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Distributed Leadership, Teacher Autonomy, and Power Relations Between Headteachers and Teachers Under Low-Stakes Accountability Conditions: An Ethnographic Account from Switzerland

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Abstract

Distributed leadership is propagated internationally as an effective means to improve teaching and learning in schools. Increasingly it is acknowledged that practices of distributed leadership depend on their context and governing conditions. Based on ethnographic research, this article discusses how distributed leadership is put into practice within a "loose" governing regime with low-stakes accountability. The example is taken from Switzerland, where the strengthening of leadership is one of the core instruments of New Public Management (NPM) reforms, while high-stakes accountability instruments have not been implemented. The analysis discusses tensions that distributed leadership generates between headteachers and teachers in a primary school. It argues that a "loose" accountability regime produces an opaque field of power relations, in which the self-governing imperative of distributive leadership meshes with claims of traditional teacher autonomy.

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Introduction

After New Public Management (NPM) reforms modelled schools as self-governing organisations, leadership grew into one of the central policies to improve the quality of schools (Anderson & López, 2017; Gunter, Grimaldi, Hall, & Serpieri, 2016). Leadership emerged as a powerful discourse (Gillies, 2013) proclaiming to lead teachers and schools to organisational and pedagogical development, to improve students' learning as well as to increase equity, social justice and inclusion in education (Ärlestig, Day, & Johansson, 2016; Waite & Bogotch, 2017). The earlier emphasis on the personality of individual leaders has given way to the idea of shared responsibility. Therewith, overlapping concepts such as "shared" or "distributed" leadership have gained prominence (Bolden, 2011). By involving teachers in leadership, the concept of distributed leadership promises to move away from hierarchical control and to distribute power and responsibility among the teaching staff (Gronn, 2002). Distributed leadership is related to an understanding of the school as a professional learning organisation, engaging teachers to develop their teaching and student learning in their school (Spillane, 2015).

Critical scholars argue that leadership approaches mainly rely on prescriptive and normative models instead of researching the messy practices and complex social relations in schools (Niesche,

2017). Lumby (2013) points out that the literature on distributed leadership largely neglects questions of power and how practices of distributed leadership shape power relations in schools. Furthermore, a critical perspective uncovers prescriptive leadership models as ahistorical, apolitical and functionalist, ignoring that leadership is an NPM strategy of governing at a distance (Wilkins & Gobby, 2021). Thus, from a critical sociologically informed perspective, the question arises of how the imperative of distributed leadership structures power relations in schools. Furthermore, understanding distributed leadership as a governing strategy asks for situating distributed leadership practices concerning its larger context. Increasingly, it is recognised that leadership practices are shaped by the institutional, socio-economic and political context (Ärlestig et al., 2016; Hallinger, 2018; Brauckmann, Pashiardis, & Ärlestig, 2020; Klein & Bronnert-Härle, 2020). This suggests that leadership policies and practices are shaped by their specific governing conditions, such as the degree of school autonomy or accountability mechanisms (Easley & Tulowitzki, 2016; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2018). Comparing leadership practices in eight countries, Moos, Krejsler, and Kofod (2008) suggested that leadership practices depend on the conditions of accountability: While "tight" accountability and performativity countries (such as the USA, UK, Canada, China, Australia) put pressure on headteachers to operate top-down, a "loose" governing regime (such as in the Scandinavian or German-speaking countries) leaves more room for manoeuvre to schools and thus for negotiations within school teams.

Critical leadership studies analyse leadership as politically constituted social practices shaped by power relations (Gobby, 2016). Headteachers are the concern of governmental activity because they

are approached as mediators and translators of government policies (ibid.). Distributed leadership emerges as a governing imperative that guides headteachers and teachers to act upon each other, aiming to change their practices in the school and the classroom (Gillies, 2013; Niesche, 2014). From this perspective, distributed leadership is, like other leadership models, related to the rationalities of NPM and is an instrument in supporting reform implementation (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008). It addresses teachers as autonomous, self-determined individuals to assume a moral agency and to engage in governing processes (Keddie, Gobby, & Wilkins, 2018). However, it puts headteachers and teachers "in an almost impossible position, caught between a leadership inspired imaginary of agential change and the need to implement reforms that have been centrally determined" (Hall, 2013, p. 270). It appeals to ideas of teachers' autonomous engagement, without taking into account the contradictions between the agency provided by distributed leadership in a managerial context and the high degree of autonomy that teachers enjoyed in pre-NPM conditions (Hall, Gunter, & Bragg, 2013, p. 471). In this perspective, distributive leadership is identified as a "pseudo-democratic" practice that seduces teachers with the idea of professional autonomy and less directive development, while in fact it secures their commitment to managerial agendas (Gunter, 2012; Hall, 2013; Niesche & Thomson, 2017). Distributed leadership is identified as a vital policy of the accountability era "as a means for absorbing the added pressure of accountability" (Holloway, 2021, p. 142).

These critical findings derive from Anglophone countries with high-stakes accountability, in which also teacher performance is regularly evaluated and assessed based on student test scores (ibid.) This raises the question of how distributed leadership is practised

under "loose" conditions of low-stakes accountability. How is distributed leadership practised if schools – and thus teachers – are not subjected to test-based accountability and frequent evaluation but are governed by bureaucratic procedures and professional guidance? Only a few studies have explored the effects of distributed leadership under loose governing conditions, such as in the German-speaking countries (Klein et al., 2019). This article contributes to the empirical analysis of leadership practices in the context of "loose" governing conditions with low-stakes accountability. The case under examination is located in a canton of Switzerland, where NPM reforms remoulded the bureaucratic-professional governance – however, without embarking into a managerial system like the one dominating the Anglophone school system (Wilkins, Jordi, Gobby, & Hangartner, 2019). How does the dispositive of distributed leadership unfold within the Swiss "loose" accountability governance?

Accountability conditions in Switzerland after NPM reforms of education

Today, Switzerland belongs, together with its neighbours, to those European countries with poorly instrumented, low-stakes accountability (Brauckmann, Thiel, Kuper, & Tarkian, 2015; Voisin & Maroy, 2018). This is somewhat surprising, as NPM was a dominant reform discourse in Swiss politics from the 1990s onward and education was one of the preeminent fields of discussion (Buschor, 1997). NPM initiatives propagated school autonomy by a shift from "input" to "output" control (ibid.). Nevertheless, NPM governing reforms (not only) in public education have remained fragmentary (Hangartner & Svaton, 2013). The regulation and governance of schools in Switzerland lie in the responsibility of the cantonal authorities. Consequently, the governing regimes differ between the

cantons and similar NPM reform discourses were followed by distinct policies. Reforms initiated school evaluations and inspection by specialised agencies and furthermore large-scale student testing and performance monitoring in some cantons (Quesel, Husfeldt, Landwehr, & Steiner, 2011). However, educational authorities largely restrained from sanctioning unsatisfying results by high-stakes accountability (Mahler & Quesel, 2015; SKBF, 2018). It is, for example, the exception rather than the rule that the cantonal and municipal authorities publish the results of external school evaluations (Landwehr, 2009). In the absence of a high-stakes accountability system with threatening sanctions, schools are governed by objectives for self-development, "best practice" peer learning, persuasion and advice (Hangartner & Svaton, 2015). Even though the governance system has been modernised, it still mainly corresponds to the bureaucratic-professional model with low-stakes accountability (Brauckmann et al., 2015; Voisin & Maroy, 2018).

Despite the dominance of the reform discourse on school autonomy, schools in a majority of cantons did not receive a substantial increase in autonomy. This means that they cannot decide independently on questions of financial resources or the distribution of subject lessons (Hangartner & Svaton, 2016). Instead, municipalities and schools receive room for manoeuvre to adapt given reforms to local conditions (Hangartner & Heinzer, 2016; Hangartner & Svaton, 2020). Nevertheless, headteachers today are a central concern of school governance: far beyond the responsibility for school organisation and management, headteachers are expected to drive school development by implementing reforms, improving teaching-learning conditions and transforming schools into learning organisations. In retrospect, of all the NPM reforms, the implementation of headteachers in schools

and the successive increase of their responsibilities have probably the most lasting effect. The growing importance of school leadership is reflected in a growing research field in Switzerland and the neighbouring German-speaking countries (Huber, 2016; Schwanenberg, Brauckmann, & Klein, 2020). Empirical surveys analyse the leadership attitudes of headteachers, their tasks or working hours (Gather Thurler, Kolly Ottiger, Losego, & Maulini, 2016; Windlinger, Warwas, & Hostettler, 2020). However, there is a lack of sociological studies that analyse how leadership shapes the social relations within school teams.

Methods

The insights of our contribution are based on two distinct ethnographic research projects that envisaged the social relations between headteachers and teachers in overall nine schools of the primary and lower secondary levels. While the first project focused on governing relations within and beyond schools, the second project is primarily concerned with the guidance of self-directed learning and asks about its analytical relationship to the (self-) governing of teachers. The first project studied how school autonomy policy is translated into governing practices in the canton of Bern. The project was scheduled in the context of a governance reform that provided municipalities more freedom concerning school organisation and leadership, accompanied by a new control process conducted by the cantonal school inspectors. Thus, the reform promised extended local autonomy paired with increased accountability. Four case studies were chosen, contrasting a reformed governance model that strengthens professional leadership by the position of municipal superintendent with traditional governance with lay school boards supervising the headteachers individually.

Our ethnographic research strategy followed the vertical case study (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014) by traversing the hierarchical governing relations between schools, municipalities and cantonal inspectors vertically. In each case study, we focused on one school and explored the governing relations within the school and between the school and municipal and cantonal supervision bodies for two years. The headteachers were the central actors in the field, as they connected the school with both the municipal and the cantonal authorities.

The authors conducted the ethnographic research and focused on participant observation in meetings held in the municipal administrations, offices of school administrators, the teachers' room, or classrooms converted into meeting rooms. Most field visits tracked meetings of one or two hours; occasionally, we followed full-day or multi-day training sessions. In schools, we followed the interactions between teachers and headteachers in teacher assemblies, steering groups, working groups and school development events. We followed the headteachers in the headteachers' assemblies, the school board meetings, and their interactions with the cantonal inspectors. The documents involved in the meetings and the relevant governing regulations were collected and analysed.

Furthermore, formal interviews with key actors and informal ethnographic conversations were conducted. We focused on interactions related to questions of school development, school evaluation, the organisation and governance of schools. As far as possible, we followed the themes through their journey through the different institutions, e.g., from the headteacher conference to the municipal school board and back to the school, aiming to follow the discussions on the same issues in the different bodies. The research

opportunities and issues were shaped by the size, organisational form and specific themes in the four case studies.

Table 1.
Overview of fieldwork in the selected case study and the sum of visits in the four case studies conducted between 2011 to 2013*

	Discussed case study	Total of the four case-studies
Teachers/headteachers in the school	22	87
Headteachers' conference	10	46
Municipal governing bodies	25	65
Interactions with cantonal school inspector	8	24
Formal interviews	5	23

* Additional 35 field visits in two case studies focused on the interactions between the teachers engaged with special needs and inclusive education, which contributed to a dissertation focusing on the governance of inclusive schooling (Svaton 2017).

The handwritten field notes of the meetings were, with the partial consultation of the audio records, elaborated into detailed protocols. We analysed the observed practices, processes and relations within the multi-level governance system by systematically analysing distinctions and similarities between the case studies. Furthermore, we analysed the rationalities of the regulatory framework and traced the divergences between regulations and observed practices. We coded field protocols, transcribed interviews and documents, and recorded the sequential analysis of essential parts of the protocols in detailed analytical protocols. Central codes and related incidents were summarised in a comparative overview.

The second, ongoing, project studies autonomy-oriented classroom settings in four schools in the German-speaking part of Switzerland and in one school in the French-speaking part. This project researches the governmentality of self-directed learning by studying the articulation of technologies of guidance and self-governing practices. It focuses on the works of teachers, in the classroom and at school level and asks how the autonomy-oriented classroom settings and the (self-)guidance of teachers are interrelated. Thus, this recent project connects a new focus on students' self-direction with the former interest in school governing relations. Fieldwork in the four schools in the German-speaking part of Switzerland includes 350 hours of participant observation in classrooms, 75 hours of coaching interactions between teachers and students (half of them including the parents), 131 hours of teacher meetings and 50 hours of interviews. These schools enacted themselves as reform-oriented, innovative schools with individualised, autonomy-oriented classroom organisation. Nevertheless, we observed ambiguous relations between headteachers and teachers; in particular, in the public schools, we observed also acts of resistance of teachers and open conflicts between teachers and headteachers.

Theoretical perspective

Our research is informed by a practice theoretical approach (Reckwitz, 2002) and analyses governing interactions as social practices (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015; Hangartner, 2019b). Moreover, we analyse practices of distributed leadership from a governmentality perspective. With this notion, Foucault problematised the relations between domination and self-guidance as "conduct of conduct" (or *"conduire les conduits"* in the French original), and thereby, he played on the ambiguous meanings of the term conduct in French: the notion

refers to the guidance of others as well as to let oneself be conducted, to how one is conducted and to the way one behaves (Foucault, 2009, p. 193). By this, governmentality is a relational perspective on the techniques by which humans "'lead' others (…) and a way of behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities" (Foucault, 1982, pp. 789-790). From a governmentality perspective, distributed leadership is approached as governing practices, related to questions of power and subjectivation (Gillies, 2013; Wilkins & Gobby, 2021).

Results

The introduction of headteachers as school leaders initiated a sustainable change in the power relations in schools all over Switzerland. Before the NPM reforms, teachers with administrative duties held a senior position as *primus inter pares* in the team, but necessary decisions were taken at the weekly teachers' assembly. Teachers in pre-NPM times enjoyed a high degree of autonomy in their daily work, despite their double subordination under the authority of cantonal inspectors and local school boards' control (Rothen, 2015). The introduction of headteachers transferred teachers' supervision into the school's internal relations. Therewith, it transformed the former egalitarian-democratic culture in teacher teams into a hierarchal organisation. The school heads subsequently received increasing competencies by taking over responsibilities both from local school boards and cantonal inspectorates (Hangartner & Svaton, 2014). Headteachers are now responsible for pedagogical leadership and operational management. They are superior to teachers, and they are responsible for pushing teachers to adapt their teaching to reform demands. The hierarchy installed in schools, however, has remained flat; there is usually no intermediate level of hierarchy between the

headteacher and the teaching staff.[1] Rather than delegating formal authority to superior teachers, distributed leadership requires teachers to engage in school development.

In a "loose" low-stakes framework, the accountability relation between headteachers and teachers within schools is also weak. Headteachers today frequently visit teachers' classrooms once a year or less and give feedback on their teaching practice. However, no high-stakes accountability instruments are used to govern teachers, such as frequent standards-based evaluation of teachers, the measurement of teacher performance related to students' test results or merit pay (Holloway, 2021). Headteachers in practice have only a few sanction options at hand if teachers do not meet up-to-date pedagogical standards or neglect duties outside the classroom. Furthermore, most headteachers are only part-time engaged in this function and are also busy teaching in the usually small or mid-sized schools they direct (Windlinger & Hostettler, 2014). Within limited time resources available, heads are mainly preoccupied with administrative duties, leaving the guidance of teachers as an additional burden (Brauckmann & Schwarz, 2015; Windlinger & Hostettler, 2014). Thus, despite the formal hierarchisation of school teams, the headteachers' position remains precarious; their formal position of authority is undermined by a lack of resources, sanction instruments and an ambiguous status both as superior and as a colleague. These diffuse power relations are accentuated by the increasing teacher shortage of the last decade, which puts experienced teachers in a powerful position. The preeminent field of headteachers' influence consists of their lead in

[1] Big schools, which for example include several buildings, may be organized in teams, which have a team leader. These leaders may have additional responsibilities; however, they are not superiors to their colleagues.

hiring new teachers and administrative and organisational practices, by which they guide teachers. Similar to neighbouring Germany, there is a contradiction between the narratives of school improvement initiated by leadership and headteachers' limited resources and decision power (Klein & Bronnert-Härle, 2020).

Between their formal position as school leaders, their restricted resources and the tradition of personal autonomy for teachers, headteachers rely on their pervasive power and often use "soft leadership", avoiding open conflict and aiming at consensus and harmony within the teaching team (Perrenoud & Tulowitzki, 2021; Hangartner 2019a). Accordingly, leadership is participative and involves teachers (ibid.). In our two research projects, we observed distributed leadership in different forms: In the bigger schools (such as the school discussed later) a so-called "steering committee", consisting of approximately five to seven teachers, supports and advises the headteacher on questions of school development, yet without having formal decision power. It is common for school leaders to involve the whole team in school development strategies. Important pedagogical and organisational questions are discussed with the entire team and possibly also decided together. Beyond, teachers are demanded to cooperate in class- and subject-related groups or in the whole school team to reflect on and improve their pedagogical practices. Furthermore, a few teachers hold the responsibility for specific subjects, such as ICT, and are involved in making school strategies.

The headteachers in our case studies strived to develop their schools together with the teaching staff. With one exception, the headteachers in our case study schools identified with the direction of reforms given by the cantonal ministry and beyond strived to be ahead of pedagogic trends such as inclusive education or individualised

teaching and self-directed classroom settings. However, the headteachers' intentions to transform the school were slowed down by a few experienced teachers. These teachers positioned themselves critically against (distributed) leadership in their schools. A qualitative study in the French-speaking part of Switzerland reports ambivalent stances of both headteachers and teachers on distributed leadership; the actors experience it as an "uncertain transaction", leaving both teachers and headteachers with limited influence (Progin & Olivier, 2018). In the following, we discuss such an uncertain transaction between headteachers and teachers from our ethnographic fieldwork.

An ethnographic account of distributed leadership at a school development workshop

We analyse the tensions that the dispositive of distributive leadership generates between the headteachers and the teaching staff at the example of a school development workshop in a primary school. We selected this school to zoom into the micropolitics of power because the two headteachers showed a dedicated commitment to teacher autonomy and democratic decision-making at their school. Furthermore, we selected this example because questions of power and autonomy were publicly addressed by the school team. Although the example is already some years old, it has lost none of its actuality: While school governance was restructured in the run-up of our study, it has remained unchanged since then.[2] The later study accordingly confirms the ambiguous power relations between teachers and headteachers. While at first sight, the disputes look like being determined by personal characters involved, the repetition of similar

[2] see Volksschulgesetz Kanton Bern, Art. 36, 43, 44; https://www.belex.sites.be.ch/frontend/versions/1165 (29.04.2022)

conflict lines, however, points to subjacent structural dimensions. In contrast to other case studies, the discussed example does not involve personal criticism against the persons of the headteachers. The absence of personal conflicts makes the example well suited to analyse the structural ambiguities between distributed leadership and teacher autonomy.

The primary school lies in a middle-class, quiet neighbourhood and consists of twelve classes and thirty, primarily female, teachers. Lisa and Patricia are both in their forties and share the 60%-job of the headteacher.[3] They both have been working at the school as committed teachers for a long time. Lisa is an engaged unionist and politically engaged for teacher autonomy and democratic governance of schools. From this perspective, she strongly disapproves the increasing hierarchisation of school relations that she has witnessed during her professional career. Unlike Lisa's joy at fervent arguing, Patricia remains calm and restrained even in heated discussions and often takes a mediating and caring position. In line with their democratic understanding of headship, the two women organised a two-day workshop with the whole team to determine the goals of the new school programme. It was the second programme that this school created, and like the first one, it was compiled in a participatory manner. A legacy of the first programme was the initiation of a group called "steering committee", by which a small group of teachers supported the headteachers and participated in their decisions.

The school programme is a self-governing instrument that shall initiate and support school development (Heinrich & Kussau, 2016);

[3] Swiss educational scholars analyse the sharing of headteachers' tasks among two or three persons as «shared leadership» (Fuchs & Wyss, 2016; Kohlstock & Buschor, 2018).

the tool was introduced in many Swiss cantons during NPM reforms (Kohlstock, 2013). In the canton of Bern, where the school is located, both the programme's goals and implementation are annually controlled by the cantonal school inspectors; in addition, the self-governing instrument has to be authorised by the local school board (Hangartner & Svaton, 2015). However, it lies in the responsibility of the headteachers, how they involve teachers in creating the programme.

The workshop marked the beginning of our fieldwork, as we met with the whole team for the first time. Both of us participated in the workshop, took fieldnotes and audio-recorded some of the discussions partly. The following examination of the workshop first addresses the positioning of the headteachers within the team, then analyses how questions of leadership, power and autonomy were debated and finally comments on the workshop's results. Based on these discussions, we conclude how governing and self-governing practices are articulated at this school and what these reflect on the dispositive of distributive leadership.

Ambiguous positioning as headteachers and team members

The organisation of the workshop gives a first impression of how the headteachers understand and shape the governing relations within the school: Lisa and Patricia involved the whole teaching staff in the workshop to set the development objectives for the next four years jointly. They delegated the moderation of the workshop to a consultant from the University of Teacher Education, while they themselves participated as team members in the workshop. The moderator opened the workshop with a presentation about the school programme as an instrument of both school development and accountability. Then, teachers were asked to assess the impact of the

last school programme and the steering committee's work. After a short and positive evaluation, the two days were used for collecting ideas and for detailing the objectives and content of the new school programme. In between, teachers were invited to express their priorities and by doing so to decide on the objectives that are included in the school programme.

During the two days, the headteachers stood out with their engagements in plenum discussions. They usually took over the moderation when participating in a working group and ensured that the discussion produced concrete results. During the breaks and at the end of the first day, they decided together with the consultant on how to proceed the workshop. During discussions, the two women participated with their opinions as teachers but sometimes positioned themselves as headteachers, providing background information that their colleagues did not have. Thus, the workshop was organised in a participatory manner by involving all teachers in the discussions and the decisions about the programme's content. However, precisely because the headteachers did not lead the workshop but participated as team members, they exercised a decisive influence: By their engagement in discussions, their superior knowledge and their taking over of responsibility, the two headteachers took a unique role, which reflects on their ambiguous standing as being both a headteacher and a teacher at the school.

Controversial discussions about leadership and teacher autonomy

On the first day, a new teacher in the team addressed questions of leadership, autonomy and power twice in public. The first incidence happened during the review of the first school programme and the steering committee's work. The steering group was positively assessed: the involved teachers characterised the work as exciting, and

both the headteachers and the team appreciated the group's work as helpful. Only Rose, who had only recently joined the team after having worked at a school abroad, threw a critical statement in the round: by engaging a steering committee, the headteachers led the team in a direction that was already pre-defined; this would be no longer a grassroots democracy. This short critical voice remained unanswered; shortly afterwards, however, Rose initiated a controversial discussion on leadership by addressing questions of power and autonomy. Asked to reflect on shared values at the school, Rose warned her colleagues about the developments she experienced at the school abroad:

> *"That school was organised hierarchically with department leaders and headteachers. At the beginning, I was shocked to realise that the headteacher defined the pedagogical standards and that I had to execute it. I had to adapt, and I was restricted in my individuality. Do we really want to go in this direction?" The moderator seems to be somewhat irritated about the unexpected intervention; she comments that the statement discloses fears and then remarks, that schools which can position themselves with an unmistakable profile would have a comparative advantage in their marketing. Christine, a teacher engaged in the steering committee, now firmly reacts to Rose's statement: "We, teachers, decide, not the headteachers". The moderator again makes a corrective comment, saying that a successful organisation is confronted by the question of how much individual freedom it allows teachers. Then, headteacher Lisa interferes and supports Rose's criticism with the argument that "the ministry indeed fosters the hierarchisation of schools, for example by introducing superintendents directing the headteachers. But we vehemently oppose this development". Finally, Patricia closes the controversy by saying in her usual soft voice "in our school, we go another way" – leaving unsaid what she means by it.*
>
> *(Shortened and revised extracts of field notes, 15.10.2011)*

The outsiders' perspective on distributed leadership, power and autonomy provokes vehement rejection and brings controversial understandings of autonomy to the fore. Rose and the moderator, even though from opposing standpoints, address the "autonomous school" as a hierarchical organisation: Rose, based on her experiences within a managerial context, is criticising distributed leadership for curtailing teacher autonomy and for securing teacher commitment to reforms that have been externally determined (Hall, 2013). In contrast, the consultant reproduces the NPM discourse on school autonomy with schools marketing customers in quasi-markets; although public schools in Switzerland did not receive the amount of autonomy she invokes, but rather, pupils are still distributed to nearby schools by local school boards.

