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School Leader Education as a Driving Force for Personal Development in Terms of Orientation, Reflection, Exploration, and Interplay

Stina Jerdborg

University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

Abstract

Following a professional program to ensure qualification for school leadership is a growing trend. However, school leaders have also come to understand and use content from educational programs in widely different ways. There is therefore a need to study how participating school principals experience learning differently within one and the same program. This empirical study uses qualitative methods to examine fourteen compulsory school principals' experiences of how the mandatory Swedish National Principal Training Program contributes to their professional development. The findings show how program elements can be experienced as contributing to professional development of some principals while being experienced as obstacles for others, depending on becoming active or passive driving forces for participants in terms of orientation, reflection, exploration, and interplay. Applying a theoretical framework made it possible to describe and understand their professional development through program participation in a nuanced way. In terms of analytical generalization such knowledge may form the basis for development of school leader programs.

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Introduction

The interest in preparation and development of school leaders through their participation in certain professional programs has expanded and strengthened the professional development and learning of school leaders, a trend that is growing internationally. Completing school leadership training is also increasingly becoming a requirement for professional practice of school leadership (Bush, 2008, 2018; Mourshed et al., 2010). However, training for school leaders varies as leaders' responsibilities and services vary between countries.

Empirical studies of formalized training programs for school leaders focuses on the content of program models as well as their pedagogical approaches (Aas and Törnsén, 2016; Jensen and Ottesen, 2022, Orr 2009; Orr and Orphanos, 2011). Accordingly, school leaders who have participated in high quality training programs, are argued to become better prepared, more consistent in how they exercise their leadership and get better at leading school development (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). However, school leaders are found to experience, understand, and make use of the program content pertaining to such trainings rather differently in their professional practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Huber, 2013; Jerdborg, 2022a; McCulla and Degenhardt, 2016). This entails exploring the very issues for dissimilar participants as individuals. That said, sparse empirical and theoretical attention has hitherto been paid to the professional development of school leadership across institutions where participants are expected to learn and develop 'across sites', i.e., they are expected to learn at site in university-based programs to develop their practitioner school leadership practice (e.g., Jensen, 2022). Thus, more attention needs to be directed to whether courses for school leaders are designed effectively so that the desired outcomes become possible.

Moreover, studies of school leadership training have been criticized for being atheoretical and for relying too heavily on participants' self-assessment, as participants respond positively in surveys regardless of the features of the program design (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Jensen, 2016, 2022). Therefore, researchers must look for ways to evaluate participant perspectives that do not rely solely on self-assessment. Consequently, studies are needed that focus on the different ways program participants experience learning. To advance education, knowledge of participants' experiences of learning may form the basis for educational development. Furthermore, basing research on a sound theoretical foundation and triangulating research methods seem important (McCulla and Degenhardt, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010).

This study creates knowledge about how school leaders (i.e., principals) experience professional development and learning through participation in a specific principal program. The Swedish National Principal Training Program (SNPTP) is a mandatory three-year program that runs concurrently with participants' work as a principal. This arrangement is in some ways unique and makes Sweden an interesting context for study, especially as there is no self-selection paving the way for voluntary attendance viz. all new principals are required to take the course. The focus is on experiences of principals who attend the third (i.e., last) year of training in the SNPTP. While participating in SNPTP, the participants of this study work as a principal in a Swedish compulsory school. As they are in their last year of the program, they have experienced all the courses and gained a few years of experience as a principal. The focus on the principals' experiences with SNPTP is specifically approached in terms of how training elements, program design and content are experienced in an

intertwined fashion. Two research questions guide this study: 1) What training elements do participants highlight and how do these contribute to their professional development and learning? and 2) How can the participants' professional learning be described and understood? The analysis uses a theoretical framework based on Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning.

Contextualization

The SNPTP is designed to intertwine experiences from practice with learning in the program and to promote social learning for the participating principals using diverse group formations during course work. The current form of the program was established in 2008 and has been mandatory for new principals since 2010. This three-year program comprises 30 higher education credits, partly at an advanced level. The principals begin the training within one year after they have been hired as a principal (Jerdborg, 2022b). The program comprises three courses: School law and the exercise of authority; Governance, organization and quality and School leadership pedagogical leading. The training/studying, conducted while the participants work as a principal, takes about 20% of the participants' working time. This parallel process contributes to professional development by linking the program closely to participants' professional experiences and everyday work (Skolverket, 2020). Through this program, the participating principals develop knowledge and competence, including an understanding of national and local goals, develop the ability to critically examine their practice, and formulate strategies for school development based on their analysis (Skolverket, 2015, 2020). The course meetings are interspersed with literature reading and assignments addressing participants' practice (Forssten Seiser and Söderström, 2021; Norberg 2019; Brauckmann et al., 2020).

Research on school leaders' professional development in education

Previous studies of school leader education show that program content should be closely linked to participants' practice, that program design should be clear and that participants need to be motivated (Orr, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Huber and Hiltmann, 2011; Orr and Barber, 2006). Programs should focus on developing leadership skills, ethical leadership, leading teachers' learning and vision work, managing the school organization's goals and results and developing organizational and change work, while connecting theory and practice using mentorship and assisting in the creation of professional networks (Orr and Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). Jensen and Ottesen (2022) display how educational practices of school leader education is dependent on social, material, and discursive artifacts and how they relate. Moreover, they argue that research needs to pay attention to educational entities in teaching practices of school leader programs and to their relationships using data from situated practices alongside to the detailed understanding of what it means to participate. Consequently, this study seeks to contribute by exploring how school leaders experience program entities through participation in a certain principal program.

Internationally, research traditions vary concerning research on school leadership education. However, as few studies use theoretical analysis tools (Jensen, 2016; Møller, 2016), there is a need for qualitative studies that use theoretical analysis. Such studies with a qualitative orientation would help provide an in-depth understanding of learning in the SNPTP context. The education of school leaders tends to develop as a separate field of research rather than relying on post graduate education (HE) research in general (Jensen and Ottesen, 2022). Thus, the situation with school leaders participating in school leader

educational programs is indeed important to address and discuss in the fields of school leadership and professional development of school leaders.

In the Swedish setting, Forssten Seiser and Söderström (2021) found that SNPTP participants develop diverse strategies according to their study group's culture. In some groups, a reflective learning community is formed, while in others effective collective routines are developed before examinations or an individualized culture is formed. Liljenberg and Wrethander (2020) show that participants in the SNPTP find the program's long-term focus on internship-related examining tasks challenging, but they gradually take on and learn from the tasks. Jerdborg (2022a, 2021) found out that participants in the SNPTP adopt one of three separate learning identities in the educational context, each affecting both how they perceive the program and how they approach their practice. Skott and Törnsén (2018) as well as Ärlestig (2012) shared that participants' previous experiences seem to affect their learning in the program. Based on these studies, new questions arise as to how the training elements are experienced by SNPTP participants and how these promote learning and professional development. This study approaches these issues specifically.

A social learning perspective as a theoretical frame

This study uses Wenger's (1998) social learning theory as a theoretical and analytical framework to explore principals' experiences of professional development and learning while participating in a principal program. That means, as this study takes on socio-cultural and practice perspectives, it is based on an ontology that perceives people as acting beings, engaged in the world (Wenger, 1998). From this perspective, learning is based on how people (i.e., the principals) develop learner identities through their active participation in specific

contexts (i.e., their program and work). However, a point important to consider is that learning cannot be designed, it can only be designed for in terms of being facilitated, or frustrated (Wenger, 1998 p. 229).

Consequently, Wenger (1998) argues it is important for educational programs to be designed for learning. For example, programs could link participants' educational engagement with their educational alignment and imagination concerning professional identity. Thus, education, at its best, can become an active force for participants' professional lives. This is an important quality to identify in the study. Further, Wenger (1998) argues for a learning design that creates social infrastructures and involves practices and professional identities. From this perspective, education becomes relevant for participants when they engage in formulating, testing, and reconsidering their professional identity as this allows learning to become a meaningful part of their professional life (Packer and Goicoecha, 2000; Wenger, 1998). Although engagement is critical to learning, it takes imagination to encompass with the broader context. In this study, facilities of imagination are therefore approached in terms of orientation, reflection, and exploration (Wenger, 1998 p. 238). Further, designing for learning is a matter of combining some fundamental dimensions productively. Thence, participation and reification, designed and emergent, identification and negotiability as well as local and global are approached as dualities in the study (e.g., Wenger, 1998 p. 232).

Becoming a member of a new community (e.g., through participating in education) is a typical starting point for learners' identity development. However, participation requires not only new knowledge but also changing one's 'old self', possibly experienced as a tangible loss (Packer & Goicoecha, 2000; Wenger, 1998).

In this study, learning can be understood based on the understandings of what is socially experienced and how this takes place. Consequently, studying principals' experiences of program participation and materialization are important. As the perspective implies that learning is ongoing in all contexts and transforms identities by including engagement, imagination, and the ability to align with systems (Wenger, 1998), educational contexts, educators' actions and teaching materials become resources for learning in complex ways and thus constitute important qualities to identify in the study. Also, when knowledge is coded into elements (e.g., texts, syllabi, and other learning material), a distance is created between the learner and the practices where the knowledge is included (e.g., school leaders' practices) (Wenger, 1998). Therefore, understanding the teaching material might require extra work constituting a pedagogical cost for the learner. Furthermore, learning can become linked to the material rather than practice, providing only superficial learning with narrow usefulness on the part of the participants. Thus, educators need to constantly balance the use of teaching material. Knowledge also needs to encompass meaning and usability to be utilized more participatively in professional settings.

Wenger's (1998) social learning theory has influenced several research fields that include learning in societal contexts and working life. In education, researchers have formerly used Wenger's framework to study how participants develop closeness or distance to their learning by adopting different learner identities (cf. Oppland-Cordell and Martin, 2015; Biza et al., 2014; Crawford and Cowie, 2012). Wenger's (1998) theoretical contribution, however, has been criticized for not being a "grand theory" and therefore not always perceived as complete. Furthermore, the theory has been criticized for not

sufficiently being empirically grounded (Engeström, 2013; Kanes and Lerman, 2008; Handley et al., 2006). Wenger argues that the ambition is not to be all-encompassing but that the theory constitutes a framework for considering learning, which is to be validated empirically (Farnsworth et al., 2016). This view sheds light to the ways through which the uses of constructs should be understood in this study as applied in the context of the specific program.

Method

The study focuses on the relevant learning experiences of 14 principals in the third (and final) year of the SNPTP in 2018–2019. All the participants were concurrently working as principals in a compulsory school. Their participation was situated within one of three studied course groups, each associated to a specific program provider (i.e., a university). These participating principals correspond to the usual composition for principals in the compulsory school regarding area of responsibility, gender and municipal or independent school organizer. That is, there was an even distribution of responsibilities regarding student grades (1–3, 4–6 and 7–9). About 66% of the principals were women and about 80% were municipal school principals (i.e., 20% were school principals of independent schools).

These principals participated in three semi-structured interviews – an individual interview, a group interview conducted at their educational site (i.e., in connection with the course), and an additional individual interview was conducted at their workplace. The two methods of individual and group interviews offer complementary approaches to answer the research questions. Individual interviews served to deepen individual experiences of the program, and as some questions were retrospective, in all, processes of professional development were

concentrated upon. Group interviews stimulated discussion and meta-reflection, helping participants to remember their past experiences in terms of program design and content. Moreover, listening to different views and reflections together brought contrasting experiences of the same entities to the fore. Meeting the principals for a second round of individual interviews, situated at their workplace, gave perspective and the opportunity to return to previous statements for further in-depth exploration. Both the individual interviews, which lasted 60–90 minutes, and the group interviews, which lasted slightly longer, were recorded digitally and transcribed.

Observations were conducted for 7–8 full days in each of the three course groups, and the participating principals were shadowed at their workplace (i.e., school) for one day. Observations functioned as complementary to interviews, helping to understand the related contexts, and highlighting the meaning of oral comments, serving as a form of triangulation. Accordingly, interview transcripts constitute main empirics for the analyses, while the observational notes are not specifically described or analyzed for this manuscript but functioned as described, contextualizing each principal's talk of their practice.

Analyses

In the first round of the analyses work, the transcripts were read for several times. All the educational activities that were talked about in the interviews, including content and design, were highlighted, and recorded in the first column of a matrix. The next column recorded what the participants shared about the gains out of the educational activity in relation to their development and in the third column what the said processes in turn meant for them in the forms of development or constraints. This round of analyses revealed two opposing views, or rather two sorts of opposing experiences. Moreover, it appeared that

several educational activities rendered the same sorts of experiences. To bring these together and find ways to analytically describe their value for participants' professional development, Wenger's (1998) conceptual framework was used. Consequently, this can be termed an abductive analysis.

This meant that the empirical material was sorted based on the principals' experiences of their program participation in terms of training elements and content. Their experiences were attributed to the aspects of orientation, reflection, exploration, or interplay (cf. Wenger, 1998, p. 238) as it takes imagination to encompass crucial engagement in a program with the broader context of a principal's work. In the analysis, orientation refers to experience of locating oneself in one's professional role and understanding one's role in relation to a general principal's role. Reflection refers to the experience of increasing self-awareness through interaction between closeness and distance, making it possible to see oneself and situations with 'new eyes'. Exploration refers to experience of exploring, trying out and recreating opportunities for professional practice. Interplay refers to experiences and training elements where orientation, reflection and exploration interact. Moreover, out of the two contrasting ways to experience the activities, these aspects are related to whether they constitute an active or a passive driving force for the participant (Wenger 1998, p. 273). Active here refers to whether the program becomes an active part of the participant's professional identity, driving and developing understanding and action. With respect to orientation, on the other hand, active refers to expanding the participant's understanding. As for reflection, active refers to gaining a view of oneself and the surrounding world in new ways. When it comes to exploration, active refers to creating a new self-image by trying out actions and providing

new experiences. Passive in relation to orientation refers to fixed ideas which can limit the professional role, whereas regarding reflection it refers to limited perceptions of oneself and situations, becoming a limiting factor. Passive in relation to exploration refers to participants' limited experiences preventing understanding and meaningful 'ownership' of the program content. The participants' experiences were related to their engagement and alignment toward the educational activities and training elements. Engagement refers to how participants approach the program and the content, while alignment points to how they adjust themselves and use what is learned. How the categorization of statements was approached in this phase of analyses are exemplified in Table 1.

