2004). The scale, which was adapted into Turkish by Taşdan and Yılmaz (2008), has a Likert type scaled between Totally disagree (1) and Totally agree (5). The internal consistency coefficient of the adapted scale was found as .92. In the present study, the exploratory and CFA were re-conducted, and the KMO value was calculated as .94, Bartlett's test of sphericity (df = 45; p = .00) was calculated as 3600.04, and the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .94. The scale explained 65.33% of the total variance. Fit values obtained result from CFA (x^2/df=3.83; GFI=.95; AGFI=.91; CFI=.99; NNFI=.98; NFI=.98; RMSEA=.08 and SRMR=.02) indicated that model fit is at an acceptable level.

Job Satisfaction Scale; the scale, which was developed by Ho and Au (2006) and adapted into Turkish by Demirtaş (2010), consists of one dimension and five items, and it is scaled between Totally disagree (1) and Totally agree (5). The exploratory and confirmatory

factor analyses were re-conducted. The KMO value was calculated as =.81, Bartlett's test of sphericity (df = 10; p = .00) was calculated as 970.25, and the scale explained 62.40% of the total variance. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found as .85. Fit values obtained as a consequence of CFA (x^2/df=3.15; GFI=.99; AGFI=.96; CFI=1.00; NNFI=.98; NFI=.99; RMSEA=.07 and SRMR=.01) showed that the model fit was good.

Data Analysis

SPSS 22 statistical package program was used to descriptive analysis and calculate the scales' internal consistency coefficients with correlation analysis. For the correlation analysis, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was calculated. A correlation coefficient close to +1 shows a high positive while it is close to -1 shows a high negative association. The absolute value of this coefficient is between .70 and 1.00 is accepted as a high association, while the value's being between .70 and .30 is accepted as a moderate association, and lower than .30 is accepted as a low association (Büyüköztürk, 2012).

LISREL 8.80 was used while examining the predictive and mediating relationships between bureaucratic school structure, organizational justice, and job satisfaction with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM is a comprehensive statistical approach used to test models in which casual and reciprocal relationships between observed and latent variables coexist (Çelik & Yılmaz, 2013). The parameters of the theoretical model are estimated in SEM. First measurement models and then the structural model is tested; following this, the model's goodness of fit is evaluated, and modifications in the model are made, if necessary. The model is continuously modified until it is decided for a good fit (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2016).

χ2 / df ratio was used to test the model's goodness of fit, and RMSEA, NNFI, NFI, CFI, GFI, IFI, AGFI, and SRMR fit values were also tested. If the analysis results show that the model's goodness of fit values are not within acceptable ranges, the model can be modified to obtain good fit. In their quotations from different sources where different cut-off points were taken as reference related with χ2 / df value, Çokluk et al. (2016) stated that values up to 3 showed perfect fit, while values up to 5 showed a moderate level of fit. NNFI, NFI, CFI, GFI, IFI, and AGFI values take values between 0 and 1. These values being close to 1 indicates a good fit. Moreover, t values regarding the significance of path coefficients of independent variables on dependent variables should be examined. If these values' being between 1.96 and 2.56 showed significance at .05 level, the values' being over 2.56 show significance at .01 level (Çokluk et al., 2016). If t values are between 1.96 and 0, the effect between the variables is not statistically significant. This criterion was taken into consideration to test the significance of the path coefficient.

The measurement model was tested by linking the variables' error covariance through modification (js2 and js4, and oj7 and oj9). The model fit was found to be at an acceptable level. Findings regarding the goodness of fit values of the measurement model are as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1.

Compliance Indices Results of the Measurement Model

Paths	β	χ² / df	RMSEA	NNFI	NFI	CFI	GFI	IFI	AGFI	SRMR
EB →JS	0.27									
OB → JS	-0.21									
OJ → JS	0.3	2.92	0.065	. 97	. 96	. 98	0.88	. 98	0.86	0.051
EB →OJ	0.84									
OB →OJ	-0.74									
Compliance Situations	Good fit	Good fit	Good fit	Good fit	Good fit	Acceptable	Good fit	Acceptable	Good fit

As seen in Table 1, the aforementioned cut-off points were taken as a reference while examining the model's goodness of fit. The goodness of fit values obtained shows that the measurement model has a good fit.

After the fit values were sufficient, a test was conducted for the mediating effect of bureaucratic school structure dimensions (enabling and obstructive) on job satisfaction. There are some prerequisites to be met to speak of a mediating effect between variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986). One of these prerequisites is to find out whether the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (through mediating variable) is significant, and some tests are used to test this significance. One of these tests is the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982). The Sobel test is a test that aims to find out whether the mediating effect is significant by using uncorrected regression coefficients (β) of dependent, independent, and mediating variables and the standard error values of these. Within the present study's scope, the mediating effect of organizational justice in bureaucratic school structure's (enabling and obstructive) predicting job satisfaction was analyzed with the Sobel test. It was found that

the variable of organizational justice could be used as a mediating variable in the effect of enabling (EB) (z = 4.53; p < .01) and obstructive (OB) (z = 5.58; p < .01) dimensions on job satisfaction.

Results

This study aims to detect the mediating effect of organizational justice in determining the impact of bureaucratic school structure on job satisfaction. For this purpose, the mean values and standard deviations of the variables, and the correlation values showing the relationships between these variables were analyzed first. The results obtained are as in Table 2.

Table 2.

Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Values of Variables

Scales/Dimensions	$\bar{x}$	SD		EB	OB	OJ	JS
Enabling Bureaucracy	3.5	0.9		1			
Obstructive Bureaucracy	2.5	1	r	-.68**	1		
Organizational Justice	3.7	0.9	r	.68**	-.64**	1	
Job Satisfaction	3.8	0.9	r	.20**	-.13**	.29**	1

r: Correlation coefficient; p**<.01

As seen in Table 2, according to teachers who stated their views, schools have a moderate enabling (= 3.45) and a weak obstructive (=2.48) bureaucracy. In addition, teachers' organizational justice (= 3.72) and job satisfaction (= 3.81) scores are high. Besides, the variables' standard deviation values show that the series exhibit normal distribution according to the measure of central tendency, and there are no excessive deviations from the mean values. On the other hand, a moderate positive association was

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found between enabling bureaucracy and organizational justice (r=.675; p< .01), while a moderate negative association was found between obstructive bureaucracy and enabling bureaucracy (r=-.684; p< .01), and organizational justice (r=-.641; p< .01). A weak positive association was found between job satisfaction and enabling bureaucracy (r=.201; p< .01) and organizational justice (r=.290; p< .01). A weak negative association was found between job satisfaction and obstructive bureaucracy.

After mean and correlation values, to determine the mediating role of organizational justice in the effects of bureaucratic structure on job satisfaction, to meet the prerequisites specified by Baron and Kenny (1986), the effects between variables were determined with different models, and the mediating model was tested. Model 1 is a model in which the direct effect of bureaucratic school structure (enabling and obstructive) on job satisfaction was tested. Model 2 is a model in which the direct effect of organizational justice perception, which is the mediating variable, on job satisfaction was tested. Model 3 is a model in which the direct effect of bureaucratic school structure (enabling and obstructive) on job satisfaction and organizational justice perception was tested simultaneously. After the mediating variable conditions were tested, finally, in model 4, the effect of bureaucratic school structure (enabling and obstructive) on job satisfaction was tested by including the organizational justice as mediating variable. These models were formed to show the mediating role of organizational justice perception in the effect of bureaucratic school structure (enabling and obstructive) on job satisfaction. Table 3 shows the standardized path (regression) coefficients and fit values of the tested models.

Table 3.

Findings and Compliance Values of Models Tested

Models	Paths	β	χ^2/df	p	RMSEA	GFI	NFI	NNFI	CFI	IFI	SRMR	AGFI
Model 1	EB →JS	0.33	2.91	0	0.065	0.94	0.96	0.96	0.97	0.97	0.049	0.91
	OB→JS	0.08										
Model 2	OJ→ JS	0.33	3.33	0	0.072	0.92	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.049	0.89
Model 3	EB→JS	0.46	2.92	0	0.065	0.88	0.96	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.054	0.86
	OB→JS	0.18										
	EB→OJ	0.8										
	OB→ OJ	-0.05										
Model 4	EB→JS	0.13	2.92	0	0.065	0.88	0.96	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.051	0.86
	OB→JS	0.1										
	OJ→JS	0.27										
	EB→OJ	0.75										
	EB→OJ	-0.1										

As can be seen in Table 3, the effects of enabling (β = .33, p < .01) and obstructive (β = .08, p < .01) bureaucratic school structure were found on job satisfaction in Model 1. This result showed that both *hypothesis 1* and *hypothesis 2* are accepted. In Model 2, organizational justice was found to positively and statistically affect job satisfaction (β = .30, p < .01). Organizational justice was found to be the determinant of job satisfaction, so *hypothesis 3* was accepted.

Model 3 was established as a model in which organizational justice was not taken as a mediating variable in the effect of bureaucratic school structure on job satisfaction. That is a model in which the path between organizational justice and job satisfaction was not drawn. In this model, enabling bureaucracy had positive and statistically significant effect on organizational justice (β = .80, p < .01)

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and job satisfaction (β = .46, p < .01). Enabling school structure was found to be a significant determinant of organizational justice and job satisfaction. According to this result, *hypothesis 4* was rejected, while *hypothesis 5* was accepted.

Model 4 was designed as the model in which the path between organizational justice and job satisfaction was added to Model 3. According to this model, enabling bureaucratic structure is a significant determinant of organizational justice (β = .75, p < .01), while organizational justice is a significant determinant of job satisfaction (β = .27, p < .01). When the fit values of the obtained result and the model are taken into consideration, it can be said that the path that enables organizational justice to be a mediating variable (OJ → JS) is significant in terms of the model. The model (Model 4) in which the mediating effect of organizational justice in the relationship between bureaucratic school structure dimensions and job satisfaction was tested is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

The Effect of the Mediation of Organizational Justice on the Effect of the Bureaucratic School Structure on Job Satisfaction (Model 4)
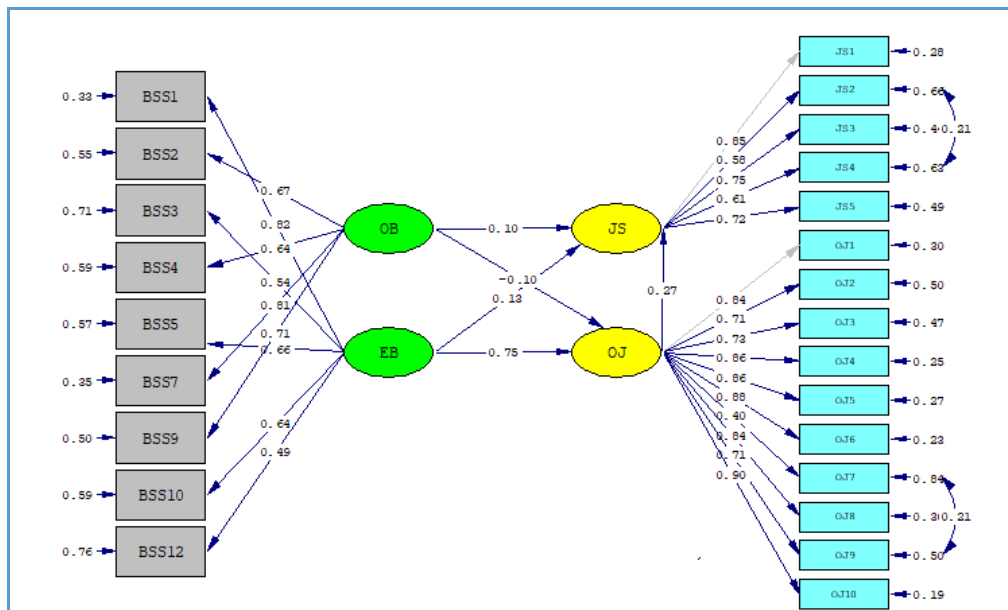
In the model seen in Figure 2, the direct effect of enabling bureaucratic structure, which is statistically significant before the path between organizational justice and job satisfaction is drawn, decreases after this path are drawn and becomes statistically insignificant. Besides, the obstructive bureaucratic structure is not a significant predictor of job satisfaction and organization. Table 4 shows the direct, indirect, and total effect coefficients between the dependent and independent variables of the established model.