The managerial framework suggested both by Rose, and the consultant is rejected by those team members in leading positions: Christine's insistence that teachers decide in the school appeals to the autonomy teachers enjoyed in the past, when hierarchies in school teams were absent and decisions were taken at the teacher assembly. Headteacher Lisa positions herself as part of the team and criticises the ministry for hierarchising governing relations on the municipal level. Patricia exempts the school from the predicted negative development; with the "we" she invokes the collective identity of the staff members that together choose another route. To our surprise, the striking distinction between the managerial orientation of the moderator and the identification of the headteachers with the former egalitarian school organisation did not grow into an open discussion during the workshop.

Decision-making and results

The teachers' discussions and working in small groups on the content of the new school programme resulted in the following priority list of objectives:

1. School internal communication
2. Concept "continuing education"
3. Project week (a week with a special programme for the whole school)
4. Concept "integration" [4]
5. Implementation of the new curriculum (*Lehrplan 21*)[5]
6. Concept "vulnerability"

At first sight, this participative process which involved democratic decision-taking seems to reflect the priorities of the teaching staff. However, our analysis identified only Nr 1 and Nr. 3 as genuine concerns of the teacher team, which was already apparent during the workshop's engaged discussion. As our fieldwork continued, we learnt that the other four priorities were, in fact, policies put on the agenda by the authorities: by the ministry (Nr. 2, Nr. 5), by the municipality according to the general guidelines of the ministry (Nr. 4) and by the municipal headteachers' conference (Nr. 6). Thus, although the objectives were defined during a participative process, the school programme includes only two subjects which were chosen by the teachers themselves, while the majority of goals were defined by the authorities. These subjects were partly put on the list by the

[4] «Integration» is the dominant term concerning inclusion policy used in Switzerland (Svaton, 2017).

[5] This is the first intercantonal curricula of the German-speaking cantons, which is part of a broader project to harmonise public schooling (https://www.lehrplan21.ch/; access: 11.04.2022).

headteachers as leftovers from the last school programme or were brought in, again by the headteachers, during the discussion.

Even though these external goals were not openly assigned as obligatory, they survived the joint discussions and evaluations, by which the priority list underwent several transformations. As the workshop constituted the beginning of our fieldwork and our attention was focused on getting to know the teachers, the atmosphere at the school and the character of the relations, it might well be that we did overlook strategies that kept the mandatory policies on the list. Interestingly, however, possible manipulations to transform external demands into the school's priorities were so subtle and smooth that they escaped the attention of us observers and did not provoke open resistance by team members.

Discussion

The participative workshop to outline a school programme emerges as an outstanding occasion where self-governing practices are intertwined with governing technologies (Heinrich & Kussau, 2016). The imperative to develop a school programme makes teams responsible for changing their practices. Thereby, with its participatory elaboration, the school programme enacts the objectives and development plans as objectives of the school team. As the development direction is primarily pre-defined by mandatory policies, recommendations or general trends, the school programme is centrally an instrument to transform top-down steering into self-guidance of the school (Hangartner & Svaton, 2020).

However, the transformation of governing policies into self-direction did not work out straightforwardly. Some teachers at the school responded to the governmentality of the school programme with counter-conduct against the demanded ways of how they should

govern themselves and their pupils (Demetriou, 2016). During the workshop, we observed how some teachers disregarded the recommendation of the external moderator on how to design projects, but they continued to plan teaching projects as they were used to doing it. While teachers did not openly oppose the objectives of the school programme during the workshop, we could observe during the following fieldwork how teachers reacted with diverse strategies of resistance against the mandatory reform objectives. Patricia informed the teachers during a conference that the headteachers would start to control the fulfilment of the requirements of the continuing education concept, she received heated reactions. Teachers bemoaned their heavy workload and asked the headteachers to relieve teachers from this obligation. On this occasion, Patricia and Lisa came under pressure and had to defend their intention to control whether teachers met the ministerial requirements and no longer wanted to accept that teachers disregarded the orders. A second example: At another teacher conference, the headteachers reprimanded the disregard of the vulnerability concept and admonished teachers to discuss the pupils, who might be exposed to harm, as demanded. Alternatively, to mention a third example: the municipal integration concept, which had already been postponed from the former school programme, was again not tackled during the fieldwork period. In conversations, teachers questioned the reform, arguing that although they supported the aims of inclusive education, they could not implement the expected changes due to the lack of resources. Terhart (2013) identifies this argument as the main reason why (German) teachers tend to resist reforms that demand to change their teaching practices.

In an interview at the end of our fieldwork, Lisa reflected on why the pedagogical development of the school team was not advancing in the way that she intended:

> *At the moment, our team seems to be sluggish, maybe tired. If somebody is needed to take the initiative and do some extra work, you have to wait endlessly, and nobody is willing to engage for it. (…) We are better at team development than in pedagogical development. I hope the development of teaching will be the priority of the next school programme. That would be related to inclusive education questions, individualised learning and learning landscapes, and diversity and heterogeneity. These trends are a huge challenge for most of our teachers. I think these are the core issues. I wish that we would dig deeper into these pedagogical issues. (Interview Lisa, 22.04.2013)*

In this interview, Lisa seems to be somewhat disillusioned and disappointed about the reluctance of her team to engage in projects which extend the daily work in the classroom. By identifying with teachers' perspectives, she addresses the engagement to develop school practices as "extra work" and not as an ordinary part of today's teachers' duties (as the ministry does). In line with it, she does not classify the perceived reluctance as resistance but interprets it as tiredness. By turning her interpretation reflexively, it could be approached as her disillusion and tiredness about the need to motivate and push her teachers, by which she seems to run into the void. Her stance on teacher autonomy is related to her commitment to engaging for social justice and an inclusive school (Woods & Roberts, 2016). As a headteacher, however, she has to mediate between governing policies, the self-governing school and teachers' needs. Thereby, she is put in a position where she is torn between governing policies, her personal pedagogical visions, teacher resistance and her support of teacher autonomy.

Conclusion

Whose autonomy and whose power are brought to the fore by the dispositive of distributed leadership introduced in a "loose" governing context? Under low-stakes accountability conditions, distributed leadership emerges as an important "soft" governing instrument to activate teachers' engagement for the development of their schools and the improvement of their teaching practices (Perrenoud & Tulowitzki, 2021). In contrast to the widespread depiction as a democratisation of leadership, the imperative of distributed leadership in Switzerland mirrors the hierarchisation of power relations among teachers in public schools. Paradoxically, distributed leadership emphasises the agential power of teachers that has only been challenged by NPM reforms. Before, teachers had a great deal of autonomy in practice and took main decisions at the teacher assembly. Distributed leadership is now reformulating teacher agency within hierarchical power relations. Similarly, to a managerial context, distributed leadership emerges as a self-governing instrument to implement reforms that are largely defined by educational policies (Hall, 2013). Correspondingly, teacher autonomy in the sense of the freedom of individual teachers in what they do in "their" classroom is weakened even under "loose" governing conditions: teachers today are demanded to open their classroom doors and to cooperatively develop their practices.

However, the low-stakes accountability conditions produce an opaque field in which power relations in schools are enacted. The superficial proximity of the agency addressed by distributed leadership to traditional teacher autonomy constitutes a contested terrain: Teachers may experience their engagement in processes of distributed leadership as autonomy. Other teachers may perceive the

requested self-transformation as an expression of mistrust. Even in the absence of high-stakes ac-countability, teachers may perceive distributed leadership as a means to harness their willingness to adopt reforms and an increasing workload (Lumby, 2013). In response, teachers may react with resistance against the demand for self-governed transformation. The weak accountability conditions that dispense with regular evaluations and measures of teaching success leave opportunities for passive and active resistance and to maintain traditional routines.

Headteachers are positioned amidst contradictious expectations: they are demanded to activate their teachers to engage in reforms and their self-transformation, while they should care for their teachers and protect them from work intensification. If headteachers aim at initiating changes at their schools, they are dependent on the support and loyalty of teachers. In times of widespread teacher shortage (such as currently in Switzerland), the position of teachers in this bargaining relationship is strengthened. Teachers may use the blurred space between distributed leadership and traditional teacher autonomy – to turn it in their favour. Teachers who do not comply with reforms are (still) able to adopt the demands without initiating significant changes in their teaching (Terhart, 2013). However, it is questionable whether the power to immunise against reforms still deserves to be named teacher autonomy. Teachers' silent resistance against the superfluous evocation of teacher leadership raises the question of how a counter-conduct of teachers, as a critical "art of not to be governed like that and at that cost" (Foucault, 2007, p. 45), could look like. Turning the perspective, it asks how a democratically inspired approach to distributed leadership and school autonomy

could be formed in that it takes the agency and autonomy of teachers seriously.

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Knowledge Production in the Field of Educational Administration in Turkey: Evaluation of Dissertations within the Context of Habermas's Knowledge Taxonomy

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Abstract

In recent years, significant efforts have been made by Turkish researchers to contribute to knowledge production in the field of educational administration to match the scholarly endeavor of their international peers. The main purpose of these scientific studies, including dissertations, is to produce knowledge and offer original alternatives to solving problems through several philosophical approaches. Consistent with this effort, the present study aims to evaluate the dissertations produced in the field of educational administration epistemologically as well as ontologically, in respect of Habermas's knowledge taxonomy. The research was conducted using document and discourse analysis, which are qualitative research methods, and 215 dissertations prepared in 23 different universities accessed from Council of Higher Education Thesis Center database were analyzed. The results show that Eskisehir Osmangazi, Hacettepe and Ankara Universities take the lead in the production of

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dissertations. It was found the number of males was higher in both researcher and supervisor positions, that mainly quantitative research methods were used, and that empirical-analytical knowledge was produced. The limitation of historical-hermeneutical/interpretative and critically oriented knowledge types is another original finding. The dataset included only dissertations and excluded other sources from Turkey. The authors believe that this study will serve as basis for a better understanding of the current features of the field. In addition, this study, which was conducted in a non-Western country, is expected to affect the knowledge production trend in the field of educational administration and support the diversity of knowledge in dissertations, which are detailed studies shedding light on the future.

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Introduction

One of the main features of scientific studies is that they give causal explanations, which researchers aim to do by making use of plentiful sources and referring to different techniques. Questioning the knowledge produced before, during, and after this intensive process is also an important task of researchers. Feyerabend, (1991; 2011) argues that being the slave of incomprehensible, repetitive, far-off catchwords may lead to being trapped in a narrow-minded ideology. This also points out that scientific studies considering/questioning the

understandings, approaches, and thought systems of the field to which they aim to contribute is indeed a scientific activity in itself.

It is expected that studies on education, an area which has been emphasized, contemplated and studied for years, constitute a wide scientific field based on an important background and also intend to produce solutions to problems (Russell, 1926; 2013). The response to this very expectation is the production of studies of original and innovative nature (Popper, 2017). To that end, one of researchers' meaningful acts is to discuss the work conducted in their field, to explain the progress, and to analyze the big picture (Bush, 2020; Fazliogullari & Kurul, 2013; Gunter, 2006) in a holistic fashion. Producing knowledge is possible by performing all scientific activities with a scientific attitude—from small-scale studies to comprehensive studies such as dissertations.

At this point, it becomes necessary to focus on dissertations, which are written with a considerably high level of effort, in particular bearing in mind the production and circulation of knowledge of the specific field, discipline, or area of study. These studies are generally the ones through which information is refined and where solid solutions to problems are expected to appear. Kuhn (1962/1995) defines science as a process, and in this direction, dissertations are among the most important of scientific studies; they are one group of comprehensive studies proposed with the claim of generating novel forms of knowledge. They are, in their most basic form, studies presented at the end of doctoral programs. In addition, dissertations are scientific activities involving academic endeavors in which *factual* (*descriptive*) and *theoretical* (*explanatory*) processes are conducted with the help of scientific referencing, research, and methods in a unified manner. The understanding of continuity as well as revolution in

scientific studies is of great importance with respect to dissertations and for the fields in which, and for which, these dissertations are written.

Educational administration (EA) is an important field that has made significant progress apropos of theory and practice in relatively recent years (Bush, 2021; Hallinger & Kovacevic, 2021; Uslu Cetin & Ozdemir, 2021), and it has attracted significant attention with its main study subjects such as leadership, management, performance, and decision-making (Oplatka, 2016). Thus, scientific studies in the field of EA cast light on numerous areas, from the management of educational institutions (Bush, 2018) to teacher training (Kaya, 1984) and from addressing theoretical knowledge (Beycioglu & Donmez, 2006, Evans, 2022) to examining organizational factors (Kosar & Calik, 2011). In fact, studies in the field of EA are progressing with great momentum in certain territories. One of the countries that have accelerated its contribution to the field in this regard is Turkey (Oplatka & Arar, 2016).

In fact, various studies, including dissertations, have indicated that Turkey is one of the countries to have significantly contributed to EA literature (Kazanci Tinmaz, 2020; Mertkan et al., 2016). Moreover, avoiding repetition, preserving continuity and innovation, and maintaining the transcendental attitude aim in the studies of the EA field are evidenced in Turkey, as is the case with different countries. Nevertheless, it is observed that a good many studies prepared in the field of EA are also criticized (Cimen et al. 2020; Karadag, 2010). It is emphasized that especially dissertations written in the literature of EA generate several problems in influencing education policies and producing knowledge (Ozdemir, 2017; Ozdemir & Aypay, 2022), and they also show similar characteristics in general (Balci & Apaydin,

2009). According to researchers (Aksu, 2020; Evers & Lakomski, 1996; Fazliogullari & Kurul, 2013), the reasons for this are the insufficiency of tendencies other than positivism and the limitation of self-critique studies. These views raise critical concerns about the epistemic characteristics of the dissertations prepared in the field of EA in Turkey.

Bourdieu (1997/2016) explains scientific attitude as producing original research by deactivating *the mind police*. The inevitability of achieving the *epistemological break*—i.e., reaching the quality outlook that will produce problems instead of solving ready-made problems—supports his aforementioned explanation. At this point, these views strengthen the necessity for the examination of dissertations in the field of EA. Thereupon, the problem of producing solutions in the field of EA and in its study topics proposed by Archbald (2008), Heck and Hallinger (2005), and Oplatka and Arar (2016) reveals *the relevance of an examination* of dissertations as stated in studies in the context of Turkey (Cimen et al., 2020; Kazanci Tinmaz, 2020).

Scientific features of studies, viz. being functional, useful, and explanatory (Griffiths, 1959), are also indispensable for EA, which in and of itself is a scientific field of study (Mialaret, 2018; Oplatka, 2016). It is also innate for science to consider this indispensability as to theoretical accumulation. As a result of this necessity, researchers handled the studies in the field of EA from systematic or bibliographic (e.g., Bellibas & Gumus, 2019; Gunter, 2006; Hallinger & Kovacevic, 2021; Mertkan et al., 2017) and epistemic (e.g., Ayyildiz, 2019; Eacott, 2019; Ozdemir, 2017; Sahin, 2018; Turan et al., 2014) aspects. It is known that the limits of the assumptions surrounding the epistemic accumulation draw the limits of scientific studies (Evers & Lakomski, 1991). From this perspective, it would not be wrong to believe that it is

beneficial to examine the studies in the field of EA through Habermas's (1994) knowledge taxonomy, which is an original epistemic approach that affects many scientific studies. According to this taxonomy, scientific research produces empirical-analytical, critically oriented, or historical-hermeneutic/interpretive knowledge. That said, the investigations about this taxonomy—particularly in the field of EA—are restricted in the national and international contexts. Considering these, the examination of dissertations based on this knowledge taxonomy offers an opportunity to review the boundaries of knowledge produced in the field of EA.

Evaluating the quality of the studies that are the sources of education—and more specifically, the ones in the area of administration of education with regard to theory and practice—gives important clues about the course of education (Archbald, 2008; Beycioglu & Donmez, 2006; Evers & Lakomski, 1996; Oplatka, 2016, Uslu Cetin & Ozdemir, 2021). When the necessity of the epistemic analysis of the knowledge produced in the field of EA and its potential contribution to the literature are taken into account, the importance of the current study becomes more visible. In this regard, the study was executed to evaluate the dissertations in the field of EA through Habermas's knowledge taxonomy. In this way, it is believed that the present study will serve to emphasize the epistemic aspect of EA studies prepared in a non-Western society for international readers. Examining the dissertations in the field of EA in Turkey will guide knowledge to be produced by other researchers in the future. Furthermore, efforts toward knowledge production in the field of EA can be strengthened, and types of knowledge produced by the relevant dissertations and trends in this production can be specified.

EA and Knowledge Production in Turkey

EA is a scientific theory and practice field that emerged in the USA at the end of the nineteenth century. Especially with the period of the *Theory Movement*, the production of knowledge reflecting the identity of this field in Western countries in education management accelerated (Ozdemir, 2018). Turkey is one of the countries where many studies are conducted in the field of EA, and significant contributions are made to the literature accordingly.

In recent years, Turkey has been drawing attention with its investments in higher education and EA programs that have developed/diversified in parallel with these processes. This parallelism is also reflected in the knowledge produced within the field of EA in the country. Assuredly, studies prepared in the field of EA contributing to theory and practice are remarkable in this regard; these studies, including dissertations and through which *scientia* is produced in the field of EA, have been discussed by many. Methodological and conceptual analyses (e.g., Fazliogullari, 2012; Isci, 2013; Karadag, 2009; Ozdemir & Aypay, 2022) as well as knowledge-based analyses (e.g., Gulmez et al., 2020; Gumus et al., 2019; Uslu Cetin & Ozdemir, 2021) have also been made. However, among knowledge-based analyses, the existence of studies dealing with dissertations prepared in Turkey in terms of the type of knowledge produced is rather limited. Hence, using the knowledge taxonomy developed by Habermas (1994) while analyzing dissertations can open up a novel chapter in "the collectively written book of EA."

Habermas's Knowledge Taxonomy

Scientific studies intend to produce quality solutions to the problems researched. The solutions proposed become further specified

with the effect of theoretical accumulations (Kuhn, 1962/1995). Arguably, a fundamental source of originality in generating solutions in this manner is Habermas with his knowledge taxonomy (Wulf, 2010). It is inevitable to herein mention the *Frankfurt School* to contemplate Habermas and his school of thought thoroughly. Frankfurt School is the widely used name of the *Institute for Social Research* established within Frankfurt University.

Criticism of positivism and opposition to the hegemony of any theoretical background are the main characteristics of the Frankfurt School (Balkiz, 2004; Ozdemir, 2017). Representatives of the school, including Habermas, offer comprehensive views on this issue. Habermas is a scholar known for his studies on *Theory of Communicative Action* and *Knowledge and Human Interests.* In particular, he discusses the views on the dominance of the ideas of the ruling class (Engels & Marx, 1846/2013) the logic of social sciences (Habermas, 2011), and epistemic processes (Habermas, 1994) in detail. It can be argued that he tries to position critical thinking at the intersecting points of the fields of science and philosophy rather than *against* science.

The assumption that *every scientific attempt involves traces of its researcher* (Guba, 1990), which has long been the subject of discussion in epistemic terms and which has been examined by Habermas as well, brought original dimensions to the studies on the production, classification, and function of knowledge. Habermas attempted to develop a knowledge taxonomy within this context, matching knowledge to human interests. According to this taxonomy, studies are divided into three categories regarding the type of knowledge they produce: (*i*) empirical-analytical, (*ii*) critically oriented, and (*iii*) historical-hermeneutic/interpretive (Habermas, 1994; Terry, 1997).

Empirical-analytical knowledge is based on technical interest, which comprises the objective field of science, and it has the purpose of controlling; conversely, *critically oriented knowledge* is taken as an emancipatory interest (Bottomore, 2013, p. 74). Relief from unconscious pressures is defined as the basic function of critically oriented knowledge (Cevizci, 2018, p. 245). *Historical-hermeneutical/interpretive knowledge* is the language-based, practical interest within individuals or social groups of various sizes, and it serves to understand historical artifacts, cultural, and social accumulation. This knowledge is intertwined with human history and hence has been predefined. This taxonomy, which Habermas (1994) calls *cognitive strategies*, also resembles the triple paradigm (positivist, constructivist, and critical) proposed by Guba (1990). It regards *action* as self-interest and *discourse* as the search for knowledge itself. Knowledge, with a critically oriented discourse, becomes the center of searching for freedom, and the knowledge provided by the critically oriented production notably serves not for exclusion but for the discovery of the idea (l).

Purpose

The attitude about originality in the effort to find solutions to the problems in practice is an acknowledged *raison d'être* of the universities and of the knowledge they produce (Oplatka, 2016). In this context, answering the questions *where we are* and *what we are doing* is vital to reveal the state of scientific knowledge in universities. In this way, preventing unwanted repetitions and even errors can be realized in the knowledge produced in fields, including EA. Studying the dissertations prepared in universities in a country such as Turkey, in which important studies have been presented to the EA literature in recent years, can decipher the knowledge production trend of the field

in Turkish universities. Moreover, such a review may help introduce the non-Western society of the field to an international readership—e.g., to researchers and practitioners—at a time when studies on an international knowledge base in the field of EA are gaining importance. The purpose of this study is then to address the dissertations of the field of EA in Turkey in connection with Habermas's knowledge taxonomy and answer the following questions:

1. What are the basic features of dissertations in EA?
2. What are the research methods used in dissertations in EA?
3. In the context of Habermas's knowledge taxonomy, what are the types of knowledge produced in dissertations in the field of EA?
4. What change is observable in the types of research methods utilized and knowledge produced in dissertations in the field of EA by year?

Method

Design

In the current study, document and discourse analysis, which are qualitative research methods, were combined and used. *Document analysis* is a qualitative research design used in the analysis of written/digital materials (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016), which scholars (e.g., Merriam, 2018; Patton, 2015) believe to be a suitable design for the evaluation of scientific materials such as dissertations and their content; therefore, we attempt to identify, classify and analyze documents. *Discourse analysis* is a qualitative research design that unearths what the subtext is instead of the apparent form of a(ny) text

as well as what purpose the writer of the text serves with this work (Gee, 2010) similar to document analysis. The suitability of discourse analysis to decipher texts—in other words, documents that include dissertations (Balci, 2016)—influenced the preference for this design. Furthermore, this approach allows to bring the diversity of meanings to light (Elliott, 1996). Habermas's (1994) discourse analysis is also connected with *hermeneutics*, which finds a place for itself in knowledge taxonomy. The analysis of the words and sentences within the text, the reconstruction of the meaning by revealing the relations between these, and the uncovering of prominent themes can be described as the essence of this design. Language is closely related to thought (Wittgenstein, 1953/2015) and has a structure that gains functionality through its socio-cultural contexts (Elliott, 1996). Discourse serves to *create insights* through language (Balci, 2016), and it would not be wrong to accept discourse analysis as a language-based analysis method. Habermas (2011) also punctuates that the expressions are not solely sentences, but they do have a background. It turns out that discourses are social realities that must be analyzed rather than simple entities formed by statements. Discourse analysis is the study of language to this spot; however, this analysis requires advanced analysis looking at syntactic and semantic features. The factors that shape, limit or develop thought are clarified through discourse analysis. The language used is at this point is handled with a critical examination and interpretation (Sozen, 2017).