Table 1. *Categorization of statements*

Engagement and alignment Passive force Examples of quotes	**Aspects of educational imagination**	**Engagement and alignment Active force** Examples of quotes
Passive with respect to **orientation** refers to fixed ideas, which can limit the professional role. *"It probably hasn't broadened my view of the assignment that much."* *"The education may not have influenced my view of principalship, but I think doing the work of principal is what creates my view."* *"There have been different qualities of the lecturers. I'm not a fan of someone coming up and putting up a PowerPoint of 250 pages, and then you know that, damn it, now we're*	Examples of training elements: o *Literature* o *Lectures* o *Assignments* o *Exams* Categorized as: **Orientation** o **Space** o **Time** o **Meaning** o **Power**	Active with respect to **orientation** refers to expanding the participant's understanding. *"After all, we should all have read the literature and then I assume that you do. If you have also written a reading log, then you already have a lot of thoughts raised and a lot of things learned. And then you get here, and you sharpen it even more, […] and through conversations in groups about the theoretical concepts. And if a colleague says, but I interpret it this way. Then you get into a new way of thinking. […] And an exchange of experience occurs."*

going to sit here until twelve o'clock and look at 250 PowerPoint slides, and where there's only two words that stand. And then you know that here is someone who likes to listen to himself."		
Passive with respect to **reflection** refers to limited perceptions of oneself and situations, becoming a limiting factor. *"If you could sit down for a while or sit down with other people and if you could be systematic and if you could let go of all these practical things. […] That is, you train a little and you prepare, but you really run a lot on instinct because you lack experience and fingertip sense."*	Examples of training elements: o *Planned reflection in assignments* o *Spontaneous reflection on content* Categorized as: **Reflection**	Active with respect to **reflection** refers to gaining a new view of oneself and the surrounding world. *" The education has given time for reflection. […] on what we do here, and what it means in my everyday life, which in turn has in any case given me more knowledge about both myself but also about the school as an organization."* *"I probably thought it [SNPTP] would be more fact-based, not that it was so much self-reflection making me grow more in three years as a person than in the other 46."*
Passive with respect to **exploration** refers to limited experiences preventing understanding and meaningful 'ownership' of educational content. *"It's my worst branch! (Note. To role-play). Shall we change the subject?"* *"Concretely, my staff doesn't see anything from the course I'm taking. I don't believe you should say that "I have an assignment from the course to carry out", then it becomes experimental, and I find it difficult to believe in such a task."*	Examples of training elements: o *Role play* o *Experiencing visual tools (pictures, maps, models, concepts)* o *Working with cases* o *Trying out tasks in professional practice* o *Testing and reconsidering actions*	Active with respect to **exploration** refers to creating a new self-image by trying out actions and providing new experiences. *"In the role play, a union representative, was going to meet the manager. The union representative would make demands and the manager would respond. In my group, it went crazy, because the manager answered completely! And I just realized that, ah! If I'm just in the slightest bad mood, that's how I'll answer! And you can't do that!"*

	○ *Visiting or receiving visits to school* ○ *Long term development plans* Categorized as: **Exploration**	*"You must always start from where you are. You can start from your own school and the reality where you are and apply what you learn in your practice. And put it, as well as the knowledge you get, into action."*
Passive with respect to **interplay** refers to training elements where orientation, reflection and exploration should interact but disconnect. *"The educational design is good, but also intensive. I'm the kind of person who, well, jeez, at least I can decide for myself where to sit! […] If you are a person who needs to just, (breathing), then it is too intense."* *"There are always some in the group who would like to be seen and heard. And in those situations, I find it a bit difficult. Because I kind of can't bear to be pushed with someone else to take a seat."*	Examples of training elements: ○ *Working in study groups and exchange of experiences* Categorized as: **Interplay**	Active with respect to **interplay** refers to training elements where orientation, reflection and exploration interact. *"Because you have collaborated with different groups, you have received many examples of what it looks like at other schools and gained an insight into both that you have had to reflect on the chain of steering in the own municipality versus what is found in others. In other workplaces, and municipalities, and independent schools versus municipal schools and so on. You´ve gained a widened view of the assignment."*

In the next round of analyses the different aspects of educational imagination, engagement and alignment were further explored in detail. Analytical concepts in terms of four dualities as fundamental dimensions (Wenger, 1998, p. 232) were used in terms of local/global, participation/reification, designed/emergent and identification/negotiability. The local/global dimension in this study considers the relationship between the program content (global) and the participant (local). The participation/reification dimension relates to degree of participation concerning training elements and how program content

and form (reification) are used. The designed/emergent dimension considers the relationship between training elements (designed) and emergent understanding (emergent). The identification/negotiability dimension examines the interaction between the participant's identification with the professional role (identification) and openness to negotiate new elements of identification (negotiability). A visualization of these dimensions in the form of an analytical frame is presented in Table 2. In the last round of analyses an analytical generalization was conceptualized out of the findings and illustrated with a figure.

Table 2. *Visualization of dimensions used as analytical frame*

Dimensions of educational (program) design		
Participant participation	Local --- Global	Program content
Degree of participation	Participation --- Reification	Program content and design
Training elements	Designed --- Emergent	Emergent understanding
Identification with professional role	Identification --- Negotiability	Openness to new elements of identification

Findings

This section presents results in three steps in line with the description of the analyses process. The first step concerns the first research question: What kind of experiences of program participation do participants highlight concerning learning and professional development and how do these contribute to their professional development? In this direction, descriptive categories from empirics are presented, however, these patterns discovered through inductive analyses, which are analytically interpreted creating links to the

theoretical constructs of the elements described in the analyses section and to their function for the participants are further made explicit. In the second step these experiences are further described and explored in terms of contribution to their professional development. Moreover, an analytical generalization is made, with the help of the second research question: How can participants' professional learning be described and understood? In the third step, the empirical results are conceptualized theoretically and illustrated through a figure.

Experiences and their connection to professional development

First, participants highlight experiences of traditional educational design in terms of lectures and literature reading together with writing assignments and exams. In the analysis, traditional elements are attributed to the elements of orientation as they contribute with information and perspectives, creating structure and direction, most often supporting the process of locating oneself professionally in time, space, meaning and power. Second, educational design promoting professional reflection is highlighted by the participants, both in terms of reflection as a specific assignment and in terms of spontaneous reflection linked to the program content and practice. In the analysis, these are both attributed to the elements of reflection. Third, the principals highlighted educational design in the form of role play, visual tools (pictures, models, maps, and concepts), contrast, work with cases, educational tasks in one's own professional practice, testing and reconsideration of acting, visiting and receiving visits to one's school and taking on long-term development work in practice linked to report writing. In the analysis, these are attributed to the opportunities for exploration. Fourth, participants highlighted working in study groups. In the analysis, working in study groups are attributed to the elements of interplay, as study group work required

an interplay between the elements of orientation, reflection, and exploration.

In the following, principals' experiences of participating in the program are presented under four headings, each corresponding to the element of orientation, reflection, exploration, or interplay. For each element, an introduction is given, followed by a presentation of experiences based on how they constituted an active or a passive driving force for the principals, mainly focusing education as an active force. Illustrative quotes are presented.

Experiencing elements of orientation

The principals describe how traditional educational designs in the form of lectures and literature bring information and perspectives. The structure given for the studies with reading literature and other preparations before each course meeting as well as tasks and assignments between course meetings are experienced as supportive. Thus, the design and structure for participation in the program (i.e., reifications) appear to be supportive and balanced.

Experiencing elements of orientation as an active driving force

Principals describe how lectures clarified content and perspectives from course literature, deepened and expanded the content and provided access to different ways of reasoning. Lectures also helped the principals adopt critical approaches. When the principals did not read from the literature before the class, they found that their learning was negatively affected, which emerged as an experience that motivated them to read assignments for future classes. The principals described the lecturers as knowledgeable and skilled. Some principals experienced the lectures as the best part of the program and described them as opportunities to listen, reflect and learn new things.

> *Principal 2: I perhaps sound a bit boring when I say that what has given me the most is actually the lectures. Because there you can relax listening to someone knowledgeable lecturing.*

The relationship between these traditional educational designs of the program (designed) and the participants' emerging understanding (emergent) was deemed supportive overall.

The pre-class reading from the literature was accompanied by supportive structures and tools. Literature logs helped the principals structure their reading and identify the author's main messages and arguments; gain the knowledge they could then use in in-class discussions. The principals described how they gained new ways of thinking through their reading. The course literature was also perceived as a form of support for staying up to date professionally and served as a reflective mirror for their own practice. The literature was also described as a dialogue partner who 'wrestles' with participants' ideas. The thoughts raised during the reading affected how the principals viewed their leadership practice and motivated them to act. The literature helped confirm their experiential knowledge. By gaining such professional language, the principals could justify their positions. That is, the literature contributed to their sense of professionalism – i.e., their professional identity.

> *Principal 7: The literature is very interesting, and I feel at home there somehow. You reflect in a different way. It is not so much that pocks one's attention, I rather get to think the thought clearly, and in consultation with others when we discuss in literature dialogues [...]. You constantly have your school practice in the back of your mind and think about things that I don't have time to think about otherwise. So, this also contributes to my development.*

Writing assignments and exams created systematics, reflections, and direction. The principals learned to perform tasks thoroughly, substantiate positions and understand the importance of working qualitatively with a long-term perspective. They found that they had learned to deliberate on possible actions and their effects. Although several participants found writing assignments difficult, they highlighted writing assignments as beneficial for their professional development. They found that responses to their assignments were supportive, promoting their ability to explicitly formulate the essential ideas rather than relying on assumptions.

> *Principal 3: The report we were tasked with has supported me, it has been a support as a leader, as a principal, because then I have taken actions that I have seen that need to be done. And I'm not so sure that I would have done it so structured otherwise.*

That is, engaging active forms of participation (participation) combined with the program content and its concretized forms (reifications) appears to have been important for learning development.

Engaging different perspectives on practice was central to the course literature, lectures and writing assignments. The principals described these perspectives as a central part of their newfound professional understanding. As these perspectives supported their everyday working actions, they became an integral part of their professional identity.

To sum up, the learning development analytically is understood as being dependent on the interaction between what is identified with professionally (identification) and openness to actively engage in

negotiating new perspectives into the professional identity (negotiability).

Experiencing elements of orientation as a passive driving force

Some principals described that the basic understanding of the course content in relation to their professional role was difficult to establish as they found the educational design and content of the program too abstract and theoretical to grasp. Although these participants believed that the perspectives treated in coursework seemed important, they did not understand how the perspectives should be used. Lacking experience with school leadership proved to make program content difficult to understand. Lack of such leadership experience limits the opportunities to link content to practice, but the principals expressed a hope to make such links retrospectively.

> *Principal 12: The whole second course year felt like a year where I would have to go back and read the literature again and think more about how I can use it. It felt abstract and theoretical, and I got the feeling that there was a lot more there, which I could have benefited from in my leadership. I think that as you get into different situations, you will become more receptive to different parts, and feel that a-ha, that's what they were after in the principal program.*

How lectures are conducted is an important aspect. Lectures were described as long and boring, compressing content to such an extent that it became difficult to understand. That is, the lectures were not adapted to the participants' needs. The principals accentuated that lectures 'only describe what successful school leaders do' without linking these to the participants' professional role. The writing assignments, on the other hand, were mentioned as difficult to

understand. This can be interpreted as limiting the possibility to participate and interact meaningfully with the course content, which limits the interaction between participation and reification.

To sum up, this disruption of learning development is understood analytically as an outcome of the lack of interaction between professional identification (identification) and engagement in negotiation of new perspectives into the professional identity (negotiability). These participants rather tried to adapt perspectives and other content to their existing professional identification.

Experiencing elements of reflection

The principals generally described educational design aimed to promote professional reflection as an important part of the program. In this sense, reflection refers to the interaction between proximity and distance, making it possible to 'see oneself with new eyes'. Such reflection can be designed and constitute a separate planned element within the program or might arise as an effect of other design elements or content.

Experiencing reflective elements as an active driving force

Reflecting on and examining one's understanding was experienced by many principals as ways to change their views and actions regarding practice. Reflection made the principals understand the program content and elements and how these relate to their experience, which also helped them understand their practice in new ways.

> *Principal 9: It has given me time for reflection, which in turn has in any case given me more knowledge about both myself but also about the school as an organisation.*

Participating principals described their novel awareness of the importance of reflection as a tool for understanding and analyzing situations. Some participants stated that they now understood the importance of introducing reflection as a tool for their employees to promote school development. Reflection seemed to help the principals revise their professional identity, from being teacher to being a principal. In addition, reflection was experienced as reducing the perceived (i.e., abstract) professional stress. The principals described reflecting on their professional situation in relation to external knowledge gained in the program as a key gain. Sometimes such reflection supported principals' acting to change their situation by, for example, changing their workplace.

To sum up, analytically, reflection is understood as a powerful active driving force when it produces interaction between an element (designed) and a participant's emerging/new understanding of practice (emergent).

Experiencing reflective elements as a passive driving force

Principals who did not understand the program content described that their reflection mainly consisted of frustration of not understanding. For them, this difficulty of reflecting added to their existing stress. A lack of professional experience as a school leader seemed to make reflective elements difficult since situations that arise in professional practice must be analyzed on the basis of a narrower framework of experience (adaptation). That is, reflection did not become a tool for deepening the understanding of practice but contributed to experiencing the program as an abstraction.

> *Principal 12: Sometimes it would be a good help if someone 'translated' a bit so that you don't have to reflect without getting*

> *help. That you get a construction to hang the literature to become more comprehensible, not having to put enormous energy into figuring out what they really meant. You need a shortcut.*

To sum up, analytically, reflection is understood as a significant passive driving force when educational elements (designed) do not improve emerging understanding (emergent) as other elements cannot be processed due to a lack of contextual knowledge and experience.

Experiencing elements of exploration

Participating principals described how their process of exploring, trying, creating, and recreating opportunities for one's own professional practice takes place in diverse ways as part of participation in the program.

Experiencing elements of exploration as an active driving force

Carrying out tasks and assignments in one's own professional practice has a central place in SNPTP. This kind of program design provides the opportunity to connect experiences to the course for further processing. However, such a structure is also cogent, which is described in general as supportive for systematic work generating new experiences. Such tasks urge principals to prioritize specific steps and perform them qualitatively and therefore take greater responsibility as leaders. Educational program elements that focus on examining and reconsidering writings and documents were described as contributing to the problematization of these same writings and documents. Participation that was combined with program content, with its concretized forms (reifications) appears to have been significant for learning and professional development.

Visiting other participants' schools was described as both exploratory and experiential. Experiencing the way other schools operate might reveal new aspects of their own practice and put it into a new perspective. Receiving visits was described in a similar way – i.e., the visitors helped them see their own practice with 'new eyes'. In course work, where the reviews of their own leadership are included, the principals described having opened their eyes to the aspects of their own leadership that they previously were unable to see.

Another exploratory element that is mentioned is role play. Through role play, the participants gained a new perspective of themselves and of their actions in their own practice, which lead to self-examination and insight into the need to adjust their leadership. In addition, several visual tools were used in the program to explore new ideas, including figures of theoretical models and sketches in the form of organizational maps and hierarchies. These kinds of visualizations, shown by lecturers or participants, were described as immediately striking, resulting in new revelatory experiences and insights.

> *Principal 2: I was bouncing around in this 'what's wrong and what am I doing wrong'. In the training, we had a lecturer who drew the flat organization with the principal. And then she drew the hierarchical one next to it. And I just looked at this number line and realized that for me it goes on forever. There are 44 lines on this number line, and then I realized that […] I must make changes!*

Even when the educators of the program contrasted concepts, this has served as a visual model. The principals described how concepts turned their understanding upside down and made them think anew. Similarly, working with cases, which formed the basis for reasoning and discussions, influenced the principal's practice.

To sum up, analytically, the visits and reviews of the existing leadership perceptions and practicum are seen as supportive towards the participants' reflections, commitment, and adjustment of their own (local) leadership practice to a general (global) leadership. However, this is understood as being dependent on an active interaction between the professional identification (identification) and an openness to renegotiate professional identification (negotiability). The relationship between educational elements of exploration (designed) and new emerging understandings (emergent) appears to have been powerful.

Experiencing elements of exploration as a passive driving force

Some participating principals found that the theoretical models and visualizations were difficult to understand. As a result, these principals chose to go directly to solving practice situations. This incongruity can be understood as a pedagogical cost as these principals perceived understanding the program material as too difficult (i.e., not worth spending their time and effort on).

> *Principal 6: I thought the course was so big and hard to grasp. What was the purpose, where am I going with all this? [...] I just thought the cross model was so difficult, what do they want with that cross model and what should I do, and how does this help me in my practice and how can I implement it?*

Some principals described some of the educational tasks to be carried out in their own practice as lengthy and difficult to understand, making the efforts not as useful as originally intended. It also appears that some principals did not want to prove themselves as a 'school leader student' in their professional practice and therefore did not integrate the assignments openly in their practice. Consequently, visits from the program were described as a type of disclosure. During these

visits, they described their fears of receiving criticism in front of their peers.

To sum up, these visits were understood as inhibiting their professional identification, resulting in an unwillingness or inability to renegotiate professional identity.

Experiencing elements of orientation, reflection, and exploration in interplay

The principals described working in a diversity of study groups as a central part in their training, mainly experienced as supportive. When working in a group, the interplay between the elements of orientation, exploration and reflection appeared to be vital.