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Table 4.

Effect Coefficient between Variables

	OJ Direct Effect	OB Direct Effect	EB Direct Effect	OB Indirect Effect	EB Indirect Effect	OB Total Effect	EB Total Effect	Total Effect
JS	0.27	0.1	0.13	-0.03	0.2	0.08	0.33	0.67

The values in Table 4 show that when the organizational justice variable is added in the model, enabling bureaucratic structure (β = .13) and obstructive bureaucratic structure (β = .10) dimensions directly affect job satisfaction; however, this effect is found to decrease. This shows that a significant part of the bureaucratic school structure's effect on job satisfaction results from organizational justice. In other words, it can be seen that organizational justice has a mediating effect in bureaucratic school structure's effect on job satisfaction. This model had the goodness of fit values, which were very close to those of the measurement model. Load values, t values, and results of structural equations for the model are presented below.

Table 5.

Model Load Values, t-values, and Structural Equation Results

Dimensions/ Items	Standard Loads	t-value	R^2
JS			
JS1	0.85	18.92	0.72
JS2	0.58	12.26	0.34
JS3	0.75	16.18	0.56
JS4	0.61	12.98	0.37
JS5	0.72	15.37	0.51
OJ			
OJ1	0.84	15.58	0.7

OJ2	0.71	13.59	0.5
OJ3	0.73	13.87	0.53
OJ4	86	16.01	0.75
OJ5	0.86	15.87	0.73
OJ6	0.88	16.19	0.77
OJ7	0.4	8.1	0.16
OJ8	0.84	15.59	0.7
OJ9	0.71	13.56	0.5
OJ10	0.9	16.51	0.81
EB			
BSS1	0.82	19.87	0.67
BSS2	0.54	11.72	0.29
BSS5	0.71	14.85	0.43
BSS10	0.64	14.36	0.41
BSS12	0.49	10.25	0.24
OB			
BSS2	0.67	14.99	0.45
BSS4	0.64	14.25	0.41
BSS7	0.81	19.38	0.65
BSS9	0.71	16.12	0.5

Structural Equation	Error Variance	
*JS =.27*OJ + .10*OB + **.**13*EB*	0.91	0.09
*OJ =-.097*OB +.75*EB*	0.3	0.7

Table 5 shows that the t values of the scale items are significant at the .01 level due to the testing of Model 4. According to the structural equations in the model established, bureaucratic school structure and organizational justice explain 9% of job satisfaction, while bureaucratic school structure explains 70% of organizational justice. When organizational justice mediating variable is added to

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the model, the direct effect of both dimensions of the bureaucratic school structure on job satisfaction is not statistically significant. However, when indirect effects are also considered, although the obstructive bureaucracy dimension does not significantly affect job satisfaction, the enabling bureaucracy dimension has an indirect effect on job satisfaction (β = .20, p < .01).

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study concluded that teachers perceived the school bureaucratic structure as moderately enabling and low-level obstructive. Some studies (Cerit, 2012; Özdemir & Kılınç, 2014) showing that teachers think the schools' bureaucratic structure exhibits obstructive characteristic differs from the present study. It was revealed that there is a negative relationship between the schools' bureaucratization and teachers' stress levels, and as schools' bureaucratization levels increase, the teachers' stress levels decrease (Öztürk, 2001). It can be said that the bureaucratic structure that causes the stress level to decrease is perceived as enabling by teachers, and this result supports the current research result. Similarly, Ömeroğlu (2006) concluded that as teachers' perceptions of the bureaucratic structure increased, they developed a positive attitude towards school. Teachers' perception of the school's rules and procedures as factors that make it easier for them to perform their duties may cause them to develop a positive attitude towards the school, avoid negative attitudes, and do their work more enthusiastically.

The current research results exhibit that the enabling school structure has a high positive effect on job satisfaction, while its obstructive structure has a low positive effect. Research results show that schools' bureaucratic structure significantly predicts teachers' job

satisfaction (Zembat et al., 2014) and that the enabling school structure has a low-positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction (Bozkuş et al., 2019) supports the results obtained in the present study. This result shows that school principals, who are primarily responsible for the school's operation (MoNE, 2014), have significant responsibilities. When school principals put rules and procedures into practice, making it easier for teachers to do their duties will increase teachers' job satisfaction. Thus, it is possible to say that teachers' performance will improve, and the ground will be prepared for the emergence of more effective school outcomes.

Another result of the study is that the enabling structure has a high positive effect on organizational justice while the obstructive structure does not affect. The enabling school structure is associated with teachers' perceptions of organizational justice (Turner, 2018), and a positive organizational structure increases the organizational justice perception (Marjani & Ardahaey, 2012). Organizational justice depends on the procedures put into practice to be clear, understandable, and fair (Greenberg, 1987). The perception of these processes in organizational terms may be more important than the results (Laith et al., 2019). For this reason, perceiving the structure as enabling in schools may improve teachers' perceptions of justice towards the school where they work, and a positive school atmosphere may be provided.

Moreover, implementing a management style dominated by strict rules may negatively affect the school's atmosphere, increase the hierarchical use of authority, and formalize relations (Dönder, 2006). Providing a positive justice climate in schools can reflect on teachers' motivation and performance positively. In this sense, it is possible to state that enabling practices will produce significant

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results for schools. Organizational justice affects attitudes and behaviors towards work (Tziner & Sharoni, 2014), increases trust in the manager, and increases the willingness to fulfill the task (Loi, Yang, & Diefendorf, 2009), and causing more organizational citizenship behavior (Jafari & Bidaria, 2012). On the contrary, the perception of injustice causes a negative attitude and behavior towards the organization and decreases performance (Bobocel & Hafer, 2007).

It was concluded that teachers' organizational justice perceptions positively affected their job satisfaction. However, the effect of the enabling structure on job satisfaction decreases when the organizational justice variable is included in the model. This situation shows that organizational justice acts as a mediator in the effect of the enabling school structure on job satisfaction. On the other hand, since the obstructive bureaucratic structure has no significant effect on organizational justice, it is impossible to talk about the mediating effect of organizational justice in the effect of the obstructive bureaucratic structure on job satisfaction. According to this result, it is possible to say that enabling school structure and organizational justice perceptions have significant roles in predicting teachers' job satisfaction. When teachers perceive the school's functioning as an enabling, their school justice perceptions rise, which leads to an increase in their job satisfaction.

Teacher job satisfaction, organizational justice, and enabling school structures are significant variables that should be found in schools. The higher the degree of these structures, the fairer and more enabling school structures teachers perceive. Besides, these variables are associated with a healthy school climate and environments that promote trust (Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Hoy & Sweetland, 2000; 2001).

School principals' management style is related to the bureaucratic structure perceived by the teachers (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020). Therefore, school principals have significant responsibilities in building an enabling structure in schools. When school principals' leadership behaviors make it easier for the school to function and teachers do their job, teachers can perceive a more enabling structure. As a result, teachers' organizational justice perceptions and job satisfaction are likely to increase. With the increase in teachers' perception of these variables, they may make more effort to achieve effective and successful school outcomes. Thus, it is possible to say that student success will also increase. As a result, one of the existential goals of schools is to ensure student achievement, and the enabling school structure stands out as a significant factor in achieving this goal.

Limitations and Recommendations

The results obtained from the study can be generalized in terms of reflecting the perceptions of teachers. However, it should be kept in mind that these results are limited to high schools in Mersin during the 2016-2017 academic year and the scales used in the study. The current research is a cross-sectional study. A significant limitation of cross-sectional studies is that they are not studies that examine the development of the relationships achieved over time and state them in a specific period. Besides, the present study, a descriptive study by the cross-sectional study's nature, does not present a cause-effect relationship between variables.

Some recommendations can be made in terms of the results obtained. In-service training pieces can be organized about the practices school administrators should do to facilitate the bureaucratic structure. Efforts should be made to make teachers

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adapt to the idea that schools' bureaucratic practices are made to enable their work. Besides, when it is considered that organizational justice is a significant determinant in teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction, it can be recommended for school administrations to be fair in the works and procedures conducted and explain these to teachers in the best way. Finally, qualitative studies can be performed about which practices teachers perceive as enabling and perceived as obstructive. By determining facilitating practices with these studies, these practices can be put to work in schools. Thus, teachers can develop more positive attitudes towards the school and the work they do.

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The Moderating Role of School Level in the Relationship between Deputy Principal's Instructional leadership and School Effectiveness in Public Schools in Maldives

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Abstract	Article Info
The quality of education is a major concern in the Maldivian education system. Previous literature posits that effective leadership is critical for the realization of school goals. As such, instructional leadership is claimed to contribute to the teaching and learning process of the school. The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of deputy principal's instructional leadership on school effectiveness in public schools in Malé, the capital city of Maldives. It also aims to analyze the interaction effect of school level on the relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness. A quantitative research approach is selected for this study. The data was collected using a survey questionnaire. The sample consisted of 359 teachers working in the public schools of the capital city, Malé, who were selected through stratified random sampling. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the conceptual relationships. The findings revealed that deputy principal's instructional leadership has a direct and positive relationship with school effectiveness. The moderation test indicated that school level moderates the relationship between deputy principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness, where the interaction effect is higher at secondary	

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level compared to primary level. The results present many implications towards theory and practice of instructional leadership and school effectiveness.

Introduction

Effective school leadership has been the interest of vast educational research for over several decades. Education is considered to be the most important prerequisite for future generations to be able to face the advancements and challenges of the 21st century. Therefore, researchers attempt to understand the association between educational leadership and school effectiveness. School leaders play a major role in school effectiveness (Hesbol, 2019; Sisman, 2016), nevertheless, the nature and degree of their influence has been a much-debated subject (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011). There have been various criteria and characteristics associated with an effective school leader, and one of the requirements endorsed by many is that instructional leadership must be practiced by school leaders (Naicker, Chikoko, & Mthiyane, 2013; Si-Rajab, Madya, & Musa, 2019).

Most popular leadership paradigms include moderator variables such as nature and structure of organizational factors (Howell, Dorfman, & Kerr, 1986). Previous research works show that there are links between instructional leadership and school effectiveness (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Nguyen, Hallinger, & Chen,

2018), however, there is a lack of studies examining school level as a moderator variable that affects the relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness. According to Bendikson, Robinson, and Hattie (2012), even though school effectiveness increases when school's leadership focuses on instruction, it is unclear if the impact is the same for primary and secondary level.

The concept of instructional leadership has been mostly referred to the school principal's role in providing and improving education. On the contrary, leadership is also the responsibility of multiple individuals at all levels in a school including the deputy principal or the vice principal. (Duncan, 2017; Naickeret al., 2013). Nevertheless, studies focusing on the instructional leadership of deputy principals is scarce (Celikten, 2001; Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017). According to Cohen (2019), with the increase in academic pedagogical requirements in the school, the deputy principal is required to manage various tasks and responsibilities instead of being the typical disciplinarian and administrator as in the past. Moreover, the involvement in school leadership enhances deputy principal's motivation to manage the school (Arar, 2014). Deputy principals desire to be more involved in instructional leadership yet their role is not aligned with the roles and tasks of an instructional leader (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004; Harvey, 1994). Instructional leadership deals with shaping the school's vision and goals, management of teaching, curriculum and programs, and findings ways to improve students' learning, however deputies do not get the opportunity to practice the roles of an instructional leader (Cohen, 2019).

Maldives is an island nation consisting of approximately 1190 tiny islands out of which only about 189 islands are inhabited.

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The capital city Malé, is a small island covering an area of just 8.3 square kilometers and is densely populated. The country has almost achieved universal enrollment for both primary and secondary level education among both boys and girls, however the quality of education is a major concern in Maldives. According to the Maldives Education Sector Plan 2019-2023 (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Higher Education Republic of Maldives, 2019), one of the biggest policy challenges faced by the country is the quality of education at all levels. The quality of education is weak and needs to be improved urgently (Aturupane & Shojo, 2012). Under achievement of students in the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations which is the secondary exit examinations for lower secondary education, has been a persistent problem in Maldivian schools (Yamada, Fujikawa, & Pangeni, 2015). This is a dire situation and needs to be addressed immediately.