Data Collection Instrument

A data collection tool developed by the researchers was used in the study according to its design framework. While developing the data collection tool, the basic features and classification details of previous studies related to studying dissertations were taken into

consideration. For the development of this process, a broad spectrum approach was taken, and a fair number of studies (Balci, 2008; Balci & Apaydin, 2009; Bellibas & Gumus, 2019; Cimen et al., 2020; Ozdemir & Aypay, 2022; Turan et al., 2014) were checked. In addition, when analyzing the dissertations concerning the types of knowledge they produce, Habermas's (1994) knowledge taxonomy was the main source of reference. Moreover, the view about qualitative studies proposed by Lincoln and Guba (2005) underlining these, which relies on an interpretative/critical paradigm, and the notion that quantitative research is based on a positivist paradigm have been counted on.

Further, studies by Chen and Hirschheim (2004), Guo & Sheffield (2008), and Uysal (2013) are other important pieces of research that guided the process. The details of the types of knowledge produced have been clarified in the data analysis section by referring to the studies by Dijk (1985), Habermas (2005), and Terry (1997). In this case, the researchers developed dissertation evaluation criteria (Figure 1) and coding instructions about the knowledge produced (Table 1) for documental and discursive analysis and then consulted two experts who conducted qualitative research in the field of EA. The dissertations were examined utilizing these two media and Microsoft Excel software.

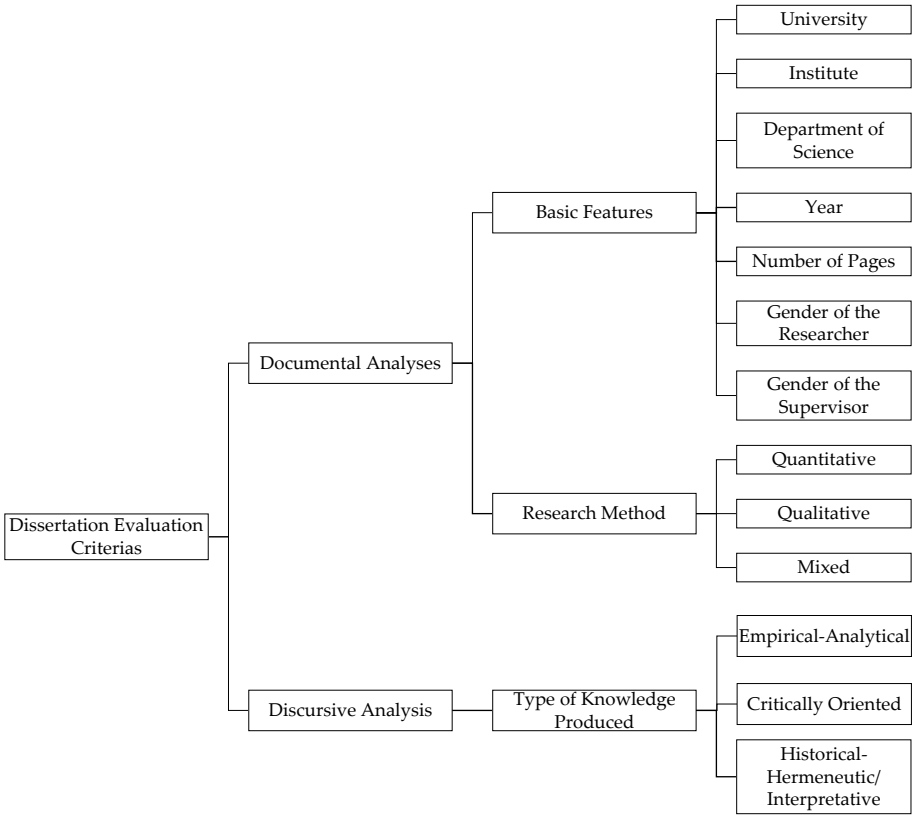

Figure 1. Dissertation Evaluation Criteria

Table 1.

Dissertation Coding Instructions

Basic Features	University, Institute, Department of Science, Year, Number of Pages, Gender of the Researcher, and Supervisor and Characteristics	
		Type
Research Methods	The apparent existence of numerical data, mathematical operations/measurements.	Quantitative
	Using interview forms, not processing the information clearly with numbers.	Qualitative
	Simultaneous use of quantitative and qualitative research methods.	Mixed
Knowledge Type	Prediction and control mechanisms by which research questions are answered; relationships between factors are analyzed.	Empirical-Analytical
	Using authentic language with ideological and political discourses; expressing elements such as freedom, egalitarianism, inadequacy, and discrimination.	Critically Oriented
	The opinions and judgments of the participants are studied, and the cases are handled with positivist and non-critical methods.	Historical-Hermeneutic / Interpretative

Identification of Sources

The sources/documents of the study are the dissertations in the field of EA in Turkey, which have been accessed from the database of the Council of Higher Education Thesis Center (CoHETC). Within the scope of the study, dissertations prepared between 2015 and 2019 were selected as the main sources. The main reason of choosing these years is the economic attitude that must be adopted when generalizing results to larger units, as has been foregrounded in similar studies (e.g., Aydin & Uysal, 2014; Karadag, 2010). It is emphasized that this approach can also methodologically strengthen external validity (Balci, 2016, p. 95), and it was expected that taking the dissertations

completed between the years mentioned above as the source would make it easier to make an inference about the population (Ozmantar Keser, 2018). Another reason for not taking all the dissertations prepared as the source was to be able to work on a different year range. Existing studies on dissertations in the field in Turkey (e.g., Cimen et al., 2020; Fazliogullari, 2012; Isci, 2013; Karadag, 2009; Karadag, 2010; Uysal, 2013) already include dissertations previously prepared and do not investigate the aforementioned time period. In the limited number of studies that refer to dissertations in the recent years (Aksu, 2020; Koksal, 2019; Ozdemir & Aypay, 2022; Uslu Cetin & Ozdemir, 2021), an approach like the one in the present study was not adopted. Thus, we aimed to evaluate the current dissertations prepared between 2015 and 2019 and used the *detailed search>department* tabs in the related database with an eye to obtaining dissertations prepared in the field of EA in different institutes and departments. From here, dissertations in various departments with the inscription of *EA* were obtained (Table 2).

Table 2.

Data Regarding Dissertations Prepared in the Field of EA

Departments	Years					Frequency
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
EA		1	9	6	15	31
EA, Inspection, Planning, and	21	22	13	15	21	92
EA and Inspection				1	1	2
EA and Supervision	8	13	22	14	14	71
EA and Investigation	2	5	2	3	7	19
Total	31	41	46	39	58	215

As seen in Table 2, 215 dissertations from five different departments were obtained in this study and constituted the source.

Data Analysis

The first sections of the dissertations to be addressed were the *title*, *purpose*, and *method*. Then, *discussion*, *results*, and *suggestions* were examined. As for observing the stability of the measurement (Patton, 2015), the researchers were careful not to study a dissertation under several types of information at the same time. In the research, to determine the basic characteristics of dissertations, (*i*) *university*, (*ii*) *institute*, (*iii*) *department*, (*iv*) *year*, (*v*) *number of pages*, (*vi*) *gender of the researcher*, and (*vii*) *gender of the supervisor* were analyzed.

To determine the research methods of the dissertations examined in the study, those in which numerical data were used abundantly alongside designs such as surveys and correlational or experimental research were coded under the (*i*) *quantitative* study category; qualitative studies and non-empirical conceptual studies using interview forms were coded under the (*ii*)*qualitative* study category; and studies in which quantitative and qualitative methods were used together were coded under the (*iii*) *mixed methods* study category. Studies employing quantitative methods and collecting data in a qualitative manner with some questions toward the end of the study were not taken as mixed methods studies; instead, the main method that dominated the dissertation was taken as the basis.

In the specification and categorization of the type of knowledge produced by the dissertations, the researchers conducted examinations from the keywords section all the way to the reference section. Acknowledging discourse analysis involves a process that provides the whole picture of a subject, concentrating on the connections of information, and analyzing meaning through concepts (Dijk, 1985); these aspects were deemed essential. Habermas (2005) makes the following statements on this subject:

> *The approach of empirical-analytical sciences carries technical cognitive interest. Critically oriented sciences contain the liberating cognitive concern at the root of traditional theories, as we have seen. The approach of the historical-hermeneutical/interpretive sciences, on the other hand, include the practical one (p. 314). (…) The methodological framework that determines the meaning of the validity of critically oriented knowledge is formed by the concept of (self-reflection). This frees the subject from dependence on hypostatized forces. Self-reflection is determined by a liberating cognitive interest (p. 316). (…) Empirical-analytical knowledge is therefore a type of knowledge that is dependent on possible prediction. However, the meaning of such predictions is determined only by the rules (that we reach by obtaining data from the field, making analyses, and interpretations) by which we apply the theories to reality. Because in the controlled observation that takes the form of an experiment, we create the initial conditions, and measure the results of the operations performed under these conditions. Empiricism tries to base the objective illusion on the observations described in basic statements. (…) Access to facts from a historical-hermeneutical/interpretative perspective is provided not by observation, but by understanding of meaning. In empirical-analytical sciences, there is interpretation of texts while verifying hypotheses (p. 315).*

The above information, confirmed by Terry (1997), has been the main reference in coding the following type of research under the category of studies that produce *historical-hermeneutical/interpretive knowledge*: (*i*) dissertations in which hypotheses are tested, the relationship between factors is found, and deterministic indications are indicated; dissertations with numerical data and statistical methods (generally using quantitative designs); studies that produce *empirical-analytical knowledge*; (*ii*) dissertations loaded with language

and content values, aiming to liberate human beings by highlighting inequalities and irregularities (generally using mixed methods); (*iii*) studies that construct *critically oriented knowledge*; (*iv*) dissertations that facilitate understanding/description of phenomena where they are examined in their own circumstances (mainly using qualitative research methods). Discourse analysis is built on questioning and interpreting philosophical foundations. Wherefore, what is aimed is not to create categories but to emphasize the existing ones, clarifying the details under the relevant categories (O'Connor, 2006). Resultantly, determining the type of knowledge originated in the relevant dissertations based on the available data, completing the categorization process following the coding directive, and finally questioning the knowledge produced in the current study point to the core of data analysis.

The attitude adopted to enhance the validity of this research involved paying attention to not coding a document under different categories of knowledge, years, or methods simultaneously. Yet another measure taken to boost the validity and reliability of the research is to work merely on the dissertations available at CoHETC. One of the first procedures performed within the scope of the validity and reliability procedures of the study was to get to the bottom of the epistemic and methodological details of the discourse analysis design as discourse analysis is an activity where qualitative methods are evident and in which the goal is to understand how discourse is constructed. Viewed in this way, this analysis is a design in which situations open to discussion, rather than the final results, are proposed. In reality, although discourse analysis does not claim to have the last word on important questions, it can contribute to a certain standpoint (O'Connor, 2006).

Results

The answer to the first question of the study, *"What are the basic features of dissertations in EA?"* is presented alphabetically in Figure 2 and Table 3. Thereby, the basic features of dissertations are provided.

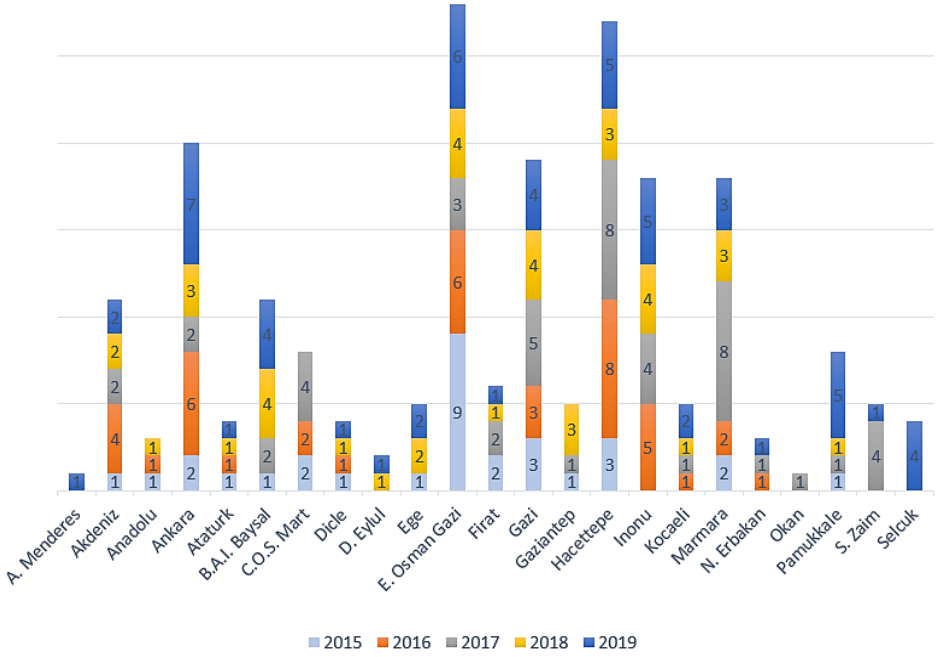

Figure 2. The Studies by Year and By Universities

Table 3.

Basic Features of Dissertations

		Frequency	%
University	Adnan Menderes	1	0.5
	Akdeniz	11	5.1
	Anadolu	3	1.4
	Ankara	20	9.3
	Ataturk	4	1.9
	Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal	11	5.1
	Canakkale Onsekiz Mart	8	3.7
	Dicle	5	2.3
	Dokuz Eylul	2	0.9
	Ege	5	2.3

	Eskisehir Osmangazi	28	13.0
	Firat	6	2.8
	Gazi	19	8.8
	Gaziantep	5	2.3
	Hacettepe	27	12.6
	Inonu	18	8.4
	Kocaeli	5	2.4
	Marmara	18	8.4
	Necmettin Erbakan	3	1.4
	Okan*	1	0.5
	Pamukkale	6	2.8
	Sabahattin Zaim*	5	2.3
	Selcuk	4	1.9
Institute	Institute of Educational Sciences	203	94.4
	Institute of Social Sciences	12	5.6
Department	EA	31	14.4
	EA, Inspection, Planning, and Economy	92	42.8
	EA and Inspection	2	.9
	EA and Supervision	71	33
	EA and Investigation	19	8.8
Year	2015	31	14.4
	2016	41	19.1
	2017	46	21.3
	2018	39	18.1
	2019	58	27.0
Number of Pages	100–150	9	4.2
	151–200	51	23.7
	201–250	57	26.5
	251–300	59	27.4
	+301	39	18.1
Gender of Researcher	Male	124	57.7
	Female	91	42.3
Gender of Supervisor	Male	144	67
	Female	71	33
Total		215	100.0

*Foundation Universities

When the basic features of the dissertations are examined in Table 3 and Figure 2, it appears that 55 dissertations (25.6%) prepared at Osman Gazi and Hacettepe University constitute most of the dissertations produced in the last 5 years, and the ones prepared at Adnan Menderes and Okan University are merely one dissertation for each. Almost all dissertations (97.2%) discussed were prepared at state

universities, and foundation universities take a small part with six dissertations (2.8%). It was found that dissertations prepared in educational sciences institutes are much higher in number (203; 94.4%) than dissertations prepared in social sciences institutes. Within the scope of the study, dissertations in different disciplines were examined, too, provided that they contained the phrase *EA* in their titles. It is thus noteworthy that the number of dissertations prepared in the fields of EA, inspection, planning, and economics (92; 42.8%) is superior to that of the dissertations prepared in the field of EA (2; 0.9%), and inspection constitutes the smallest part of the related dissertations. The distribution of the dissertations by years highlights a regular increase in the number of dissertations (except for the year 2018), so much so that the 55 dissertations (25.6%) prepared in 2019 are almost twice as many as the 31 dissertations (14.4%) prepared in 2015 (Figure 2). With regard to the number of pages, 59 studies (27.4%) with a range of 251–300 pages represent the largest group of dissertations, and with regard to gender, most researchers are male (124; 57.7%), and so are most supervisors (144; 67%).

The answer to the second question of the study, *"What are the research methods used in dissertations in EA?"* is presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Research Methods Used in The Dissertations

Research Method	Frequency	%
Quantitative	110	51.2
Qualitative	45	20.9
Mixed	60	27.9
Total	215	100.0

It is noticed that more than half of the dissertations (51.2%) were prepared using the quantitative research method. Mixed methods research was utilized the most, followed by the quantitative research

method, with 60 dissertations (27.9%). Conversely, 45 dissertations (20.9%) applied the qualitative research method.

The answer to the third question of the research, *"In the context of Habermas's knowledge taxonomy, what are the types of knowledge produced in dissertations in the field of EA?"* is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Types of Knowledge Produced in The Dissertations

Types of Knowledge	Frequency	%
Empirical-Analytical	176	81.9
Critically Oriented	3	1.4
Historical-Hermeneutic/Interpretative	36	16.7
Total	215	100.0

When the dissertations prepared between 2015 and 2019 are examined with reference to the types of knowledge that they produced, it appears that empirical-analytical knowledge was produced in 176 dissertations (81.9%), followed by historical-hermeneutical/interpretive knowledge, with 36 dissertations (16.7%). Nevertheless, it was reported that the smallest group of produced-knowledge type in the dissertations was critically oriented. Critically oriented knowledge was produced in only three dissertations (1.4%).

The answer to the fourth and last question of the study, *"What change is observable with the types of research methods utilized and the knowledge produced in the dissertations in the field of EA by year?"* is presented in Figure 3.

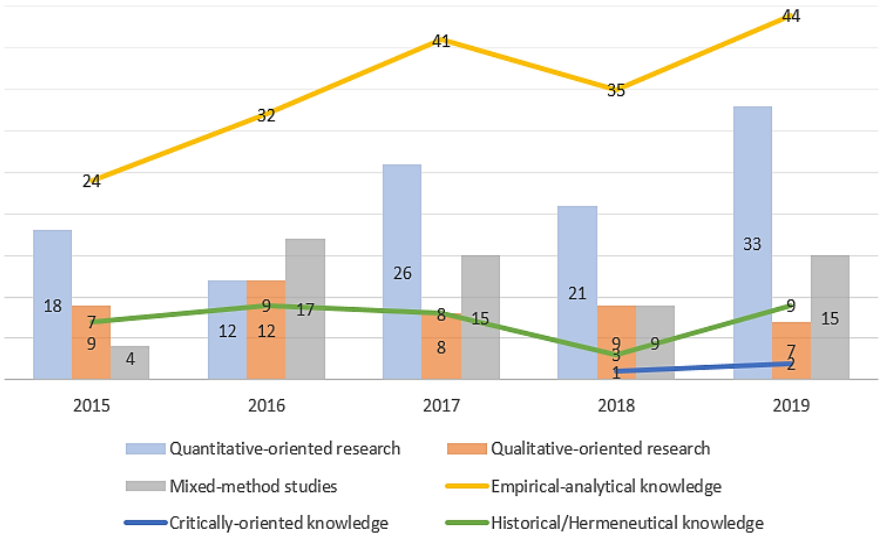

Figure 3. Research Methods and Type of Knowledge Produced by Years

Figure 3 shows the rather fluctuating rise in—and the use of—quantitative and mixed research methods and empirical-analytical knowledge production as well as the limited rise in critically oriented knowledge and the steady course in the use of qualitative research method and historical-hermeneutical/interpretive knowledge production.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, dissertations in the field of EA were examined by alluding to the term "knowledge taxonomy" developed by Habermas (1994). In so doing, we intended to draw attention to the knowledge produced in the universities in the field of EA of Turkey as a non-Western country. Within this frame of reference, 215 dissertations prepared between the years 2015 and 2019 were discussed. The basic features, that is to say, the methods used, and the type of knowledge produced in the relevant studies have been clarified. In the following,

the key findings and limitations of this study are discussed, and recommendations for the field are offered.

The present study comprises four questions. The first is about the basic features of dissertations. As per the main characteristics of dissertations prepared in the field of EA, it is perceived that prominent institutes were educational sciences/state universities, while foundation universities made a limited contribution to knowledge production in the field of EA. Moreover, the majority of both researchers and supervisors were male. Taking a closer look at previous studies that examined the gender of researchers, the results of this study seem to align with their findings (Balci & Apaydin, 2009; Baykara, 2019; Fazliogullari, 2012; Ozdemir & Aypay, 2022). These are notable contributions vis-à-vis revealing the dominant role of educational sciences institutes and male researchers in the field in Turkey.

The second question is about research methods. It is observed that 110 (51.2%) of the 215 dissertations examined had been prepared using a quantitative research method. Similar results had been obtained in previous studies (Archbald, 2008; Balci & Apaydin, 2009; Fazliogullari & Kurul, 2013; Uslu Cetin & Ozdemir, 2021). Demirhan (2015) emphasizes that the dominant research tradition in the field of EA is to make measurements based on opinions, perceptions, and attitudes, and it is suggested the parts are brought together in the studies where research questions/hypotheses are tested. A number of studies in the field of EA (Isci, 2013; Karaca, 2018; Koksal, 2019; Turan et al., 2014) point out that studies deploying quantitative methods, where empirical data are frequently analyzed, are abundant. The present study agrees with the related studies; this may be an original dimension of our research given that the dissertations we disclose in the Turkish context still embrace quantitative research methods.

Consistent with this, another original facet of our study is that it shows how mixed methods research was limitedly preferred but nevertheless preserved its place in the dissertations prepared in Turkey (Bellibas & Gumus, 2019). From this, it can be claimed that Turkish researchers should go beyond their frequently selected research methods to produce more refined knowledge.

The third question is about Habermas's knowledge taxonomy and the types of knowledge produced in dissertations. The findings indicate that dissertations producing historical-hermeneutical / interpretative and critically oriented knowledge represent about one-fifth of the total number. This result implies that a significant portion of the studies are empirical-analytical, for which quantitative methods are used frequently, and that practically oriented studies are prepared. This unbalanced distribution of produced knowledge confirms the conceptualization that no consensus exists on the pathways of knowledge production (Beycioglu & Donmez, 2006, p. 328; Heck & Hallinger, 2005) or on research strategies (Baykara, 2019) in the field of EA. This result is particularly interesting in the Turkish case since the recent research highlights the dramatic performance of Turkish scholars in EA studies (Gulmez et al., 2020; Mertkan et al., 2017). This picture may imply that EA research, which has gained momentum in Turkey in recent years, has an epistemic problem when it comes to dissertations. This is also supported by many studies on dissertations (Fazliogullari & Kurul, 2013; Kazanci Tinmaz, 2020; Ozdemir & Aypay, 2022). Similar to Eastern societies (Oplatka & Arar, 2017), although several Turkish researchers have focused on doctoral programs and dissertations, they have produced restricted hermeneutic/interpretative and critically oriented knowledge in the field of EA in Turkey. The historical-hermeneutic/interpretative knowledge, with the limitation of critically oriented knowledge,

produced in the discussed dissertations assures a skeptical and concerned approach that criticizes the knowledge and cognition style in previous studies (Orucu, 2006; Turan & Sisman, 2013). An earlier study by Osguthorpe and Wong (1993) demonstrates that this is veritably not special to Turkey, and it has a decades of history. Thus, recent studies (Evans, 2022; Ozdemir, 2017) underline the epistemological challenges experienced in the field of EA. In this respect, the current study fills the epistemic criticism gap in the literature that is needed by EA studies both nationally and outside of Turkey.