Experiencing interplay as an active driving force

The work in study groups most often was described as contributing to development and learning. The exchange of experiences provided good insights into different leadership practices and the conditions that surround them. Therefore, meeting colleagues gave access to more perspectives than the ones owned, and new network contacts were made possible. Moreover, in general it seems to have contributed to a more open attitude to the profession.

> *Principal 8: It was great support with the base group. During all the years, precisely that you change the base group. Very good. I have learned an awful lot. You discuss all the time and openly in a different way because, it's not my municipality and we know that you don't talk about it. So, I think it has been fantastically good and still is.*

These conversations with peers provided opportunities to reconcile complex issues in the professional practice, which further promoted

professional identification. Having to account for one's own professional practice and describe it to others seemed to support understanding.

Principals stated that listening to the other principals' dilemmas and how they managed situations contributed to expanded thinking and to figuring out new solutions. Such professional guidance was experienced as instrumental for resolving difficult conversations, which helped them reconsider their actions. The principals described a feeling of 'being on the move to take action and direction' in difficult matters. The dilemmas they dealt with throughout their program participation were seen as vicarious experience for their professional practice. Professional guidance was often carried out in strict conversation models, which was experienced positively.

To sum up, working in different study groups brings the opportunity for the interplay between elements. The relationship between one's own practice (local) and the outside world (global) becomes central for the participants when working in peer groups. When the principals needed to account for their professional practice, their degree of participation increased as they needed to clarify (reification). That is, design through study groups contributed to an emergent understanding of both one's own and others' views and actions, which helped clarify their professional identity. Thus, the openness to renegotiate professional identification might be at stake.

Experiencing interplay as a passive driving force

Some of the participating principals expressed skepticism about working in study groups. Prestige and negative group processes were said to counteract learning and professional development. In groups, hierarchies become visible and shape boundaries.

> *Principal 6: We're all leaders sitting here, and sometimes things don't go well at all. It's a bit dodgy, it's not appealing. There are hierarchies already in the groups if you put it that way. I find that difficult.*

The quality of group work varied and depended on expectations, members and role taking. Several participants experienced managing many new relationships during coursework as overwhelming. Professional guidance was a training element specifically mentioned as problematic if the conversational leaders did not take care of negative group processes. The principals stated that they adapted themselves to such situations by developing flat and bland dilemmas to protect their self-image.

To sum up, experiencing the interplay as a passive driving force meant that the interplay between different dimensions do not take place. To work in study groups appears to be challenging for the participants for whom the education is a passive driving force. If there is no openness to renegotiate professional identity, the training element is adapted to make it a technically feasible activity for the participant.

Conceptualizing School Leader Education as an active or a passive driving force

The participants highlighted several training elements as contributing to their professional development and learning. In the analyses, these were categorized and attributed to such elements of orientation, reflection, exploration, and interplay. These elements influenced the principals' learning and professional development. The elements of orientation clarified the course content and perspectives, deepened, and expanded the course content and provided access to several different ways of reasoning, aspects that helped the principals adopt

critical approaches. The elements of orientation contributed with information and perspectives and created structure and direction thus helping the principals locate themselves professionally in time, space, meaning and power. The elements of reflection were described as creating an interaction between proximity and distance. This interaction made it possible for the principals to 'see themselves with new eyes', to change their views, to act in practice and to promote a new understanding of the program content and how these relate to their experienced practice. The elements of exploration were experienced as immediately striking in a way that provided "aha" experiences and new insights, urging the principals to prioritize specific qualitatively steps of specific sort and take over a greater responsibility as leaders. These experiences appear to be important for learning and professional development. Last, the interplay between elements of orientation, exploration and reflection appeared to be vital when working in study groups, promoting exchange of experiences, providing insights into different leadership practices, and into surrounding conditions, giving access to more perspectives, new network contacts and in general promoting an open attitude about the profession.

However, some participants described how these same training elements hindered their learning relative to their own professional role and therefore blocking their understanding of their professional practice. The content of the courses was difficult to understand so they did not achieve a basic understanding of their professional role. The educational design and the program content were experienced as abstract, and their reflections mainly consisted of frustration resulting from not understanding well. The pedagogical cost of the understanding of the educational material was perceived as high and

managing many new relationships during coursework was experienced as overwhelming.

These results can cast light on a theoretical generalization. Learning in terms of professional development in this study is understood as depending on whether the program mainly becomes an active or a passive driving force (cf. Wenger, 1998, p. 273). Concluding and conceptualizing these results as regards a theoretical understanding, it would be fair to state that as an active driving force, education contributes to and expands the participants' professional identity via driving and developing understandings and actions accordingly. When the participants perceive education as a passive force, it rather becomes adapted to their existing ideas, which limits the development of professional identity.

The conclusion is that the principals who were actively engaged in the program were forced to reflect on their educational and practical experiences, which supported the renegotiation of their professional identities. However, the participants who passively experienced the program were unable to engage in the content or renegotiate their professional identities. Instead of engaging in reflection, they tried to adapt the education to their (narrower) experiences and identification. This is conceptualized theoretically in Figure 1.

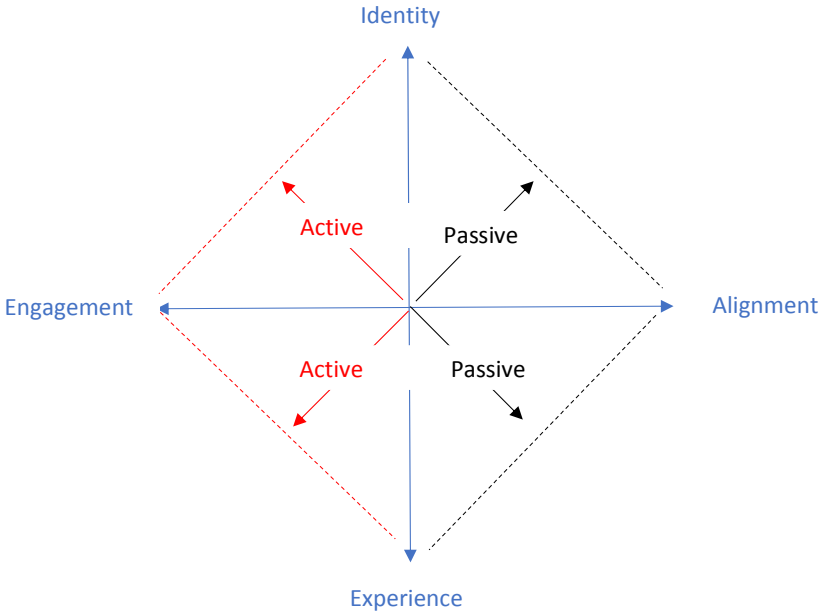

Figure 1. *Conceptualizing school leader education as an active or a passive driving force*

Concluding Discussion

This study creates knowledge about how principals experience professional development and learning through participation in a specific principal program. The first research question addressed what sorts of training elements the participants highlight and how these elements may contribute to professional development and learning. The results show that the training elements that contribute to professional development do so by functioning as aspects of educational imagination in terms of orientation in space, time, meaning and power, reflection, and exploration (cf. Wenger, 1998). This categorization of empirics to broader analytical categories is an authentic form of contribution, nuancing the way specific elements

support and intertwine the participants' learning. Moreover, another category was added, namely the interplay, as results made clear that while working in the study groups, orientation, reflection, and exploration needed to play out in concert. This also showed to be challenging for the participants who experienced education as a passive force, which connects to the second research question.

The second research question of the study addressed how the participants' professional learning can be described and understood. The results show that when education becomes an active driving force, it connects to the participants' identity, engagement, and experience. The training elements, design and content are engaged with the participant's identity and experience, which are actively influenced, becoming renegotiated and therefore generating learning. When education becomes a passive force, the participant's identity is linked to adaptation and experience. That is, when training elements, design and content are adapted to prevailing identity and experience, they are passively impinged and preserved. These results imply that experience is an important asset and that openness to negotiate new elements into the professional identity is crucial to benefit from such a program fully.

As a general lack of experience with school leadership proved to make educational content difficult to understand, it is urgent to review career paths of principals in Sweden (cf. Jerdborg, 2022b) and to address lacunas from policy perspectives. Moreover, to explore and develop a professional identity through participating in professional programs needs to mean focusing on multiple identities as a school professional rather than breaking with the former identifications such as being a teacher. This means, the program should begin by addressing experiences of teaching and middle leading before entering specific principalship issues. Instead of the in-service design, the

program could be approached full time intertwined with long term service in school in between. However, this implies that one needs to abandon the idea of the superiority of the principal arising from the first day of service and accepting experience, professional identity, and professional development as keys to leading and improving schools. This would also dismantle the fear of receiving criticism in how one is approaching practice as a novice principal because a novice can never approach practice in the same manner as anyone experienced and 'expert' in a professional role.

This implies the journey to principalship might not be that of a sprint but rather one pertaining to a slow progression from that of a teacher, into the role of a middle leader before entering the principalship. That is, at least some experiences of leading schools should be gained before entering this type of professional program should there be a difference to be assured. In Sweden professional learning and development of a principal is approached after gaining position as a principal, yet novice principals lack the experience needed to approach any educational content. As former experiences of school leadership work seem to be an asset for the program participants, I question whether the SNPTP can help principals reshape their professional identity into school leaders or whether the program rather promotes further development of already experienced school leaders.

The results of the study show how work experiences affect an individual's opportunities to utilize education as an active driving force for professional learning and professional identity development. It would also be relevant to study the work of educators and how they facilitate engagement of participants' identities and address eventual identity crises arising in the transition from teacher to principal. Pedagogical considerations to be made include whether education

takes sufficient account of pedagogical costs, (i.e., the degree of extra work required to understand educational material). This is not to say that such material should be avoided. Educational material not only constitutes obstacles but also proves to be powerful support for learning. The results of this study also imply that planned teaching and emerging learning of the participants need to interact. That is, educators need to discover attendees' understandings at play to support learning and not expect these individuals to reflect professionally without being given any explicit support. Consequently, program providers can develop their educational design to better meet the needs of those experiencing education as a passive force. Packer and Goicoecha (2000) state that learning not only requires new knowledge but also requires the release of one's old self. This study approves this, arguing the importance of approaching professional selves in principal programs.

The results of this study expand previous studies of school leadership education by nuancing how the participating principals experience content and design. The results also show that educational programs can become active forces for participants which is of great importance (cf. Orr, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Huber and Hiltmann, 2011; Orr and Barber, 2006). However, this study clearly shows how some participating principals instead experience the education as a passive force even though the focus of the program is on the development of leadership skills while connecting theory and practice as well as assisting in creation of professional networks (cf. Orr and Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009; Ärlestig, 2012; Liljenberg and Wrethander, 2020). This is of importance for principals, educators, and policy makers, engaged with principal programs.

Conclusion

This qualitative study focused on the participants' experiences of the SNPTP in three different educational contexts. This approach allowed for an in-depth analysis of their experiences as participants. The balancing act of not relying only on the participants' self-assessment while exploring educational experiences from a participant perspective was approached using qualitative observations and interviews and utilizing a consistent theoretical approach. However, this type of study still has limitations. The limited data set is not sufficient for separating and comparing the educational providers to obtain reliable results for each educational provider separately. To design and conduct such a study could, however, possibly provide important insights into how pedagogical approaches might contribute to the program becoming more of an active driving force or more of a passive driving force.

This study used Wenger's (1998) theoretical and analytical framework to create the knowledge of how principals experience professional development and learning through their participation in a specific principal program. This framework made it possible to approach those principals' experiences of learning in terms of the elements of orientation, reflection, exploration, and interplay to describe and understand their professional development through program participation in a nuanced way. Trying to speak about the principals learning in school leader education in terms of becoming an active or a passive force for the participant made it possible to describe and understand how and why the participants' experiences out of the same professional learning opportunity can be totally different. This way of approaching professional development expands research on principals in education and should be viewed as a theoretical

contribution. This study proposes further use of Wenger's (1998) constructs to explore professional learning and development in diverse contexts as such theoretically based studies could add to our existing knowledge about professional development in education.

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About the author:

Stina Jerdborg is a senior Lecturer at the Department of Education and Special Education, University of Gothenburg. Her research interests include school leadership, professional development, and school improvement. She is an educator for the Swedish national course for further professional training for principals. She has worked with teaching, school improvement and professional development for teachers and leaders.

E-mail: stina.jerdborg@ped.gu.se

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Investigation of the Relationship Between School Principals' Narcissistic Leadership Behaviors and Teachers' Organizational Trust and Organizational Cynicism Levels (Path Analysis)

Veysel Okçu*

Siirt University, Siirt, Turkey

İnan Ay

Ministry of National Education, Siirt, Turkey

Mehmet Sevgi

Siirt University, Siirt, Turkey

Cihangir Burul

Ministry of National Education, Tekirdağ, Turkey

Abstract

As leaders of educational organizations, school principals can change teachers' perceptions of school positively or negatively with leadership styles they have. The purpose of this study is to determine in what direction and level the narcissistic leadership behaviors of school principals is related with teachers' organizational trust and cynicism levels according to teachers' perceptions. 397 teachers working in primary, secondary and high schools in Siirt/Turkey during the 2019-2020 academic year completed self-report surveys. Teachers' perceived organizational cynicism and perceived organizational trust were shown to have a negative and moderate relationship. This indicates that the increase in organizational cynicism ultimately decreases organizational trust. Also, 37% of the total variance in the organizational cynicism variable is explained by the behaviours of

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narcissistic leader. Furthermore, 52% of the total variance of organizational trust variable is explained on the basis of narcissistic leadership behaviors and a direct effect of organizational cynicism latent variable, as well as an indirect effect of narcissistic leadership behaviors through the organizational cynicism variable. As a result, the narcissistic leadership behaviors of school principals can damage organizational trust and increase organizational cynicism.

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Introduction

The responsibilities of social life and today's rapidly and continuously changing information and technology structure have led to a more competitive environment in business life. It can be said that this competitive environment causes a sceptical and prejudiced approach among employees (Akdemir, Kırmızıgül, & Zengin, 2016). It can be argued that organizations can only gain an effective structure in terms of management and functioning if such organizations possess positive traits (organizational trust, collaborative work, etc.) and purge away negative concepts (organizational cynicism, burnout, narcissism, etc.) within the organization. Organizational cynicism is one of such negative concepts given that concepts containing negativity are likely to cause problems for the organization and cause employees to generate unfavourable feelings and thoughts about their job (Kalağan & Aksu, 2010). In this respect, it is significant to examine the concept of cynicism in the context of the organization.

Cynicism, which is perceived as a new concept today but dates back to the 4th century BC, has an impact on social and organizational fields and activities (Ada and Yarım, 2017, p. 66). Cynicism, according to Andersson (1996), is not only a general but also a specific form of attitude that is characterized by frustration and disillusionment and skepticism of a person, group, ideology, social contract, or institution. Cynicism appears to have a negative structure. AL-Abrrow (2018) stated that the concept of cynicism evokes more pessimism in the society and business environment. In this respect, adopting a management approach that focuses on human relations is essential to prevent cynicism in an organization. The literature review reveals that organizational cynicism has negative organizational consequences (Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2006; Richardsen, Burke, & Martinussen, 2006). Such consequences may be listed as burnout, organizational distrust, reduced organizational commitment, work alienation, increased intention to quit the job, reduced job satisfaction and organizational performance, and the tendency to harm the organization (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998; Eaton, 2000; Fleming, 2005; James, 2005). Accordingly, one may notice that there are concepts that affect and are affected by organizational cynicism. Organizational trust is of this nature and should be focused on in this respect.