In Maldivian schools, the vice principal or the assistant principal is known by the term 'deputy principal'. The deputy principal is considered the next in line to the principalship, and holds a key position in the school leadership team. Unfortunately, deputies are weighed down with administrative and managerial tasks such as attendance and discipline, leaving little room for instructional practices. The custodial role associated with assistant principals marginalize their instructional leadership role (Abrahamsen, 2017). Nonetheless, to transform the shortcomings of the educational system, there is an urgent need to ascertain efficient leadership including deputy principal's instructional leadership in Maldivian schools. Therefore, this research is intended to study the impact of deputy principal's instructional leadership on school effectiveness in public schools in Malé, the capital city of Maldives. The study also aims to identify whether school level is a moderating variable that

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affects the relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness.

Literature Review

Instructional Leadership (IL)

Instructional leadership of the school leader is considered to be a key factor in school effectiveness (Adams, Mooi, & Muniandy, 2018; Alsaleh, 2018; Deniz & Erdener, 2020; Hallinger& Murphy, 1985). According to Celikten (2001) instructional leadership is a broad concept with various definitions describing the roles, actions and outcomes of instructional leadership. Bush and Glover (2003) defined instructional leadership as the leaders' roles in the teaching and learning process of the school and their focus on the teachers' behaviors with the students. Ozdemir, Sahin, and Ozturk (2020) state that instructional leadership is the school leader's practices aimed at achieving success in the teaching-learning process and an effective instructional leader drives all stakeholders towards achieving the school's goals. Thus, instructional leaders influence school outcomes by aligning the school's plans and actions with the mission of the school (Hallinger, 2005).

Instructional leadership was hardly acknowledged as a formal conceptualization of the school leaders' role up until a half-century ago (Bridges, 1967). However, from the 1990's the bureaucratic and management responsibilities which had been previously associated with school leader's duties have been replaced by the recognition of instructional leadership as one of the core roles of the school leader (Nguyen et al., 2018). Subsequently, the start of the effective school movement in the USA and UK led to the increase of discourse on instructional leadership (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Instructional

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leadership is now widely acknowledged to be a factor in school effectiveness and it is linked with positive impacts on the teaching and learning process of the school (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

Several models of instructional leadership have been suggested by educational scholars but one of the more notable and applicable models is the instructional leadership model proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). This model offers three dimensions of the instructional leadership: Defines a School Mission, Manages the Instructional Program, Develops a Positive School Learning Climate. Based on this framework, Hallinger (1983) developed the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), a tool for measuring the school leader's instructional leadership. According to this framework, school leaders lead by developing a school mission and aligning the teaching and learning activities with the specified objectives, they create a climate of high expectations, engage in monitoring and evaluation of the activities and stimulate innovation in instruction (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2010; Hallinger, 2005). The PIMRS has been used in over 500 empirical studies around the globe (Nguyen et al., 2018).

Instructional leadership has been recognized as an influential element for effective schools, however the leadership model has also had a fair amount of criticism. The viability of instructional leadership as a leadership model has been questioned (Hallinger, 2011). It is doubted as a practical model since it is unrealistic to expect the principals to focus all their attention on curriculum and instruction (Leithwood & Sun, 2018). The model concentrates too much on the expertise, power and authority of the principal, thereby underestimating the impact of other school leaders including the

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deputy principal (Adams et al., 2018). It has also been criticized as a top down model and has been denounced for being hierarchical in nature (Hallinger, 2005; Hassan, Ahmed & Boon, 2018).

Although extensive studies have been done on instructional leadership, majority of these studies have focused on the role of school principal, and very little consideration has been given to the instructional leadership of the deputy principal (Cranston et al., 2004; Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017). Nevertheless, deputy principals are an imperative part of the school leadership team. In addition, with the progress that has been made in the knowledge and understanding of the concept of instructional leadership, the focus of attention has switched to other approaches of how leadership impacts students learning including the notion of instructional leadership as a distributed function involving other senior school leaders (Bush, 2015). To resolve the issue of top down and hierarchical approach of school leadership, school leaders should create conditions to support shared instructional leadership in schools (Abony & Sofo, 2019). Thus, in order to develop favorable working environment which facilitates more hands-on instructional leadership approaches with contemporary instructional leadership practices, the school principal needs the support of other school heads.

Deputy principals exercise instructional leadership in their daily work (Calabrese, 1991). However, deputies do not have proper well-defined roles and responsibilities. Thus, deputy principals would be more productive as leaders and serve the students and teachers better if their roles are redefined to include instructional leadership practices (Celikten, 2001; Cohen & Schechter, 2019). Moreover, deputies often initiate their own professional learning activities which are mostly inconsistent and ad hoc; thus it is

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important that principals provide mentoring and coaching, and establish a collegial relationship with their deputies (Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017).

School Effectiveness (SE)

A considerable number of studies have attempted to find out what are the components of an effective school. The Coleman report (1966) claimed that socioeconomic status, race, and other family contextual variables had a greater influence on student achievement compared to the effects of school variables. Thus, in response, scholars have attempted to establish that schools do and can make a difference irrespective of students' socioeconomic status or family background (Mortimore, 1993). Consequently, educational reform initiatives have focused on identifying influential factors of school effectiveness (Ghani, 2014; Trujillo, 2013).

There have been different propositions and debates regarding a proper definition of the concept 'school effectiveness'. Mortimore (1991) claims that an effective school is "one in which pupils progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake" (p.9). Cobanoglu and Yurek (2018) define school effectiveness as the capability of achieving the aims and goals planned by the school. Several researchers have defined school effectiveness based on just academic achievements, however, school effectiveness does not depend only on academic outputs (Talebloo et al., 2017). Day and Sammons (2013) state that socials outcomes of schooling are as important as academic outcomes. Policy makers rely on the claim that schools do make a difference in student outcomes as a guide in their educational reforms.

Laying the foundation for effective schools, Edmond (1986) suggested the characteristics of effective schools as a safe and orderly

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environment, opportunity to learn and time on task, a clear and focused mission, instructional leadership, high expectations, frequent monitoring and positive home-school relations. These characteristics were adopted by Lezottte (1991) and formally identified them as the seven correlates of effective schools. The correlates of effective schools have been linked with student success. The correlates of effective schools enable students to attain high results despite their socioeconomic status (Magulod, 2017). Among these variables, the instructional leadership of the school leaders and administrators is considered to have the biggest impact on school effectiveness (Cobanoglu&Yurek, 2018).

School Level as a Moderator

Moderating variable is an essential part of theory in business and social science (Memon et al., 2019). It refers to a third variable known as the moderator that impacts the relationship between two variables. The moderator interacts with the independent variable and can impact the direction and the strength of the correlation between the independent and dependent variable (Awang, 2015). According to Faroog and Vij (2017) interaction effects are used to test the model hypothesis that is not causal in nature. Moderators demonstrate the generalizability and external validity of the relation between independent variable and the outcome, explaining the context under which the relation holds (Fairchild & McQuillin, 2010).

Researchers have posited that organizational factors can impact the school leader's behaviors and functions (Nguyen et al., 2018). The contextual factor, school level, has been proposed to have a significant effect on instructional leadership practices (Hallinger, 2005; Wildy & Dimmock, 1993). Robinson, Bendikson, and Hattie (2011) claim that the impact of instructional leadership on student

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learning differs between primary and secondary school. Nonetheless, school level is one of the most misunderstood contextual variables (Heck, 1992). In addition, literature available on this subject is limited and most focus specifically on either primary or secondary level (Wildy & Dimmock, 1993).

Firestone and Herriott (1982) claim that the basic organizational structure of primary and secondary schools is distinct, thus different perspectives should be used to define and improve effectiveness. Similarly, Heck (1992) point out that in addition to structural and contextual differences, there may be differences in principal leadership between primary and secondary schools. According to Firestone, Herriott, and Wilson (1984) although primary and secondary schools are different, their differences are overlooked since they are characterized to be bureaucratic and loosely linked systems. Yet, contextual differences can lead to variation in the school leader's instructional leadership practices, consequently affecting the performance of the school (Heck, 1992). Hence, primary and secondary schools cannot be considered and handled in the same manner.

Wildy and Dimmock (1993) argue that principals at primary school level are more responsible for instructional leadership than secondary school principals. This difference could be due to the fact that the settings of primary schools are more agreeable for principal instructional leadership than secondary schools (Nguyen et al., 2018). According to Firestone et al. (1984) goals are shared less and power is more decentralized in secondary schools than in primary schools. It is especially challenging for school leaders to effectively focus on instructional improvement in secondary schools because of the greater size and organizational structure of secondary schools

(Hallinger, 2012). Rather than focusing on technical processes, principals concentrate on allocation of resources and external relations at secondary level (Firestone & Herriot, 1982). Therefore, principals in secondary level are unable to engage in activities to improve teaching and learning, unlike in primary level where principals communicate with staff and keep track of daily work thus being more involved in practices related to teaching and learning outcomes (Gedik & Bellibas, 2015). Evidently, school leaders are required to perform different instructional tasks at different school levels, hence how they are perceived also need to be differentiated (Firestone & Herriot, 1982).

The effective school research indicates that instructional leadership can make a difference in outcomes of schooling. Instructional leadership is acknowledged to have a higher impact on student outcomes compared to other leadership styles, however it is not clear whether the value added to student outcomes through instructional leadership is the same between primary and secondary level (Bendikson et al., 2012).More evidence is required to prove whether school principals in both primary and secondary school level have become more directly involved in instructional processes of the school (Hallinger, 2005). Most studies have focused either on primary or secondary schools and majority of the findings have not been very consistent. Therefore, in order to have a better understanding of instructional leadership of the school leaders and how they influence school performance, it is important to examine whether school level has any impact on this association.

Based on the review of the literature, a hypothesized conceptual model was adopted for this study. In this model, instructional leadership is viewed as the independent variable and

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school effectiveness is the dependent variable. School level is hypothesized as a moderator variable in this study. Based on the model the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Deputy principal's instructional leadership has a direct and positive relationship with school effectiveness.

H2: School level moderates the relationship between deputy principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness.

Methodology

Research Design, Population and Sampling

This study employed a quantitative survey approach. A questionnaire was distributed in 12 public schools of Malé, the capital city of Maldives. There are just 14 public schools in Malé, all located in close proximity to each within a distance of about 3.2 square miles. 12 of these schools provide both primary and lower secondary education and follow the same curriculum, thus were chosen for this study. The primary and secondary sections have their own respective deputy principals, head teachers and teachers. Public schools in the capital city Malé were selected for this study because almost one third of the of the country's population reside in the capital city.

The population of this study consisted of 1509 teachers. Respondents were chosen using stratified random sampling to represent teachers from primary and secondary level. This is because the representative sample should closely reflect the characteristics of the population (Weiss, 2012). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the minimum sample size required for 1509 is 346 respondents based on the recommended table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). However, a higher number of respondents were selected to avoid any issues in data analysis (Creswell, 2018).

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Research Instrument

Incorporating two instruments, a closed ended questionnaire was used to measure the variables in this study. The questionnaire had three parts: Part A contained demographic information, part B comprised of 22 items for measuring Instructional leadership using the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) teacher short form (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen 2013), and Part C included 27 items to assess school effectiveness using the correlates of effective schools (Herman, 2017; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011).

The PIMRS is an established survey instrument for assessing instructional leadership and it is designed to provide data on multiple dimensions of the instructional leadership roles and from a variety of perspectives including those of teachers, principals, assistant principals and supervisors (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). The PIMRS Teacher Form displays a consistent high level of reliability for all three levels of scale across school levels (Hallinger et al., 2013). The effective schools scale was synthesized based on the works of Baldwin et al. (1993), Herman (2017), Lezotte (1991), and Lezotte and Snyder (2011). The correlates of effective school area set of indicators which are codependent and act together to achieve school effectiveness (Magulod, 2017; Talebloo et al., 2017). The 47 items of the instrument were assessed using a five-point Likert scale.

The instrument was finalized after a pilot study carried in one of the public schools. The pilot study helps to determine the relevancy and reliability of the instruments. It confirms whether the items in the scale are clear, precise and comprehensive to the respondents. To reduce data bias, respondents were ensured of their anonymity and confidentiality of the study. The reliability analysis showed that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for instructional leadership

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and school effectiveness were .954 and .960 respectively. Thus, the scale was considered to be a reliable tool.