The fourth question of this study concerns change in the types of research methods utilized and knowledge produced in the dissertations by years. The results illustrate the rising position of the quantitative research method and empirical-analytical knowledge production by years. Considering the research results in general and bearing in mind the relationship between the literature studied and the type of knowledge obtained, it is thought that an original look at the literature and an analysis of it by taking a distinctive stance are essential to arrive at divergent information and consequently disparate formats of knowledge. Thus, there exist studies (Fitt, 2011; Karadag, 2010; Ozdemir & Aypay, 2022) proposing that even the literature discussed in the dissertations is similar to a great extent. In addition, it is thought that problems pertinent to faculty, programs, and opportunities offered at universities may arise, and as a result, dissertations are mainly produced at certain universities—an argument endorsed in other studies (Fazliogullari & Kurul, 2013; Isci, 2013; Karaca, 2018) as well as in ours. When considered in view of access, this situation suggests the problem of delivering and obtaining an equal opportunity for education that continues at the graduate level, that is, in doctoral programs. We argue that the boundaries

between theories and methods are not yet clear in the debate as to which type of knowledge some studies produce in their aspirations toward knowledge production. This may be because the formal environments where educational activities are attained are open systems and are designed in unpredictable structures (Balci & Apaydin, 2009). Should there be a claim at this juncture, it would be that the knowledge production practices in the field of EA are heretofore stuck in solely a single area, even though the tendency appears to have relatively decreased. As a natural consequence of this situation, in the EA area, where a few methods are thought to have been limiting the maneuverability of researchers in producing knowledge, and where conventional methods are predominating, this way of thinking becomes somewhat stronger.

This research has two limitations. First, albeit many recent dissertations have been reviewed, the data source of the study could have been larger. In this vein, conducting research that includes different types of work based on a wider time period may be possible. Notwithstanding, we believe that our epistemological taxonomy can make significant contributions to the understanding of supervisors, doctoral students, and researchers and eventually to knowledge production in the field of EA. Second, at first glance the evaluation and philosophical context of the *modus operandi*—and even of "rituals" of knowledge production through dissertations from Turkey only—may not catch the interest of the international members. Nonetheless, we know that the field of EA has been the home of situational knowledge, and the structure of our study may allow international field members to make comparisons through the studies provided (e.g., by checking them against Arabic, African, Asian, and Latin American ones). Finally, we also encourage studies that produce historical-hermeneutical/interpretative and critically oriented knowledge

encompassing elements such as social justice, egalitarianism, inadequacy, and discrimination as well as cases that must be handled with (more) critical methods.

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Retrospective and Prospective Analysis on Educational Leadership: Indicators of Productivity, Dispersion, and Content

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Abstract

This article analyzes the production, performance, impact, and content of scientific documents contained in an internationally recognized database, the Web of Science, that consider educational leadership (EL) thesaurus (title, abstract and/or keywords). To this end, a scientometric study was performed on a sample of 2,181 research documents that met the established inclusion criteria. A co-word analysis was also performed using Hirsch's index (2005), as well as several bibliometric indicators, impact factors, and citation indices (h, g, hg, and q2). The main findings indicate that production on the topic of EL dates back to 1924, although it did not reach a significant level until 2004. Several important points related to the production profile on EL are highlighted: language, area of knowledge and institutions, and authors specializing in the subject. There are several lines of study open in the established periods, and the subjects that should be taken into account in the future are "critical-race-theory," "identity," and "distributed-leadership." The implications and limitations of the study are discussed and ways for education leaders to address new education policies and their practical implications are provided.

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Introduction

There are currently many theories and definitions of the term "leadership", due to the variety of fields in which the concept is applied. Consequently, there is a need to investigate and define the limits and areas of the concept and, more specifically, of educational leadership (EL). Lorenzo Delgado (2004) states that leadership is not understood as an individual or environmental attribute, a definition more appropriate for a director or manager, but that EL is conceptualized as a "function, a quality, and a property that resides in the group and that energizes the organization [...] to generate its own growth in terms of a shared mission or project" (p. 195-196). Novak's (2002) vision is of particular interest in that the author talks about leadership being about people, and EL being about care and ethics in relationships between people, institutions, and society in general.

Several studies argue that the practice of EL is one of the principal factors behind academic achievement and quality of education (Álvarez, 2010; García-Carmona, 2014; O, 2013; Shen et al., 2020). EL is also considered a major influencing factor in school improvement (Leithwood, Aitken, & Jantzi, 2006; Sigurðardóttir, & Sigþórsson, 2016), cultivating a supportive culture, and facilitating teacher learning (Keung et al., 2020). There are several types of EL including distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005), learning leadership, sustainable leadership, and teacher leadership (Harris, 2003). As a

result, EL has been reviewed by numerous authors from multiple perspectives (Arias & Cantón, 2006; Beycioglu & Pashiardis, 2014) such as gender (Antonakis et al., 2003; Cáceres et al., 2012; Cuevas et al., 2014; García-Carmona, Fernández-de-Álava, & Quesada-Pallarés, 2017), student academic achievement (Heck & Hallinguer 2010; Marks & Printy 2003; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003), parent participation at school (García-Carmona, Evangelou, & Fuentes-Mayorga, 2020), social justice (Theoarhis, 2007; Miller, Roofe, & García-Carmona, 2019), and school climate (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Martín et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2020). However, there are few studies aimed at helping us to understand the evolution of EL publications at a multiple country level from when it first appeared in the field of education.

The literature shows that the historical development of EL has been deeply influenced by scholarship from the United States (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, and Australia (Hallinger, 2019; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2019; Kovačević & Hallinger, 2019; Oplatka, 2010). In turn, the literature has been influenced by the leadership school environment of its time, which has changed and become increasingly challenging and complex (Arikewuyo, 2009; Gurmu, 2020). It aims to address changes in society such as diverse student population, personalized learning experiences, inequality, and the use of Information and Communication Technologies, among other factors. Stakeholders' expectations are also high and challenging to address (Gurmu, 2020; Miller, Roofe, & García-Carmona, 2019). All these aspects have had an impact on the evolution of the scientific literature on EL at an international level. In this regard, it is important to ask whether the term has evolution consistently or, in contrast, has suffered fluctuations, and which language, publication formats,

authors, journals, and universities are at the forefront in the subject. In turn, the study of the motor themes that appear to be associated with the study subject will provide practical implications for education leaders to tackle new education policies.

Our review complements other EL reviews (e.g., Castillo & Hallinger, 2018; Flessa et al., 2018; Gumus at al., 2018; Gumus et al., 2020; Hallinger, 2014; Hallinger, 2019; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2019; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021; Hallinger & Kulophas, 2020; Kovačević & Hallinger, 2019a; Kovačević & Hallinger, 2019b; McGinity et al., 2022; Oplatka & Arar, 2017; Wang, 2018; Wang et al., 2017) by employing a scientometric study to examine the production, performance, impact, and content of scientific documents on international EL literature. Our main contribution is the thematic evaluation of the EL concept using SciMat software to summarize the historical development of EL research.

The review addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: How has EL scholarship performed since it first appeared in WoS until 2019?

RQ2: What is the scientific evolution of the term EL over the past eight decades?

RQ3: What topics have attracted the greatest attention from EL scholars?

RQ4: Who are the most influential authors on EL knowledge?

The general objective of this study was to analyze the evolution of the concept of educational leadership (EL) in the Web of Science (WoS) database. To this end, bibliometric analysis and scientific mapping techniques were used to examine the evolution, structure,

and dynamism of keywords. More specifically, the objectives of the study focus on: a) Examining the performance of the scientific production on EL; b) Understanding the scientific evolution of EL; c) Identifying the most frequent topics on EL, and d) Discovering the most influential authors on EL.

Therefore, this study provides an overview of the research performed on EL to date. In order to follow a model accepted by the scientific community, we used the analytical structure used by previous studies taken from Journal Citation Reports (JCR) (Kipper et al., 2020; Rodríguez-García, López-Belmonte, Agreda, & Moreno-Guerrero, 2019; Zhang, Hua, & Yuan, 2018).

Method

Research Design

To address this study and achieve the objectives proposed, we used bibliometrics as a research methodology, and in particular, the sub-field of scientometrics due to its potential in everything relating to investigating, recording, and analyzing academic literature and predicting trends (Martínez, Cobo, Herrera, & Herrera, 2015).

The study's methodological design follows the guidelines and directions of experts in this particular study method (Moral-Muñoz, Herrera-Viedma, Santisteban-Espejo, & Cobo, 2020). Specifically, this research is based on a co-word analysis in line with Hirsch (2005) and various bibliometric indicators, and impact and citation indices (h, g, hg, q^2) (Cobo, López, Herrera, & Herrera, 2011). This gives rise to a series of science maps with nodes that record the production and location of the sub-domains of the constructs connected to EL. In addition, the diagrams highlight the development of the topics on EL

in the previously selected database (López-Robles, Otegi-Olaso, Porto, & Cobo, 2019).

Data Collection and Data Analysis

We followed the guidelines set out in the PRISMA protocol (Moher et al., 2009) to determine the units of analysis: 1-Select the database to be analyzed (WoS); 2-Determine the keywords to be considered (educational leadership); 3-Develop the search algorithm (educational leadership); 4-Select a search by combining the TOPIC process to identify documents that contain the concept to be analyzed in the metadata alluding to title, abstract, and keywords. This process produced a first data report of 2,181 publications. The earliest discovery of the concept of educational leadership (EL) the database dated from 1924. The publications relating to 2020 (n = 33) were eliminated because the calendar year was not completed. Similarly, documents that were repeated or incorrectly indexed (n = 102) were also deleted. This gave a total of 2,046 documents that comprise the units of analysis (Figure 1).

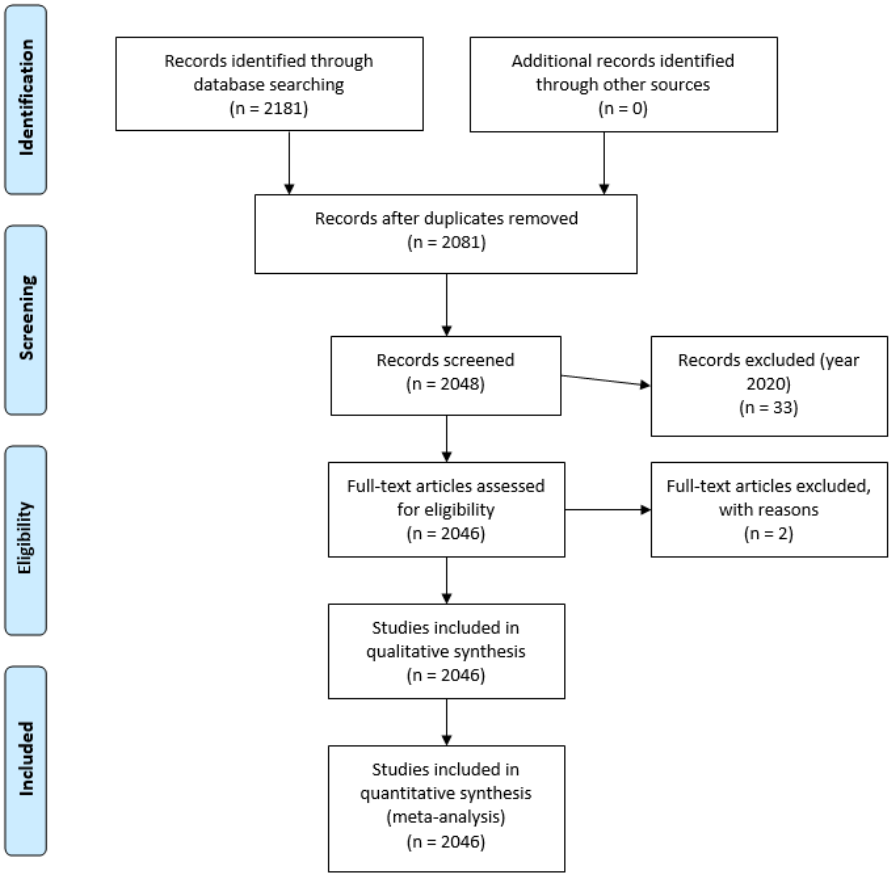


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart

The following were used as indicators and inclusion criteria for the bibliometric analysis (Table 1): year of publication = the entire body except 2020; language ≥ 5; publication area ≥ 40; type of document ≥ 80; institution ≥ 40; author ≥ 15; source of origin ≥ 50; country ≥ 100; citation (the three most cited documents ≥ 230). In other words, we only present data with values higher than those indicated above. The other values are not shown for reasons of space.

In order to determine the bibliometric indicators referring to year, author, country, type of document, institution, language, type and most cited documents in the resulting production, we used Analyze Results and Create Citation Reports (tools integrated in the WoS platform). To perform the structural and dynamic development analysis, we used SciMAT (Montero-Díaz, Cobo, Gutiérrez-Salcedo, Segado-Boj, & Herrera-Viedma, 2018) for an effective co-word analysis to perform the following steps (Figure 2):

- *Detection:* in this step, the keywords in the documents are analyzed (n = 3,653). Subsequently, a map of co-occurrence nodes is generated; a standardized network of co-words is outlined; the most significant keywords are detected after debugging (n = 3,472), and lastly, the most prevalent topics and concepts are represented by means of a clustering algorithm.

- *Visualization:* A strategic diagram and thematic network based on the principles of centrality and density are outlined. The resulting diagrams are divided into four quadrants: top right = motor and relevant issues; top left = developed and isolated issues; bottom left = disappearing or emerging issues; bottom right = underdeveloped and transversal issues.

- *Identification:* In this step, the evolution of the nodes distributed in several time periods or intervals is analyzed. Five periods were configured in the study (P_1 = 1924-2007; P_2 = 2008-2012; P_3 = 2013-2016; P_4 = 2017-2019). The criterion to distribute the periods was that each of the established periods contained an equal number of manuscripts. However, for "author" only one period was configured which covers the entire period (P_X = 1924-2019). To find the link strength, the number of common keywords in the different periods was taken into account.

- Performance: In this step, several production indicators were configured with various inclusion criteria (Table 1).

Figure 2. Co-word analysis steps using SciMAT (Hinojo-Lucena et al., 2020)

Table 1. Production indicators and inclusion criteria

Configuration	Values
Unit of analysis	Keywords authors, keywords WoS
Frequency threshold	Keywords: P_1 = (2), P_2 = 2), P_3 = (3), P_4 = (3) Authors: P_X = (2)
Network type	Co-occurrence
Co-occurrence union value threshold	Keywords: P_1 = (1), P_2 = (2), P_3 = (2), P_4 = (2) Authors: P_X = (2)
Normalization measure	Equivalence index
Clustering algorithm	Maximum size: 9; Minimum size: 3
Evolutionary measure	Jaccard index
Overlapping measure	Inclusion Rate

Results

Scientific performance and production

The total of 2,046 studies show a very irregular distribution of scientific production in the area of study. Although they date back to 1924, their evolution until 1998 is not consistent, given that there are years in which studies on EL are not produced at all. From 1989 to the present day, scientific production was recorded in every year, although it was not until 2004 that the number of scientific productions began to rise, establishing an ascending line, which shows the increasing interest of the scientific community in the field of study. This increase in production can be seen in two particular moments in time, 2007 and 2018. In both years progress stalls and there is a slight decrease in production. In the subsequent years, an ascending line is again shown (Figure 3).

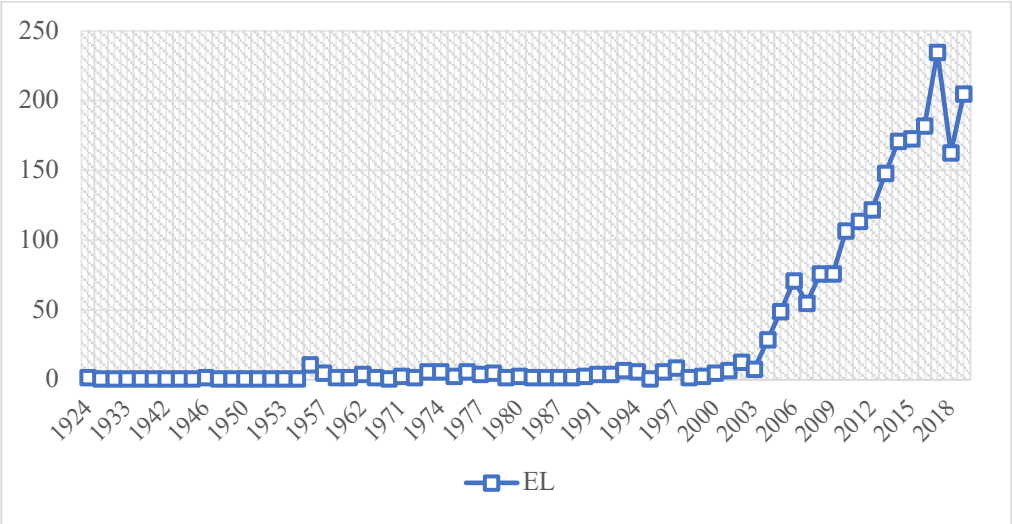


Figure 3. Evolution of scientific production on EL

The language used by the scientific community to present research is English followed, at a considerable distance, by Spanish (Table 2).

Table 2. Scientific language used

Language	EL
English	2033
Spanish	92
Portuguese	7
German	5

The area of publication where most research on the subject is performed is "education & educational research" followed, at a considerable distance, by "management" (Table 3).

Table 3. Area of knowledge

Publishing area	EL
Education & Educational Research	1831
Management	130
Education Scientific Disciplines	47
Social Issues	44

The types of documents preferably used to present research are "articles" followed, at a considerable distance, by "book chapters" (Table 4).

Table 4. Type of document

Type of document	EL
Article	1615
Book Chapter	318
Book Review	144
Proceedings Paper	139
Editorial Material	130

There are no significant differences between the institutions that focus their studies on EL. The University of Texas System takes the lead, closely followed by the University of Missouri System, and the State University System of Florida (Table 5).

Table 5. Institution

Institution	EL
University of Texas System	52
University of Missouri System	50
State University System of Florida	47
University of Missouri Columbia	45
University of North Carolina	44
California State University System	43

As far as level of production is concerned, the most prolific author is Hallinger, P., who has published more than other authors who write on the topic. He is followed by Eacott, S. and Brooks, J. S. (Table 6).

Table 6. Most prolific authors

Authors	EL
Hallinger, P.	47
Eacott, S.	28
Brooks, J.S.	24
Normore, A.H.	21
Young, M.D.	18
Oplatka, I.	16

The three leading research journals on EL in the scientific community are: Educational Administration Quarterly, closely

followed by the Journal of Educational Administration, and the International Journal of Leadership in Education (Table 7).

Table 7. Source of origin

Source	EL
Educational Administration Quarterly	132
Journal of Educational Administration	118
International Journal of Leadership in Education	85
Journal of Research on Leadership Education	81
Educational Management Administration Leadership	80
Journal of Educational Administration and History	59
School Leadership Management	54

The country with the highest level of production is the United States followed, at a considerable distance, by England, and Australia (Table 8).

Table 8. Country

Country	EL
United States	914
England	215
Australia	196
Canada	142

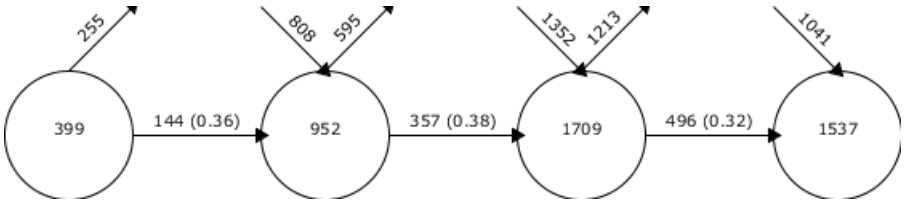
The most cited publication in the scientific literature on EL is Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008), which seeks to analyze the relative impact of different types of leadership on student academic and non-academic achievements. It is followed, at a considerable distance, by the article by Theoharis (2007), and the article by Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) (Table 9).

Table 9. EL: Most cited articles

Reference	Citations
Robinson, V.M.J., Lloyd, C.A., & Rowe, K.J. (2008). The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes: An Analysis of the Differential Effects of Leadership Types. Educational Administration Quarterly, 44(5), 635-674, doi: 10.1177/0013161X08321509	661
Theoharis, G. (2007). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: Toward a theory of social justice leadership. Educational Administration Quarterly, 43(2), 221-258, doi: 10.1177/0013161X06293717	329
Witziers, B., Bosker, R.J., & Kruger, M.L. (2003). Educational leadership and student achievement: The elusive search for an association. Educational Administration Quarterly, 39(3), 398-425, doi: 10.1177/0013161X03253411	254

Structural and thematic development

Figure 4, keyword continuity between contiguous intervals, shows the keywords that enter and exit a given period, in addition to presenting the percentage of coincidence between time intervals. In this case, the percentage of coincidence between periods is less than 40% in all cases. This suggests that the field of study is not based on a firm line of research, but that several research topics are open.



(**a**)

Figure 4. Keyword continuity between contiguous intervals

In performance by academic topic, Table 10 shows the values of the various bibliometric indicators used. In this case, the indicators used are index h, index g, index hg, and index q^2, which provide data on the leading topics in each time period. In the first, second, and third time periods, the topic with the highest h index is "leadership" followed, at a distance, by the other topics discovered. In the last interval, the trend changes, and two other topics are shown to have the highest bibliometric indicators: "context" and "educational-leadership".