In the 1950s, scientists realized that the concept of trust is important as a precondition for management and organization (Taşkın & Dilek, 2010, p.38). It is stated that trust is essential in all aspects of social life and plays a role in the development of social relations (Yu, Mai, Tsai, & Dai, 2018). Given that trust has important consequences for an organization, it is important and necessary to examine organizational trust. Rusu and Babos (2015, p.55) reported that organizational trust is

a structure that shows the healthy functioning of the organization as one of the direct or indirect determinants of the productivity of the organization. Cummings and Bromiley (1996, p. 302) expressed organizational trust as the level of trust that exists between units of an organization. Cook and Wall (1980) discussed this concept as an element that influences the long-term continuity of the organization and the employees' well-being. Employees in organizations who feel insecure about each other and the organization cannot be expected to create a healthy and trustworthy working environment. Therefore, it can be thought that the concepts of organizational cynicism and organizational trust exhibit a structure that limits the sphere of influence of one another.

The consequences of organizational trust are expressed in the literature as follows: building positive relations among employees, ensuring organizational commitment, increasing productivity, performance, and job satisfaction, facilitating information exchange among employees, reducing resistance to change, and providing performance evaluation perceptions and organizational citizenship (Demircan & Ceylan, 2003; Guinot, Chiva, & Mallén, 2013; Houtte, 2006; Lines, Selart, Espedal, & Johansen, 2005; Robinson, 1996; William, 2001). It can be argued that organizational trust must be established to observe the reflection of consequences in educational institutions. Teachers are the most important component of a healthy and effective education system. To ensure that teachers are active and productive in the management of the education system, it is of great importance that they trust other employees in schools. Baş and Şentürk (2011, p.8) report that the performance of teachers is enhanced if they equally trust their principals, colleagues, and stakeholders. In this sense, school principals with leadership skills are expected to play a key role

in establishing trust and reducing organizational cynicism in educational institutions.

Principals influence the functioning of the school since the organizational structure formed by the principals in their institutions may also set the ground for an effective and productive school climate and ensure that employees possess positive perspectives towards their organizations. Suliman (2001) suggests that the existence of healthy and positive relationships between principals and employees will play a significant role in establishing organizational trust. Along the same lines, school principals play a significant role in establishing trust among teachers, and particularly the leadership of principals influences the organizational climate.

Apart from organizational cynicism, another unfavourable concept in the field of management is narcissism. Grandiose and overly optimistic personal beliefs characterize narcisism (Nevicka, De Hoogh, Den Hartog, & Belschak, 2018). In other words, narcissism is a trait that can be expressed as being overly preoccupied with seeing him/herself superior to others with an inflated sense of self-importance and having a self-righteous point of view. Although narcissism is considered a disorder in terms of personality in psychology (Pincus & Lukiowitsky, 2010), it has been defined as a personality trait based on the dynamism of narcissistic behaviors (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007). As a personality dimension, narcissism is regarded to be linked to authority and leadership (Nevicka, Ten Velden, De Hoogh, & Van Vianen, 2011) and has positive and negative influences and outcomes on three levels including individuals, groups, and organizations (Braun, 2017).

The administration of institutions also encompasses the issue of leadership approaches, one of which is narcissistic leadership. Narcissistic leaders differ in terms of bright and dark sides (Campbell,

Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2011). High level of self-esteem shows the bright side of narcissistic leaders, while such leaders may also possess bright sides including charisma (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), self-expression skills (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010), and personal energy (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). The bright sides of narcissism aid narcissistic leaders to be successful in evaluating prospective recruits during job interviews (Grijalva, Harms, Newman, Gaddis, & Fraley, 2015) and taking brave decisions in the face of obscurity (Patel & Cooper, 2014). Such sides and traits explain the reasons for selecting narcissists for executive posts in companies or other types of establishments (Brunell et al., 2008; Campbell et al., 2011).

The dark sides of narcissistic leaders are the inability to recognize and be worried about others and feelings of self-interest (Paunonen, Lönnquist, Verkasalo, Leikas, & Nissinen, 2006). The dark sides also include traits representing a high level of confidence (John & Robins, 1994), command (Saucier & Webster, 2010), and lack of empathy (Munro, Bore, & Powis, 2005). Those with excessive amount of narcissism possibly disadvantage their workplace in the long run than those with a low level of narcissism (Braun, 2017; Grijalva et al., 2015). The challenge for narcissistic leaders emerges when their egos are threatened and they are unable to manage their impulses, resulting in arrogance, anger, and aggression (Grijalva & Harms, 2014). Unsurprisingly, narcissists misjudge their abilities (Maccoby, 2007). Narcissists distort past performances through overestimation (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2011) and take unnecessary and trivial risks (Campbell et al., 2011). If they are criticized negatively, they feel that they are being subjected to unfair treatment, even if the evidence is shown (Allen et al., 2009). Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006) underline

that grandiose belief systems and leadership styles are what narcissistic leaders possess and such people are often driven by their desires for power and admiration rather than empathetic concern for the people and organizations they are in charge of.

Narcissistic leadership also has a negative connotation like organizational cynicism. Since narcissistic leaders put their own management approach to the fore and thus ignore the interests and needs of other employees in the organization, they may cause an increase in organizational trust and negative feelings and thoughts arising from organizational cynicism. The relationship among these three concepts stated within the scope of the research is examined according to the perceptions of the teachers. It will be possible to understand the effectiveness level of narcissistic leadership and organizational cynicism in ensuring organizational trust while contributing to understanding the causes of negative situations that arise in educational environments.

Research Objective

This study seeks to investigate the relationships between narcissistic leadership behaviors of school principals and teachers' organizational trust and cynicism levels. As a result, the following research questions were addressed:

1. To what extent do school principals show narcissistic leadership behaviors? (dimensions including authority, exploitativeness and entitlement, superiority and self-sufficiency, exhibitionism), according to teachers' perceptions?

2. What is the perceived organizational trust level of teachers?

3. What is the perceived organizational cynicism level of teachers?

4. Is there a significant relationship between school principals' narcissistic leadership behaviors and teachers' perceived organizational trust and cynicism levels?

5. To what extent do school principals' narcissistic leadership behaviors (dimensions including authority, exploitativeness and entitlement, superiority and self-sufficiency, exhibitionism) are related to teachers' organizational cynicism and trust?

Materials and Method

Research Model

A relational study was employed as this study aims to determine the relationships between teachers' perceived organizational cynicism, organizational trust, and narcissistic leadership. The goal of relational research is to find out if there is any co-change between two or more variables and, if so, how much. (Büyüköztürk, Akgün, Karadeniz, Demirel & Kılıç Çakmak, 2016; Karasar, 2015). There are three variables in the research model: one independent variable and two dependent variables. The research model's independent variable is narcissistic leadership behaviors (comprised of four dimensions: authority, entitlement and exploitativeness, superiority and self-sufficiency, and exhibitionism) whereas the dependent variables are organizational trust and cynicism. Figure 1 shows the model used in the research study.

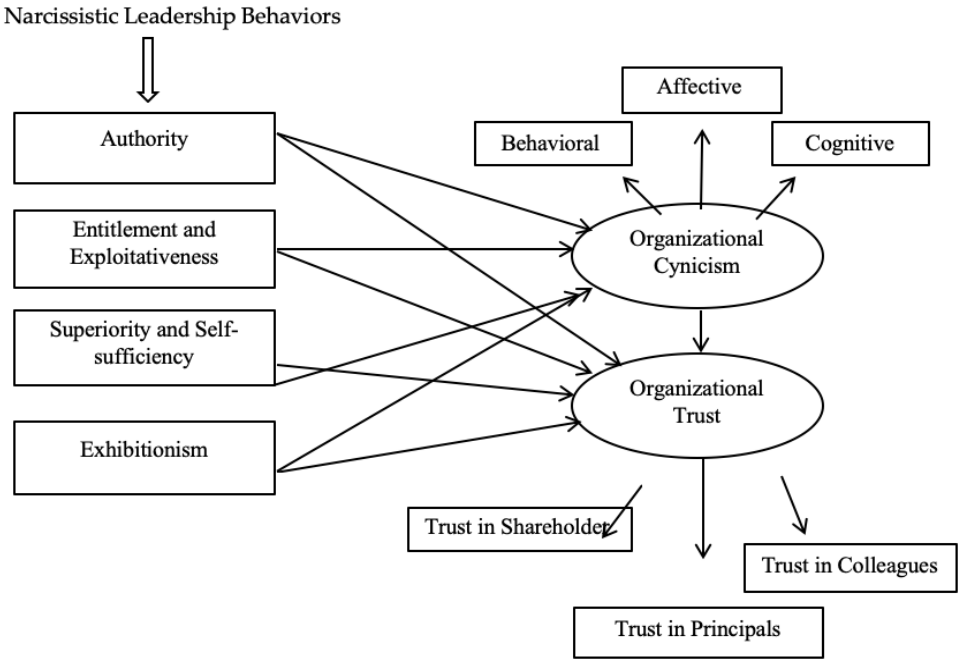

Figure 1. *Structural Equation Model of the Research*

Population and Sample

The population of the study is 4456 teachers working in primary, secondary and high schools in Siirt/Turkey during the 2019-2020 academic year. The study's sample includes 397 teachers from 10 primary schools (125 class teachers), 10 secondary schools (124 secondary school teachers), and 10 high schools (148 high school teachers) who were chosen using the simple random sampling method, which ensures that the selected units are included in the sampling by giving each sampling unit an equal chance of being chosen. (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2016). Personal information about 397 teachers is as such: 47.4% of the teachers are female and 52.6% are male and 31.5% work in primary

schools, 31.2% in secondary schools, and 37.3% in high schools. 36.8% have seniority of 1-5 years, 25.2% of 6-10 years, 20.2% of 11-15 years, and 17.9% of 16 years and over.

Data Collection Tools

Information on the scales used to collect data in the study is explained below, respectively. The "Perceived Narcissistic Leadership Scale", which was developed as a narcissistic personality inventory by Raskin and Hall (1979) and took its current form by Raskin and Terry (1988) to determine teachers' perceptions of school principals about narcissistic leadership, was revised and reconstructed by Öğretmenoğlu (2019). The perceived narcissistic leadership scale consists of four dimensions and 18 items. Sample items are: *My principal thinks he's a special person, my principal thinks he is a good leader (whether he is or not), my principal thinks he's more talented than other people.* There are 7 items in the "Entitlement and exploitativeness" dimension, 5 items in the "Superiority and self-sufficiency" dimension, 3 items in the "Authority" dimension, and 3 items in the "Exhibitionism" dimension. The explained total variance of the scale was determined as 47.90%. Cronbach's alpha value for the whole scale was determined as .91. The competence level of the scale is arranged as a 5-point Likert. Items in the scale are rated and graded as 1- "strongly disagree" to 5- "strongly agree".

The Organizational Trust Scale, developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) and adapted into Turkish by Yılmaz (2006b) to measure organizational trust levels of teachers, was used in the study. It contains 3 dimensions and 22 items. Sample items are: *I trust the school principal, I never suspect my colleagues at school that they will behave negatively towards me, I rely on the support of students' parents,* "Trust in principal" has 7 items, "trust in colleagues" has 8 items, and "trust in

stakeholders" has 7 items. The explained total variance of the scale was determined as 45.31%. Cronbach's alpha value for the whole scale was determined as .92. The competence level of the scale is arranged as a 5-point Likert. Items in the scale are rated and graded as 1- "never" to 5- "always". The 17th-item in the scale was coded in reverse.

The "Organizational Cynicism Scale," developed by Brandes, Dharwadkar, and Dean (1999) and adapted into Turkish by Kalağan (2009), was used. It contains three dimensions and 13 items: The dimension of "Cognitive" contains 5 items, "Affective" contains 4 items, and "Behavioural" contains 4 items. Sample items are: *I believe that what is said and what is done in the school are different (Cognitive), I get angry when I think about the school (affective), With others, I criticise practices and policies of the school (behavioral)*. The explained total variance was determined as 78.67%. Cronbach's alpha value for the whole scale was determined as .93. The competence level of the scale is arranged as a 5-point Likert. Items in the scale are rated and graded as 1-"strongly disagree" to 5-"strongly agree".

Data Analysis

After the implementation studies of the scale, the remaining 397 scales were deemed suitable for evaluation after the incomplete or unfilled scales were removed. Voluntary participation was taken as basis. The SPSS 21 package program was employed. While anlaysing the data, frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation values were calculated and the Pearson moments correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between variables. For confirmatory factor analysis, a number of fit indices such as x^2/df, RMSEA, TLI and CFI were used to determine the fit indicators of the scales. The research model was put to the test using the AMOS 22 program. The hypotheses of the study were tested at a $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ significance level.

Results

Reliability and validity of the scales

Cronbach's alpha values for each scale were calculated with the data obtained from 397 teachers who constituted the sample in the study. Table 1 shows the reliability coefficients of the narcissistic leadership, organizational trust, and organizational cynicism scales.

Table 1. *Reliability coefficients calculated for dimensions of narcissistic leadership, organizational trust, and organizational cynicism scales*

Scales	Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Narcissistic Leadership	Authority	3	.70
	Exhibitionism	3	.79
	Superiority and Self-sufficiency	5	.89
	Entitlement and Exploitativeness	7	.87
Organizational Trust	Trust in colleagues	8	.89
	Trust in principal	7	.90
	Trust in stakeholders	7	.81
Organizational Cynicism	Cognitive	5	.89
	Affective	4	.96
	Behavioural	4	.82

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of dimensions of the scales were calculated. The values are ranging from .70 to .96. The construct validity of each scale was tested with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). As suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), CFI >.90, TLI >.90, and RMSEA < .1 were employed as cutoffs for demonstrating acceptable

data fit. As a result of CFA, the Perceived Narcissist Leadership Scale (x^2/df:915.39/189=4.84 p < .01, RMSEA=.088, TLI=.92, CFI=.94), the Organizational Trust Scale (x^2/df:768.2/200=3.72, p < .01, RMSEA=.083, TLI=.93, CFI=.96), and the Organizational Cynicism Scale (x^2/df:293.43/62=4.73, p < .01, RMSEA=.085, TLI=.92, CFI=.95) fitted the data well. Accordingly, it was observed that there is no problem regarding the reliability and validity of all three scales.

Results Regarding the First, Second and Third Sub-Problems

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation values for narcissistic leadership, organizational trust, organizational cynicism, and their dimensions according to teacher perceptions.

Table 2. *School principals' narcissistic leadership behaviors and perceived organizational trust and organizational cynicism levels of teachers (N = 397)*

	Dimensions	$\bar{X}$	Sd
Narcissistic Leadership	Authority	3.45	.69
	Exhibitionism	2.58	.94
	Superiority and Self-sufficiency	2.56	.88
	Entitlement and Exploitativeness	2.98	.80
Organizational Trust	Trust in colleagues	3.47	.67
	Trust in principal	3.73	.70
	Trust in stakeholders	3.19	.58
	Total	3.46	.52

Organizational Cynicism	Cognitive	2.55	.80
	Affective	2.02	.95
	Behavioural	2.53	.82
	Total	2.38	.72

Table 2 reveals that the mean values of the dimensions of narcissistic leadership traits range between $\bar{X}$ = 2.56 and $\bar{X}$ = 3.44 according to the perceptions of the teachers who participated in the study. Given the mean scores of the dimensions of narcissistic leadership traits, one may notice that the highest value is found in the "authority" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.44) and the lowest value in the "superiority and self-sufficiency" ($\bar{X}$ = 2.56) dimensions. In general, mean score of perceived organizational trust was $\bar{X}$ = 3.46, and mean score of perceived organizational cynicism was $\bar{X}$ = 2.38.

Results Regarding the Fourth Sub-problem

Table 3 shows the result of the correlation analysis between narcissistic leadership behaviors of school principals and organizational trust and organizational cynicism levels of teachers.