Data Analysis

SPSS and AMOS Version25.0 were used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics analysis was carried out to explain the characteristics of the respondents and check the level of two variables. Prior to the analysis, it is important to assess the data for normality. Multivariate normality can be detected by examining the skewness and kurtosis. For instructional leadership the skewness values were between -.506 and -1.093 while the kurtosis values were between -.695 and .856. For school effectiveness the skewness values were between-.548 and -1.083 while the kurtosis values were between -.246 and 1.889. The values were in the range between ±1.96, thus considered as normally distributed (Hair et al., 2014).

Since a survey questionnaire was used to collect information from same respondents at the same time to measure both the independent and dependent variables, there was a possibility of bias due to common method variance (CMV), which can result in inaccurate estimates of impacts and relationships between variables (Chang, van Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010). Therefore, to ensure the consistency and validity of the results without common method bias, the CMV test using Harman's single factor score was carried out to check if a single factor was accountable for variance in the data. The variance for single factor was 43.8% which is less than 50%, indicating that CMV was not an issue in this study (Tehseen, Ramayah, & Sajilan, 2017).

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was adopted to determine the relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness and to examine the interaction effects of school

level on the relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness. SEM is a multivariate technique that can be used to find the relationship among various variables, mediation, moderation, error estimation as well as model fitness. (Hair et al., 2014).

Results

Out of a total of 500 questionnaires, 379 responses were received. The responses were screened for any inconsistencies, missing data and outliers. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016) the information returned by participants should be checked for any omissions, illogical or inconsistent data and dealt appropriately when editing the data. Hence, the data were analyzed based on the 359 responses.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Descriptive analysis was carried out to find the demographic information of the respondents. Table 1 represents the demographic details of respondents.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of the Respondents

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
School Level	Primary	182	50.7
	Secondary	177	49.3
Gender	Male	72	20.1
	Female	287	79.9
Age	20-30 years	139	38.7
	31-40 years	138	38.4
	41-50 years	64	17.8
	51 and above	18	5

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Years of experience as a teacher	1 year	49	13.6
	2-4 years	82	22.8
	5-9 years	97	27
	10-15 years	68	18.9
	More than 15 years	63	17.5
Years of experience with current deputy Principal	1 year	123	34.3
	2-4 years	117	32.6
	5-9 years	81	22.6
	10-15 years	25	7
	More than 15 years	13	3.6
Total		**359**	**100**

Table 1 above showed that 182 (50.7%) respondents were from primary level and 177 (49.3%) respondents were from secondary level. The number of female respondents of 287 (79.9%) were higher than that of males 72(20.1%). The majority of respondents which is 139 (38.7%) were between 20 to 30 years old. Most respondents which is 97 (27.0%) had working experience between 5 to 9 years. Finally, the majority of respondents represented by 123 (34.3.7%) had just 1-year experience with the current deputy principal.

Reliability and Validity

To assess the reliability and validity of the instrument, the questionnaire went through a pilot test. A pilot test is a small-scale trial conducted before the study to ensure that relevancy and reliability of the instruments. Next the data was analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) procedure to explore and determine the interrelationship among variables (Pallant, 2016). Based on EFA, some items were removed due to poor factor loadings.

The following table displays the comparative results of reliability and factor analysis of the scales.

Table 2.

Reliability and Factor Analysis Results of Measuring Scales

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha (α)	Explained Variance (%)	Factor Loading	KMO	p
IL	19	0.954	69	.552-.837	0.954	0.000
SE	24	0.960	65	.593-.788	0.950	0.000

In this study, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been performed to validate the measurement models of the latent constructs. CFA is a validating procedure which can assess the unidimensionality, validity and reliability of latent constructs (Awang, 2015). The convergent validity was checked through the values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and reliability test was done by testing the composite reliability (CR). The convergent validity is achieved when the AVE for each construct is 0.5 or higher and the composite reliability is attained when the CR index is greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014). Table 3 below indicates that measurement model have met the criteria necessary to achieve convergent validity and composite reliability.

Table 3.

Composite Reliability and AVE analysis

Variable	CR	AVE
Instructional Leadership	0.927	0.811
School Effectiveness	0.910	0.772

To determine how well the items measure their respective constructs, the fitness indexes of the specified model are checked.

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There are several fitness indexes to check model fitness from the three categories of model fitness, namely: absolute fit, incremental fit and parsimonious fit (Hair et al., 2014). However, researchers can choose any fitness index as long as the fitness chosen represents one from each category (Baistaman et al., 2020). The goodness-of-fit indices used in this study include the normed chi-square test (CMIN/DF), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA). Table 4 demonstrates that the fitness indices have met the suggested threshold value of a good fit (Awang, 2015; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 4.

The fitness indices of measurement model

Category	Acceptable Value	Test Value
Absolute Fit	RAMSEA ≤ .08	0.063
Incremental Fit	CFI ≥ .90	0.900
Parsimonious Fit	Chisq / df ≤ 5	2.420

Once the CFA procedure was completed, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed to test the proposed hypothesis on the relationships between the variables. SEM is a powerful multivariate approach combining aspects of factor analysis and multiple regressions for testing relationships among measured variables and latent constructs. SEM can assess the measurement properties and analyze the theoretical relationships (Hair et al., 2014).

Level of IL and SE

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the mean and standard deviations of the data collected. The level of instructional leadership and school effectiveness were determined by a mean score determination scale of three levels with 1.00-2.33 as low level, 2.34-3.67 as medium level and 3.68-5.00 as high level (Amlus et al., 2015). The following table reports descriptive statistics for the variables.

Table 5.

Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Std. deviation and Level of IL and SE

Dimension	Mean	Std. D	Level
Defining School Mission(DSM)	4.06	0.708	High
Managing Instructional Program (MIP)	3.84	0.869	High
Promoting Positive School Climate(PPSC)	3.67	0.942	Medium
Instructional Leadership (IL)	**3.89**	**0.988**	**High**
Focused Mission and Clear Goals (FMCG)	4.08	0.604	High
Maximized Learning Opportunities (MLO)	3.96	0.703	High
Strong Instructional Leadership (SIL)	3.88	0.708	High
School Effectiveness (SE)	**3.98**	**0.830**	**High**

As shown in Table 5, the overall mean of instructional leadership is 3.89 and the standard deviation is .988. Thus, it can be assumed that the deputy principal's IL level in public schools of Malé are at a high level. Subsequently the overall mean of school effectiveness is 3.98 and standard deviation is .830 which can be interpreted as a high level of SE in public schools of Malé.

Hypotheses Testing

Structural Equational Modeling (SEM) technique was applied to test the hypotheses that were formulated to answer the research questions. Prior to hypotheses testing, the model fit indices were

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examined. Figure 1 shows the research model that was examined using SEM.
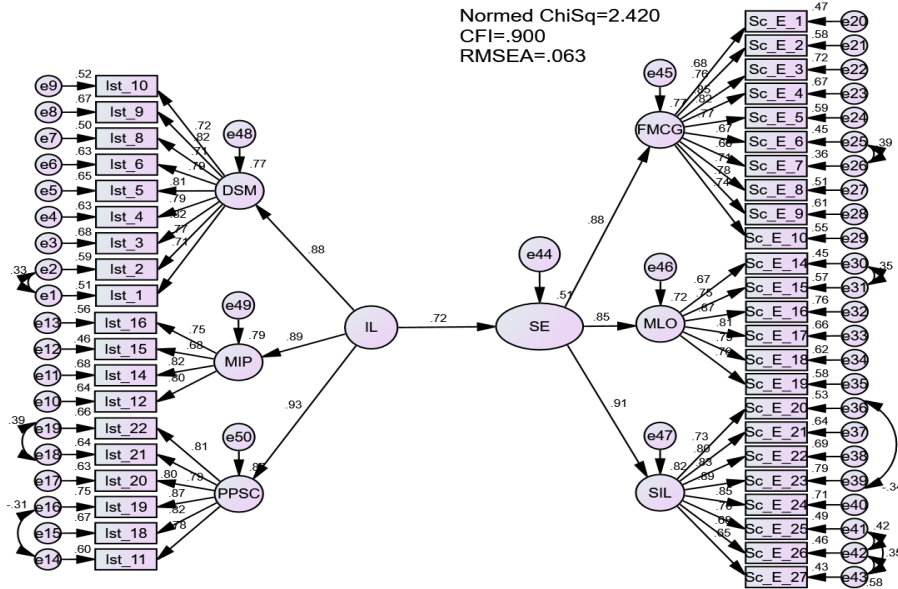
Figure 1.

Fit Indices and Parameter Estimates of Hypothesized Model

To assess how well the theoretical model fits the dataset, the goodness of fit indices and the parameter estimates were examined. As depicted in Figure 1, all the model fit indices of the hypothesized model have met the required thresholds (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, the research model was considered valid for hypotheses testing.

Relationship between IL and SE

A path analysis was used to test the first hypothesis of the study. Table 6 presents the results of hypothesis 1.

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Table 6.

The Regression Path Coefficient and its Significance

			Estimate	**S.E.**	**C.R.**	**p**
School Effectiveness	←	Instructional Leadership	0.687	0.075	9.151	0.001

Findings in Table 6 show that there is a significant relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness. The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 9.151 in absolute value is less than 0.001 (Table 6), specifically, the regression weight for instructional leadership in the prediction of school effectiveness is significantly different from zero at the .001 level (two-tailed). Moreover, the parameter estimates also supported the adequacy of the relationship. The path coefficient between instructional leadership and school effectiveness is 0.717 and is statistically significant. The result supports the hypothesis which indicates that deputy principal's instructional leadership has a direct and positive relationship with school effectiveness.

Moderation for School Level

A moderator variable is a third variable that alters the relation between a predictor and an outcome, and can modify the direction and strength of the relation between the two variables (Fairchild & McQuillin, 2010). Moderation analysis enables to find out whether an intervention has similar effects across groups (Farooq & Vij, 2017). Moderation is tested by the coefficient of interaction. SEM technique was used determine if there was statistical moderation.

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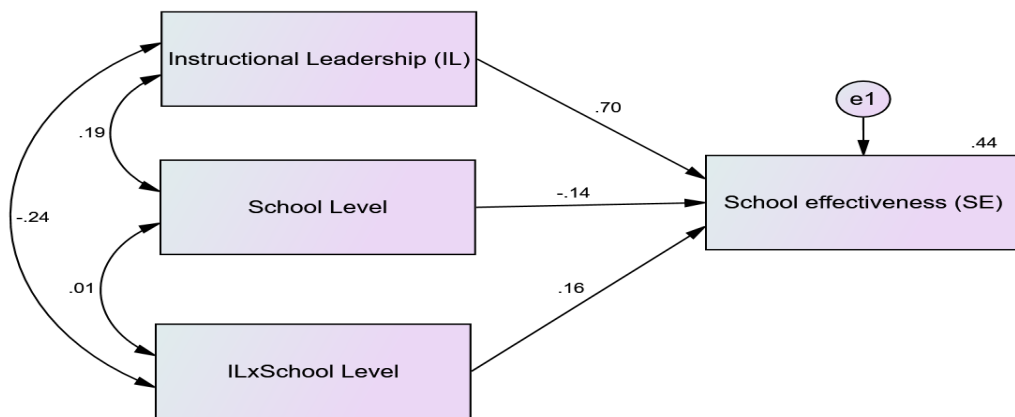
Figure 2.

Moderation for School Level

Figure 2 shows the statistical model for moderation. In this moderation model Instructional leadership (IL)is the independent variable, School effectiveness (SE) is the dependent variable, school level is the moderator variable, and IL x School Level is the interaction of the independent and moderator variable. In this case, the moderator is not a part of a causal sequence, but is postulated to have an interaction effect.

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Table 7.

Hypothesis Testing (Moderation)

Path			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
SE	←	IL	0.699	0.041	16.87	0.001
SE	←	School Level	-0.137	0.04	-3.409	0.001
SE	←	IL x School Level	0.169	0.042	4.047	0.001

Results in Table 7 reveal that the regression coefficient of product term (IL x School Level) on School Effectiveness is .169, which is positive and statistically significant. A significant interaction term with a positive beta would indicate that school level was strengthening the relationship (Dardas & Ahmad, 2015). The findings suggest that the impact of instructional leadership on school effectiveness was moderated by school level. Thus, the findings have supported hypothesis 2. This is a partial moderation because the main impact is significant even after the moderator entered the model (Awang, 2015). Subsequently, in order to determine which group (primary level or secondary level) had the most impact, a pairwise comparison of estimates between the two groups were made and the critical value for the comparisons was found.