Table 10. EL performance by topic

Interval 1924-2007						
Topic	**Publications**	**Index -h**	**Index -g**	**Index -hg**	**Index -q2**	**Citations**
Programs	5	5	5	5	17.61	282
Community	5	5	5	5	11.4	134
Mentoring	7	5	7	5.92	14.14	311
Leadership	21	11	17	13.67	18.76	855
Performance	6	6	6	6	20.2	492
Schools	5	5	5	5	6.32	136
Academic-Staff	2	1	1	1	3.46	12
Educational-Administration	2	1	2	1.41	3	10
Ethnicity	2	2	2	2	20	202
Change	2	2	2	2	6.63	28

Educational-research	2	2	2	2	4	12

Interval 2008-2012

Title	Publications	Index -h	Index -g	Index -hg	Index -q2	Citations
Medical-education	12	7	9	7.94	8.77	86
Achievement	17	11	16	13.27	15.56	992
Social-justice	16	10	14	11.83	12.65	444
Principals	15	8	14	10.58	16.49	411
Leadership	52	15	27	20.12	18.97	856
Styles	2	2	2	2	7.21	30
School-leadership	10	7	10	8.37	11.22	279
Reform	4	3	4	3.46	4.9	28
Programs	4	3	4	3.46	9.95	101
Power	4	3	3	3	5.2	21
Performance	3	2	2	2	36.36	725
Critical-race-theory	4	3	4	3.46	11.36	151

Interval 2013-2016

Title	Publications	Index -h	Index -g	Index -hg	Index -q2	Citations
China	18	10	15	12.25	15.17	261
Performance	29	8	12	9.8	10.95	190
Framework	18	9	15	11.62	14.39	295

Improvement	27	11	17	13.67	14.07	296
Reform	16	7	10	8.37	9.9	120
Perspective	25	9	13	10.82	10.39	186
Leadership	91	17	24	20.2	19.77	885
Principal-leadership	10	5	9	6.71	7.75	134
Gender	11	5	6	5.48	6.32	43
Professional-development	8	4	6	4.9	6.63	49
Methods	5	4	5	4.47	4	27
Special-education	5	4	5	4.47	9.17	65
Research-development	3	3	3	3	9	101
Foucault	2	2	2	2	6.93	27
Higher-education	4	3	4	3.46	4.9	36
Educational-policy	3	3	3	3	6.48	48
Leadership-preparation	4	3	4	3.46	5.74	31
School-improvement	4	3	4	3.46	6.48	45

Interval 2017-2019						
Title	**Publications**	**Index -h**	**Index -g**	**Index -hg**	**Index -q2**	**Citations**
Asia	32	7	13	9.54	10.25	190
Gender	19	4	6	4.9	5.29	45
Reform	19	4	7	5.29	6	69
Performance	18	4	6	4.9	6.32	46
Equity	24	3	4	3.46	3.87	29
Students	16	4	5	4.47	4.9	36
Context	23	8	14	10.58	12.65	200
Professional-development	12	4	9	6	8.94	94
Educational-leadership	116	8	14	10.58	12.33	322
Outcomes	12	2	4	2.83	4.9	24
Distributed-leadership	11	4	4	4	4.47	27
Engagement	8	4	6	4.9	6	45
Critical-race-theory	6	2	3	2.45	4	15
Mainland-China	3	1	2	1.41	2	5
Identity	6	3	3	3	4.58	18
Bourdieu	4	1	1	1	1.41	3
Students-outcomes	3	1	1	1	1.41	3

The interval tables show data on the significance of each topic in the established time periods through a grouping process. Callon's centrality and density measures were used to study the degree of interaction of a thematic network with respect to another thematic network from two different angles. Centrality analyzes the external link strength with other topics by measuring the significance of a topic in the development of a certain field of research. Density analyzes the internal link strength of the network, identifying the internal links between all the keywords that are grouped around a specific topic, thus providing the degree of development of the field of study analyzed. In the first period, the motor themes are: "mentoring", which is linked to "leadership-preparation", "advancement", "national-commission", "educational-leadership", "gender", "women", "capacity-building", and "research"; "programs", which is linked to "mathematics-achievement", "size", "Netherlands", "model", "principals", "teachers", "professional-development", and "instruction", and "community", which is linked to "critical-race-theory", "women-administration", "policy", "school-leadership", "race", "equity", and "reform".

In the second period the motor themes are: "achievement", which is linked to "school-performance", "improvement", "outcomes", "institutions", "educational-leadership", "management", "principal-leadership", and "instructional-leadership", and "reform", which is linked to "quality", "public-education", "policy", and "system".

In the third period the motor themes are: "framework", which is linked to "administration-preparation", "interest-convergence", "preparing-leaders", "students", "principal-role", "social-justice", "diversity", and "preparation-programs"; "reform", which is linked to "redesign", "implementation", "assessment", "complexity",

"principals", "accountability", "curriculum", and "principal-preparation"; "performance", which is linked to "transactional-leadership", "commitment", "validity", "meta-analysis", "job-satisfaction", "instructional-leadership", "achievement", and "transformational-leadership"; "China", which is linked to "culture", "curriculum-reform", "Hong-Kong", "context", "school-change", "management", "impact", and "Asia", and "improvement", which is linked to "outcomes", "fit-indexes", "teacher-learning", "secondary-school", "school-leadership", "student-achievement", "distributed-leadership", and "capacity".

In the fourth period, the motor themes are: "Asia", which is linked to "Vietnam", "China", "Malaysia", "Journals", "Management", "principal-leadership"; "instructional-leadership" and "knowledge-production"; "reform", which is linked to "performance", which is linked to "Vietnam", "China"; "Malaysia", "journals", "management", "principal-leadership", "instructional-leadership", and "knowledge-production"; "equity", which is linked to "youth", "leadership-preparation-programs", "authentic-leadership", "partnership", "social-justice", "classroom", "social-justice-leadership", and "inclusion"; and "context", which is linked to "progress", "east-Asia", "improvement", "community", "styles", "leadership", "values", and "decision-making".

In the last period, given their location in the diagram as "unknown subjects" the following topics should be taken into account "critical-race-theory", "identity", and "distributed-leadership", as they may be the trend in future research on EL or, in fact, disappear completely (Figure 5).

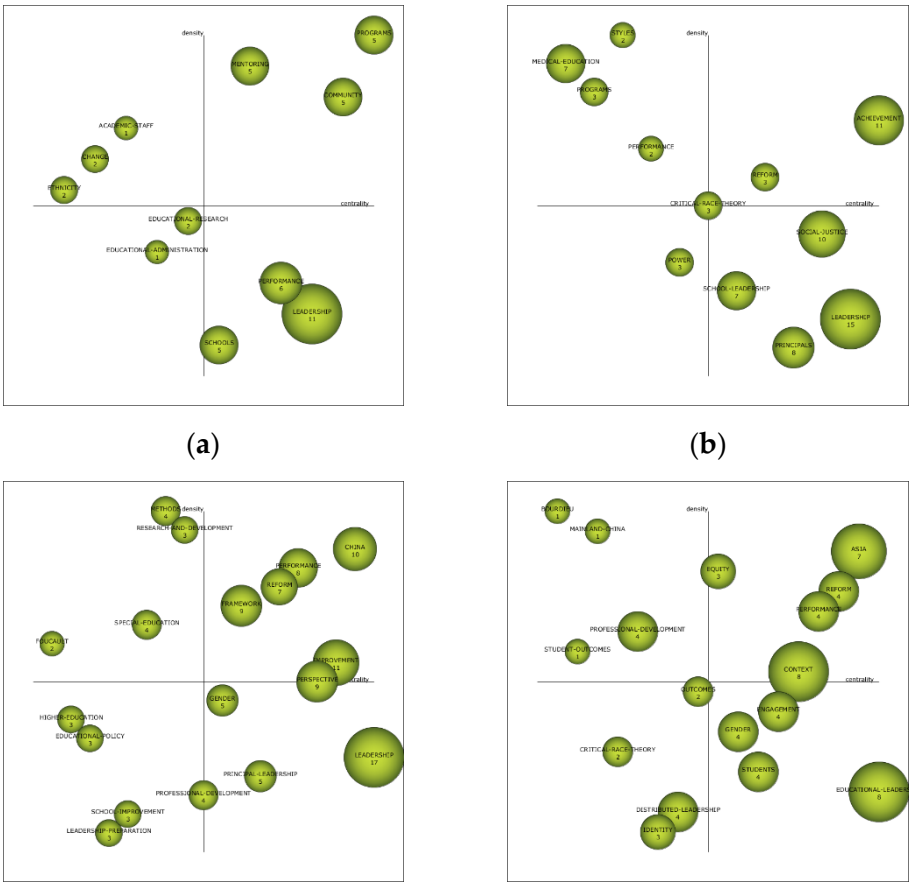


Figure 5. Strategic diagram by EL index-h

Note: (**a**) Interval 1924-2007; (**b**) Interval 2008-2012; (**c**) Interval 2013-2016; (**d**) Interval 2017-2019.

Thematic evolution of keywords

Thematic evolution represents the strength of the relationship between topics in the various intervals bearing in mind the Jaccard index. Evolution occurs if a topic in a given interval shares keywords

with the previous or contiguous intervals. The more keywords topics have in relation to consecutive intervals, the stronger their evolution. The two types of connections that can occur are: continuous line, where the connection is thematic; and discontinuous line, where the connection is by keywords. The thickness of the lines shows the strength of the relationship between the topics.

Bearing in mind the data shown in Figure 6, a gap in EL research can be appreciated, given that not a single topic is repeated in the four established periods. This does not mean that there is not a marked line of research. In this case, "leadership" is marked from the first period but from two different paths. On the one hand, there is the line "leadership-leadership-leadership-educational-leadership" and, on the other, "leadership-social/justice-framework-students". In other words, the field of leadership research focuses on leaders themselves, but also the influence of leadership on students and social justice. Furthermore, topics vary over time. Those in the first period focus more on leadership and educational communities, while those in later periods evolve towards aspects more related to leadership at different stages of education, developing actions, and equity. It should also be noted that there are more thematic than conceptual connections, which highlights a close relationship between the different fields of study, despite the wide range of topics.

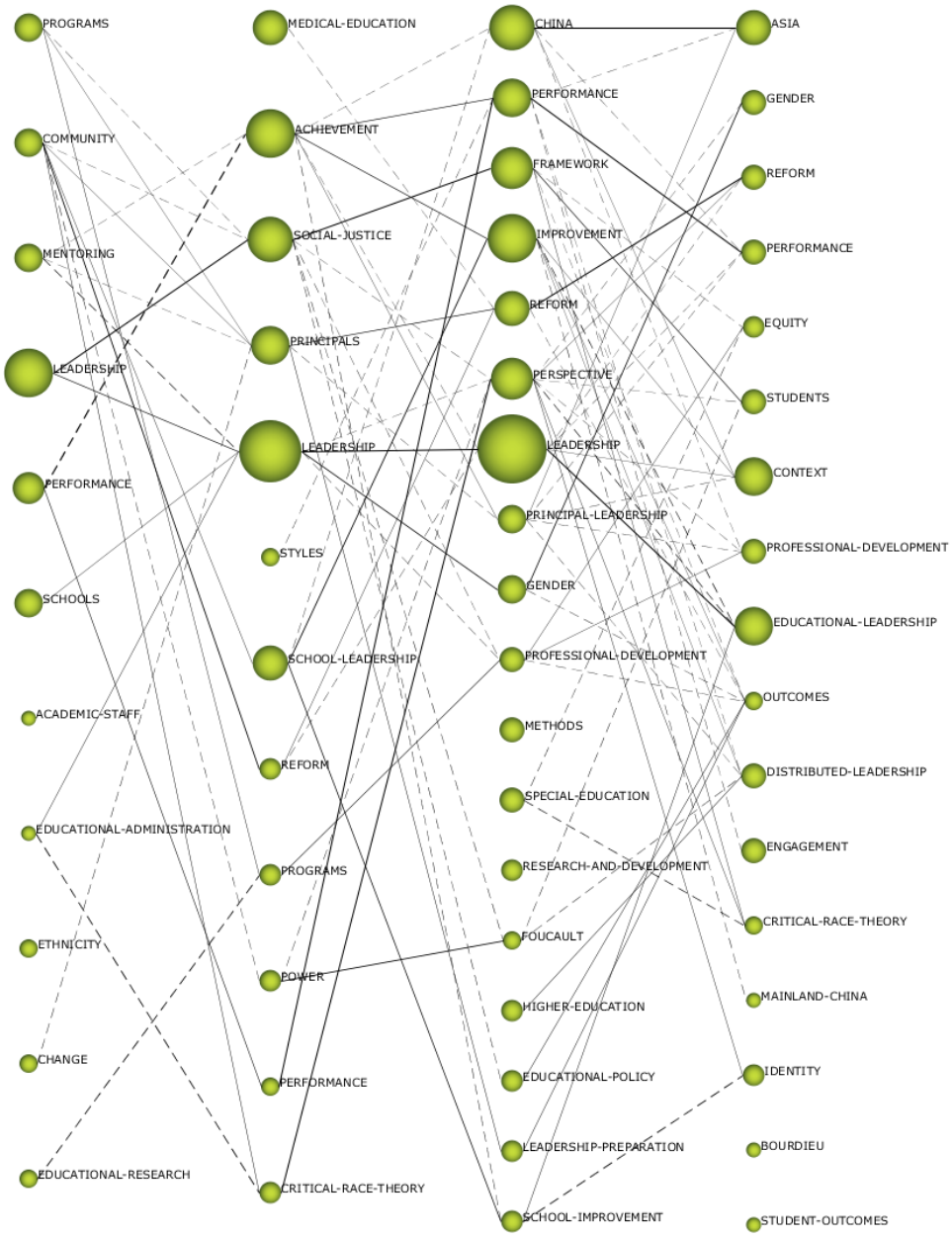


Figure 6. Thematic evolution by h-index

Authors with the highest relevance index

According to the analysis, the most influential authors in scientific production on EL are, in order of importance, Hobgood[1], C., Normore, A.H. and Beaty, D.M. However, authors Walker, K., Mansfiled, K.C., and Gunter, H. should be kept in mind as they may become relevant in coming years given their location in the diagram. Additionally, the size of the circle of Hallinger, P., which has an h index of 11, highlights the importance of his scientific production (Figure 7).

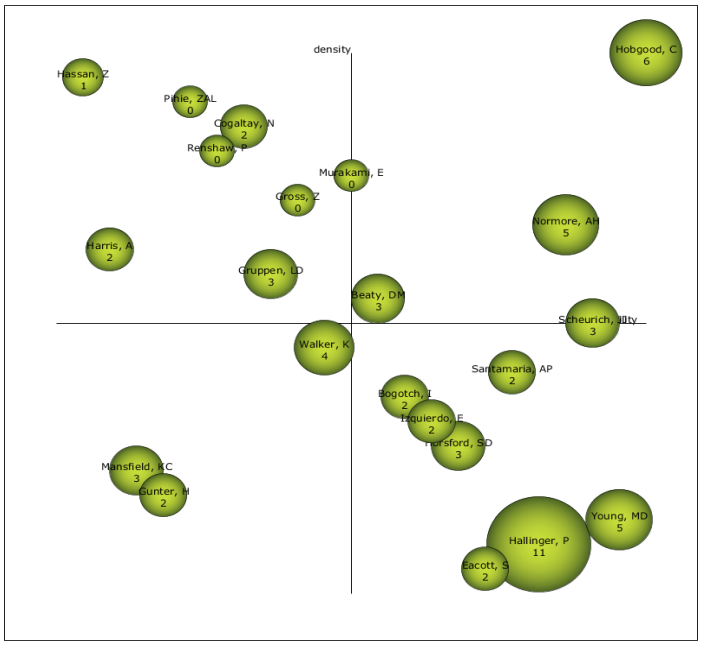


Figure 7. Strategic diagram of authors from the entire production

[1] It should be taken into account that the program performs statistical analyses. In this case, the analysis is not conducted according to the volume of production, but by correlations between authors, citations received, and number of authors in the manuscripts, among others. The number of citations an author receives should not be confused with the author's relevance.

Discussion and Conclusions

Educational leadership is commonly discussed in educational research and practice. The main purpose of this review was to analyze the production, performance, impact, and content of scientific literature on "Educational Leadership" in the internationally recognized database Web of Science. To this end, a scientometric study was performed on a sample of 2,181 scientific documents that met the established inclusion criteria.

The main findings indicate that the production on the theme of EL dates back to 1924, although it did not reach a significant level until 2004, when production increased substantially until 2016. In 2017 production fell but increased again in 2018. This data complements other reviews of EL such as Flessa et al. (2018); Hallinger (2019); Hallinger and Kovačević (2019); Kovačević and Hallinger (2019), and Oplatka and Arar (2017).

There are several important points regarding the profile of the production on EL that can be highlighted. First, the predominant language used in studies is English, a fact already detected by Flessa et al. (2018), Hallinger and Kovačević (2019), and Kovačević and Hallinger (2019). This highlights the importance of further research on the subject that takes into account contextual factors relating to the authors and the research performed. Second, the research articles are framed within the area of knowledge "education & educational research", which indicates that the subject matter is firmly established within educational research. Third, by number of publications, the University of Texas System tops the list as the most specialized educational institution in the field. Fourth, the analysis performed determined that the most prolific author on EL is Halliger, P., while

the most influential is Hobgood, C., and the most cited Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008). Fifth, the leading journal on EL is Educational Administration Quarterly. These data influence the fact that the country with most production on EL is the United States, as highlighted by Kovačević and Hallinger (2019). All these data highlight the asymmetry in knowledge despite the increasing body of work on EL from different parts of the world (Walker & Hallinger, 2015), given that schools and school systems are not the same everywhere (Nguyen et al., 2017). The findings also highlight the importance of transnational research on EL to promote a wider perspective and present a holistic and integrative approach in the field (Lumby & Foskett, 2016).

The study also highlights the fact that there is no established line of research, but that several lines of study are open, given the absence of high levels of coincidence between the established periods. Two main lines of research were identified over the time periods, which start from the same point. Both are based on "leadership", although one is more focused from the perspective of leadership as a topic and the other on the influence of leadership on students and social justice. Studies by Huber (2005) and Mestry (2017) support this result. They argue that EL is becoming more diverse and multifaceted, which highlights the need to have professional leaders in school leadership positions.

In turn, the topic with the highest bibliometric index is "leadership", which occurs in the first three periods. In the last period, the trend changes and becomes a variant of "leadership", in this case, "educational-leadership", one of the topics with the highest bibliometric index. It is important to mention that there is no "keyword" that is repeated in all the periods analyzed, which

highlights a change in trends and interests in research on EL. The topics of study evolve throughout the time periods. In the first period, topics are more focused on leadership and educational communities, and evolve towards aspects more related to leadership at different stages of education, developing actions, and equity.

And lastly, it is important to bear in mind that the topics that might be relevant in the future and should be taken into account are "critical-race-theory", "identity", and "distributive-leadership". This fact highlights the trajectory of the term EL. As a result, the trend in future publications will take into account aspects relating to the cultural diversity of today's society from a critical perspective, and studies that focus on distributed leadership, as a chosen model of action, will predominate (Modeste at al., 2020).

Further Research, Implications for Practice, and Limitations of the Study

The aim of this study is to offer researchers an insight into the new trends in EL on the most relevant and interesting topics for the scientific community in the near future. It also aims to show the aspects on which research has been based in recent times, so that researchers have a basis from which to start, develop, or guide their studies. In this regard, research on EL has been linked to terms such as "performance" and "mentoring" (first period), "achievement" and "social-justice" (second period), "improvement" "perspective" (third period), and "equity" and "context" (fourth period). As previously mentioned, the trend in the future will be linked to "critical-race-theory", "identity", and "distributed-leadership". Therefore, as future lines of research, we propose the development of practical applications and pedagogical actions in the field of education that provide answers to the diverse world in which we live and in which educational institutions

developed. The pedagogical actions and public policies that emanate from this research should focus on intercultural education and shared leadership.

There are several limitations presented in this research. First, the debugging of the data presented in WoS, which included duplicate documents and others that were not related to the subject of the study. Second, the fact that the authors of this study decided to maintain a similar number of documents in each time interval due to a question of equity. And lastly, the parameters in this study were established according to the authors' own criteria, as such the results are presented according to size and relevance. Therefore, the data presented here should be analyzed with some caution, given that a change in the parameters established in the study may vary the number and connections in the topics presented.

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Examining the Knowledge Produced in Educational Administration Doctoral Theses with Respect to Functions of Science

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Abstract

This study examines the contribution of the knowledge produced in educational administration doctoral theses to the functions of science, concept and model development, theory formation, scale development/adaptation and application. Content analysis, one of the qualitative methods, was used in conducting the research, which analyzed 122 doctoral theses dated between 2017 and 2020. These compositions were produced at 27 universities that ranked in the top 500 globally in CWUR (Center for World University Ranking) 2020. The results showed that the knowledge produced in the theses was mostly descriptive. However, there were a few experimental theses that reached the control level and contributed to the application with a concept, model, theory creation and scale development/adaptation. The findings offer implications that can guide future research in the field of educational administration.

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Introduction

This study contributes to the assessment and evaluation upon the scientific quality of knowledge produced in the field of educational administration and acts as a guide to increasing this quality. Findings its roots in the beginning of the 20th century, the field of educational administration has been the subject of much debate as its identity and newly-constructed knowledge base have been frequent targets of criticism (English, 2003; Evers & Lakomski, 2012; Greenfield, 1973; Oplatka, 2008). From time to time, issues such as the methods used, the accuracy of the produced knowledge, the contribution of the philosophical approach to the field (Willower, 1985, p. 5), the polarization of paradigms, and the uncertainty of the boundaries of the field (Oplatka, 2008, p. 4) have been discussed. According to Donmoyer (2020, p. 344), none of these issues have been solved and so they continue to create challenges well into the 21st century. The infrequent reviews of the knowledge of the field on national and international scales (Ahmed, 2020; Archbald, 2008; Berkovich & Eyal, 2017; Castillo & Hallinger, 2018; Hallinger & Chen, 2015; Hammad, Samier & Mohammed, 2020; Hallinger & Kovacevic, 2021; Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Gümüş, Bellibaş, Esen & Gümüş, 2018; Gümüş, Bellibas, Gümüş & Hallinger, 2020) were done. Philosophical and epistemological studies (Donmoyer, 2020; Evers & Lakomski, 2012; Fitz, 1999; Haller, 1979; Oplatka, 2008; Oplatka, 2016) have also tried to

suggest solutions to the field problems regarding the produced knowledge. Noting that the most important element in the scientization of a field of study is the scientific quality of the produced knowledge (Yılmaz, 2018), it can be said that the aforementioned studies are important and should be multiplied for varying contexts.

When we look at the Turkish context of the knowledge production in the field, it is seen that various problems are evident, and yet ignored on an epistemological, ontological and methodological level (Turan, Bektaş, Yalçın & Armağan., 2016, p. 100). Failing to put theory into practice (Beycioğlu & Dönmez, 2006; Kısa, 2016), designing studies that are solely descriptive, lacking creativity and not contributing to the practice (Balcı, 2008; Demirhan, 2015; Yılmaz, 2018) are just some of these difficulties. Unless this is corrected, knowledge generated in the field will be unable to provide effective solutions to the problems in educational applications (Özdemir, 2017). There are studies (Balcı, 1991, 2008; Beycioğlu & Dönmez, 2006; Çelik, 1997; Demirhan, 2015; Takmak 2019; Turan, 2004; Turan & Şişman, 2013; Örücü & Şimşek, 2011) that evaluate the knowledge produced in the field in terms of theory and in the context of the field of science. There are also studies (Aydın & Uysal, 2011; Karadağ, 2009; Polat, 2010; Turan, Karadağ, Bektaş, & Yalçın, 2014) that examine theses and books produced in the field. However, only a few studies (Ayyıldız, 2019; Özdemir, 2017; Şahin, 2018) are focused on the epistemological evaluation of the knowledge of field.

The literature review focusing on philosophical and epistemological studies revealed that there is no research that deals with the knowledge of the field regarding the functions of science. This study can determine the extent to which knowledge production in the field fulfills the functions of science (situation and explaining,

predicting, controlling functions), namely, identifying the strengths and weaknesses in putting the knowledge produced into practice. Thus, it can reveal the main points to be considered in order to increase the scientific quality of the knowledge. In addition, the research findings can provide guidance to supervisors and students in determining doctoral thesis topics, as well as in clarifying the type of knowledge to be acquired from the theses. The results of this study can also help policymakers determine and regulate the science policies of countries. At the same time, it can lead institutions to improve the processes behind thesis creation. By associating doctoral theses with the problems in the real life, the knowledge production targeting those problems can be encouraged. For example, what school principals have experienced in the current pandemic crisis, such as the effects of the refugee crisis on internationalization in higher education.

As in all fields of science, knowledge production in educational administration is realized through the stages of description, prediction, and control (Özdemir, 2018). Producing qualified knowledge in a field plays a key role in the development of policies, solving problems in practice, and scientificizing the field. For this reason, in determining the theses' topics and the research design, the efforts should target the control stage in addition to description and prediction. Although difficult in social sciences, research designs in theses should fulfill the functions of prediction and control. The theses that ignore the factors affecting phenomena and lack research designs to control the situation applying the required measures may not provide an adequate contribution to the educational administration. In order to find solutions to the real problems of the practitioners of the field, it is necessary to produce results for the application that reach the level of control. Özdemir (2017) states that some of the reasons

why this does not happen are the fact that the field of educational administration is still trying to build its own unique identity and the weakness of the theory-practice link, which is seen as an obvious problem in the field. According to the researcher, philosophical studies aimed at determining the epistemological, ontological and methodological boundaries of the field are limited. In addition, the production of research within the framework of academic career and the consideration of individual benefit rather than social benefit prevents the establishment of theory-practice bond. This results in the inadequacy of the contribution of the knowledge produced in the field to real society and ensures ongoing education problems. Similarly, Coburn and Stein (2010) state that researchers primarily focus on problems arising from their own interests, rather than the needs of practitioners who already have limited access to research findings produced in the field. Swafford (1990, p. 11) added that only 7% of research in the field of educational administration is related directly to itself, namely its philosophical context. Turan and Şişman (2013) argue that while determining the research topics, it is necessary to focus on the ontological problems related to the essence of educational administration, to go from practice to theory and to develop field-specific theories when necessary.