Table 3. *Correlation analysis between school principals' narcissistic leadership behaviors and teachers' organizational trust and organizational cynicism levels.*

Variables	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
1. Authority	1					

2. Exhibitionism	.05**	1				
3. Superiority and Self-sufficiency	.16**	.77**	1			
4. Entitlement and Exploitativeness	.32**	.68**	.75**	1		
5. Organizational Trust	.33**	-.30**	-.20**	-.14**	1	
6. Organizational Cynicism	-.15**	.56**	.52*	.46**	-.45**	1

**p <.01

Cut-off points recommended by Büyüköztürk (2004) were used in the interpretation of the values obtained from correlation analysis. Table 3 shows that there is a positive and moderate level of relationship between the dimension of authority and organizational trust levels of teachers (r = .33; p < .01), but an inverse and low level of relationship between the dimension of authority and organizational cynicism levels of teachers (r = -.15; p < .01). There is an inverse and moderate level of relationship between the dimension of exhibitionism and organizational trust levels of teachers (r = -.30; p < .01) while there is a positive and moderate level of relationship between the dimension of exhibitionism and organizational cynicism levels of teachers (r = .56; p < .01). There is an inverse and low level of relationship between the dimension of superiority and self-sufficiency and organizational trust levels of teachers (r = -.20; p < .01) while there is a positive and moderate level of relationship between the dimension of superiority and self-sufficiency and organizational cynicism levels of teachers (r = .52; p < .05). There is an inverse and low level of relationship between the dimension of entitlement and exploitativeness and organizational trust levels of teachers (r = -.14; p < .01) while there is a positive and moderate level of relationship between the dimension of entitlement and exploitativeness and organizational cynicism levels of teachers (r = .46; p < .05). According to the findings, there is a negative, moderately

significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of organizational trust and organizational cynicism (r = -.45; p<.05).

Results Regarding the Fifth Sub-problem

The findings of the fit indices obtained as a result of the path analysis made regarding the direction and level of the effect of the school principals' narcissistic leadership behaviors on perceived organizational trust and organizational cynicism levels of teachers are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. *Values Regarding Fit Indices*

Criteria of Fit	Fit Indices	Acceptable Fit Indices	Excellent Fit Indices	Interpretation
x^2/df	23.288/12=1.941	3< x^2/df<5	0< x^2/df<3	Excellent fit
RFI	.902	.90<GFI<.95	.95<GFI<1.00	Acceptable fit
TLI	.943	.85<AGFI<.90	.90<AGFI<1.00	Excellent fit
CFI	.975	.90<CFI<.95	.95<CFI<1.00	Excellent fit
NFI	.952	.90<NFI<.95	.95<NFI<1.00	Excellent fit
RMSEA	.049	.05<RMSEA<.08	.00<RMSEA<.05	Excellent fit
p	.00			

In Table 4, "excellent fit", "acceptable fit", and "fit indices obtained for scales" are given. Although different ranges are indicated in the literature regarding the interpretation of fit indices, it is seen that values close to each other are generally mentioned (Bayram, 2010; Çelik & Yılmaz, 2013, p.39; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Meydan & Şeşen, 2011, p.31-37; Raykov & Markoulides, 2006). The Chi-Square and degree of freedom ratio (x^2/df) in the values of the fit index were expected to be below 5. The ratio of (x^2/df) calculated as a result of the analysis was 1.941, which indicates that the proposed model had an excellent fit with its data (Bayram, 2010; Kline,

2005; Sümer, 2000). For the RMSEA value, .080 was accepted as acceptable fit and values less than .05 were accepted as excellent fit. As a result of the analysis, the RMSEA and x^2/df values were among the values of excellent fit. Besides, for RFI, GFI, TLI, CFI and NFI indices, the range between 0.90 and 0.95 was an acceptable fit while the range between 0.95 and 1.00 was an excellent fit (Bayram, 2010; Byrne & Campbell, 1999; Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen, 2008; Steiger, 2007; Sümer, 2000; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2011). In the light of this information, the TLI (.943), CFI (.975) and NFI (.952) values obtained in this study were determined as an excellent fit and the RFI (.902) value as an acceptable fit.

The results regarding the standardized path coefficients are shown in Figure 2 below.

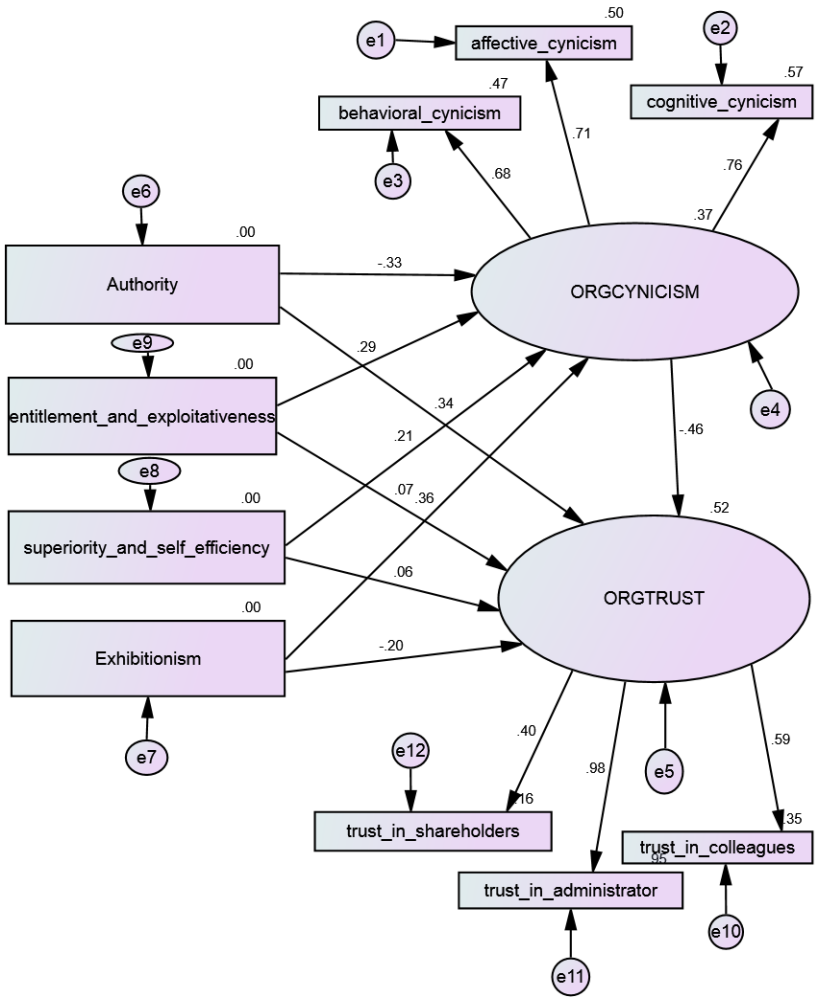

Figure 2. *Standardized Path Coefficients*

As seen in Figure 2, the dimension of cognitive (.76) in organizational cynicism was a slightly better indicator than the dimensions of affective (.71) and behavioral (.68). On the other hand, trust in principal (.98) was found to be a more positive indicator compared to trust in colleagues (.59) and trust in stakeholders (.40).

According to the path analysis findings, there was a positive and moderate relationship between the dimension of "authority" and teachers' organizational trust levels (β =.34), as well as a negative and moderate relationship between narcissistic authority and teachers' organizational cynicism levels (β =-.33). In other words, as school principals display authoritative behaviors, organizational trust increases and organizational cynicism decreases.

A positive, moderate, and significant relationship existed between the dimension of "entitlement and exploitativeness" and teachers' organizational cynicism level (β =.29), as well as a positive and low-level relationship between the dimension of "entitlement and exploitativeness" and teachers' organizational trust level (β =.07). This indicates that as school principals display exploitative behaviours along with entitlement, organizational cynicism levels increase and organizational trust levels are not significantly influenced.

The dimension of "superiority and self-sufficiency" had a positive and low-level relationship between teachers' organizational cynicism (β =.21), as well as a positive and a very low relationship between teachers' organizational trust (β =.06). This indicates that as school principals display behaviours of superiority and self-sufficiency, organizational cynicism increases and organizational trust is not significantly influenced.

The dimension of "exhibitionism" was found to have a positive, moderate-level relationship with teachers' organizational cynicism (β =.36), as well as a negative, low-level, and significant relationship with teachers' organizational trust (β =-.20). This indicates that as school principals display behaviours of exhibitionism, organizational cynicism increase and organizational trust decreases.

Teachers' perceived organizational cynicism and perceived organizational trust were shown to have a negative and moderate relationship (β =-.46). This indicates that the increase in organizational cynicism ultimately negatively influences organizational trust. Also, 37% of the total variance in the organizational cynicism variable is explained by the behaviours of "authority", "entitlement and exploitativeness", "superiority and self-sufficiency" and "exhibitionism". In addition, 52% of the total variance of organizational trust variable is explained on the basis of narcissistic leadership behaviors and a direct effect of organizational cynicism latent variable, as well as an indirect effect of narcissistic leadership behaviors through the organizational cynicism variable.

Discussion

Perceived narcissistic leadership level of school principals was X̄=3.45 in the dimension of authority, which indicates that teachers are of the opinion that school principals display behaviors in the dimension of authority. The dimension of authority indicates a strong belief that the narcissistic leader possesses an extraordinary leadership ability to influence other employees and should be the first to use such power (Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006). The dimension of authority indicates that the narcissistic leader is apt to take responsibility for authoritative situations and decisions and to perceive himself/herself as a leader (Glover, Miller, Lynam, Crego, & Widiger, 2012). This is possibly because the narcissistic leader possesses excessive and unnecessary self-confidence. However, the authority and leadership of narcissistic leaders do not last for long. For, employees notice the negative traits/behaviors of narcissistic leaders in a short time and stop following them (Twenge & Campbell, 2010, 78). In this respect, the "authority" dimension of narcissistic leadership can be seen as a

positive leadership trait, albeit temporarily. The study conducted by Öğretmenoğlu (2019) supports the result of this study since perceived authoritative behaviours were found as X̄=3.57. It is positive to observe that perceived behaviors of school principals in the dimensions of exhibitionism and superiority and self-sufficiency were at levels of X̄=2.58 and X̄=2.56 respectively, since exhibitionism, sensation seeking, extraversion, and a lack of impulse control seem to signalise the exhibitionism component (Raskin & Terry, 1988, p.899). Narcissists are obsessive individuals to prove their superiority (Wallace and Baumeister, 2002, p.820). According to the researches, in this sense, superiority is one of the most harmful characteristics of narcissism. (Reidy et al., 2008, p.866). Self-sufficiency means motivation in which a person is in pursuit of being loved and efforts for reaching self-sufficiency and excellence (Raskin and Terry, 1988, p.890-891). As Öğretmenoğlu (2019) concluded that perceived narcissistic leadership behaviors of school principals by teachers in the dimensions of "exhibitionism" and "superiority and self-sufficiency" were at a moderate level, the relevant finding supports the study's findings. Alternatively, it should be considered negative to observe that perceived narcissistic behaviors of school principals in the dimensions of "entitlement and exploitativeness" were at a level of X̄=2.98, since feelings and behaviors of entitlement, presumption, not being satisfied until he or she obtains what is thought to be deserved, or anticipation of favorable treatment are all examples of entitlement (Glover et al., 2012). The findings of Öğretmenoğlu (2019) support the findings of this study, which indicates that perceived narcissistic leadership behaviors in the dimensions of "entitlement and exploitativeness" were at a moderate level.

In relation to teachers' perception of organizational trust, it was determined that teachers perceive their principals and colleagues trustful while teachers' perceived trust in stakeholders was at a lower level and these findings overlap with the findings in the literature (Arslan, 2009; Çınar, 2013; Çelik & Gencer, 2019; Doğan & Karakuş, 2020; Kovancı & Ergen, 2019; Okçu & Gider, 2019; Ergül, Okçu & Adıgüzel Gök, 2020; Okçu, Ergül & Ekmen, 2020; Polat & Celep 2008; Saraç, 2019; Pars & Elma, 2018; Yazıcıoğlu, 2015). Teachers have a sufficient level of trust in their principals and colleagues in the context of organizational trust while they tend to have some problems in terms of trust in stakeholders. These problems can be overcome through environments and activities in which all stakeholders (school principal, teacher, student, parents, etc.) can participate to understand each other better. Unlike this study, there are some studies indicating that teachers have a moderate level of perceived organizational trust (Külekçi-Akyavuz, 2017; Memduhoğlu & Zengin, 2011; Özdemir, 2020). In this context, it is stated that the behaviors, such as failure to take the opinions of the teachers in the decisions taken about the school and to involve them in the decisions, are negatively related with the trust in the principals. Gökduman (2012) concluded that the trust in colleagues and stakeholders was higher than trust in principals, which does not support the finding of this study.

As a result of the analysis, organizational cynicism levels of teachers working in educational institutions at primary, secondary and high school levels were not high and that teachers do not have a cynical perception of their school. This finding is similar to the studies on the concept of perceived organizational cynicism of teachers. In various studies, it was found that teachers' opinions on organizational cynicism were not high (Helvacı & Çetin, 2012; Korkut, 2019; Sezgin-

Nartgün & Kartal, 2013; Şamdan & Baskan, 2019). Since organizational cynicism is a concept that creates negative effects, as shown in the literature, it can be argued that low levels of cynicism may reflect positively on institutions. Particularly, low level of perceived organizational cynicism can be effective on concepts such as burnout and organizational commitment and especially trust in the organization. In this respect, it can be implied that positive contributions may be provided if teachers, as an important component of the education system, do not exhibit cynical behaviour. Some studies have found higher levels of cynicism of teachers than findings of this study (Balay, Kaya & Cülha, 2013; Demirtaş, Özdemir & Küçük, 2016; Kalağan & Güzeller, 2010; Korkmaz, Okçu & Uçar, 2018; Okçu, Şahin & Şahin, 2015). Researches on organizational cynicism have shown that cynical employees do not trust their organization, believing that the organization exploits them. Furthermore, whereas a lack of trust might emerge from a lack of knowledge about the organization; cynicism against an organization is always the consequence of some experience with that organization (Eaton, 2000). Factors such as the size of the sample group, regional differences, and the educational level are effective in the differentiation of the results of the studies conducted with organizational cynicism.

Teachers' organizational trust and cynicism levels were shown to have a negative and moderate relationship. In general, the relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism is inversely proportional. It can be argued that teachers are less likely to display cynical behaviour if they trust their institution. There are other studies in the literature that support the findings of this study that show a negative and moderate relationship between the two concepts (Akın, 2015; Yakın, 2017; Zengin, 2020). Akin (2015) found a significant

relationship in all dimensions between teachers' organizational cynicism and organizational trust levels and concluded that organizational cynicism predicted organizational trust. Zengin (2020) found a negative and moderate relationship between organizational trust and cynicism. In various studies on organizational cynicism and organizational trust, it has been determined that there are negative and high-level relationships (Uyar & Zafer Güneş, 2019; Uyar-Bulut, 2018), which contrasts the findings of this study. In another study, a negative and high-level relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism levels of secondary school teachers was found (Uyar and Zafer-Güneş). Batmantaş and Örücü (2018) found that organizational trust does not have any effect on cynicism. On the other hand, Reyhanoğlu and Yılmaz (2017) reported that there is a negative and significant relationship between organizational cynicism and organizational trust. It can be said that factors such as the size of the sample group and different occupational groups are effective in the differences in the findings of the studies.