Table 8.

Group Comparison

			Primary		Secondary			
Path			Estimate	p	Estimate	p	z-score	Result
SE	←	IL	0.669	0.001	0.91	0.001	3.821***	Significant

Note: p*** < 0.001

Table 8 shows the pairwise comparison of the two groups: primary and secondary. The critical value for the difference between

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the groups is 3.821 and is statistically significant at p < .001. Based on the parameter estimates which is .769 for primary level and .821 for secondary level it can be deduced that the impact of instructional leadership on school effectiveness is more pronounced in secondary level when compared with primary level.

Discussion

The data was analyzed using SEM technique. There are two main findings from this study. Firstly, the results showed that deputy principal's instructional leadership is significant for school effectiveness. The finding is consistent with past findings (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003; Leaf &Odhiambo, 2017). The results are in line with the findings of Setwong and Prasertcharoensuk (2013) who claim that factors of instructional leadership have direct effects on school effectiveness. Similar to this study, Ali (2017) found that there is a strong relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness. The results are also supported by the findings of Robinson, Lloyd,and Rowe (2008) who confirm that instructional leadership is one of the most effective leadership models related to school effectiveness and improvement. Likewise, Hassan et al. (2018) claim that instructional leadership is a leadership model that should be embraced by all school leaders to achieve excellence in schools.

When school leaders practice the elements of instructional leadership namely: defining school mission, managing instructional program and promoting positive school climate, the outcomes of schooling is enhanced (Ghavifekr, Radwan, & Velarde, 2019; Si-Rajab et al., 2019). The results indicate that by sharing the vision and the mission of the school, the school leaders motivate the stakeholders to attain the desired goals. School leaders develop a school mission that offers an instructional focus for teachers, creating a conducive

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learning environment around the school which in turn promotes student learning (Gaziel, 2007). School leaders can shape the goals and actions as well as motivate others by setting missions, visions and values (Craig, 2021). Moreover, the instructional leader's task of managing the instructional program focuses on supervision and evaluation of instruction, coordination of curriculum and monitoring of student progress which are crucial functions for an effective school. This component of instructional leadership involves the school leader's contribution to instructional practices including the provision of necessary resources required by teachers to cater for students learning and improvement (Bhengu, Naicker, & Mthiyane, 2014). Additionally, instructional leaders set high standards and expectations to ensure that a positive learning climate is established in the school. Likewise, they make sure that instructional time is protected and professional development is supported. The presence and visibility of the school leader impacts the school learning climate indirectly effecting student achievement (Gaziel, 2007).

The results show that deputy principal's instructional leadership role is critical for the improvement of school effectiveness. Consistent with Leaf and Odhiambo (2017), when deputy principals perform instructional leadership tasks, they apparently contribute to the improvement of school's performance. Hence it is important to redefine the duties of the deputy principals to enhance their instructional leadership practices (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012; Celikten, 2001).

Secondly, the results of moderation analysis showed that the variable school level moderated the relationship between deputy principal's instructional leadership practices and school effectiveness. The results of this study are supported by past research findings

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(Firestone & Herriott, 1982; Sismen, 2016). More and less effective schools are renowned by the degree of principal instructional leadership; and evidence suggests that instructional leadership differs between primary and secondary schools (Robinson et al., 2011). While the current study has recognized school level as a moderating variable, the findings indicate that the interaction effect of school level is higher in secondary level compared to primary level, which is contrary to earlier findings. Previous findings claim that primary schools are more compatible settings for principal instructional leadership than secondary schools (Nguyen et al., 2018). Due to the greater size and complexity of secondary schools, instructional leadership cannot be carried out the same in secondary schools as it is practiced in primary school (Gedik & Bellibas, 2015; Hallinger, 2012). Despite these challenges, the instructional leadership of secondary principals is crucial for student success (Robinson et al., 2011). Accordingly, instructional leadership should not only be limited to primary schools (Sismen, 2016). However, there is a lack of references to the adaptation of instructional leadership to secondary school regardless of the grounding in instructional leadership research on primary schools (Hallinger, 2005). The distinctive findings of the current study shed new light to the understanding of school level as a moderator variable, suggesting that the interaction effect of school level in the relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness is significant, and it is more prominent at secondary level than at primary level.

Table 9.

Summary of the Main Findings of the Study

H(x)	Hypothesis	Reference	Finding
H1	Deputy principal's instructional leadership has a direct and positive relationship with school effectiveness	Figure 1, Table 6	Accepted
H2	School level moderates the relationship between deputy principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness.	Figure 2, Table 7, Table 8	Accepted

Conclusion and Implications

The objectives of this study were to examine the relationship between deputy principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness and to determine whether school level is a moderating variable in the relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness respectively. The results of this study have showed that deputy principal's instructional leadership has a significant relationship with school effectiveness. In addition, the moderation analysis revealed that this relationship was moderated by school level. More specifically, the interaction effect was higher for secondary level compared to primary level. The findings suggest that in the Maldivian context, deputy principals practice instructional leadership roles in their schools. Moreover, the level of instructional leadership and school effectiveness is high in the public schools. The tasks of instructional leadership include framing and communicating the school goals, managing instructional program through supervision, evaluation and coordination, and promoting a positive climate by protecting the instructional, supporting professional development, keeping high visibility and ensuring high academic

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and professional standards. When school leaders incorporate these into their leadership behaviors and activities, the teaching and learning process improves in the school. In order to create conducive environments for teachers and students to reach their full potential, school leaders should balance their administrative and managerial duties with instructional leadership functions.

The quality of education at all levels is a major policy challenge faced by the Maldivian education system. The learning achievement of students at the primary are less than satisfactory, especially in skills of literacy. In addition, the underachievement of students at the end of the lower secondary level hinders them from enrolling in higher secondary education. Thus, there is a pressing need to explore the issues contributing to low performance and implement measures to raise the achievement of students. Improving school effectiveness is not the role of only school principals, but it requires the support from all stakeholders including policy makers, principals, deputy principals, teachers and parents. Subsequently, the systematic issues of learning outcomes require urgent action from policy makers and educational practitioners.

The results of the present study demonstrated the critical role of deputy principal's leadership in the outcomes of schooling. Deputy principals cannot function effectively unless they are given opportunities to enhance their role and practice instructional leadership. Hence, it is essential that system leaders redefine the deputies' role to include more on instructional leadership and less on administration. The reorganized role of deputy principals should acknowledge their instructional leadership role and give deputies the opportunity to work closely with teachers and follow up the teachers'

professional work (Abrahamsen, 2017). This redirection is necessary to improve the quality of education in schools.

The findings suggest the significance of establishing the instructional leadership role of deputy principals. Appropriate skills and training need to be provided to deputy principals for them to effectively implement and practice instructional leadership in the school. The selection, training, and development system of school leaders should ensure that they acquire the relevant competencies to work in challenging contextual conditions (Yıldırım & Yenipınar, 2021). It is equally imperative that principals provide support and mentoring to their deputies. Principals need to establish an environment of trust and frequent communication with deputies, giving them the flexibility and autonomy required to exercise their instructional leadership role.

In this study school level was found to be a moderating variable that affects the relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness. In addition, comparison between the two groups primary and secondary levels showed that the interaction effect was higher for secondary level compared to primary level. This implies that the impact of deputy principal's instructional leadership on school effectiveness is higher at secondary level when compared with primary level. Even though primary and secondary schools are distinctive institutions with different organizational structures and leadership needs, instructional leadership can be effectively carried out in secondary schools. Since secondary schools are larger in size with departmentalization, they usually have more additional layers in hierarchy. Therefore, school leaders need to share instructional roles with other staff including lead teachers. This could be achieved by applying a distributive approach, nevertheless the school leader

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should have an active role in instructional leadership. They should focus on building a collaborative school culture where professional development is supported. School leaders need to empower and motivate teachers to realize the school goals. Teachers' work should be recognized and rewarded. Considering the contextual differences between primary and secondary schools, school leaders including deputy principals should exercise their instructional leadership accordingly

Although the findings of the study have supported the hypotheses, it also has limitations. The fact that the data analyzed solely stems from the view of teachers limits the power of analysis and evaluation. To obtain different perspectives on this subject, data from multiple groups including teachers, deputy principals and principals can be examined. In addition, the spatial disparity between the capital city Malé and the outer islands is a limitation of this study. Future researches should consider extending research outside the capital city. Furthermore, conducting the research in Malé constrained the sample size of schools to just 12 schools, challenging the generalizability of the findings. Duplication of the study on a national scale covering other parts of the country will contribute to generalizability of the findings. The choice of school type is a delimitation of the study. Public schools were selected for this study since public schools represent approximately 97% of the total schools in Maldives. These limits present opportunities for future research.

In sum, this study has contributed to the understanding of deputy principal's instructional leadership and its relationship with school effectiveness. Moreover, the evidence of school level as a moderating variable has added insight into the knowledge of school level differences in instructional leadership and school effectiveness.

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Additional research with wider scope can be considered to support the findings of this study.

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The Reopening of a School during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Administrative Lens

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Abstract	Article Info
In an effort to investigate school administrator self-efficacy during the COVID-19 pandemic, two public high school administrators from the same high school in a Southeastern U.S. state were interviewed virtually two times a week during the first six weeks of the 2020-2021 school year. Selection of participants was accomplished using convenience sampling, as both persons completed a principal preparation program where the lead researcher served as an instructor. The participants were surveyed before and after the study using questions from the Principal Self-Efficacy Survey (PSES) as well as researcher-developed questions specifically related to work life during the pandemic. The study revealed the degree that these administrators defined their work experiences during this period, based on four distinct perspectives, including: (a) structural, (b) symbolic, (c) political, and (d) human resources. Also, the study revealed administrator perceptions of equity and access among various constituents at their school, including teachers, support staff, students, parents, and members of the broader school community. Using open

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systems theory as a theoretical perspective, the study revealed six emergent themes that related to their work while opening school during a world crisis: (a) technology access/instruction, (b) informational/procedural ambiguity, (c) resource dependency, (d) policy adaptability, (e) stakeholder disposition, and (f) methods of communication. Focused on a principal and assistant principal at a single high school, this case-study illuminates the personal and professional challenges faced by these administrators during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

The importance of school administrators to address issues that affect student health and learning in today's schools cannot be overstated. These issues were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting the manner in which schools served students, teachers and non-teaching staff, families and members of their local communities. Starting in the spring of 2020, school officials responded to the global pandemic in many ways, to ensure the health and welfare of all school stakeholders. For schools which continued in-person instruction, school administrators led the efforts to install health check procedures for all persons entering school grounds, mandate personal protective equipment (PPE), adopt procedures for contact tracing, and enforce strict limits to physical interaction for persons in their schools. For schools with some or all students learning remotely, school administrators worked with district office staff and community members to ensure equitable access to educational and computer resources, meeting demands that were

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previously not considered. At the same time, these professionals
assisted teachers and students as forms of instruction were modified
to increase the use of computer-based teleconferencing platforms,
learning management systems, and educational software.

School administrators spearheaded efforts to address the
needs of instructional support staff who support students receiving
specialized services (e.g. special education, English language
learning, gifted and talented, economically disadvantaged).   In
addition to instructional support, school administrators continued
their efforts with participation in co-curricular activities (e.g. sports,
clubs) while adhering to health and safety standards. As the COVID-
19 pandemic continued to affect the entire school communities,
administrators were required to effectively communicate up-to-date
information, using a variety of methods, about changes that affected
the way that a variety of school stakeholders could engage in school-
related activities.   Additional professional obligations during the
pandemic adversely affected the personal lives of school
administrators, some of whom faced pandemic related health-related
concerns themselves, as well as those experienced by their friends,
colleagues and family members.

According to Bolman and Deal (2013), "life's daily challenges
rarely arrive clearly labeled or neatly packed" (p. 407). It is clear that
issues related to the administration of schools during the COVID-19
pandemic are unprecedented in terms of complexity and scope. This
research study aspires to illuminate the effects of this global
pandemic on the lives of two U.S. high school administrators during
the first six weeks of the 2020-2021 school year. Participant self-
efficacy and perspective framing provide a basis for understanding

the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their personal and professional lives.