Importance and purpose of the research

In this research, the produced knowledge via doctorate theses in educational administration was examined in terms of its contribution to the functions of science, concept and model development, theory formation, scale development/adaptation, and practice. This research is also directly related to the field of educational administration. This also investigation is important since it provides

recommendations for future studies in addition to focusing solely on educational administration.

Answers were sought to the following problems to fulfill the purpose of this study.

1. What is the frequency distribution of the theses with respect to methods?

2. What is the frequency distribution of the theses with respect to describing the situation and the explaining, predicting and controlling functions of science?

3. What is the frequency distribution of the theses with respect to their contribution to concept and model development, theory formation, scale development/adaptation, and practice?

Conceptual Framework

Reviewing the Knowledge of the Field and Doctoral Theses

The nature of the produced knowledge in a field of science can give important clues about its developmental level. Oplatka (2008) explains that a review of the produced knowledge will reveal the trends in the development of knowledge production in educational administration. Heck & Hallinger (2005) assert that examining the knowledge of the field is useful in understanding the practical problems and evaluating research methods. Such reviews and examinations may contribute to the very process by making the field a more respected discipline in the future (Hallinger, 2014). Along with providing information regarding the scientific quality of the knowledge produced, a systematic and holistic examination of the

studies conducted in different countries can also provide the solution to management and control problems in educational organizations.

The production of knowledge through doctoral theses is significant, as the doctorate degree is still considered highly prestigious in academia (Ödemiş Keleş & Tonbul, 2020, p. 668). Doctoral theses, which are among the most original studies, differ from master's theses with respect to information synthesis and to their contribution to the field (Neuman, 2014). Through these theses, faculty members and doctoral candidates in the field of Educational Administration are able to comprehend the logic of scientific education and advancement of knowledge (Fairweather, 1996), and practice the management of leadership skills (Archbald, 2008) Aside from making original contributions to knowledge (Trafford, Leshem, & Bitzer, 2014), doctoral theses should also fulfill some of the functions of science during the research process.

Research, including doctoral theses in all fields of science, is often used to describe a thing or an event, explore the relationship between phenomena or predict the future (Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger, 2010). In this context, it is thought that examining doctoral theses is a very effective way to reveal the scientific quality, weaknesses, and strengths of the knowledge produced in a field of science, and how well it corresponds to the real world.

Functions of Science

Objectivism in the knowledge production process explained the role of social science while interpreting social reality by revealing the universal laws of society and human relations in it (Balcı, 2021). Kerlinger (1973) describes the two approaches to science: static and dynamic. These approaches determine the functions of science.

According to these two opposing views, in addition to the classical understanding, explanation, prediction and control functions of science, functions in the context of the dynamics of social sciences such as the educational function of dissemination-publishing, the function of application to human use, the function of technology, tools and methods are also mentioned (Balcı, 2021). There are two perspectives on educational science as an aspect of social sciences. The traditional view regards it as natural science and emphasizes natural science research in producing science. The radical view, on the other hand, maintains the traditional understanding of social science in describing human behavior, but emphasizes the difference between human beings and natural phenomena. Within the scope of objectivism, the nature of social sciences has been to "reveal the universal laws of society and human relations in it". From the point of view of subjectivism, the nature of social sciences and the knowledge produced in this context have led to the question: "How do different people interpret the world they live in?" (Balcı, 2021, p. 3-6).

Scientific knowledge production in educational administration also goes through the stages of description, explanation, prediction and controlling (Özdemir, 2018). These stages also constitute the functions of science. Describing the situation is the recognition of the investigated events or things, the elaboration of their characteristics and the determination of the relations between them, that is, the description of existing situations (Balcı, 2021). The explanation is meant to reach common generalizations, and to form principles and theories by finding the causes, effects and levels of the interrelationship of events in nature (Erkuş, 2020). The most advanced explanation and the ultimate goal of science is coming up with a theory (Karasar, 2007; Balcı, 2021). Another purpose of the research is to

predict. If the researcher finds a relationship (i.e., correlation) between two variables based on previous descriptive research, it may be possible to predict one variable based on knowledge of the other variable (Marczyk, De Matteo & Festinger, 2010). In other words, the goal of prediction is to determine the empirical relationship of the analyzed events with other events and to look at a situation in order to predict what may happen in the future. Knowledge obtained through scientific research can be used to understand and explain other events and phenomena because its basis should be practical. The accumulative and progressive feature of science depends on its ability to predict (Erkuş, 2020). In essence, if the purpose of a test within the scope of the research is to make predictions about some future behavior or situation, this means that the test collects evidence to determine its validity (Kelecioğlu & Geçer Şahin, 2014). Predictive validity is defined as the ability to predict the future of the measurement result of the situation in question (Kline, 2000). The control function of science is aimed at controlling the events of nature and society in the process of scientific research (Karasar, 2007). Once a situation or event is understood, it may be possible to find out how it can be controlled, after determining the cause-effect relationships and the components of the situation (Walliman, 2010). For the control function to be effective, the status detection and explanation functions must work well (Karasar, 2007). Exploring the reasons why it rains leads to detection of the situation and explanation, in which situations it will rain leads to prediction, and whether it 'can be rained' at the desired time and amount leads to the control function. Causes of job dissatisfaction, possible consequences and practices that increase or even secure job satisfaction can be given as examples from the field of educational administration. It should be noted that the control function mentioned here differs from exact measurements in the natural

sciences (for example, water boils at 100 degrees Celsius in certain conditions) and should be evaluated within the framework of social sciences. Again, for the purpose of connecting with social sciences, even if experimental research reveals which factors are effective in controlling job satisfaction, it should be taken into account that not all variables affecting job satisfaction can be kept under control as in the laboratory environment.

Method

Research Design

A qualitative interpretive approach was used in the research. In qualitative research, reality is interpreted in the context of the researcher's knowledge and experience. Qualitative research is based on an anti-positivist interpretative perspective. This takes into account that there are many different perspectives in the world, so the facts are structured by social environment. In qualitative research, situations and events are handled from the perspective of individuals and there is usually no need for generalization. There is no doubt that generalization can be mentioned if there is an effort to produce a model to reveal the patterns among the variables.

The content analysis method, which is frequently used in qualitative research, was used in this study. Content analysis is "a systematic, repeatable technique in which some words of a text are summarized with smaller content categories with coding based on certain rules" (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2019, p. 259). Content analysis studies are divided into three parts: meta-analysis, meta-synthesis (thematic content analysis) and descriptive content analysis. In descriptive content analysis, research on a subject is evaluated and defined according to their tendencies.

Since the goal is to examine the knowledge produced through doctoral theses in education administration according to certain criteria, descriptive content analysis is the most suitable approach (Çalık & Sözbilir, 2014; Suri Clarke, 2009).

Study Materials

The research material consists of 122 doctoral theses completed in the field of educational administration between 2017-2020. Each originated in one of 27 universities that were among the top 500 in the CWUR (Center for World University Ranking) world university rankings in 2020. Because the research problem required having a sample with certain attributes, the criterion sampling was used (Büyüköztürk et al., 2019). We selected the theses from eight countries: USA, Canada, England, Japan, China (Hong Kong), South Korea, Netherlands, and Sweden. Five criteria were effective in the selection of countries: (1) The country's location in the selected regions (Far Asia, Northern Europe), (2) the presence of universities in the Top 500 in the CWUR 2020 ranking, (3) the presence of education management in these universities, (4) the theses produced in the field of educational administration should be open to access, and (5) they should be written in English. Doctoral theses were obtained from "oatd.org, ebsco.hot, and dissertations.se" as well national open access resources such as "hub.hku and narcis.nl". Sweden and the Netherlands represented the countries of northern Europe, while Japan, China, and South Korea were selected to embody east Asia. The above-mentioned criteria factored into the number of countries and universities that were included in the study.

Since the field of educational administration was developed in the USA and Canada, the number of theses completed between 2017

and 2020 was relatively higher in these countries than in others. For this reason, we made a systematic sampling within the theses from North American institutions. According to the systematic sampling method, the population size is divided by the desired sample size, and a sample selection is made with a gap width as large as the obtained coefficient (Büyüköztürk et al., 2019). Approximately 25 theses from other regions were sampled. For this reason, we decided to set the interval width to three to sample 25 theses out of 75 and 77 theses, which were completed in three universities from the USA and Canada, respectively. In this order, the theses corresponding to three and multiples of three were selected and 25 theses chosen were added to the study material. Information regarding the included doctoral theses is given in Table 1.

Table 1.

Distribution of study materials

Content	*Country*	*University*	*Number of theses*		*World Ranking*
North America	United States	University of Harvard	12	25	1
		The Ohio State University	7		58
		University of California	6		18
	Canada	University of Calgary	13	25	188
		University of Toronto	9		24
		University of British Columbia	3		48
Europe	Great Britain	University of Cambridge	11	24	4
		University of Leicester	9		228
		University of Glasgow	2		120
		University of Edinburgh	2		20
Far Asia	Japan	Waseda University	4	14	176
		Hiroshima University	3		413
		Kobe University	2		444
		Kyoto University	2		28
		Tohoku University	1		132
		Keio University	1		93
		Osaka University	1		87
	Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong (China)	University of Hong Kong	6	6	166

	South Kore	Seoul National University	3	3	31
North Europe	Netherlands	Utrecht University	10	20	68
		Maastricht University	3		240
		Erasmus University	3		92
		Wageningen University	2		187
		Delft University	1		259
		Vrije University Amsterdam	1		146
	Sweden	Upsala University	2	5	88
		Stockholm University	3		159
		TOTAL			*122*

Data Collection Tools and Data Analysis

We accessed the theses from international open-access sites such as "oatd.org, Ebsco.hot, dissertations.se" and national thesis archives of the determined countries such as "hub. hku, narcis.nl". We downloaded them as PDF files. The data were analyzed by the document analysis technique through developing the criteria list in the Evaluation Criteria and Indicators of Knowledge Production in Theses created by Ödemiş Keleş & Tonbul (2020). Document review is defined as the analysis of written and visual materials containing information about the phenomena and events that are requested to be researched (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 189). The fulfillment of the functions of science, concept, model development, theory building, scale development/adaptation, and contribution to the practice of theses was examined according to the indicators in the criteria list in Appendix 1.

There is a consensus in the literature, although there are different views in social sciences on the status determination, explanation, prediction and control functions of science (Balcı, 2021; Karasar, 2007; Özdemir; 2018). The presence of correlation and

regression analyses was taken as a criterion for the theses to be included under the category of "making predictions", which is one of the functions of science. In addition, expressions that describe how a situation in the past explains the present and how an existing situation will affect the future were also taken as criteria (e.g., the effects of an increase in the number of students in employment and schooling). This is because the predictive relationship between two variables can be measured by correlation and regression analyses (Büyüköztürk, 2020, p. 94). Considering the different meanings attributed to the control function between social and natural sciences, theses had to include applications such as experiment or action research in order to meet the criteria. the rationale here is that the control function can only be realized after putting the knowledge obtained from previous functions of science into practice (Balcı, 2021).

For the category of contribution to theory development, coming up with a new theory by considering an old one a problem situation and processing it directly, or developing a new theory by testing an existing one and making use of previous theories were taken as indicators. For the category of contributing to the application, developing a new technique such as software and programs, and depicting a new perspective and way of doing things were used. Theses which offer a new model and theory and containing experiments have also been put into this category considering they present a new perspective and way of operating.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the research, the researchers constantly exchanged views during the data analysis process. Theses were categorized according to the criteria list given in Appendix 1, which is explained in detail in the data analysis section. Opinions were

received from three different faculty members during the creation of the criteria list. The data were subjected to expert evaluation by a third professional, and control coding was completed. With the control coding made within the scope of expert evaluation, the differences in coding can be discussed and the data becomes more reliable and understandable (Miles & Huberman, 2015). It was calculated with the formula of Miles and Huberman (2015) (Reliability=Agreement/ [Agreement + Disagreement] x 100) as a result of expert evaluation. According to Miles and Huberman (2015), 80% agreement between encoders is sufficient for reliability, and it was found to be 90% in this study. A consensus was reached between the researcher and the expert in classifying the theses according to the criteria.

Expressions or quotations from the theses were used to meet the validity (credibility) and reliability (consistency). In the study, a detailed explanation was given to support the external validity of the data collection and analysis process. Theses from many countries were randomly selected according to certain criteria, and the criteria were varied in the checklist. Although the theses are in a certain discipline, attempts were made to achieve maximum diversity by including country and university criteria. In addition, the difference in the scope of the studies also contributed to the maximum diversity.

Limitations

This research includes a limited number of studies that are selected from a larger group of theses in educational administration based on criteria, such as country of origin and the date of the publication. This study focused specifically on the contribution of the theses to meeting the functions of science, the methods used, concept and model development, theory building, scale development/adaptation, and applications. Due to the fact that the theses are randomly selected, the differences between the nature of the

theses in the early and late period may be seen as a limitation. These limitations can be overcome if all doctoral theses are accessible and in English.

Results

Distribution of Theses According to Their Methods

The method sections of the theses were examined to gain knowledge about the distribution of the research design, data collection technique, and sampling type. Among the 122 theses examined, most of the studies (n=71) used a qualitative design. This is followed by theses with mixed (n=33) and quantitative designs (n=18). Most of the thesis with the qualitative design used case study (n=47), and a limited number of ethnographic (n=4), narrative (n=4), embedded theory (n=2), feminist (n=1) and historical approaches (n=1) were observed. The theses with mixed research design mostly employed descriptive sequential (n=15) and multi-stage mixed (n=9) patterns. However, the embedded (n=2) and nested mixed patterns (n=1) were less preferred. In the quantitative theses, survey design (n=9) was used most of the time, while the causal screening (n=1) and the descriptive comparative educational research pattern (n=1) were less frequently used. It is seen that experimental designs (n=7) are also used in theses, although not at a high rate. It has been determined that experimental patterns that can be used to generate knowledge for the control function of science were not sufficiently utilized.

The interview technique was used in most of the qualitative theses (n=22). In addition, theses jointly using "observation, interview and document analysis" (n=17) and "document analysis and interview" (n=14) were noted. Questionnaire and interview techniques were mostly used together in mixed-approach theses (n=9). Questionnaire (n=5) and experimental technique (n=5) were the most used techniques in quantitative theses. In addition, the number of theses (n=20) that used three or more data collection techniques (e.g., scale, observation, interview, and survey) together was remarkable.

The variety of data collection techniques in theses with mixed design stands out as a striking finding. We evaluated this situation as an effort by researchers to create diversity in data collection to strengthen validity and reliability.

Theses with samples including teachers (n=46), students (n=45) and education administrators (n=39) were abundant. However, theses focusing on parents (n=7), inspectors (n=4), foreign students (n=2), dropouts (n=1) and teacher candidates (n=1) were relatively rare. The number of theses covering stakeholders such as educational personnel (n=16) and teaching staff (n=11) was comparably low. It can be said that a focus on the neglected stakeholders through the educational administration studies is important in increasing the contribution of the research to practice and the number of beneficiaries.

Distribution of Theses According to the State of Fulfilling the Functions of Science

The findings obtained in line with the second sub-purpose of the study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

Distribution of theses according to the state of fulfilling the functions of science

Function of Science	n
Describing the situation and explaining	122
Predicting	31
Controlling[1]	15

[1] In order to classify the theses examined as suitable for control, it was taken as a criterion that they were tested using applied methods for control, such as experiment or action research.

An examination of Table 2 reveals that all the theses (n=122) fulfill the compulsory first step of the functions of science, describing the situation and explaining the causes. This was followed by theses making a prediction (n=31), and employing controlling (n=15). The determination of the relative scarcity of predicting and controlling functions in theses was an important finding. The following is the excerpt from a thesis pointing out one of the functions of science, namely describing the situation and explaining the reasons:

> *"This study found that an integral aspect of a principal's longevity lies in the trusting relationship he/she has with his/her direct supervisor, oftentimes a pastor." (Thesis 1)*

To include the knowledge produced in theses in the category of prediction, the use of a correlational design along with an explanation of how a situation in the past affects the present have been taken as criteria. The following is the excerpt which embodies predicting:

> *"A statistically significant correlation was found between the two constructs indicating a strong positive linear relationship between the academic and career self-efficacy measures (Pearson coefficient: .657 p value = 0.001)." (Thesis 11)*

An excerpt from the statements that meet the predictive function of social science by pointing how a current situation will take shape in the future is given below:

> *"This suggestion should be considered because, if these students intend to settle down in the country where they attended PSEIs and are culturally orientated, they could be able to assess a suitable place for themselves (Enders, 2004). This would expand the nation's economic growth when these students settle and invest in some of these lesser populated areas or provinces." (Thesis 29)*

Here is an excerpt that categorizes the controlling function of the science.

> *"Students who completed both the pre-departure CQI and the post-return CQI instrument and gave their permission to utilize their data, were included in the sample of 90 respondents. All students in the sample participated in a study abroad program that changed from seven to ten days in length with other degree seeking students enrolled at The Ohio State University. Each program was led by at least two OSU faculty or staff members who taught students in at least six seminar style class meetings prior to departure. Students also participated in a required university on-line health and safety orientation that briefly addressed cultural adaptation." (Thesis 13)*

It was found that the knowledge produced in the theses was mostly in the stages of describing the situation and explaining the reasons. The fact that there was relatively little knowledge in predicting and controlling categories is a remarkable finding.

Distribution of Theses According to Their Contribution to the Concept and Model Development, Theory Formation, Scale Development-Adaptation and Practice

A total of 122 theses examined were distributed with respect to *developing concepts* (n=2), *developing a model* (n=4), *developing a new theory* (n=2), *developing a new theory by utilizing previous theories* (n=1), *developing scales* (n=1), *adapting scales* (n=2) and *providing a new perspective and way of doing things* (n=17). It is observed that most of the thesis contributed to a new perspective and way of doing things. Considering a theory as a problem status, the type of contributions could not be found. There is also no contribution to theory verification and technology development.

The following are quotations regarding the contribution of the knowledge produced in the theses to the development of a concept or model, theory formation, scale adaptation, and a new perspective and way of doing things.

> *"In my first paper, I develop the concept of technical ceremonies to describe a new coupling pattern in schools, where instead of ceremonially complying with formal policies and structures while buffering technical activities, educators ceremonially change surface-level aspects of their practice while buffering deeper aspects of their practice (beliefs, assumptions, patterns of interaction, pedagogy) from influence." (Concept development/Thesis 25)*

> *"My thesis presents a model of professional development that supports these transformational changes… A particular model of professional development developed and emerged from my analysis of the intervention (Chapter 8)." (Model development/ Thesis 58)*

> *"Whereas induction focuses on theory generation, abduction focuses on theory development. In the last step of my research in this dissertation I abductively use earlier research, theory, and my findings to develop a concept and theory." (Developing a new theory using previous theories/Thesis 110)*

> *"In Study One, 582 students from Primary 4 to Form 3 completed the Chinese version of the S-CASSS. The validity of the scale was established through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses." (Scale adaptation/Thesis 116)*

> *"Chapter 5 presents Study Two, which constructs a model of school satisfaction for Chinese students in Hong Kong by testing the direct and indirect effects of social support from teachers, parents, and classmates on self-efficacy, hope, and school satisfaction." (Contribution to a new perspective and way of doing business/Thesis 116)*

The findings show that the contribution of these theses produced in the field to the concept, model, theory, scale development and adaptation and practice is quite low. This was a surprising finding. The next section attempts to clarify this and other discoveries from the process.

Discussion

The research tried to answer the question of how the theses produced in the field of educational administration are distributed according to their method, according to the functions of science, concept, model, theory formation, and scale development/adaptation and contribution to practice.

Research findings show that the knowledge produced in the field is mostly done in qualitative and mixed research designs. Generally, a case study was used in the qualitative designs and explanatory sequential and multi-stage mixed designs were used in mixed models. Similar to this finding, a number of studies in the literature have concluded that the qualitative method is the dominant type in field studies, an observation consistent with our findings (Berkovich & Eyal, 2017; Gümüş et al., 2018). However, Hallinger & Chen (2015), who reviewed the knowledge produced in the field with an Asian focus between 1995 and 2012, determined that although qualitative research methods were more popular before 2006, the use of quantitative research methods increased significantly between 2006-2012. The reason for this difference in findings may be due to the time zone difference of the studies included in the sample. The increase in qualitative patterns can be explained by the significant progress in the acceptance of selected qualitative methods in the last two decades, and the widespread, if not unanimous, acceptance of patterns such as case

studies, ethnography, and naturalistic research in academia (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). Such an interest in the use of qualitative and mixed approaches demonstrates that the field of educational administration has begun experiencing a greater impact from the qualitative research approach in recent years. Aypay et al. (2010) reached similar findings. Therefore, collecting quantitative and qualitative data together, or sequentially, in order to make sense of the findings revealed by numbers in social sciences (for example, the interaction of subjects such as job satisfaction, leadership, etc. with culture, belief, ideology, etc.) will further strengthen the research. We suggest that quantitative methods which have a great contribution to the field, originate from positivism, have strong validity and reliability, and qualitative methods that provide in-depth knowledge be used together to complement each other's weaknesses. Creswell and Plano Clark (2020) note that mixed methods research provides the power to compensate for the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research, encourages the use of multiple worldviews, and answers questions that quantitative and qualitative research alone cannot answer.

In the study, we found that interviews and more than one data collection technique were used extensively in qualitative research. Questionnaire and interview techniques were mostly used in theses with mixed designs. In addition, we have seen that three or more techniques are frequently used together in mixed studies. In quantitative theses, the most preferred design by the researchers was survey. Berkovich & Eyal (2017) determined in their research that the interview technique was the mostly used technique in qualitative research, and that studies that use more than one qualitative data collection technique were twice as common as those that use a single technique. The reason for the frequent use of three or more data collection techniques in qualitative and mixed approach theses may be

to overcome the generalization problem of the qualitative method by providing data diversity, as well as the desire to strengthen the validity and reliability of the research, also known as triangulation in research (Creswell, 2017).

We found that teachers, students, and educational administrators were the focus of most of the thesis's samples. However, theses sampling parents, inspectors, foreign students, and teacher candidates were few, and those including education personnel and teaching staff were very rare. Similar to this finding, there are studies in the literature that indicate that vocational high schools and educational personnel are rarely included in the samples (Ödemiş Keleş & Tonbul, 2020) and that the focus is mostly on school principals and teachers (Gümüş et al., 2018). In terms of different theories, this may be discussed further in the future. For example, in the course of the Chaos Theory, the courses or the student-receiving system, such as the consultancy system, be taken to support the scientific nature of the theses. Again, Stakeholder and Actor-Network Theories argue that the solutions produced without accounting for those that are affected and those that cause the problems will not be functional. From this point of view, it can be said that even the stakeholders who are thought to be the 'most ineffective' should be included in a study as factors determining the variables and making up the samples due to the butterfly effect assumption. On the other hand, the organizational ecology theory suggests that the differentiation of structural or human resources in organizations is not the only distinctive, but also possible future styling factors that appear insignificant. The diversity problems in the research methods and technology also ensure the need to solve the inter-disciplines with the interdisciplinary studies that can address all stakeholders. Therefore, it is important to add neglected education stakeholders in field research. It is also thought that it will be useful in

increasing the validity of the generated information and increasing the number and variety of those who will benefit from this information.