According to correlation analysis, a positive and moderate relationship was found between the dimension of authority and organizational trust. The ability to influence others and an effective leadership style are factors that may positively affect teachers' organizational trust. A negative and moderate relationship was found between exhibitionism and organizational trust. This indicates that seeking attention, theatricalism, and failure to be humble hinder teachers' trust in the organization. Also, a negative and low-level relationship was found between the dimension of superiority and self-sufficiency and organizational trust. Self-righteousness (e.g. a grandiose person, an extraordinary person, etc.) is also a possible consequence of reduced trust in the organization. A negative and low-level relationship was

found between the dimension of entitlement and exploitativeness and organizational trust. High expectations, the search for power, and the desire to be followed reduce trust. Yıldız and Öncer (2012) found a negative and low-level relationship between narcissism and organizational trust in their study. According to Ouimet (2010), narcissistic leadership has significant negative consequences, such as a decrease in or loss of trust among subordinates/employees in organizations. The correlation analysis revealed a negative and low-level relationship between the dimension of authority and organizational cynicism, as well as a positive, moderate-level, and significant relationship between the three dimensions of narcissistic leadership (exhibitionism, superiority and self-sufficiency, and entitlement and exploitativeness) and organizational cynicism. Narcissistic leadership is described as a more negative leadership style, in which the leader has the potential to cause psychological pressure on subordinates. When subordinates see their leaders as narcissists, negative attitudes such as organizational cynicism may be more likely to occur. Maccoby (2000) and Paunonen et al (2006) reported that the leader can concurrently have good and bad narcissistic traits. Narcissistic leaders have an exaggerated, grandiose sense of self-esteem, power, and success fantasy. They hardly care about and feel empathy with others (Yukl, 2002). In the studies of Aboramadan, Turkmenoglu, Dahleez and Cicek (2020), Erkutlu and Chafra (2017), it was concluded that narcissistic leadership is positively related with the cynicism of the employees.

The path analysis revealed a negative and close to moderate relationship between the dimension of "authority" and organizational cynicism, as well as a positive and moderate relationship between the dimension of authority and organizational trust. This indicates that

while teachers' organizational trust levels (trust in principal, colleagues and stakeholders) are enhanced and organizational cynicism (cognitive, affective and behavioural cynicism) are reduced by the power of school principals if that power is positive. While the dimension of "entitlement and exploitativeness" was shown to have a positive and low-level relationship between organizational cynicism, no significant relationship was found between the same dimension and organizational trust. Organizational cynicism and the dimensions of "superiority and self-sufficiency" had a positive and low-level relationship, but there was no significant relationship between the same dimension and organizational trust. "Exhibitionism" had a positive and moderate relationship with organizational cynicism, while it had a negative and low-level relationship with organizational trust. Teachers' organizational trust and cynicism levels were found to have a negative and moderate relationship. This indicates that the increase in teachers' organizational cynicism level is related with their organizational trust levels negatively. Besides, 37% of the total change in the organizational cynicism variable is explained by the behaviors of narcissistic leadership in the dimensions of "authority", "exploitativeness and entitlement", "superiority and self-sufficiency", and "exhibitionism". The remaining 52% is explained by the direct influence of the above-mentioned dimensions and the latent variable of organizational cynicism as well as by the indirect influence of the variables under the four dimensions through the mediation of the organizational cynicism variable. In this context, in a study by Erkutlu and Chafra (2017), it was determined that narcissistic leaders support the positive effect on employees' organizational cynicism and that the psychological tension of the employee supports the mediating effect.

School principals' behaviors (exploitativeness and entitlement, superiority and self-sufficiency, and exhibitionism) are negatively related with teachers' organizational trust and positively related with their organizational cynicism. Although administrative behavior (authority) is positively related with teachers' organizational trust levels and negatively related with their organizational cynicism levels, the literature review indicates that the authorities and leadership of narcissistic leaders do not last long and remain temporary and that when teachers learn about the negative behaviors/characteristics of the narcissistic leader, they may stop following the relevant leader.

It can be concluded that the narcissistic leadership behaviors of school principals can damage organizational trust and increase organizational cynicism, thus, such behaviors can damage the quality of education and educational practices. In this context, the results of this research are remarkable.

Limitations and Recommendations

The study's findings can be generalized in terms of representing teachers' perceptions. However, it should be highlighted that these findings are limited to Siirt state schools for the 2019-2020 academic year, as well as the scales used. The study is a relational study. One fundamental limitation of relational research is that it cannot provide precise information about the causality between variables. Furthermore, there is no evidence of a cause-and-effect link between factors in the current study.

The teachers included in the study were selected through simple random sampling. Teachers made statements about their schools, principals, colleagues and other stakeholders. However, the statements of teachers working in a school may not be stochastically

independent from each other. Therefore, in future studies, it can be ensured that all teachers in one school are included in the research.

Depending on the results of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. In this study, it was determined that the behaviors of school principals regarding the three dimensions of narcissist leadership ("exploitativeness and entitlement", "superiority and self-sufficiency", and "exhibitionism") can decrease teachers' organizational trust while increasing their level of organizational cynicism. In this context, educational activities can be organized for school principals to raise awareness to draw attention to narcissistic leadership traits and the institutional negative consequences of such traits.

2. To improve education, school principals can take an approach to increase teachers' organizational trust and to avoid cynical behaviors in an attempt to ensure teachers' participation in decision-making processes, to strengthen internal communication, and to adopt a collaborative perspective in various works.

3. In this study, it was determined that teachers have a moderate sense of trust in the dimension of organizational trust in stakeholders. To improve this situation, various social activities can be organized together with the stakeholders in schools (school principal, teacher, student, parents, etc.).

4. Quantitative, qualitative or mixed studies can also be conducted on different provinces and regions and different occupational groups, focusing on the relationship between narcissistic leadership, organizational trust, and organizational cynicism.

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About the authors:

Veysel Okçu received his master's degree in Education Management from Anadolu University. In 2011, he completed his PhD degree on Education Management from Gazi University. In 2012, he became assistant professor at Siirt University. In 2018, OKÇU became associate

professor of Educational Administration. He presented papers and published articles, book chapters on educational management and organization management. He is currently working at Siirt University in Siirt/Turkey.

E-mail: veysel.okcu56@gmail.com

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization/methodology: designated research goals and aims, and administered the research, developed the methodology, also contributed to all parts and process of the study.

İnan Ay is a PhD student at the Institute of Social Sciences at Siirt University. He is currently working as a branch teacher in the province of Siirt/Turkey.

E-mail: inan.ayyy@gmail.com

Authorship credit details: Methodology/formal analyses/review and editing: designated the methodology, applied of statistical techniques to analyze or synthesize study data, prepared the published work.

Mehmet Sevgi is a PhD student at the Institute of Social Sciences at Siirt University. He is currently working as a lecturer in Educational Faculty at Siirt University /Turkey.

E-mail: mehmet.sevgi56@gmail.com

Authorship credit details: Investigation/resources/review and editing: collected data from participants, prepared the published work.

Cihangir Burul is a PhD student at the Institute of Social Sciences at Siirt University. He is currently working as a classroom teacher in Tekirdağ Province /Turkey.

E-mail: cihbur8710@gmail.com

Authorship credit details: Software/writing: input and analyzing of data to computer program, wrote the initial draft of the study.

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Resignation and Resilience: Bridging Effective Teaching to the Impacts of Complex and Layered School Culture

Mary Afra Garofalo*

Kean University, Union, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Matthew James Graziano

Health & Wellness Unit of the City of New York Police Department, New York, U.S.A.

Abstract

This article examines the relationship between teacher efficacy, leadership, and how they intersect with complex and layered school system dynamics. Using the Listening Guide Method for Qualitative Inquiry (the Listening Guide, Gilligan, 1993), teacher interviews are examined, resulting in thematic expressions of resignation or resilience. These qualitative data revealed that effective classroom teachers can overcome the limitations of existing bureaucratic structures through resilience anchored in individual self-efficacy. Teacher resilience, anchored in demonstrated self-efficacy, played a major role in teachers' in-classroom experiences and ability to successfully navigate a complex and layered school system dynamics.

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*Corresponding author
E-mail: mgarafol@kean.edu

Introduction

United States (US) educational leadership models moved through a series of notable transitions over the last century (Tienken & Mullen, 2015; Halliger, 2011). During that time, the most notable transition was towards corporate culture leadership frameworks and those rooted in Max Weber's (2016) Organizational Theory of Bureaucracy. These frameworks moved education fundamentals away from the classic, moral, and humanistic traditions within education and towards quantitative, data driven outcomes and more "managerial" leadership styles (Shaturaev, et al., 2021; Tienken & Mullen, 2015; Halliger 2011; Blackmore, 2013; Lumby & Foskett, 2011 Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016).

In contrast, during the last decade, US educational leadership frameworks writ large were often critiqued as ineffective, ungrounded, and lacking nuance (Bush, 2015; Meirer et al., 2000; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016) For example, Bush (2011) suggests that "[t]he espousal of one theoretical model [Weber's] leads to the neglect of other approaches" (p. 29), indicating that there is an over-influence of the corporate, "managerial" bureaucratic structure, leaving little room for complimentary or improved theoretical approaches. Specific to this article, we posit that this over-influence is the weakest part of existing leadership frameworks, where an over reliance on prescriptive modalities are disengaged from social justice in practice, individual voice/contributions, and may, in fact, be the problem as opposed to the solution (Graziano & Pelc, 2021; Neische & Gowlett, 2019; Neische & Thomson, 2017; Kellerman, 2012; Hallinger, 2011; Gunter 2012; Minckler, 2011).

As the move towards– and critique of– exclusionary leadership frameworks continues to evolve, a void in available research examining the origins of teacher burnout, higher stress levels, and unique challenges of classroom based individuals has emerged. The need to understand classroom based burnout, stress, and challenge accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, with current literature focused on how teachers' respond to bureaucratic school culture, distance learning, new policy initiatives, as well as the day-to-day expectations of teachers in digitally driven environments (Bush, 2020; Karadag, 2020). This article adds to the existing knowledge base of educational leadership models by examining bureaucratic school culture and the impact on teacher efficacy and agency in the face of challenging administrative behaviors and the first year implementation of a co-teaching program at the secondary level. Specifically driving our inquiry: what are the experiences of teachers within a complex and layered school culture? How do teachers perceive their efficacy in the context of the school culture? How does the administration's leadership behaviors impact teacher efficacy?

The Centrality of Teacher Efficacy

Two decades of teacher efficacy research within American education supports our focus on the flaws of prescriptive modalities disengaged from social justice in practice and the disclusion of individual voice. Historically, research on teacher efficacy was (and is) focused on three key points: (i) core elements of teachers' impact on students; (ii) extents of which teacher behavior and effectiveness is rooted in self-belief; and (iii) how belief is impacted by external factors within the K-12 system (Friedman & Kass, 2001; Guidetti et al., 2018). Furthermore, available research of teacher efficacy is historically broken into three parts: (1) self; (2) collective and (3) proxy (Bandura, 1997; Goddard et al., 2000;

Minckler, 2011, Kleinsasser, 2014). These layers of efficacy show that education is built on the interconnected, individual, interpersonal, and systemic school systems. Notably, these interconnected elements are different from those found in the corporate sector. The reliance of the interpersonal interaction creates a unique dynamic in schools where the leadership, peer mentorship, collaborative time for teachers and reliance of collective and proxy efficacy really does impact the culture of the school. Where as corporate culture does not traditionally rely heavily on the apprenticeship model, or collaborative enterprise to meet the corporate goals, whatever they may be (Boyles, 2018).

Teacher self-efficacy is the extent to which a teacher believes in their professional knowledge base and ability to affect academic achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1997). Teacher collective efficacy is the shared judgment that affects student learning (Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). A third model, teacher proxy efficacy is the mutual belief in the ability of an individual or group to "organize and execute courses of action" and "produce given levels of attainment" (p. 218, Alavi & McCormick, 2016). Particularly salient in the study of teacher proxy efficacy, and effects on resilience, are the narratives of how teachers' efficacy exists in complex and layered school structures. Importantly, available research on teacher efficacy is premised on school systems that function as open, enabling environments when, in reality, many function as closed, traditional, hierarchical bureaucracies (Mayerson, 2010; Veiskarami & Ghadampour, 2017).

Although there is extensive research on teacher, collective, and proxy efficacy over the last 20 years (Friedman & Kass, 2001; Klassen et al., 2011; Guidetti et al., 2018), there is a gap examining efficacy through teacher narratives and bureaucratic school culture. In response to

limited research exploring the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, teacher proxy efficacy, and teacher narratives, this study uses the Listening Guide Method of Qualitative Inquiry (the Listening Guide, Gilligan, 1993). This method supports examination of first-person narratives of general and special educators, co-teachers, and their experiences and perceptions of their school's ability to organize and execute effective courses of action for students and professionals (Bandura, 1997).

To do so, we first provide an overview of the theoretical frameworks guiding the study. Second, we center discussion on teacher self-efficacy and the relationship between leadership and bureaucratic school culture. Third, we argue for the significance of teacher narratives—and their role(s) within the bureaucratic system —as well as the importance of first person voice as a site of study for in-classroom resilience. Finally, the Listening Guide Method is explained, and the resulting methodological themes, or voices, are used to provide rich, qualitative data to understanding the intimate challenges of the teacher-in-classroom experience.

Theoretical Underpinnings for the Listening Guide Method of Qualitative Inquiry

Narrative Theory and theorist Jerome Bruner (1990; 2002) and Feminist Theory and theorists Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) and Carol Gilligan (1989; 1993) provide a theoretical frame for grounding qualitative research within individual voice by thoroughly examining the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, resilience, silence, leadership, and school bureaucracies. Furthermore, these theorists, in concert with Critical Theory (Levitt, et al., 2021), help explain why teacher narratives—and their role(s) within this relationship—are a crucial, and often overlooked, site of study for in-classroom resilience.

In his books *Acts of Meaning* (1990), and *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life* (2002), Bruner notes that when individual identity narratives collide with cultural narratives, the product is often tension. Supporting Bruner and Narrative Theory are the works of Anzaldúa (1987) and Gilligan (1989, 1993) whose theoretical contributions assist in operationalizing identity within individual narratives at cultural intersections. Bruner notes that from a young age, "the child is not learning simply what to say but how, where, to whom, and under what circumstances" (Bruner, 1990 p. 71). Bruner's "how, where, whom, and what circumstances" can be seen through the inexhaustible number of narratives–within and outside education– that reinforce or censure specific constructs. These reinforcements and censures are designed to highlight exceptional individual behavior(s) while simultaneously eliminating narrative deviations from accepted cultural pattern(s) (Bruner, 1990). They also inevitably create tension between what is "right" and what is "perceived as right" (Garofalo & Graziano, 2022).

Like Bruner, feminist Gloria Anzaldúa argues that these tensions created by physical, psychological, and cultural intersections inform narrative beliefs, perceptions, and understandings of unchallenged and unquestioned cultural narratives. For Anzaldúa, narratives remain unchallenged because dominant culture reinforces shame, intimidation, or fear on individuals. Gilligan (1993) operationalizes Anzaldúa assertions when– speaking specifically about women– she notes that within dominant culture(s), "women often sensed that it was dangerous to say or even to know what they wanted or thought—upsetting to others and therefore carrying with it the threat of abandonment or retaliation" (p. ix). Collectively, both Anzaldúa and Gilligan give voice to *how* individual narratives that resist dominant narratives are seen, heard, and understood.

Given the theoretical underpinnings of Narrative and Feminist frameworks, we posit that if one considers schools as an arm of a dominant culture (i.e. public schools equal public good), one might see them as a microcosm or reflection of larger society (Neal & Neal, 2012; Alexander, 1997). For example, "[m]any critical scholars consider the educational system a highly politicized, oppressive and hegemonic institution with its neoliberal, neoconservative agendas that perpetuate the status quo through regulatory social structures, prescriptive curricula, top down decision making processes, and standardized assessments (Marcine, 2020). Given this, Critical Theory, and its emphasis on the individual's understanding of issues regarding inequity, power and oppression within a society within and beyond education, grounds this study by using this lens to examine the lived experiences of teachers within the complex and layered bureaucratic school culture (Apple, 2013; Giroux, 1999). Critical Theory and the Listening Guide (LG) methodology work in concert to give a voice to those teachers who are voiceless within the context of the social structure of the school, and to bring to the surface the narratives of those who have chosen to or felt forced to remain silent. As a whole, this framework and methodology allows for the construction and analysis of multiple realities shaping the experiences of those feeling marginalized within a system.