For the purposes of this study, the terms "school leaders" and school administrators are not used interchangeably. In general, all school administrators are considered school leaders, in their capacity to implement a school vision, enforce policies and procedures, serve as role models at their respective schools, and the like. However, not all school leaders are school administrators, as there are other members of the school community (e.g. board members, attendance clerks, sports coaches) who contribute to the leadership of the school, but are not appointed as formal administrators. That said, the terms "educational leaders" and "school leaders" are used interchangeably, omitting any references to administrators not serving in elementary and secondary school sites.

Purpose of the Present Study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate feelings of self-efficacy expressed by two school administrators in a Southeastern US state during the first six weeks of the 2020-2021 school year, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. A secondary aim was to reveal the degree that these administrators defined their work experiences during this period, based on four distinct perspectives, or "frames" (Bolman & Deal, 2013) which include: (a) structural, (b) symbolic, (c) political, and (d) human resource. Thirdly, it was the intent of the authors to research the administrators' perceptions of equity and access among various constituents at their school during the study, including teachers, support staff, students, parents, and members of the broader school community.

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Theoretical Framework

This research is guided by the theoretical perspective of schools as open systems, a subset of systems theory. In general, researchers use systems theory to understand interactions that occur in response to actions taken by participants within the system itself. Orren & Smith (2013) state that individuals in social systems "engage in input/output exchanges with their social environments" (p. 40). Schools can be viewed as social systems with interdependent elements (e.g. teachers depend on principals; students depend on teachers) (Ee & Gandara, 2020; Anderson & Carter, 1990; Parsons, 1959).

Related Literature

School disasters are characterized by their large-scale disruption and sudden changes in normal routine to the school and community. In many instances of disaster, there are marked times of uncertainty, unexpectedness, and unpreparedness. Disasters stem from many causes: school shootings; natural disasters that include hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, flood, and/or fire; and biological disasters that include epidemics or pandemics that often require schools to close and considerably alter schools' normal routines. As a result, in the time of disaster, school administrators in the affected school are faced with unique challenges in leadership that include supporting students, teachers, and the community; adopting new job duties; and establishing a plan of action. Moreover, school administrators are responsible for establishing protocols that will be implemented in a future disaster with similar circumstances, if it were to occur.

Educational Leadership in Response to Disasters

Educational leaders are challenged under normal circumstances, but even more so during crisis/disaster scenarios. Visibility, accessibility, and engagement, are stressed by leaders in the midst of a school disaster, and these often involve creative leadership strategies (Bishop et al., 2015). School administrators become the link between the school and the community by sharing a vision and providing support at the community level (Gyang, 2020; Stone-Johnson and Weiner, 2016). The creativity needed in leading the community through a disaster involves providing the learning community important resources and involving stake-holders in the decision making process (Gyang, 2020). A case study by Tarrant (2011) highlighted the positive effect school administrators have in communicating with families after the school disaster and is supported by the evidence suggesting that community resilience stems from a school administrators' actions (Sherrieb et al., 2012). However, in unprecedented times such as a pandemic, school administrators lack useful information regarding changes to school procedures, and this creates uncertainty among the school population, parent population, and the community in general (Ahlström et al., 2020). School administrators in the future, though, can mitigate the level of uncertainty by encouraging participation in events that provide advance training on drills and protocols that will be needed in an emergency (Akbaba-Altun, 2005).

Supporting the School and the Community

In times of disaster, the school should not lose emphasis placed on students and their wellbeing, as well as their academic success (Bishop et al., 2015; Imberman et al., 2009). School administrators are responsible for maintaining a positive atmosphere

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so that students feel hopeful even when distressed (Akbaba-Altun, 2005). According to Fournier et al. (2020), actions related to inclusive leadership, where the school administrators hold the belief that all students have the ability to learn and value student input, are essential under dire circumstances. Sider (2020) suggests that, among the myriad of concerns that arise in a school disaster, equitable access to education for students was among the most significant. An educational leader's actions, on the other hand, can be limited as they address inequitable access to resources for particular students. Not all students have equal access to learning technology (smart phones, laptops, tablets) necessary for efficient remote learning (Pollock, 2020). Acknowledging that access is a high priority, it is recommended that school administrators pre-emptively assess the unique needs of students at their sites so they can implement strategies to improve student support (U.S. CDC, 2020).

Additionally, school administrators are responsible for the wellbeing of the teaching staff, as teachers require unique support during a school disaster (Fletcher and Nicholas, 2016). Inclusive leadership is beneficial to teachers as professional development is prioritized, collaboration is encouraged, and diversity of skills among the staff is celebrated (Fournier et al., 2020). Differing levels of support should be taken into consideration, especially during a school's transition from in-person to remote learning (Li et al., 2020). Finally, school administrators become the link between the school and the community by sharing a vision and providing support at the community level (Gyang, 2020; Stone-Johnson and Weiner, 2016). Visibility, accessibility, and engagement, are stressed by leaders in the midst of a school disaster, and these often involve creative leadership strategies (Bishop et al., 2015).

Adopting New Job Duties

During past school disasters that have occurred internationally, increased workload and expanded job duties for school administrators was required in nearly all instances (Hauseman et al., 2020; Bishop et al., 2015; Mutch, 2015; Ozmen, 2006; Pollock, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges for the school administrators, and their responsibilities have increased in coordination with a heightened degree of accountability. With regard to a viral pandemic, school administrators are faced with legal challenges in reporting symptomatic students, maintaining a socially-distanced campus, and enforcing contact tracing and quarantines. Moreover, the role of school administrators during a pandemic requires regular collaboration with public health officials to protect the health of their communities (Pollock, 2020).

Establishing an Action Plan

In addition to supporting the school and community as well as adopting new job duties, research studies focus on a school administrator's role of creating a plan of action for the school in the midst of a current disaster that develops strategies for opening or closing the school (Zhang, 2020; Ozmen, 2006). Bishop et al. (2015) contends that, in making decisions for a school in crisis, the preferred manner is to act quickly. In identifying actions that will prove to be most beneficial in planning the course of action for the school, a school administrator needs to seek advice, demonstrate empathy, communicate clearly, and envision the long-term goal (O'Connell and Clark, 2020). Fortunately, school administrators are able to learn not only from their own schools' past crisis events, but also from other school systems' mitigation strategies used during a disaster. By

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understanding past experiences, the school administrators can begin planning for the future (Brown, 2018).

Preparing for Future Disaster

One of the marked characteristics of a school disaster is the uncertainty that encompasses the school. This uncertainty can be reduced by pre-emptively establishing a plan, protocols, and/or strategies in preparation for future disasters. In preparation for a sudden change to remote learning, professional development and training of all school staff regarding issues related to technology, communication, and equity must be completed for a successful transition (Zhang, 2020; Ozmen, 2006). Moreover, school administrators should be in contact with other organizations in the community that play a role in disaster relief to determine the roles that will be carried out by these respective parties (Akbaba-Altun, 2005). Thoughtful and intentional planning by administrators is crucial to advance awareness in methods to decrease destructive effects related to a disaster (Stone-Johnson and Weiner, 2020; Ozmen, 2006).

To synthesize, the literature shows that regardless of the external factors and happenings, and even with added duties during a global pandemic, a school's focus should be kept on the wellbeing and academic success of the students. School administrators should continue to value students, fight for equitable instruction for all, provide sense of hope for everyone, and keep the wellbeing of the teaching staff of utmost importance. This study looks at the self-efficacy of two school administrators as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and how they define their work experiences based on four perspectives: structural, symbolic, political, and human resources.

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Method

A sequential, mixed methods research design (Teddie & Tashakkori, 2009) was used so that both quantitative survey and qualitative interview data could be investigated, both in isolation and in relation to one another. Participant responses to non-demographic survey questions collected prior to the first interview, coinciding with the start of the academic year, were compared to survey data collected after the interviews had concluded, a span of six weeks. Audio transcriptions from all interviews were completed and all members of the research team were either present during, or watched a recording of, all interviews. Although the interviews were administered remotely and transcriptions were comprised mostly of participant voiced responses to questions posed to them, field notes were recorded by the researchers to include important visual information (e.g. expressions, gestures).

Participants

Two administrators serving in the same secondary (high) school in a Southeastern US state were selected as participants for this study. Prior to them taking on administrative roles, assistant principal Rachel (a pseudonym) had served as a high school English teacher, while principal Steven (a pseudonym) had served as a high school science teacher and coach. The selection of these participants was purposeful, as both had completed their principal preparation program (PPP) two years prior to the study in the same university where the lead researcher served as an instructor. It was important to the study that participants had developed a level of trust and positive rapport with the lead researcher, so they would more likely respond

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substantively to survey and interview questions. Demographic information from both participants is provided in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographic Information for Study Participants

Participant	Role	Sex	Age	Race	Highest Education	Years as Teacher	Years as Administrator
Rachel	Asst. Principal	Female	31	White	Ed. S.	6	3
Steven	Principal	Male	33	White	Ed. S.	7	3

Note: Neither participant recorded in their questionnaire that, aside from their administrative credential, they had been certified in instructional technology.

Instruments

Survey. Prior to, and immediately after, the interview portion of the study, participants were asked to complete a 19-question survey, requiring them to provide demographic information and rate (quantitative, Likert-scaled) statements that reflected their perceptions of: (a) professional self-efficacy, (b) work habits, (c) teacher competence, (d) estimations of professional support, (e) relationships with teachers, (f) equity and access of resources, and (g) organizational changes and professional concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In investigating options related to research design, Creswell (2012) emphasizes that quantitative research is more applicable when researchers relate known variables, rather than when they are not clearly defined at the outset (p. 13). Therefore, survey questions were taken from instruments developed in prior studies focused on measuring school administrator self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Martinez, Williams & Uy, 2020) and in the case of questions related to COVID-19, created expressly by the researchers for the purpose of this study. The survey

was first completed by the school administrators the week before the first student attendance day and the second administration of the survey was completed six weeks later, days after the final interview. Both surveys were provided to the participants via email, requiring them to print a paper copy, complete the survey by hand, scan the completed survey and attach it to an email message addressed to the lead researcher.

Interviews. Participants were interviewed for approximately one half-hour per session, twice a week for the first six weeks of the school year. Once a week (Mondays) both administrators were interviewed in the same virtual session. On Wednesdays, the assistant principal, Rachel served as the lone interviewee and the head principal, Steven, was the lone interviewee on Fridays. The timeline for the interviews, as well as significant events occurring during the study, is provided in Figure 1.

8/20/20 first football game

8/24/20 First day of school/study

8/28/20 second football game

8/31/20 First positive COVID-19 student case

9/4/20 third football game

9/18/20 school went virtual for two weeks, athletics stopped

9/21/20 newly hired ELL teacher started, virtual school
attendance at 95.8%

10/2/20 Last day of school/study

10/3/20 athletics resumes

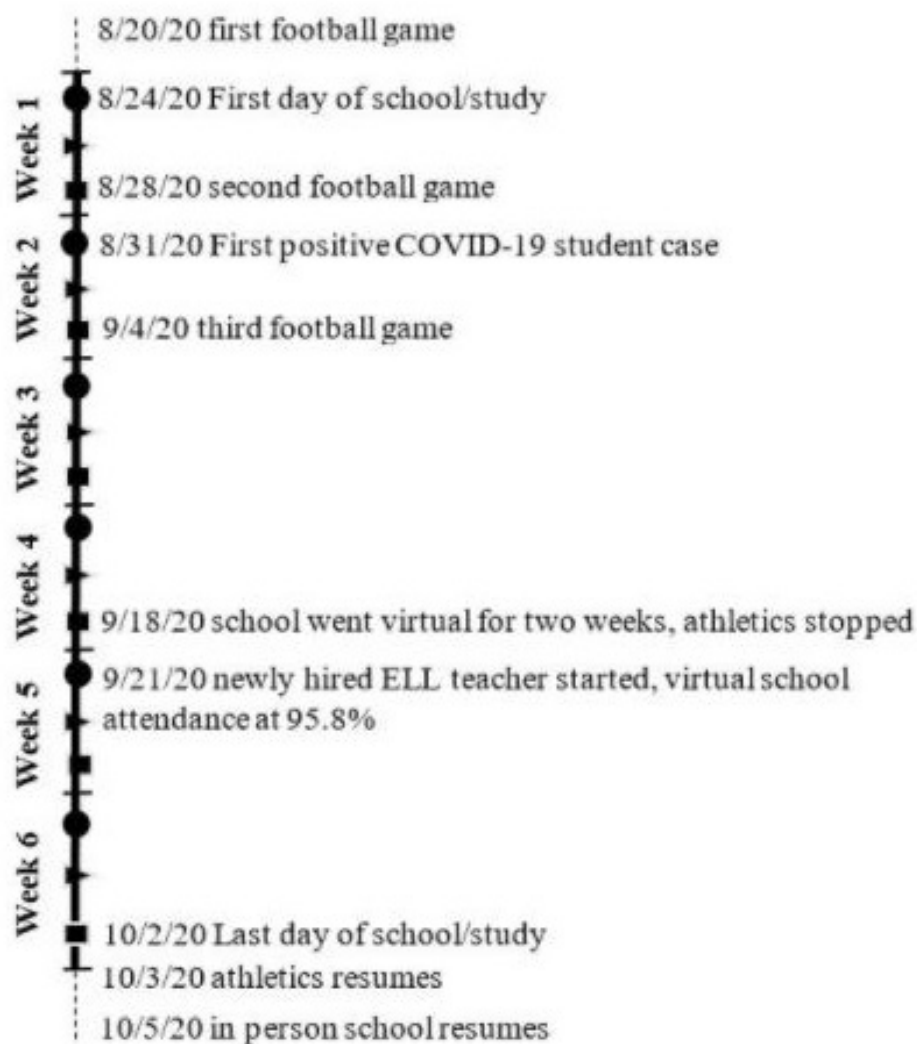10/5/20 in person school resumes

Figure 1.