The research findings show that the knowledge produced in the field of educational administration is mostly for describing the situation and explaining the causes, while knowledge concerning predicting and controlling is less common. Demirhan (2015) also found in their research that the knowledge produced is at the level of situation detection and explanation, although they favored the knowledge at the controlling level. This is a striking finding regarding domain knowledge, as it becomes an important premise in arguing that the applied side of the field of educational administration science continues to be overlooked. Özdemir (2018) emphasizes that the field of educational administration is a field of science and practice which aims to use the knowledge in the field to solve concrete problems. Since the 1960s, scholars have emphasized the difficulty of developing practice and generating the theoretical and practical knowledge needed to adequately solve practitioners' problems in the field (Oplatka, 2008, p. 26). However, the functions of science need to be investigated more in terms of social sciences, and more research is needed on this subject. Donmoyer (2020) noted that the epistemological and methodological debates in the field in the 20th and 21st centuries were interestingly similar. These discussions focus almost exclusively on epistemological and methodological issues, largely ignoring everyday problems in practice. It is thought that a research culture is needed to identify a problem, to identify the factors causing the problem, and to explain its possible causes in many ways, as well as produce knowledge to prevent the emergence of the problem or to keep the problem under control. Education systems are expected to have brought this understanding to students well before they reach the doctorate level.

As a result of the research, it was determined that the knowledge produced in the field contributed little to the concept, model, theory creation, and scale development/adaptation and practice. The lack of contribution to technology and technology development, especially within the scope of contribution to practice, was interpreted as an indicator of the lack of structuring theses as projects and ignoring interdisciplinary studies in the field. For example, studies on augmented reality and administrator training should also be carried out in terms of school supervision, such as the detection of certain points without problems, as in the cybernetic control theory. For this reason, it is necessary to question the contribution a thesis can make before accepting the proposal in the doctoral process.

While determining the topics of the theses, Stakeholder and Actor-Network Theories can be used by negotiating with other institutions, inviting them to thesis meetings, sharing the results, and asking for feedback. Young consultants can come together with experienced consultants and benefit from their expertise. Although universities have thesis writing guidelines and such thesis review criteria lists have been created before, a criteria list that takes into account the functions of science have not been found within the scope of the literature review. Although situational contextual information, which is a part of social sciences, is not considered unimportant, "Evaluation Criteria and Indicators for Knowledge Production in Theses", which reflect the philosophy in this research, can be used in order to increase the contribution to the concept, model, theory creation and practice in the preparation of theses (Ödemiş Keleş and Tonbul, 2020).

Conclusion

This research has tried to evaluate the scientific quality of the knowledge in the field and its contribution to practice by examining doctoral theses in terms of method, distribution of science according to its functions, concept, model, theory creation and scale development/adaptation. It is evident that qualitative studies dominate the knowledge produced in the field, and it is thought that the weaknesses of both methods can be covered with mixed designs in which qualitative and quantitative designs are used together. The intensive use of three or more techniques in both qualitative and mixed approaches in data collection increases the validity and reliability and helps establish the research on a solid foundation. It is important that the theses deal with all stakeholders of education in a balanced way, in terms of reaching more beneficiaries with the information. Thesis results can be compiled and collected through submitting them onto certain platforms, and the participation of the relevant stakeholders in the thesis juries can be ensured.

The level of knowledge to be produced in the thesis design stage is one of the functions of science and its contribution to practice should be questioned through concept, model, and theory creation. In addition, a research culture should be established in order to improve the use of applied research results by the beneficiaries. The educational administration discipline interacts with many other fields such as management, economy, sociology and psychology due to its overlapping subject basis. However, the discipline of educational administration should also develop its own concepts and theories. This development will also strengthen other disciplines and contribute to practice.

The selection of doctoral students, the quality of the researcher training process, the determination of thesis topics, and the healthy functioning of the thesis monitoring processes are important in the scientific quality of the doctoral theses produced. Reviewing these topics can increase the contribution of theses to practice. Social sciences need to review themselves in the context of the scientific quality of the knowledge produced with interdisciplinary studies and mixed patterns. In this study, no distinction was made in the theses produced by the consultants in the old and new periods, and the contributions of theses to the knowledge production in the field of educational administration can be examined by making such a distinction in future research.

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Appendix 1

Evaluation Criteria and Indicators of Knowledge Production in Theses

Evaluation criteria		**Indicators**
Fulfilling the functions of science	Describing the situation and explaining	- Descriptive statements such as definitions and explanatory cause and effect expressions
	Predicting	- To reveal how a situation that exists today will take shape in the future (For example, the consequences of an increase in the number of students in future employment, schooling) - Trying to explain a situation in the past but controlling it in the future, or specifying how a situation in the past explains present - Presence of correlation or regression analyses
	Controlling	- Presence of experimental and applied methods
Contribution to practice with concept & model development, theory building, scale development/adaptation	Concept development	- A new concept - Author statement referring to concept development
	Model development	- Aiming to develop a new model in line with the data obtained with quantitative and qualitative techniques - Determination that the model has been developed as a result of the above applications and the author's statement regarding this
	Theory building 1. A new theory 2. Contributing to the theory by treating a theory as a problem situation and processing it directly 3. Developing a new theory using previous theories	1. Creating a new theory by treating a theory as a problem situation and processing it directly, and author statement 2. Case of testing a theory by treating it directly as a problem case, and author statement 3. Author's statement that a new theory has been developed by making use of previous theories, and/or research findings (e.g., taking the magnetism theory and applying it to educational administration)
	Scale development/adaptation	Practices and author's statement regarding the development/adaptation of a new scale
	Contribution to the application 1. Contribution to technology/technology development 2. Contribution to developing a new perspective and way of doing things	1. Development of a new device, software, simulation, etc., and author statement 2. a) Applications such as models, theory building and experiments that offer a new perspective and way of doing things, and the author's statement about them[2] b) Developing a different approach, way of doing things, and suggesting a new paradigm by comparing previous and current practices with international practices

[2] It is thought that presenting a new perspective here can be possible only by creating a new theory, model or incorporating experiment in it.

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School Principals' Opinions on the Schooling in Turkey During the COVID-19 Pandemic[1]

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Abstract

An education crisis has emerged during the pandemic, and the purpose and existence of schooling has begun being questioned again. For this reason, this paper discusses school principals' opinions regarding the changes in schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research uses the phenomenological design, and the participants of the research consist of school principals. The data were collected using the semi-structured interview technique, with content analysis being used to analyze the data. According to the study's findings, school principals were determined to have difficulties in the fields of strategic leadership, instructional leadership, and social leadership during the pandemic. Regarding school-related difficulties during the pandemic, important benefits were emphasized for school processes under the themes of achievements focused on capacity building, socially oriented achievements, and goal-oriented achievements. The themes of administrative priorities, social priorities, and developmental priorities emerged regarding how to reduce adjustment problems to schooling during and after the pandemic.

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Introduction

COVID-19 was first diagnosed on December 31, 2019 in Wuhan, China, and shortly after it was declared a pandemic (global epidemic) by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, many countries decided to close schools, colleges, and universities to prevent the spread of the virus as it had begun affecting a very large part of the population of the community. This led to a serious crisis in terms of meeting societies' educational needs. A crisis can be expressed as a serious and dangerous situation that negatively affects many people and may cause death (Filiz, 2007). A crisis is a difficult moment or period of depression in the life of a person, organization, or society. Crises create tension and uncertainty in terms of social life, can occur gradually or suddenly, and can cover a narrow or broad area (Akyüz, 2018). Based on social experiences, many crises are known to have been overcome until today. However, each crisis causes many changes and leaves traces in social institutions as well as people's attitudes, thoughts, and feelings. In this sense, criticisms have appeared alongside the education crisis that emerged from the point of view of educational institutions during the pandemic regarding the purpose of schools and the way they realize their purpose; even new perspectives on schools as a concept have begun to form.

As one of the most important institutions of human life, the institution of education temporarily stopped providing face-to-face

education due to COVID-19, after which each country tried to structure new teaching experiences according to countries' own opinions. Due to the need for education continuing despite school closures, distance education applications based on information and communications technology (ICT) began to replace face-to-face education. Many countries have established synchronous online and offline courses alongside a reduction in existing practices (i.e., face-to-face learning) to support teachers' and school heads' communication with students and parents. Due to the pandemic, many countries such as Argentina, China, Egypt, France, Denmark, Mexico, and the United States of America use online platforms connected to the Internet for continuous learning (Ahlström et al., 2021; Chang & Satako, 2020; Pollack, 2021). Some countries such as Croatia, China, France, Islamic Republic of Iran, Senegal, Spain, Peru, and present learning content with the help of television and other media; however, and some countries such as Costa Rica, Islamic Republic of Iran, Thailand also use existing practices to maintain communication between teachers and students (Can, 2020).

Turkey has applied different strategies for different education levels. In the first year of the pandemic, the Republic of Turkey's Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and Higher Education Institution (YÖK), which are responsible for public education in the country, conducted education and training remotely, both synchronously, and asynchronously, using digital tools in secondary and higher education. However, diluted face-to-face education continued in basic education (kindergarten and primary schools). Although these strategies being applied to different levels have political, economic, and sociological sources, the main premise involves the need for social isolation and the government's isolation

policy in order to increase physical distance for groups that are likely to be adversely affected by the pandemic. In this respect, the authoritarian policies and measures applied to the upper age group to control the pandemic in Turkey showed similar characteristics to those around the world. In addition, MoNE requested the use of the Educational Content Network (EBA) platform with regard to synchronous distance learning and the channel TRT EBA TV for asynchronous distance learning. Although these tools greatly assisted teachers in maintaining education during the pandemic, MoNE had to retrain teachers and school principals on developing new distance learning software and using distance learning materials. In general, the new teaching experiences show that countries have interpreted new conditions and distance learning in various ways (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020; Klaiman et al., 2011).

Education is a development process that aims for individuals to become effective and productive members of the society in which they live and to live in harmony with other members of society (Cırık, 2008). In this process, individuals live in interaction with the environment, and individual learning is shaped according to individual and environmental factors. In order to increase the success of this process, taking students' environment into consideration has great importance. Defining a student's environment as school-centered causes it to expand to an environment that extends beyond the classroom, school, and family to the local society, national society, and universal society. Therefore, taking into account the characteristics, cultural diversity, and variations of students' in- and out-of-school environment throughout the education process contributes to the schooling process. In addition, schools should try to create a structure that is effective at responding to students' educational needs, at

increasing the quality of education, and at increasing students' success in line with the realities of their time. Because the world is changing very fast, schools must be dynamic, flexible, and open to innovations, for an educational institution that fails to keep up with the changes may cause it to become dysfunctional. The fact that schools have not fulfilled some of their functions due to the COVID-19 pandemic is a significant loss in terms of education and community life. According to the latest the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, Turkey was among the top four countries to close schools for the longest time in 2020. Therefore, the failure to meet society's educational needs should be considered as a failure to provide the *right to education and training*, which falls within the scope of the basic human rights listed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as a failure to provide *economic and social rights*, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. In addition, viewing the concept of education only as *online teaching* can be considered a perspective that limits education and schooling. At the same time, the potential that online education has to reinforce the pre-existing social inequalities of students whose position is unfavorable with regard to accessing education (Bingöl-Schrijer, 2020) also creates problems in terms of ensuring social justice.

In terms of the future of education and schooling, inferences must be made based on teaching experiences during the pandemic process. For schools to maintain their function, ensuring schools' effectiveness and transforming their roles are necessary. In this sense, education administrators and school leaders have great importance in preparing schools for change. First, the school closures due to COVID-19 have increased uncertainty and caused disagreements about what and how to teach (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

However, nearly every crisis results in at least some trauma for everyone directly involved or affected by it and has an impact on school strategies, processes, and procedures in a way that makes fully recovering what has been lost impossible. Therefore, leading the recovery of the school community after a crisis involves a delicate balancing act that requires sensitivity to the needs of those affected by the crisis as well as the need to return to standard work routines as quickly as possible in the eyes of stakeholders and absorb the operational impact of the crisis (Smith & Riley, 2012). The crisis management process should involve identifying the possible problems and danger factors for the area of work and the future, identifying the appropriate types of responses and struggles, implementing measures to cope with the crisis, and evaluating reactions (Demirtaş, 2000).

According to Mayer et al. (2008), crisis management for most organizations involves a linear three-stage strategy: prevention, response, and recovery. The most common classification in the literature states the process to have three stages: pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis (Alaağaçlı, 2006). The stage common to most classifications is post-crisis recovery. This involves needing to get the crisis under control, to evaluate it, to learn from its shortcomings and experiences, and to restructure (Filiz, 2007). What needs to be done is to successfully manage the crisis and the chaotic situation it creates and to overcome it with minimal damage. Therefore, new experiences need to be taken advantage of for planning the future (i.e., returning to school after the pandemic). The need exists to evaluate the conditions for returning to school and to develop foresight in order to start over. After the crisis, the important things are to get things back to normal as quickly as possible and to clarify the uncertainties for all school members. In this sense, because the existential purpose of the school leader is to keep

the school organization (i.e., its members) united and to solve problems, strategic leadership characteristics are required for a school to be effective and for bringing appropriate solutions to the problems (Akyüz, 2018). Strategic leadership in the face of uncertainty can contribute to seeing the future, setting a vision, providing flexibility, and empowering employees (Ireland & Hitt, 1999). On the other hand, when evaluated in the context of critical theory, protecting the benefits of those affected by the education system requires the members of the system to act rationally. Otherwise, distorted communication strategies will be accepted as legitimate, the environment of free speech in society will become lost, and educational institutions may emerge where only certain masses are able to access education. With Habermas' self-reflection strategy, school members can only be liberated when they understand the wrong parts of their forms of consciousness and the challenges they are subjected to (Geuss, 1981). In other words, reflexive thinking can eliminate the illusions about the school that emerged during the pandemic process and develop a liberated consciousness.

Some studies in the literature that will be associated with the school process during the COVID-19 pandemic process investigated how the pandemic process has shaped education (Anderson, 2020; Külekçi-Akyavuz & Çakın, 2020; Sarı & Nayır, 2020) and its effect on educational leadership (Harris, 2020), as well as presented solutions for problems. Some studies are seen to have evaluated schooling (Huber & Helm, 2020), with researchers having found socio-psychological problems and opportunities after the pandemic (Koh et al., 2020) or looking at how the process has reflected on teachers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020). In addition, the studies from Ahlström et al. (2021), Jarvis and Mishra (2020), and Netolicky (2020) examined the

difficulties encountered in terms of school leadership during the pandemic. The studies from Oplatka and Crawford (2021) and Pollack (2021) discussed school leadership approaches during the pandemic. In this context, this study differs from the studies in the literature in that it evaluates the experiences involving the changes (e.g., difficulties, achievements related to the school process, and reducing school adjustment problems) in schooling holistically using empirical data based on school principals. Social distancing has become a new reality for many with the measures enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic, with school closures having initiated a rapid transition from traditional education to distance education for many teachers and students (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic may end after a while in all countries, or human beings may survive by learning to live with its long-term effects. However, both cases need to evaluate the return to school for a fresh start and to develop foresight for the future. In this direction, the main purpose of this research is to investigate school principals' opinions about the changes in schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic and to offer suggestions for eliminating the problems encountered. In this direction, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are school principals' experiences regarding the difficulties experienced with their school during the pandemic?
2. What are school principals' experiences regarding the achievements related to schooling during the pandemic?
3. What are school principals' experiences with reducing school adjustment problems during and after the pandemic?

Method

This study has preferred the phenomenological design, a qualitative research method, because it aims to obtain in-depth information about a specific situation. The phenomenological design is also a suitable research method for obtaining detailed information from people who experience the phenomena that occur in different forms in daily life and therefore have different understandings and comprehensions and who have basic characteristics that can express these phenomena (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2017). In this sense, using the phenomenological design has been deemed appropriate for determining the meanings school principals ascribe to their experiences in line with the changes in schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because COVID-19 quickly went from a distant, foreign threat to a phenomenon present in our everyday lives, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the nature of school principals' work across the globe. Today, principals are expected to be exceptional managers and excellent leaders at a time when the pace of change has increased exponentially (Pollack, 2020). In this study, we question whether the principals were able to capture experiences and meanings accurately in this process or just opinions. In fact, we use phenomenology to attempt to simply approach their experiences by dealing with the meanings they represent. We analyze broad research questions and examples in depth by comparing the experiences of different people to get the gist of the phenomenon and have found discoveries and unanticipated themes. We phenomenologically examined in depth the meanings attributed to the facts based on individual experiences as the focal point from every angle through focused in-depth interviews in an attempt to obtain the psychological essence of their experiences.

Participants

This study uses the purposeful sampling technique for determining the sample, as the aims are to discover and understand school principals' experiences during the pandemic and to gain a deeper insight into their experiences, and the purposive sampling technique allows for in-depth study of situations that are thought to be rich in information (Patton, 2015). Considering the subjective nature of the research, maximum diversity sampling is preferred for forming the participant group. This technique aims to create a relatively small sample that is heterogeneous in various aspects and to determine whether individuals who may be a party to the phenomenon under investigation have common or shared situations. Although the participants may have different characteristics individually, maximum diversity sampling is based on the idea that having certain common experiences in a highly diverse and heterogeneous group is an important finding (Patton, 2015). To do this, the participants in the research were selected from among the school principals working at public primary, secondary, and high schools in the city centers. Different types of applications have been attempted at all three school levels in Turkey during the pandemic. While face-to-face education was mostly maintained in primary schools, diluted face-to-face education was preferred for secondary schools and distance education for high schools. At the same time, we determined that the participant selection criterion should be at least two years of managerial experience, as this allows a principal to know the school organization and evaluate the school processes as a whole.

The researchers decided on a study group of 63 participants, and the saturation point was reached during the interviews. Although a study group of this number is not a common situation in qualitative research, observing similarities in the collected opinions can assist in

learning more from the participants' experiences. The participants are 23 women and 40 men. Although the number of female principals is low, the gender ratios are in line with the distribution of school principals in Turkey. The participants consist of 24 principals working in primary schools, 20 principals working in secondary schools, 17 principals working in general high schools, and 12 principals working in vocational high schools. Of the principals, 29 are between the ages of 31-40, 24 are between the ages of 41-50, and 11 are 51 years or older. When examining the principals' educational status, 52 are seen to have bachelor's degrees and 11 to have master's degrees. When examining the managerial experience of the participants, 14 were determined to have 2-5 years of experience, 20 to have 6-10 years, 13 to have 11-15 years, 14 to have 16-20 years, and 12 to have 21+ years of managerial experience.

Data Collection

This study has utilized the interview technique, which is frequently used in phenomenological research. In order to reveal the experiences and meanings of the phenomena in the interviews, the participants need to be interacted with using open-ended questions and the context needs to be examined in depth through probing questions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2017). When preparing the semi-structured interview form to be used in the interviews, the relevant literature was first scanned, and an item pool was created containing open-ended interview questions for determining the changes in schooling with regard to their pandemic experiences. The next stage selected questions that were deemed appropriate from a pool and revised them according to criteria such as being easy to understand, being subject-oriented, being open-ended, avoiding being directing, not being multidimensional, and consisting of probes. In this way the

draft interview form was prepared. The third stage took field experts' opinions regarding the purpose of the questions, how the questions reflect the content, and the order in which they were asked; in this way, the pilot application form was determined. Afterward, the pilot application form was presented to five school principals outside of the study group and revised within the scope of pilot studies regarding the questions' suitability for the study purpose; in this way, the semi-structured interview form was prepared for implementation.

In the data collection process, the school principals were contacted before the interviews, their consent was obtained, and an appointment was made. The interviews were carried out face-to-face one at a time and voice recorded. The nature of the interviews was informal and conversational, which allowed the researchers to question participants' responses and get more details using probe questions. The phenomenological design supports the purpose of the research, as the school principals have stories and experiences that involve their feelings and moods regarding the practices carried out in the spring and fall semesters during the pandemic.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed in order to identify the structure of the phenomenon's meaning. This consisted of a reflective process, beginning with gaining an initial understanding of the entire texts from the interviews, followed by re-readings to analyze the sections, and lastly reconstructing the text to a new whole that describes the structure of the phenomenon's meaning (Dahlberg et al., 2008). In this context, we conducted an in-depth analysis within which we could explain the broad research questions. In this sense, the data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using content analysis. Content

analysis allows one to identify the meaning, or meanings, of what is presented, and to formulate and classify everything contained within the discourse (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016). The basic processes of content analysis involve gathering similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and organizing and interpreting them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2017).

Firstly, the voice-recorded interviews were transcribed to the computer environment and converted into text documents. Once completed, the interviews were transcribed and closely read, with copious notes being made. The data analysis approach was interpretative, the intention being to uncover the meanings the individual participants had with their experiences and, through comparison (Chowdhury, 2015), to identify the emerging themes (Galletta, 2013). The second stage involves reading the data obtained from the interviews, determining the common concepts, and performing open coding. The third stage checks the codes based on the sources of differentiation in accordance with the participants' expressions using axial (i.e., focused) coding. The final stage conducts selective (i.e., conceptual) coding, with themes starting to get created by comparing the data with the conceptual framework. The codes were then categorized and the themes were named. Once the meanings relevant to the phenomenon had been identified and no inconsistencies were found, the most abstract level of the analysis (i.e., the essence of the phenomenon) emerged by moving between the parts and the whole (Carlsson-Lalloo et al., 2021). As a result, phenomenology does not prescribe a single method for analyzing data, but it does provide processes that can be applied flexibly while maintaining the analytical focus on exploring participants' experiences.

The research was conducted in compliance with ethical rules upon applying to the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Kütahya Dumlupınar University and obtaining their approval. Before the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the expected benefits, how it would be conducted, the possible risks, and what was expected from them. Their consent was obtained by having them sign a consent form. The semi-structured interview form contains no elements that would offend or disturb the participants. The principals' experiences were additionally coded and conveyed so as to observe the principle of confidentiality.

Results

Table 1 presents the themes that emerged as a result of data analysis.

Table 1.

Themes Generated as a Result of Data Analysis

Research Questions	Themes
1. What are school principals' experiences regarding the difficulties with school processes during the pandemic?	Strategic leadership Instructional leadership Social leadership
2. What are school principals' experiences regarding the achievements related to school process during the pandemic?	Achievements focused on capacity building Socially oriented achievements Goal-oriented achievements
	Administrative priorities Social priorities

3. What are school principals' experiences regarding reducing school adjustment problems during and after the pandemic?	Developmental priorities

As can be seen in Table 1, nine themes were obtained as a result of the analysis of the data. Accordingly, the themes of *strategic leadership*, *instructional leadership*, and *social leadership* were found in line with the sub-problem of school-related difficulties during the pandemic. In line with the sub-problem of schooling-related achievements during the pandemic, the themes of *capacity-building achievements*, *social achievements*, and *goal-oriented achievements* were formed. The themes of *administrative priorities*, *social priorities*, and *developmental priorities* were identified in line with the sub-problem of priorities in reducing school adjustment problems.