Leadership, School Culture, and Teacher Efficacy

The theoretical roots of teacher self-efficacy reside in overlapping concepts: Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control, and Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) Social Cognitive Theory.

Bandura identified self-efficacy as "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Building on Bandura's definition,

further research suggests that a strong sense self-efficacy of teachers powerfully predicts persistence, effort, achievement, a willingness to take risks, and successfully employ strategies to help students across the spectrum (Kurt et al., 2011; Bandura, 2001; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ross & Gray, 2006).

In an expansion of available self-efficacy research, Cherniss (1993), focuses on the organizational aspect of teachers' work environment and the impact on teachers' self-efficacy. Their research spurred further study of school climate, administrative behaviors, sense of belonging and school culture, and a school's administrative decision making (Friedman & Kass, 2002; Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk- Hoy, 2001). Friedman & Kass (2002) further contributed to the conceptual model of teacher efficacy through the addition of school context and interpersonal relationships between teachers and significant others in the school community, breaking the context down into three factors: (i) in-classroom environment & school environment; (ii) autonomy & value/ belonging; and (iii) tasks & relationships. The understanding of an individual's experiences of a system where external factors, like leadership and school culture can impose structural, systemic inequity closely ties to Critical Theory.

Among others, Kurt et al.'s (2012) research ties teacher efficacy to school leadership by identifying two kinds of leadership, transformational and transactional (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ball, 1993). These researchers found that transformational leadership enhances efficacy beliefs among teachers by providing emotional and ideological explanations that link individual identities to that of the collective identity of organizations (Ball, 1993, Kurt et al., 2012). "Transactional leadership focuses only on the task and avoids the

individual who performs the task. This approach results in low-self-efficacy of individuals by detaching the task from the employees" (Kurt et al., 2012, p. 76).

Teacher- proxy efficacy, as well as a combination of leadership and bureaucratic structures, are necessary for individuals to seek support from others in order to achieve desired goals and meet the objectives of the organization writ large (Bandura, 2001). Leadership and governance are key to teacher-proxy efficacy, in that it can only occur if leadership is committed to the common goal, in this case, successful teaching (Garofalo, 2019).

Bureaucratic School Culture, Silence, and Resilience

As defined by the literature, bureaucracy is an organization having a special structure with certain characteristics defined systematically by Weber (Mouzelis, 2001). One of the areas in which bureaucracy is implemented is education, where the products of the school are individuals, families, generations and nations with non-linear, emotional personalities (Mouzelis, 2001). Unlike the economy sector, schools have different duties and applications in building society (Balicki & Aypay, 2018). U.S. schools are different entities than other bureaucratic organizations, in that they are specifically designed to be a "public good", where other organizations are designed to grow the bottom line, appease stakeholders, and increase financial success, stability and influence. Schools have built in mentorship structures (students mentoring students, teachers mentoring students, teachers mentoring teachers, administration mentoring teachers, administrators mentoring administrator) and are not designed to produce a profit, but rather to have a well trained workforce and an informed electorate (Labaree et al., 1997). These altruistic goals of the educational sector are based on the common goal of improving society.

Although school bureaucracies have different systematic goals than other organizations, schools are still part of the dominant culture, and therefore—according to Feminist Theories and Narrative Theory—is governed by the same societal rules.

School environment is created through bureaucracy and layers of authority (Demirbolat, 2010; Demirbolat et al., 2014). Hoy & Sweetland (2001) examined the features of bureaucratic school structures, naming a centralized locus of power and formal rules and/or procedures as foundational components. As these elements work together, they form a "distinctive bureaucratic climate" (Demirbolat 2010; et al., 2014, p. 496) which impacts the effectiveness of school operations as well as the perceptions and behaviors of those working within that structure (Demirbolat et al., 2014). However, research suggests that bureaucracies writ large are seen as largely negative, inefficient systems, yet are important for organizational structure. According to study on school bureaucracies, Balicki & Aypay (2018) understood that there was usually an incompatibility between what happens and what should happen within the bureaucratic structure.

Prior to the global pandemic of 2020, the literature focused on two perspectives on the role of bureaucratic school structure: (i) enabling and (ii) complex & layered (Sinden et al., 2004). Enabling bureaucratic school structures positively affects behaviors by engendering trust, encouraging professional autonomy, and fostering inclusive, valuable rules and policies (Hoy, 2003; Demirbolat et al., 2014). Transformational leadership is often at the root of an enabling bureaucratic system, putting collective goals above individual leadership goals. This enabling bureaucracy supports transparency and collaboration (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

The opposite holds true of the complex and layered school bureaucracy. Hierarchy and regulations are mandatory, with hallmarks being control and conflict avoidance (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). Complex and layered bureaucracies demand strict adherence to rules, decreased autonomy, increased autocratic control, discourage progressive change, lean on disciplinary action, attach importance to compromise, utilize fear, punish missteps, and regard issues within the system as problems (Sinden et al., 2004; Demirbolat, Kalkan, & Dagli, 2014). Transactional leadership is largely at the core of complex and layered bureaucracies (Hoy & Miskel, 2010; Eppard, 2004). Two categories of culture within transactional leadership are identified in the literature: passive-defensive culture and aggressive-defensive culture. As such, the transactional leadership style expects faculty to conform to rules, do what they are told, are punished for non-conformity but not rewarded for success. Additionally, transactional leadership encourages teachers to compete against each other, rather than work together (Eppard, 2004). Additionally, the limits of this leadership style were on vivid display during the COVID-19 pandemic, when large, top down systems struggled to adapt to new learning environments (Mette, 2020).

This article and these data are drawn from, and nested in, American bureaucratic school culture, silence, and resilience. As such, many of the issues that are facing practitioners and policymakers are by products of the American bureaucratic system, such as failure to bring best practices to scale, failure to capitalize on the expertise of teachers, the mistrusting and often strained relationship between policymakers and practitioners (Mehta, 2013). However, post pandemic, Weber (2020) explains changes in bureaucratic culture and mindset; how its norms of assembly, rules, rule-makers, rule-enforcers, and standards

were disrupted by the onset of the international pandemic in March 2020. Relatedly, Pollock (2020) highlights the changing nature of school leaders' work during the pandemic and characterizes it as leadership in times of predictability to leadership in times of uncertainty. Most recently, Peter Green (2022) suggests that administrators are facing uniquely challenging issues creating an environment where they have "all the responsibility with none of the power" (p.1).

Internationally, the cultural impact transactional bureaucratic systems are evident in the studies of Organizational Silence (OS) and the link between silence and bureaucratic school culture (Daniilidou et al., 2020; Ngui & Lay, 2020, Peixoto et al., 2018; Balicki & Aypay, 2018). Of note, recent studies show a significant relationship between school culture and teacher silence when there is a perceived lack of communication, trust, empathy and/ or support from the educational administration (Alqarni, 2020; Durnali et al., 2020; Saglam, 2016; Ruclar, 2013). When there is an absence of communication, there is an absence of trust, which may lead to Organizational Silence.

Organizational Silence (OS) is defined as withholding of thoughts, opinions and concerns about organizational problems, which may be deliberate, as people who feel that they need to protect themselves, the institution, or other individuals from negative consequences of speaking out (Saglam, 2016). Specifically, for teachers, OS exists when they feel that that cannot express their opinions, feelings and perceptions freely, they stay silent, even in the face of criticism, as they do not feel valued or trust in their administration (Bayram, 2010; Kahveci et al., 2012; Zengin, 2011). International studies indicate that OS can negatively impact a teachers' emotional well-being, impacts teacher efficacy, performance, and motivation (Perlow & Williams, 2003; (Saglam, 2016; Durnali, Akbasli, & Dis, 2020). For educational

systems based on interpersonal altruism and mentorship, OS can also have a negative impact systemically, in particular impacting the effectiveness of the human structures on which the systems rely. Within those closed bureaucratic structures, teacher efficacy and resilience are closely linked. In fact, individuals with high levels for self-efficacy tend to perceive problems within their environment, as challenges, rather than threats, often demonstrating flexibility and resolve (Daniilidou et al., 2020).

Resilience is coping adaptively with challenges and is linked to self-efficacy (Schwarzer & Warner, 2013; Daniilidou et al., 2020). Self-efficacy is essential to developing effective coping strategies when faced with challenges, maintaining persistence in the face of failure and has been shown to positively affect and, in some cases, predict resilience (Gschwend, 1999; Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011; Eg & Chang, 2010; Peixoto et al., 2018; Daniilidou et al., 2020). Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to maintain their enthusiasm, remain steadfast in their persistence, and have higher levels of resilience than teachers who do not perceive themselves to be efficacious (Gibbs, 2009; Tschannen- Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007).

Resilience in educational leaders has not been widely studied, however, Patterson et al., (2009) define a resilient leader as one who demonstrates the ability to recover, learn from, and developmentally mature when confronted by chronic or crisis adversity. Benight & Cieslak (2011), the recognized authority on organizational leadership, said resilience is the cornerstone to successful leadership. In a study of resilience in female educational leaders, Reed & Blaine (2015) found that, often, leaders become both the target and an outlet for the frustrations of others, which often causes them to have deteriorating levels of resilience. Therefore, leaders think and act in ways that cause

stress to become more intense, becoming angry and aggressive. As blame is placed on others, the emotions of denial, grief, and anger thrust leaders into a reactive role. This pattern of behavior directly correlates to the characteristics of the transactional leadership model existing in a complex and layered school culture (Reed & Blaine, 2015).

Teacher Narratives as tools: Understanding lived experiences within school cultures

Teacher narratives within the bureaucratic school system contain valuable information to inform policy, practice, and organizational health. Researchers have, to date, sought to tell the teachers' story through different lenses in a myriad of contexts (Day, 2013). However, education research often excludes the first-person voices of the teachers and how they are affected by educational policy (as stated by e.g., Purcell- Gates, 2000; Shaker & Ruitenberg, 2007). Dillon (2010) notes that "lived experiences" are capable of dominant cultural narrative critique. However, dominant cultural contexts and constructs persist *despite* the ability of powerful individual "lived experiences" to inform the complexities and flaws of dominant cultural narratives (White, 1989; Graziano et al., 2018). Like culture writ large, flawed dominant cultural narratives about education persist while the individual narratives of the teacher become lost within the system (Day, 2013). Examining this invisibility of the teacher through the lens of Narrative Theory, Feminist Theory, and Critical Theory, it is evident that silence, resilience and resignation come through the narratives of the teachers, in the form of "I" poems.

Methods

The Listening Guide (LG) specifically focuses on the researchers' active role in understanding the participant narrative(s). By operating from a

subjective stance and using a relational methodology, the researcher and the participant are encouraged to share what they know and how they know it (Gilligan, 1993; 2015). Specific to educational policy implementation, we posit that teachers' voices, experiences, and input are wholly excluded from the process, but central to understanding the complexities of their profession at the intersection of self and structure (Graziano & Pelc, 2019). By utilizing the Listening Guide, we seek to untangle individual co-teachers' experiences from dominant narratives within education, allowing for the teacher's voices to emerge through a systematic examination of the under-explored relationship between teacher self-efficacy and a complex and layered school culture (Woodcock, 2016).

The Listening Guide Method of Inquiry

As a method, the Listening Guide acknowledges how themes, patterns, and silences in voice can be studied to critique dominant cultural contexts and constructs (Graziano et al., 2018; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1997). The goal of the Listening Guide is *not* generalizability, but to uncover underlying themes of the participants as they are narrated through first person voice. To uncover these underlying, narrated themes, the Listening Guide uses four steps, or "listenings" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, Graziano et al., 2018): (1) interview transcription; (2) Listening for Plot; (3) Creation of the "I" poems; and (4) Creation of Contrapuntal Voices.

Listening for the Plot

During the first listening and after transcription, the main objective of the researcher is to understand a participant narrative (Graziano et al., 2018; Woodcock, 2016). Here, several questions should emerge: What do (don't) we know? What are the potential themes emerging from

these first person voices? What is (not) being narrated and/or said? In order to answer these questions, the researcher approaches Listening for Plot through: (1) researcher self-reflexivity and (2) focus on participant voices in relationship to the researcher.

Creation of "I" poems & attention to the participant voice

At the heart of the Listening Guide methodology are "I" poems (Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1997). The researcher, by returning to the transcripts for the third listening and linking the "I" statement with a verb, is looking for shifts in voice. Shifts in voice are identified through changes in tone, rhythm, pauses, and conversational direction. Additionally, through the creation of "I" poems, the researcher is mindful of the central questions framing the "I" statements; what is the participant voicing or narrating when they refer to themselves? How do they describe, narrate, or give voice to themselves or their experiences? (Woodcock, 2016).

By following and noting the participants "I" statements during the third listening, researchers are better able to focus on—and understand—participant first person voice (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Raider-Roth, 2004). Then, through this still growing understanding of how a first person voice is being narrated by participants, a researcher can begin to uncover the themes present within and across these shared narratives. Thus, at this stage, several important questions emerge for the researcher: How is context impacting the relationship between researcher and participant? How is context impacting the researcher's understanding of the transcript? How is context impacting what is being shared? How do the researcher's biases impact the responses of the participant? (Graziano et al., 2018).

Creations of contrapuntal voices

The fourth listening is the creation of contrapuntal voices. Contrapuntal voices are the (often unexplored) relationship of individual participant voices to each other (Graziano et al., 2018). During this listening, the researcher looks for what is (or isn't) being said, what is being said (in)differently, as well as what might be silenced or voiced (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017). Because of dominant cultural contexts and constructs, individual voices are often kept independent to maintain the dominant cultural status quo. When these individual voices do challenge the cultural status quo, they are explained away, threatened, or summarily dismissed (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bruner, 2002). Said differently, as Gilligan notes, when faced with cultural pressure, individuals and their voices are often forced to not know what they know (Brown & Gilligan, 1993).

With these data, the relationship(s) between teacher narratives and leadership, school culture, and teacher efficacy were closely studied within and across interviews. The particular attention to participant voice within and across interviews allowed the researchers to hear changes in tone, cadence, and rhythm that were a reaction to, or a shying away from, speaking about school structures. By comparing the impressions from each interview and noting the relationship each interview has to others, researchers are able to theoretically analyze each transcript by looking for commonalities in silences and narratives—the shared voice—present within these data. The contrapuntal voices, then, after careful deliberation, analysis, and discussion between all researchers, are created through these data. are presented The results of this analysis are located in the findings section of this article as the Voice of Red Tape (direct and indirect) and the Voice of Teacher Resilience.

Use of Voices within the Listening Guide. In tandem with the previously stated goal of the Listening Guide not being generalizability, a related endeavor is the absence of a concrete research question. The absence of a concrete research question does two things. First, it challenges the quantitative concepts of a hypothesis and null hypothesis created by such a question. Second, but related, analysis using the Listening Guide involves using a "real question" (Gilligan, 1989, p. 9). A "real question" is one that requires the researcher to have a desire for both an answer and a desire to enter into conversation and relationship with another. When using traditional qualitative methods, a cornerstone of thematic analysis and discussion is reliability and validity (two concepts most often associated, if not wholly borrowed from, quantitative methods). Furthermore, in other qualitative methods, such as Grounded Theory, emphasis is placed on the integration of themes into broader (and widely accepted) social and cultural contexts and constructs.

Participants

The 12 teacher participants were tenured faculty at a regional secondary school in the Northeastern United States (Table 1). There were 16 teachers who were involved in the first year of the new programmatic co-teaching initiative of co-teaching, as the school bureaucracy moved away from the self-contained, resource model for classified students. Twelve teachers of the sixteen volunteered to participate in the study. Six self-identified as women and six self-identified as men. Six participants were special education teachers and six were general education teachers. Participant ages ranged from mid 20's to late 60's, and the teaching experience ranged from five to 34 years. At the time of interview, each participant was engaged in their first year of co-teaching as part of a new program for the regional

secondary school. All participants were given [pseudonyms to protect confidentiality and anonymity].