Timeline of Study

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Note. ● Combined interview with Rachel and Steven (Mondays each week between 8/4/20 and 9/28/20, except for Monday 9/7/20 where the interview was moved to Tuesday, 9/8/20 due to Labor Day)

▲ Interviews with Rachel (Wednesdays between 8/26/20 and 9/30/20)

■ Interviews with Steven (Fridays between 8/28/20 and 10/2/20)

The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for participants to depart from commenting only on the questions posed, increasing the breadth and authenticity of their responses. The original plan was to interview the participants in person at their school, but due to safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were accomplished using the Zoom teleconferencing platform. Both audio and video content from the interviews was recorded in preparation for the qualitative coding process.

The interview questions were created by the researchers to reinforce concepts in the study's survey, as well as draw on elements of self-efficacy as defined in current literature (Hoy & Hoy, 2020) and accepted models of perspective framing (Bolman & Deal, 2015). Overall, questions focused on the following concepts: (a) self-efficacy, (b) work-related resources, obstacles and accomplishments, (c) vulnerable populations, (d) equity/access, (e) perceptions of professional skills and knowledge, and (f) organizational perspectives (or "frames"). Interview questions used in this study are provided in Appendix A. Football games and athletics are included as significant events because large groups of students gathered and this could have contributed to when the school was forced to switch to virtual learning.

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Finally, it should be noted that two years before the study took place, both participants received instruction in a principal preparation program class taught by the lead researcher which focused on the practice of "framing" to better categorize and diagnose work-related occurrences. According to authors Bolman and Deal (2015), the ability to use frames "requires an ability to think about situations in more than one way, which lets you develop alternative diagnoses and strategies" (p. 5). The final question in each interview required the participants to identify which of the four frames (structural, symbolic, political, and/or human resource) they most associated with recent events.

To increase the validity of the study, participants were given the opportunity to "member check" portions of the manuscript text that directly or indirectly referred to their responses. This member checking and use of pseudonyms were used to increase confidentiality and ensure anonymity. Although assistant principal Rachel was satisfied with all portions of the analysis which reflected her views, principal Steven asked for minor adjustments to ensure that anonymity was preserved (e.g. revision of a statement that expressed his familiarity with the school having been a student and teacher at the same site).

There were a number of limitations to the study that were out of the control of the researchers. The most significant of these are the changing conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including restrictions prohibiting the researchers from performing observations at the site. Also, limiting the study to a single school with defined characteristics (e.g. enrollment, percentage of students receiving free or reduced meals, ethnic makeup, teacher qualifications) does not allow for generalizability to other populations. Albeit allowing the

researchers to treat the school as a "case-site", revealing as much or more about the school than the participants, the sample size for this study is insufficient for any meaningful quantitative statistical measurement.

Similarly, there were some delimitations in this study, based on choices the research team made. Since both participants had earned their educational specialist degrees from the same principal preparation program, were only three years out from having done so, and were serving in the same school, it is likely that many of their responses would not show a great deal of variability. Due to the inherent differences in professional roles (i.e. principal and assistant principal), one cannot directly compare results between the two participants, Steven and Rachel.

Data Analysis and Results

Results of both quantitative (i.e. survey) and qualitative (i.e. interview) investigations illuminate study participant understandings during the first six weeks the 2020-2021 school year. Taken individually, each instrument provided unique understandings presented by each of the two school administrators. Collectively, the data show connections between initial thoughts, day-to-day perceptions and overall ideas that provide a comprehensive look at one school through the eyes of these two, public school administrators.

Survey Results

Quantitative data was collected by the participants as they completed pre- and post-surveys, gauging their feelings of self efficacy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The pre- and post-survey

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data were analyzed quantitatively using Microsoft Excel, as well as comparing scores between participants.

Researchers further analyzed the data to look at which numerical response was most common, which response was least common, and how many questions the participants scored with the same number, and which questions showed relative agreement or disagreement among the participants.

COVID-Focused Section (31 questions). Both participants, Rachel and Steven, completed the COVID-focused portion of the survey before and after the interviews. For these survey questions, participants were asked to rate each question on a Likert-scale between one (strongly disagree) and four (strongly agree). Comparing pre-survey to the post-survey results in this section revealed changes in participant attitudes about their own capacity to serve in their professional roles. Of the 31 pre-survey questions, Rachel responded six times with a "strongly agree" response (19%), nineteen times with an "agree" (61%), six times with a "disagree" (19%), and did not respond to any question with a "strongly disagree" (0%). Her overall pre-survey average was a 2.94. Rachel's responses became even more positive from the pre- to the post survey. Instead of five "strongly agree" responses, she jumped to twelve (38.7%), her overall average was a 3.35 when her post-survey scores were averaged, and her average change from pre- to post-response was a positive 13.9%.

Steven's pre-survey average was 0.1 less than Rachel's. As was the case with Rachel, Steven's post-survey average similarly increased compared to his pre-survey average, an increase of 13.4% to 3.22. However, some differences do exist in these data. Where Rachel's scores were all twos, threes, and fours on the pre-survey,

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Steven's spread the entire spectrum with ratings in all four of the categories. Out of the 31 questions, he responded seven times with a "strongly agree" response (22.5%), sixteen times with an "agree" (51.6%), four times with a "disagree" (13%), and responded "strongly disagree" four times (13%).

Overall, from pre- to post-survey, Rachel dropped her score on only one question (3%), rated the same on twenty questions (64.5%), increased her score by one point on eight questions (25.8%), and increased her score by two points on two questions (6.5%). Steven, from pre- to post-survey, dropped his score by two points on two questions (6.5%), kept the same score on seventeen questions (54.8%), increased his score by one point on ten questions (32%), and increased his score by two points on two questions (6.5%). The participants responded with the same score to 15 questions (48%), responded within one point to 13 questions (41.9%), and responded within two points to three questions (9.6%). On the post-survey questions, the participants responded with the same score to 16 questions (51.6%), responded within one to 14 questions (45%), and responded within two to one question (3%). Data analysis provided a means to understand differences in ratings by Steven and Rachel. There were four occurrences where one of the participants increased their ratings by two points from pre- to post-survey. All four of these occurrences occurred on questions focused on technology access and online instruction.

Other highlights from this section of the survey relate to one-point differences (twenty-one instances, seventeen increasing) between pre-and post-survey responses. In four instances, one-point differences were recorded by both administrators while responding to the same survey question (i.e. 10, 12, 24, and 26), two of which

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revealed both parties increasing, while the other two questions revealed one administrator increasing and the other decreasing. Most significantly, between the pre-and post-surveys both study participants increased from "disagree" to "agree" on question 10 ("I have been effective in supporting measures related to equity for students and their families") and from "agree" to "strongly agree" on question 26 ("I have adjusted my expectations for online effective teaching because of the COVID-19 pandemic").

Owing to different professional experiences during the same time period, on question 24 ("I sometimes doubt my ability to evaluate teachers for online teaching) for example, Rachel decreased her rating from "strongly agree" to "agree", while Steven increased his rating from "disagree" to "agree". From these data, it can be surmised that, although coming to their post-survey conclusions from different directions, both administrators ultimately felt able to evaluate teachers in their online teaching. Overall, these data suggest that both administrators went into the academic year with high levels of self-efficacy and they grew higher over the six week study even amidst a global pandemic. These data also suggest that past professional experience as teachers and the administrator preparation program completed by the participants may have provided them with the knowledge and tools, and therefore the confidence, to handle a variety of situations, even those which are ill defined.

Principal Self-Efficacy Survey (PSES) Section (18 questions). A second part of the pre- and post-survey was not related specifically to the COVID-19 pandemic, but asked the participants to rate themselves on self-efficacy using the Principal Self-Efficacy Survey (PSES). For each of the survey's questions, participants rated statements on a scale of one to nine, where 1 equates to "none at all",

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3 means "very little, 5 is "some degree", 7 equates to "quite a bit", and 9 means "a great deal". The participants were able to designate even numbers as well, to fill in the scale. The results of the PSES section of the surveys are provided in Table 2.

Table 2.

Quantitative Data - Researcher Created, COVID Focused Survey Portion (includes PSES)

	Question	Rachel-pre	Rachel-post	Steven-pre	Steven-post
	In your current role as administrator, to what extent can you…				
1	facilitate student learning at your school?	7	7	7	7
2	generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school?	7	6	7	6
3	handle the time demands of the job?	7	8	7	8
4	manage change in your school?	8	7	6	6
5	promote school spirit amount a large majority of the student population?	6	6	6	6
6	create a positive learning environment in your school?	8	8	8	7
7	raise student achievement on standardized tests?	6	6	5	5
8	promote a positive image of your school with the media?	8	6	6	7
9	motivate teachers?	8	7	6	7

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Table 2. (continued)

Quantitative Data - Researcher Created, COVID Focused Survey Portion (includes PSES)

	Question	Rachel-pre	Rachel-post	Steven-pre	Steven-post
	In your current role as administrator, to what extent can you…				
10	promote the prevailing values of the community in your school?	6	5	8	8
11	maintain control over your own daily schedule?	9	8	7	6
12	shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school?	9	8	8	7
13	handle effectively the discipline of students in your school?	7	6	8	9
14	promote acceptable behavior among students?	7	7	8	8
15	handle the paperwork required of the job?	7	8	7	8
16	promote ethical behavior among school personnel?	7	8	7	8
17	cope with the stress of the job?	8	8	5	5
18	prioritize among competing demands of the job?	8	9	7	7
	Averages	7.39	7.11	6.83	6.94

Note: 1-none at all, 3-very little, 5-some degree, 7-quite a bit, 9-a great deal; Themes (a) technology access/information, (b) informational/procedural ambiguity, (c) resource dependency, (d) policy adaptability, (e) stakeholder disposition, (f) communication methods

Similar to results gathered in the COVID-19 focused portion of the survey, there was an overall sense of confidence reported by

both participants as evidenced by no scores being lower than a "5-some degree". Rachel's average score from all of the pre-survey questions was a 7.4. Those responses became slightly less positive from the pre- to the post survey, her overall post-survey average was 7.1 which depicts a change of negative 0.28. Relative to Rachel's ratings on the PSES, Steven's scores were slightly lower overall on both the pre- and post-surveys. His average score for the pre-survey was 6.8, three-tenths lower than Rachel's average, and his post-survey average was 6.9, two-tenths lower than Rachel's post-survey average. According to the PSES results, Steven rated highly in self-efficacy heading into the academic year and remained steady in those ratings.

Of the 18 statements provided in the PSES, there was only one two-point change from pre- to post-survey which was on statement 8, "In your current role as an administrator, to what extent can you promote a positive image of your school with the media?" Rachel recorded an 8 on her pre-survey and then dropped to a 6 on per post-survey. All other pre- to post- responses were within one point of each other. To further highlight important results, there were seven questions on the pre-survey and seven questions on the post-survey where both Rachel and Steven marked their abilities with the same score.