School Principals' Areas of Difficulty

When analyzing the data on the areas where school principals had difficulty during the pandemic, the themes of *strategic leadership*, *instructional leadership*, and *social leadership* were identified. Among these themes, strategic leadership came to the fore the most. The principals emphasized compliance with central decisions, data sharing, management with uncertainties, increasing responsibilities, and providing technical support regarding their views on the theme of strategic leadership. Principals stated having the most difficulties in the area of *managing uncertainties* (n = 35) with regard to strategic leadership. In terms of strategic leadership, they emphasized that neither the central organization nor the schools had previously developed a scenario plan for extraordinary situations such as pandemics. Therefore, the principals were identified to have been able to produce short-term solutions for this uncertain environment. When

considering the participant's views regarding this, a quote from one participant's views is as follows:

> *We'd make an announcement to our teachers, and the next day the decision would be changed or canceled. Our teachers were embarrassed toward the parents and we were embarrassed toward our teachers.* (M1)

Another issue highlighted under the theme of strategic leadership is *providing technical support*. School principals mentioned some of their attempts at overcoming communication deficiencies for distance education applications. At the same time, the participants were determined to have had problems complying with the central decisions. Under the code of complying with central decisions, the principals mentioned how hard it was for them to constantly change the decisions received from the center. One excerpt from a principal's comments regarding this code is as follows:

> *Uncertainties have been my biggest problem. We encountered questions that even my administrative superiors did not know. This got me into trouble. One fellow teacher was asking a question, it was hard for me to tell them I didn't know. I even had a hard time explaining it. It bothered me a lot. For example, on Friday, an official letter came, I announced it to my fellow teachers. On Sunday, a new letter arrived saying that the previous one had been canceled… This information had not only been shared with our teachers, they'd also shared it with the parents. Then we go back to the beginning. For example, this happened for course schedules, course hours, days for coming to school, event announcements, and competition announcements.* (M20)

Regarding sharing the received decisions with stakeholders under the theme of strategic leadership, some opinions stated the information sharing between parents and the school to have been limited. The extraordinary situations brought about by the pandemic conditions

have further increased principals' current responsibilities, and the legal requirement to monitor the process has caused them to have difficulty advancing their education activities.

The second theme regarding the difficulties experienced with schooling is the theme of instructional leadership, which prioritizes teachers who have been unable to reach their instructional goals sufficiently due to educational activities being interrupted during the pandemic. Within the scope of this theme, the participants touched on issues such as planning the online curriculum, monitoring students' progress, evaluating the efficiency of the online course, and ensuring continuity. The most emphasized code under this theme is monitoring students' progress (n = 30). This code is more about the difficulties and uncertainties encountered when evaluating teaching activities. The principals stated that teachers have had difficulty evaluating the effectiveness of the lesson process and the school principals to be hesitant about reaching school goals. An excerpt regarding the experiences of school principals stating their difficulty monitoring students' progress is expressed as follows:

> *We do tests online from time to time, but we don't know if the student did it themself or if it was their sibling. We will see the best return for this on the LGS and YKS exams, but we actually have problems monitoring progress in general.* (M21)

Another code that stands out under the theme of instructional leadership is evaluating online course efficiency. School principals stated shortcomings to be present regarding evaluating the achievements of distance education; they stated not being able to be sure of the courses' effectiveness for many reasons such as the short duration of the courses, the large number of students, insufficient student participation, problems connecting to the Internet, the

students' young ages, and insufficient parental support. Also under this theme, the unpredictable and sudden changes created by the pandemic conditions also created various difficulties in terms of *planning the online curriculum* for conducting and operating the courses. One quote from the principals' views for this code is as follows:

> *At the top of the areas where we had administrative difficulties in this process was adjusting the curriculum. Opening schools and reducing or increasing course hours as needed are all things that should be done within a plan and program. Saying that we will open schools in 2 days is easy in terms of a sentence. Schools will be open for 2 days, but when schools open for 2 days, but saying what courses will be given to students, which courses will be reduced, which courses will be increased, or whether the course hours of our teachers will be sufficient becomes a problem for each of these.* (M14)

Regarding the theme of instructional leadership, the participants also stated attempting to ensure students' continuity with their lessons. School principals stated that they had difficulty taking measures against high absenteeism in online classes: They created parent WhatsApp groups to ensure continuity, sent warnings to parents, and had teachers monitor the number of students in attendance.

The third theme for school-related difficulties is social leadership and involves principals' communications with stakeholders. The theme of social leadership involves the codes of providing motivation, digital communications with staff, maintaining school-environment communications and relations, and reducing stakeholder concerns. The code that came most to the fore under this theme is providing motivation (n = 31). Participants stated that teachers and students lost motivation because face-to-face communication was limited during the pandemic process. Under the code of providing motivation, the

principals stated trying to help their teachers adjust to distance education, especially through communication technologies, despite not being face-to-face. One excerpt from the principals' comments on this code is as follows:

> *In order to keep the motivation of the teachers high, we held an online meeting once a week and exchanged views in a conversational mood. Sometimes I tried to make them realize that we were with them by making one-on-one phone calls.* (M25)

Regarding the code of maintaining school-environment communications and relationships under the theme of social leadership, maintaining and developing these relations was said to be limited in accordance with the pandemic measures, with emphasis on the inefficiency of online meetings compared to meeting in person. Another prominent issue under this theme is digital communications with the staff. School principals stated mostly using ICT-supported tools when communicating with staff, with communications generally occurring as official correspondence. Meetings and information sharing were done online, as well as distance learning. In addition, communications with security units, district occupational health and safety units, and transportation units were made online. The principals also mentioned trying to *reduce the concerns* the pandemic process had caused for the stakeholders and trying to hold meetings by taking the necessary precautions and pushing the limits of their means.

Schooling-Related Achievements During the Pandemic

When analyzing the data on schooling-related achievements during the pandemic with respect to the school principals, the themes of achievements focused on capacity building, socially oriented achievements, and goal-oriented achievements emerged. Among these

themes, achievements focused on capacity building came to the fore, under which the following codes were emphasized: increasing technological knowledge, preventive behavior, needing to be open to innovations, and caring about professional development. The most emphasized code regarding this theme is increasing technological knowledge (n =24). Regarding this code, the principals mentioned how the pandemic process had contributed to theirs and teachers' perspectives and competencies on technology and how this had contributed to the education-teaching process. When considering the participants' views in this aspect, an excerpt from one participant's view is as follows:

> *With the distance education method, we realized that we could continue our operations with remote live lessons in all kinds of situations such as snow and rain without closing the school. For example, we can offer live remote lessons to students with various illnesses such as broken legs who are unable to come to school. In fact, we will demand this method more and more because distance education is more economical.* (M27)

Under the theme of achievements focused on capacity building, the principals also emphasized the importance of taking *preventive actions* in order for school members to adapt more easily to extraordinary conditions that may arise during the pandemic. The following is an excerpt from one principal's views regarding the code of preventative behavior:

> *We may experience such problems in the future. From the top (MoNE) down, we all need to be prepared. Our ministry was also unprepared for this process. There have always been decision and implementation changes. I think our ministry should have a plan for such situations. In particular, we being the teachers and administrators clearly needed to*

> *improve ourselves and follow the innovations in education. In addition, measures should be taken for both students and schools regarding inequality of opportunity.* (M22)

Another issue emphasized under the theme of achievements focused on capacity building is the code of caring about professional development. For this code, principals expressed their thoughts on the changes to teacher profiles and the need for professional development, as well as their experiences during the pandemic. The last issue emphasized under this theme is the code of needing to be open to innovations. Within the scope of this code, the participants stated that the innovations encountered were adopted faster due to the uncertain and dynamic nature of the pandemic, with education being able to be carried out not only at school but also anywhere.

The second theme for schooling-related achievements during the pandemic is socially oriented achievements. This theme includes awareness of protecting health, increasing communications with stakeholders, and social responsibility. This theme prioritizes the need for environmental support in ensuring the continuity of education. The most emphasized code under this theme is health protection awareness (n = 33). For this code, principals talked about the changing hygiene habits in schools with COVID-19. An excerpt from one principal's views regarding health protection awareness is as follows:

> *First of all, attention was paid to cleanliness and distance. These have been our priority. These perhaps should always have been, but we didn't see much. With this process, we saw the need for more. The hygiene documents and children's self-sacrificing efforts in terms of cleanliness in particular gained great importance. These needed to be done anyway, and the value of our school has increased even more.* (M4)

The code of social responsibility ranked second under the theme of socially oriented achievements and involves school principals' increased responsibilities outside of school, showing sensitivity to the needs of teachers and students, and being supportive. An excerpt from one participant's views on this code is as follows:

> *We tried to protect each other more because of the disease. The more we try to protect and care, the more we value each other. We have friends among us who tested positive for COVID. We conveyed our best wishes to them and supported them. Because our COVID-positive friend couldn't leave his house, I brought him much of what he needed. This increased the unity between us. Reducing physical contact between people has increased the contact between hearts.* (M8)

Finally, the third most emphasized code under the theme of socially oriented achievements is giving importance to communication with stakeholders. It involves actions to bridge the deficiencies of losing face-to-face interaction by using ICT tools. In order to do this, the principals' experiences involved mentioning suggestions such as increasing the frequency of school-parent communications by telephone and dealing with parents' problems individually so that students can attend class.

The third theme under schooling-related achievements during the pandemic is goal-oriented achievements, which consists of the codes of adapting to online teaching, understanding the pressure of academic success, and awareness of inequal opportunities. This theme involves the principals' views on learning how to adapt to the new situations that arise in maintaining their schools' efforts to achieve its goals. The most emphasized code is adapting to online teaching (n=29). With regard to this code, the principals talked about how to learn distance education applications, strengthen schools' infrastructure,

and the orientation process alongside the pandemic. An excerpt from the principals' views on adapting to online teaching is as follows:

> *It turned out that, if the infrastructure problems related to distance education are resolvable, the overall costs spent on school and education will be much lower. While it had been obligatory to use only MoNE domain internet, now we can find our own source. Our schools have started to develop more on the Internet and digitally. We discovered and learned how to teach with deficiencies in infrastructure, together with our teachers.* (M25)

The second-most emphasized code under the theme of goal-oriented achievements is understanding the pressure of academic success, which concerns the externality of distance education. The importance of students' social needs during distance education and the intensity of courses became clearer with regard to this code. The third most emphasized code under this theme is awareness of inequal opportunities. With regard to this code, school principals mentioned how the inequal opportunities among students had become deeper during the distance education applications and emphasized solving these inequalities that had not been taken into account before more, suggesting that online education could be used in addition to face-to-face education in order to reduce the inequalities existing in the education system.

Priorities for Reducing School Adjustment Problems

When analyzing the school principals' views regarding school priorities in order to reduce the adjustment problems during and after the pandemic process, the themes of administrative priorities, social priorities, and developmental priorities emerged. Among these themes, administrative priorities came to the fore and consists of the

following codes: preparing a safe physical environment, providing equal opportunities, maintaining achievements, raising awareness, and identifying problems and expectations. The theme of administrative priorities involves what needs to be done to find solutions to the problems caused by the new normal with regard to schooling and maintaining new achievements. The most emphasized code regarding this theme is the preparing a safe physical environment (n = 32). This code addresses hygiene practices in the event that schools maintain face-to-face or transition to hybrid teaching during and after the pandemic. In this regard, a quote from one participant's views is as follows:

> *An order regarding the physical environment is considered to have been established. In line with the instructions from MoNE, we need to prepare to make classes less crowded. We need to build ventilation systems and air conditioners must be installed in all classrooms, because air circulation must be provided in crowded classrooms just as in shopping malls. Whatever needs to be done technologically in places where people are concentrated, we will turn to it.* (M13)

The second code under the theme of administrative priorities is providing equal opportunities and involves the impossibilities that cause inequality among students in distance education and the efforts to eliminate them. One excerpt from the principals' views regarding this code is as follows:

> *Our priority was to correct the injustices in tablet distribution. The number of siblings, success, and financial status of students should be reported. Our state is not a very poor one... The state should have provided the infrastructure for this. At my school, 6 people did not switch to reading. They had no Internet infrastructure. They were trying to connect from their mobile phone. Rich families' kids and the*

> *kids of government officials have a computer at home, a tablet, and a mobile phone. The family is conscious, they are learning the lessons. This is the village boy... The quota for those who have Internet is running out. Injustices have increased. Distance education did not reach everyone.* (M12)

Under the theme of administrative priorities during the pandemic, the code of maintaining achievements was also emphasized. To this end, some principals said that the gains in cleaning and technology use should continue after the pandemic. In addition, some principals stated that priority should be given to activities that *raise awareness* regarding the practices that have been made or can be done to ensure that stakeholders are psychologically ready for the pandemic process and what comes after. An excerpt from one principal's views regarding the code of raising awareness is as follows:

> *We held meetings with our teachers to help them adapt. In the beginning, we were away from the students for two and a half months. Currently, our school is divided in half, and face-to-face education continues. We only do distance learning on Wednesday. I see that students also miss school and their friends. Our Guidance Service provides services for resolving the uncertainty and psychological problems COVID has created. I hear that some of our parents do not want to send their students. In order to break this understanding, I have the guidance teachers and parents meet. We try to resolve problems by presenting different ideas and approaches.* (M24)

The second theme for schooling-related priorities during and after the pandemic is social priorities. This theme offers some suggestions for coping with the psychological depression caused by the social isolation that entered our lives through the pandemic. Under this theme are the following codes: providing social support,

increasing social activities, and providing motivation. The code with the highest frequency under this theme is increasing social activities (*n*=27). The code involves activity and application suggestions that will facilitate students' and teachers' adaptation to schooling in the face of the psychological distance caused by the social distance. One quote from the principals' views regarding this code is as follows:

> *If schooling continues like this, we may have things such as nature walks for the students in the afternoons. Students missed acting together. Students who never come to school almost forgot about school. They forgot to talk, they forgot to play, they forgot their friends. They have already forgotten their teachers. After the pandemic process is over, social activities should be held with teachers. Social activities are necessary to increase teachers' commitment to the school and to strengthen communication. Teachers should be supported with activities.* (M11)

The second most-emphasized code under the theme of social priorities is providing motivation. This code exemplifies what needs to be done in order to overcome negative emotions such as the burnout, inefficiency, and aimlessness caused by the constant changes and uncertainties in the education system. The following is one excerpt from the principals' comments regarding this code:

> *Our students have developed psychological imbalances. In order to overcome these, we need to motivate those students at regular intervals. For example, if their first lesson starts at 9:00, we have to do something fun with music in the garden for the first hour of the lesson.* (M5)

The last theme determined regarding schooling priorities during and after the pandemic is developmental priorities. This theme prioritizes the codes of providing academic support and providing emotional support. Regarding this theme, the principals emphasized

what needs to be done to eliminate the educational and instructional deficiencies created by the different education systems employed through trial and error during the pandemic process. Regarding the code of providing academic support, which the principals mentioned the most under this theme (*n*=23), the principals talked about their practices for eliminating the educational differences between students. The following is an excerpt from one principal's comments regarding this code:

> *There was a difference in students' academic levels. The students who had the opportunity continued distance education, but those who did not were unable to finish their grade. These children need to start from scratch again or the achievements need to be stretched accordingly. A way must be followed in order to win over the child with a low academic level. Teaching past subjects more intensively to students who were unable to attend will eliminate the level difference* (M13).

The second most highlighted code under the theme of developmental priorities is providing emotional support. This code expresses the principals' experiences with the rehabilitation practices for teachers, students, and parents. During the process of returning to schooling, principals emphasized carrying out studies with psychosocial support groups. In order to do this, applying the tests guidance teachers and experts prepared for the students and acting in accordance with their reports would be appropriate. This is because the principals had a hard time getting students to adapt and had noticed behavioral disorders.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

This study has determined that the areas where school principals had difficulty in managing the process of schooling during

the pandemic are gathered under the themes of *strategic leadership*, *instructional leadership*, and *social leadership*. The school leader's goal is to create a school environment that enhances students' learning and well-being under all circumstances. Leadership is a tool for reducing the inequalities that hinder the desired environment. The fact that school administrators have defined their experiences in the literature mostly through the concepts of uncertainty and instability during the pandemic support the findings of this research (Martinez et al., 2021). In times of crisis, school leaders' ability to ensure the effectiveness of the school and to bring appropriate solutions to problems includes various difficulties, and they are expected to show strategic leadership characteristics (Akyüz, 2018). Strategic leadership involves setting a vision, providing flexibility, and empowering employees to bring about the desired change (Ireland & Hitt, 1999). According to Daniels and Ramey (2005), a school leader is expected to make a systematic evaluation (i.e., situation analysis) by using the information they collect in order to understand and manage the school's environment during and after the pandemic. Because schools in Turkey are structured according to the principle of centralized management, the slightest change or uncertainty in the central organization is felt more strongly in schools, which are known as provincial organizations. When evaluated in the context of chaos theory, as the wavelength between the center and the periphery grows due to the principle of centrifugation, the effect the central government has on schools also grows exponentially. For this reason, principals resorted to short-term solutions in their schools and therefore stated having difficulties displaying their *strategic leadership* characteristics. Another reason for this result may be the inadequate scenarios for crises found in MoNE and the schools before the pandemic, as was also seen throughout the world. In addition, the interruption of classes due to pandemic

conditions, the inability of teachers to achieve the desired educational goals, and the inability to communicate with stakeholders face-to-face may have caused principals to feel inadequate and/or experience difficulties in terms of leadership. Schools should be evaluated in the context of critical theory, not only to serve the development of certain students or train socially-oriented workers, but also to train empowered, knowledgeable, and highly skilled democratic citizens with the confidence and mastery to make the social environments in which they live, work, and act more vibrant and to develop their lives inclusively (Kincheloe, 2008). From this point of view, the influence a school leader has in times of crisis is to focus on minimizing the damage to stakeholders and ensuring the survival and development of the school.

The research results show that the pandemic process has had some important benefits in terms of schooling-related *achievements focused on capacity building*, *socially oriented achievements*, and *goal-oriented achievements*. Among these themes, achievements focused on capacity-building came to the fore. According to the literature (Sarı & Nayır, 2020), the primary opportunities for education during the pandemic process have been for providing healthier school conditions, revising education plans, and developing new assessment systems and distance education programs. Secondary education opportunities involve developing new ways of communication, preparing schools for periods of crisis, increasing parental participation, expanding online learning, developing teachers' technical and pedagogical skills regarding integrating digital devices into education, redefining the roles parents, teachers, and education policies/politicians will have in the education process after the epidemic, and trying to make education systems stronger and fairer. Bowen (2012) mentioned that, as another

opportunity brought by the pandemic, how traditional education institutions have moved content distribution and mixed/hybrid forms to online media can be exemplified as having increasing the quality of face-to-face teaching by moving content distribution online. According to Buheji and Ahmed (2020), the revision of education can be seen as an opportunity to update the methods that have moved away from the basic philosophy of education and to discuss their validity in many respects. At a time when the attention of the whole world is focused on education as well as health systems, transforming education policies into a more inclusive and fair structure should also be an opportunity both for today and the future. The literature and these research findings show that the school organization has been forced to change due to environmental conditions. In other words, the classical education style has evolved into digital education to maintain the existence of the school organization and education system as an evolutionary instinct resulting from the environmental factors created by the pandemic process. This can be claimed to have enabled school members to attempt to develop themselves personally and professionally. We could say our findings are consistent with Senge's (2006) learning organization theory. In this respect, crisis experiences can be considered as the gains from the pandemic process and to have namely increased the individual and professional capacities of school principals and teachers for developing preventive behavior, acquiring technological knowledge, being open to innovations, and attaching importance to professional development.

Findings from the study show that the themes of administrative priorities, social priorities, and developmental priorities emerged with respect to the school principals' experiences regarding reducing the problems associate with adjusting to the pandemic and the subsequent

schooling process. Administrative priorities are at the forefront of these themes. Having to live long-term with the pandemic measures has brought about certain restrictions in the lives of school members or the adoption of different attitudes. Maintaining pandemic measures within a school requires implementing and monitoring new rules while adding new responsibilities for school principals. Therefore, the need exists to carefully evaluate the side effects of measures that may adversely affect the adaptation process (Harris & Jones, 2020). According to the research from Yıldırım et al. (2021), things such as crisis management centers or boards can be established during a crisis in order to provide expert support regarding adaptation problems during the post-crisis return to school. On the other hand, long-term measures may create a perception that additional rules are present that restrict and exhaust individuals' behaviors, causing them to be ignored. In some cases, a lack of personal control over subjective decisions and feeling controlled externally may cause people to avoid adaptive behaviors (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). Bergdahl and Nouri's (2020) research emphasized the negative effects of social distance measures in schools and the emotional deprivation caused by individuals with limited social interactions. According to Giannini and Lewis (2020), other problems that may arise as a result of continuing measures after the pandemic are the growth of existing inequalities in the education system, the emergence of long-term negative consequences in addition to missed learning opportunities, many children and young people losing access to the healthy meals schools offer them, experiencing economic problems, and being exposed to social stress.

All in all, when evaluating the research results collectively, school principals were identified as having the most difficulty displaying their strategic leadership characteristics, and the pandemic

contributed to the principals through the emergence of the administrative priorities that resulted from their experiences with the pandemic. Furthermore, administrative priorities being brought to the fore could indicate a shift in principals' attitudes toward imposing responsibilities on themselves, ensuring school improvement by learning from problems, providing equal opportunities for disadvantaged students, and turning process experiences into opportunities. In this regard, the following recommendations can be made:

School leaders stated having difficulties in the areas of strategic leadership, social leadership, and instructional leadership skills. Therefore, new policies may be made to support the development of these skills. Furthermore, school principals have the most difficulty in exhibiting strategic leadership; therefore, strategic plans may be made based on several scenarios that give autonomy to schools at the central and provincial levels. School principals can also be mentored to improve their competencies regarding strategic leadership.

According to the findings, the school principals most frequently mentioned that opportunities exist for capacity development and infrastructure investments should be made by increasing the share of national income allocated to education. Although the pandemic caused a sharp shift to the digital era, one in which the principals experienced many difficulties and uncertainties, the schools and principals encourage online teaching and feel responsible for accessing technological resources for teachers and students. In many respects, education policymakers may thus use the teaching and learning processes that occurred through distance learning and other similar formats to support a return to normality.

The principals emphasized most that administrative priorities should be put to work after the pandemic, and the new management model created by the new normal should be standardized and applied at the school level. Principals may wrestle within their practice around creating conditions for students to learn and teachers to teach while at the same time seeking out new ways to support online learning and the operations of public schooling through extensive digital leadership. As such, they need to develop their digital leadership skills.

The themes of administrative priorities, social priorities, and developmental priorities emerged with respect to the school principals' experiences regarding reducing the problems associated with adjusting to the schooling process during and after the pandemic. People may develop negative emotions and feelings such as a sense of loneliness or frustration due to experiencing long days of quarantines and social isolation (Dor-Haim & Oplatka, 2021). School leaders should support their staff in coping with any feelings of loneliness and frustration they may have experienced, thereby encouraging staff to manage their emotions in class and to show similar support to their students. To cope with these and other related negative emotions, teachers and school principals should be supported in their emotion management and regulation.

Limitations of the Research

In terms of method, this research is limited to analyzing data collected from a semi-structured interview form based on a qualitative approach using content analysis. Future research using other data collection approaches may additionally strengthen the findings and increase the generalizability of the results. The research is limited to

the principals working in primary, secondary, and high schools in Turkey in the 2020-2021 academic year. The study did not take teachers' experiences into consideration, which may have caused limited data to be reached. Due to the central governmental policies of the Ministry of National Education, the principals may also not have been able to clearly express their negative feelings about the pandemic process.

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