That said, there are two examples of where Steven expressed greater confidence in his abilities, relative to Rachel. For example, Rachel responded with a 6 on her pre-survey while Steven responded with an 8 in responding to question 10 asking, "In your current role as administrator, to what extent can you promote the prevailing values of the community in your school?". Also, Rachel scored herself as a 6 while Steven scored himself a 9 on question 13, which asked the

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participants about effectively handling discipline. Alternatively, Rachel reported an 8 and Steven reported a 5 on both pre- and post-survey to question 17, which inquired, "In your current role as administrator, to what extent can you cope with the stress of the job?".

We can hypothesize that Steven's higher confidence level could be contributed to the autonomy of his role as principal, or possibly due to research that shows that men are more comfortable with self-promotion than are women (Exley & Kessler, 2021).

Interview Results

Throughout the sessions with the administrators, repetitive themes emerged from their answers to the questions asked that describe dilemmas, achievements, and unique situations faced by the community, students, teachers. The themes described highlight the changing circumstances of the school and included: (a) technology access/instruction, (b) informational/procedural ambiguity, (c) resource dependency, (d) policy adaptability, (e) stakeholder disposition, and (f) communication methods.

Technology access/instruction. During the first week of interviews, the school's principal, Steven, described the beginning of the school year as going "smoother than we all expected it to be" with the exception of virtual learning related technology issues. By the end of the first week, Steven stated that work to address technology difficulties was the school's "biggest accomplishment." The next time teachers' comfortability with virtual instruction is mentioned by the principal, he observed that "teachers [had] developed a level of comfort." The improvement continued throughout the sessions, including circumstances of school experiencing cycles of in-person and virtual instruction.

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Informational/procedural ambiguity. Additionally, in the midst of returning the school routine to normal, the administrators expressed instances of ambiguity that caused normal routine to be challenging. The ambiguity in communication included direction from the school district office regarding COVID-19 policies that impacted teachers as they experienced the vagueness of contact tracing in the classroom and the uncertainty of the duration they will be teaching in the classroom or virtual setting. Overall, the uncertainty infiltrated the school holistically, and in each new issue of action to take regarding contact tracing, school athletics, quarantine, or social distancing, "[ambiguity] pops back up, and it's not popping back up in the same like tidal wave it was before," as said by Rachel in the sixth week.

Resource dependence. Throughout the interviews, dependency on resources, both material and human, appeared consistently as a theme. The technological resource in demand was an inadequacy of internet access for students who came from low socioeconomic status (SES) homes, highlighting a limitation the school faced in regards to being unable to ensure reliable internet access for all students. In the final individual interviews in the sixth week, both Steven and Rachel commented that technology and access to resources remained relevant issues.

Aside from technology resource deficiencies, the school exhibited a substantial need in human resources as well. The lack of resources in this category includes the need for teachers with technology support skills, substitute teachers, and specialized subjects teachers. Steven first indicated teachers' skills were needed in the later part of the first week where he stated that "we don't have a whole bunch of teachers that are qualified to do [on-site tech

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resource], so the ones that are qualified right now are just overworked." In the second week, Steven cited substitute teachers as a "major resource shortage" and stated in a later interview that the shortage could revert the school to closing. Additionally, specialized skills and staff availability were needed for English language learning (ELL) and special education students. Although the desire for an ELL teacher was persistently mentioned by both administrators, on the twelfth interview, Rachel mentioned that an ELL teacher was hired, but she remarked in the final interview that she was still concerned about the ELL students "because they were not served for so long, and we're playing catch up now and it's a group that already was playing catch up in a lot of ways because of the language barrier."

Policy adaptability. The abnormal circumstances of the cycle of in-person and virtual instruction warranted novel school and school district policies, many of which were developed during the summer prior to the beginning of the school year and had never been tested in circumstances that change rapidly.

The most prominent included policy related to student attendance and athletics. The methods and personnel for monitoring and reporting student attendance were altered according to in-person or remote attendance. He remarked that he was concerned that "the first time we're going to hear from some of these kids this school year is when they have to show up in court for truancy." Fortunately, by the fifth week, virtual student attendance had improved to mirror the attendance rate of a typical school year. Finally, Steven stated in the twelfth interview session that policy regarding student athletics was a "looming question for our football coaches." Students planning for state qualification in golf tournaments resulted in many families of golf players advocating for games to continue regardless of school

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closure. Steven described the policy changes as "blanket sweeping guidelines" but there were many specific instances where an overarching policy was not the best fit.

Stakeholder disposition. The stakeholder disposition is used to describe the inherent characteristics that the students, teachers, administrators, and school community possessed throughout the duration of the interviews with the administrators.

Both Steven and Rachel stated early in the sessions that the students were compliant with mask and social distancing requirements but had "disconnected from the learning process completely" in the third week, according to Steven. Rachel described early on her disposition as an administrator as her ability "to acquire new knowledge in the service of someone else." Steven attributed his "level of trust from the community" to previous work experience in the school. Teachers' dispositions were described in terms of virtual and face-to-face pedagogical practices. Steven noted that the commitment to provide "high quality education" in the virtual setting had diminished by week five. Moreover, Steven stated that teachers who showed apathetic qualities in a normal school year exhibit the same qualities in the virtual setting. The teachers' disposition mattered less about the setting of instruction but rather more about their practices and attitudes towards instruction in general.

Communication methods. The majority of the communication methods mentioned throughout included information disseminated from the district level. Rachel mentioned in the first session that she felt "good about the people we have in the building…it's just the information that's coming to us from on high." Communication from the district level hindered the administrators' ability to have a clear

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vision of the policies being implemented, which ultimately impacted school functionality, such as the distribution of technology.

Additionally, communication between administrators and teachers, as well as between administrators and parents, embodied a unique therapeutic nature as described by Rachel. In two separate interviews during the fourth week, Rachel noted that her job duty reflected a "therapist" for teachers and parents in order to assist students adapting to online learning.

Framing of Experiences. The secondary aim of this study was to document how each study participant "framed" their experiences as expressed in the interviews during the six weeks of the study, based on four distinct perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 2013), namely: (a) structural, (b) symbolic, (c) political, and (d) human resource. These frames were presented to the participants, respectively, as items related to: (a) technical quality, (b) ambiguity and uncertainty, (c) conflict and scarce resources, and (d) commitment and motivation. During the interviews, the administrators were asked to indicate which of these characteristics was most dominant at that time.

In their twice weekly interviews, both administrators answered most frequently that "ambiguity and uncertainty" defined their job experiences (Steven 46% of the time and Rachel 50% of the time). Rachel described this frame as "trying to figure out again how to translate things and to piece together what different people hear from different sources." Steven concluded in the final week that newly implemented contact tracing guidelines had left the school "with a lot of ambiguity and uncertainty when you get into the nitty gritty details."

Aside from their shared most frequent answer, Steven responded 23% of the time that "commitment and motivation"

(human resource frame) dominated his professional outlook, while Rachel responded with similarly eight percent of the time. Steven first commented in the third week that he worried that "the longer we progress through this...it's going to have a negative effect on (teacher and staff) commitment and motivation." Furthermore, Rachel focused on "conflict and scarce resources" 25% of the time, compared to 15% of Steven's responses. This connection to the political frame was first mentioned by Rachel in the second week in regard to students lacking internet access.

Discussion

Through surveys and interviews, two administrators from the same school shared feelings of professional self-efficacy and the manner in which they "framed" their COVID-19 pandemic experiences during the first six weeks of the 2020-2021 academic year. As school administrators, both participants were challenged to garner support for measures that were required in the first weeks of school because the pandemic. In the surveys and interviews, both administrators expressed a deep level of care for members of the school community, especially for the welfare of the teachers and students at their site. Since both Steven and Rachel had served at the school in the years prior to this study as teachers and administrators, they had established a level of trust with teachers, support staff, students and parents, in responding to the adverse circumstances related to the pandemic.

While serving as school administrators at the same site, it is clear that each had separate areas of influence. In general, principal Steven was focused on the policies and procedures needed to effectively govern activities at the school as a whole, communicating

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to entire groups of constituents, including policies and procedures formulated specifically to address issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Assistant principal Rachel was focused on assisting individual teachers and students, serving in her words in a "therapist" role to allow these constituents to express their concerns. Regardless, the ability for each of these school administrators to be perceived as trustworthy was necessary for their relative success in their professional roles. Participant descriptions of the ways they supported members of the school community is well established in the literature (Bishop et al., 2015; Imberman et al., 2009; Akbaba-Altun, 2005).

The surveys provided evidence of the similarities and differences between the two administration timeframes, as well as between the two participants when surveyed during the same weeks. From the pre-survey to the post-survey, both Rachel and Steven expressed increased confidence in their ability to serve as administrators. Steven and Rachel's estimations of self-efficacy related specifically to aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic showed a greater relative increase than those attributed to the PSES between the start and end of the study.

Based on the results of the surveys, the interviews provided more authentic and fine-grained information on topics central to the study. Although Steven and Rachel regularly expressed their appreciation of students and teachers to adopt the use of technology tools related to online instruction, both administrators expressed that some teachers progressed more slowly with their application of basic skills than the students. When talking about technological resource access, Rachel and Steven expressed more concern with the lack of internet connectivity in student homes (to support student online

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learning) than the lack of availability of hardware/software that was provided to students. Informational ambiguity was consistently mentioned prominently by both participants. Understanding the needs of constituent parties during a transition was also well founded in previously published literature (Zhang, 2020; Ozmen, 2006).

Although both administrators were concerned with the amount, timeliness and clarity of information related to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. contract tracing and when/if school was going to change from fully in-person instruction to fully remote instruction), principal Steven's concerns were focused on the of district office communications to the school, while assistant principal Rachel's concerns related to communications which were internal to the school. Evident in the review of literature (Pollock, 2020, U.S. CDC, 2020), discussions of equity were ever present in the interviews. Both participants specifically mentioned difficulties that low SES students were experiencing in obtaining access to the internet in their homes. The scarcity of resources was also evident during the interviews in participant choices of which "frame" (in this case, political) most dominated their professional outlook. That said, "ambiguity and uncertainty" (symbolic frame) and "commitment and motivation" (human resource frame) were even more prevalent.

Used as a theoretical framework for this study, open systems theory was used as a lens to better understand an individual's exchanges with their social environment (Orren & Smith, 2013). It is clear that the interactions between the study's participants and the numerous constituent parties in which they came into contact formed the basis from which professional decisions were made. Although mainly focused on different tasks with a common group of constituents for the first six weeks of the 2020-2021 school year,

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principal Steven and assistant principal Rachel also interacted with each other, confirming the interdependent nature of open systems.

Motivated by the interactions and results of this study, the research team encourages future researchers to integrate data which reveals the perspectives of non-administrator school stakeholders (e.g. parents, teachers, non-instructional staff, students, community partners) when exploring the dynamics of learning environments impacted by large scale change. Also, inspections of administrative attitudes of self-efficacy (using the PSES and other validated instruments), "framing" and equity from a greater diversity of school contexts will serve to more generally describe reactions of a broader community of educational leaders. Finally, an examination of how a broader array of school administrators (i.e. type of professional preparation, years in the profession, age, sexual orientation, gender, specialized training, etc.) respond to large-scale change will allow for a broader understanding of a more generalized set of educational leaders.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. How are you feeling about your ability to do your job? (researcher created)

2. What main obstacle(s) are deterring you from performing at your best? (researcher created)

3. What accomplishments can you celebrate? (researcher created)

4. Who are the neediest constituents right now and why? (researcher created)

5. How well do you feel you are attending to issues related to equity and access?

6. How difficult is the task at hand and what resources are available? (Hoy and Hoy, 2013, p. 164)

7. Given the situation, do you have the skills and knowledge (to adequately attend to the task)? (Hoy and Hoy, 2013, p. 164)

8. Are commitment and motivation essential to success (of what you are taking on)? (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 311) (human resource/symbolic frames)

9. Is the technical quality (of what you are taking on) important? (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 312) (structural frame)

10. Are ambiguity and uncertainty high (to adequately attend of what you are taking on)? (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 312) (political/symbolic frames)

11. Are conflict and scarce resources significant (to adequately attend to of what you are taking on)? (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 312) (political frame)