Each general education participant was given the choice to either engage in co-teaching and/ or choose their co-teaching partners, although special education teachers were mandated to participate, but could choose their partners. Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2009). By purposefully sampling the teachers who had choice of participation and/or partner, researchers were able to focus on teachers' feelings of autonomy, value, and overall perceptions of their experiences of self-efficacy, and proxy efficacy. Administrative decisions & participant impact.

The special education teachers were told that they would be co-teaching, with policy decisions made by the superintendent. By teacher report(s), decision making largely occurred in isolation; changes to the existing special education program, input from affected stakeholders (the board of education, parents, students, faculty, staff, and some administrators), and the rationale behind the co-teaching program were all cited as decisions made out input from relevant stakeholders.

An understanding of the rationale behind this implementation strategy was brought to light through a series of administrative interviews completed for a different study using the same research site and co-teaching program as the case (Garofalo & Graziano, 2022). These data indicate a parallel process of school bureaucracy, one where administrators were unclear or unable to discuss the rationale behind the programmatic switch. As with the data presented within this article, OS was evident with the administrative interviews. For example, in an interview with the superintendent, they discussed her programmatic decisions. In an apparent attempt to thwart any teacher pushback, the program was rolled out as a punishment for teachers

due to failure to perform their duties effectively (Garofalo & Graziano, 2022). Notably, for this study, each participant was asked their qualification status and each participant of both the special education and general education faculty is designated as "highly qualified" by the federal and state guidelines. It was made clear to the faculty that the messaging about the new program would be sotto voce from the superintendent. There was an active decision to silence teachers and to centralize authority and communication. It is important to note that administrators, themselves immersed in, and reflective of, a punitive school culture, gave voice to being tasked with enforcing or creating rules that were based in punishment. That said, drawing on the theoretical frameworks guiding the study, the school culture is reflective of the normative culture, therefore, those within the system are forced to conform to the cultural norms. Additionally, the elements of a coercive bureaucratic culture—such as lack of transparency, punishment, silence, utilizing fear, increased autocratic control, lack of trust in leadership conversely, perceived lack of trust by leadership, decrease teacher autonomy, and issues regarded as problems—are evident throughout the data.

Results

Based on the analysis of 12 interviews using The Listening Guide (Gilligan et al., 2006), two contrapuntal voices emerged from this data: The *Voice of Red Tape* and the *Voice of Teacher Resilience*. All pronouns used to identify participants are their chosen pronouns.

Voice of Red Tape

The contrapuntal voice discussed as the *Voice of Red Tape* emerged when participants gave voice to the power, authority, and constant presence of the bureaucracy as both external and internal actors within

their professional lives. This voice indicated that teachers felt defeated, self-doubting, silenced, replaceable, secondary, or non-existent. During repeated listenings, the researchers noted that teachers used two versions of this voice, addressing both the direct and indirect "red tape" generated by school bureaucracy. The direct *Voice of Red Tape* was evidenced as criticism of administration policy and procedures. This voice emerged for the researchers during earlier listenings. The indirect *Voice of Red Tape* was evidenced as an internalized doubt about professional roles within the school system. Given the indirect nature of this voice, it emerged during later listenings.

Direct Voice of Red Tape

Jennifer and Veronica spoke in-depth to the administration's rollout of policies and procedures for inclusion classrooms and co-teaching dyads. Jennifer and Veronica's "I" Poems, widely reflected in the narratives of other participants, and showcased an unwillingness or inability to communicate or support the administration, concerns about the implementation of the new policy, and understanding increased autocratic control (and decreased autonomy) for teachers. Jennifer notes:

> *I don't know what [the superintendent] is doing and I don't care what [the superintendent] is doing. I don't want to figure it out, and I don't want to try to. I haven't had to before... even though [the director of Special Services] tried.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I don't know/ I don't care/ I don't/ I haven't

And later, they state:

> *I'm sorry. I'm not gonna mince words. I mean, there's, there's a way to do things. There's no tact, no finesse. It's like this is the way it's going to be whether it's good, bad or indifferent. You don't ask anybody... [the director of Special Services] said [they] didn't know anything about. Maybe they didn't, maybe they did. I don't know. I don't know. But, I'm not pleased with it was shoved down our throats.*

I'm/ I'm/ I mean/ I don't/ I don't/ I'm not pleased

Repeated listenings of Jennifers narrative support a direct interpretation of her "I" poems, which suggest confusion, resignation ("I don't know/ I don't care"), feelings of isolation, exclusion ("I don't/ I don't/ I haven't") and frustration, ("I am not pleased") in reaction to her experience with the administration's lack of communication and increased autocratic control.

Veronica spoke about how the administration executed the new policy of co-teaching.

> *I'm a little bitter right now because I hear that [the director of special services] said they [administration] are taking us away from the resource kids, too. So, I am currently set to co-teaching all day-which I have no problem with., but its June and I have no idea who my new person is. I mean, I've been polling the whole history department to find out. I have to say communication is a problem with the administration. I think communication is a huge problem. Huge! My boss doesn't have a clue what's going on and [they] the director of special education. And they are purposely keeping [them] out because they don't want to hear. I mean, that's my opinion. They don't want to hear [their] "legalese" what's legal and what's not legal.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I'm a little bitter/ I / I am
I have / I have / I mean / I [have been] I have / I think/ I mean

The repeated listenings of Veronica's narrative clearly verbalizes resentment ("I'm a little bitter"), feelings of indignation ("I/ I am/ I have/ I have"), and uncertainty of her role and how to navigate the situation within the school ("I mean/ I have been/ I have/ I think/ I mean").

During later listenings of Colin's narrative, it became clear that he was acutely aware of the unequal or unfair treatment of the special education teachers by the administration.

> *[The superintendent] literally treat us like like second-class citizens. I mean, we are all highly qualified and have been working our tails of to get these kids where they need to be. [The superintendent] literally called us into the auditorium to tell us that we were failing to do our jobs and that we weren't qualified. She was punishing us with by taking away our classes. I had my own classroom for more than a decade. I have designed a reading program that has proven successful. How could she talk to us like that. I can't wrap my head around it. I see red when I think about how she talks to us.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I mean /I had my own classroom
I have designed
I can't wrap my head around it I see red

These later listenings showed that Colin demonstrates clear resentment, feelings of exclusion and punishment ("I had my own classroom"), confusion ("I can't wrap my head around it") and anger ("I see red") at the administration's treatment of the special education teachers.. During later listenings, the researchers noted that Colin uses the words "punishment" and the phrase "second-class citizens" in the transcript, which further demonstrates the feelings of inequitable treatment of the faculty by the bureaucratic school culture.

In early listenings, the researchers noted John's discussion around the way the administration implemented the new policy and the lack of communication about expectations and input from teachers.

> *One day they were just like; you're teaching a co-teaching class. [The administration] didn't really ask, [the administration] just told us. I mean, I get it, right of assignment. But [the administration] didn't even train us or ask what we thought about anything. Student placement was a nightmare. I think there was not forethought. [The administration] just shoved it down our throats. I don't think they cared at all about what we thought, and we are the experts. I am pretty tired of it.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I mean/ I get/ I think
I don't think
I am pretty tired of it

Further, John's "I" poem indicates he is uncertain about his place ("I mean/ I get/ I think/ I don't think"). In later listenings, it became clear to the researchers that John communicates resentment and feelings of exclusion ("But...[they] didn't even train us or ask us what we thought about anything.") Importantly, this forced silence is seen throughout

these data, as people demonstrate hesitation to speak about, and/or felt silenced by the administration. Yet, even here, John acknowledges his own self efficacy and collective efficacy of the teaching staff ("we are the experts"), but also indicates resignation about his treatment by the administration "I am pretty tired of it."

Through both early and later listenings by the researchers, The *Direct Voice of Red Tape* was voiced as an overt discussion of the effects of school bureaucracy on teacher self-efficacy. Examples were echoed in all 12 interviews, reflecting an acrimony created by a school bureaucracy that limited communication, transparency, autonomy, and voice (and, therefore, teacher- proxy efficacy).

Indirect Voice of Red Tape

In later listenings it became clear that participants were, indirectly, discussing other aspects of the bureaucratic red tape within their positions. During these later listenings, researchers noted that all participants gave voice to the doubt that was instilled by the bureaucratic system, which created a pattern of wavering confidence. Importantly, each participant seemingly internalized the messages of the school bureaucracy, and gave voice to feeling unseen, unheard, replaceable and/or secondary.

During these later listenings, researchers noted that Christina described her presence in the classroom in terms of perennial absence, floating in and out, without impact on students, administrators, or peers.

> *Like, I'm in and out, you know. There's no- and I think that probably a lot of it, too. I'm very like, I'm like a blip in her-- ya. At all. I have nothing in her classroom. Like, I don't leave anything in there. It's not my home base. It's not...*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I'm in and out/ I think
I'm/ I'm a blip
I have nothing [in her classroom]/I don't [leave anything in there]

Christina's "I" poem support this, by indicating her feelings of invisibility and impermanence ("I'm in and out/ I think/ I'm/ I'm a blip") without direct impact of value to the people or the culture of the school. Her "I" poem suggests her resignation to her current situation within the system ("I have nothing/I don't").

Other teacher-participants voiced that, in the face of the system red tape, they just gave up. In both early and later listenings of Katherine's narrative this was apparent. For example, she states:

> *I mean, I think they tried to give us the, [Professor-in-Residence]. Ya, I guess they did that with the hopes of her being somewhat of a support for us? Uh, I didn't really find that at all. I didn't- she didn't come in one of our classes ever and I didn't turn to her for any type of support in any type of way. I know we had, we were directed to sit through some of her presentations but, again, I didn't find it as really like a support. But, I guess the administration was giving her to us as a support.*

Along with the accompanying "I" Poems

I mean/ I think [they tried]/ I guess/ I didn't
I didn't
I know/ I didn't
I guess

Katherine's "I" poem suggests that she is hesitant to express her feelings and perceptions regarding the new program and

administration ("I mean/ I think/ I guess"). Katherine also indicates that she felt there was a lack of support by the administration and she was unclear about the administration's goals in the implementation of the new program ("I didn't/ I know/ I didn't/ I guess"). By *existing* in this system, Katherine avoids conflict, punishment, and undue attention; she does not challenge the system, and, in return, the system does not challenge her. Unlike the voice of direct red tape, which offered a direct challenge to the administration, the voice of indirect red tape was, as these data suggest, subtle, hidden, and guided by not disrupting the status quo (while also acknowledging the administration flaws). This particular piece of the contrapuntal voices offered within this analysis reinforce the crucial need for multiple listenings, so hidden themes can become emergent through repetition.

Voice of Teacher Resilience

The contrapuntal voice discussed as the *Voice of Teacher Resilience* emerged when participants were asked about their individual role(s) in the co-teaching classroom. This voice was agentic and revealed a willingness and ability to thrive *despite* system red tape. The *Voice of Teacher Resilience* emerged from these data when teachers shifted their focus away from bureaucratic failures, shortcomings, and difficulties, and centered their professional self-efficacy on student well-being, relationship building, classroom learning, and advancement.

Andrea's agentic voice was identified through multiple listenings, and seemingly honored a commitment to meeting the needs of all her students:

> *I mean, the pace is [different]. I think we have a higher demand on the students this year from resource. Um, ya know, when I personally felt like I was always the um, what did they call me?*

> *The "harder" English teacher out of the special ed or resources because I feel that I challenge them. I hold them to a higher standard, I shouldn't say higher, high standard, but um. And, I feel like it was still a step up this year. So, the pace is different. The content is a little bit, is different. Ya know, I want these students to be exposed to a mainstream curriculum because I think it's important. And a lot of our students that were in resource last year, are going to college. So, they need this college prep. They're going to community college and they're transferring. And I've had students come back to me in the past and they're like "Wow! It was really hard year one because I feel like there was a gap between what we were learning and where we were supposed to be." So, another reason why I was behind co-teaching, is because I think it is important for students to be exposed to these types of materials and requirements of a mainstream class.*

Culled from other points in Andrea's narrative, her "I" Poems further support these repeated listenings and their indication of self-reliance and resilience. For example, when asked about how she plans on continuing her work in the classroom next year, despite uncertainty, she plans to be successful in a less-than ideal situation.

I think/ I am / I think
I can build/ I have / I already have
I can build/ I can change /I can add
I know what worked/ I know what didn't

Here, Andrea thrives *despite* the lack of transparency, training, or communication and the administration questioning of abilities and qualifications. Her self-efficacy is powerful ("I think/ I am/ I think/ I can build/ I have/ I already have"). Andrea illustrates her foundational

belief that she has come through the administrative and programmatic challenges by focusing on her students and how she can be better ("I know what worked/ I know what didn't"). Additionally, she is planning to continue to meet those challenges ("I can build/ I can change/ I can add") to improve in the future.

Similarly, Zeek is acutely aware of bureaucratic pressure. Across the totality of his narrative, his responses honor the requirement of new teachers to be diplomatic when discussing policy, procedures, and decisions mandated by the administration,

> *I think I did- I obviously liked having my own class, my own group of kids. You don't see the same group of kids every day. Um, but I was excited for inclusion. I think it was-I knew it was going to be good for the kids- to kind of not be in that stigma of "Oh, I'm in a resource class" or "It doesn't really matter what I do." Um, I knew it was going to be good for them to get into that general population.*

When asked about co-teaching, Zeek offered his support, framing it as important for the students. However, Zeek's "I" poems reveal his commitment to what is best for his students.

I obviously liked/ I was excited for inclusion/ I think/ I knew/ I knew

The resilience demonstrated across the multiple listenings of Zeek's narrative, one in which he narrates the painful loss his classroom, demonstrated resilience, *despite* the soft power of having your own space among faculty and administrators ("I was excited for inclusion").

Like Andrea, Zeek focuses on the opportunity to provide the best learning environment for his students, even though that means he will have to share instructional time with a co-teacher ("I obviously liked/

I was excited"). His self-efficacy is apparent; he knows that he has the ability to help his students, ("I knew/ I knew"). Lacking resources from administration, Veronica begins to educate herself on the needs of her students, realizing that even provided resources are netted out in ways that create an unintentional, bureaucratic hierarchy.

> *I did hear that the administration sent a select few to the Marilyn Friend Workshop. I understand that those things cost money, but, it would be nice to have access to her material. Because of even last year I found myself googling strategies in a co-teaching classroom because I [could not] believe I was the only person to ever deal with the discord of co-teacher relationship. So, I wanted to know what my options were, but I did that on my own, informally.*

Veronica's accompanying "I" Poems and repeated listenings support a narrative that is self actualizing.

I did/ I understand
I found/ I/ I/ /I wanted to know/ I did that on my own

Veronica's "I" poem shows her flexibility and resourcefulness in the face of lack of support, communication and training by the administration. She takes it upon herself to learn as much as she can about co-teaching best practices to better serve her students and her co-teaching partner ("I found/ I/ I/ /I wanted to know/ I did that on my own"). Her self-efficacy is demonstrated in her actions and her words ("I did/ I understand")"

Finally, Jennifer, when reflecting on nearly 40 years of teaching, spoke in both early and later listenings in terms that showed how she was

agentic *despite* the bureaucracy and operated as her own boss, one guided by personal ethics and a want for change within her students.

> *And I am a real person to them. And they are real people to me. And I like that I just take them for what they are the minute they walk into the classroom. They coulda been killing someone in the hallway. OK, slight exaggeration. But then when they walk in, it's me and it's them and it's us together and we will figure it out. That the way I look at it. I want to figure it out with them. I want to help them do whatever they can do in their lives. And that's the way I want it. And I see them as people. And I explain things to them. I just don't say "Because". Sometimes I do. "It's because I said so. I'm the boss, this is not a democracy. It is a dictatorship, whether you like it or not". And that's the way I do.*

I am/ I /I/ I
I want [to figure it out with them]/ I want [to help them do whatever they can]/ I want
I see/ I explain/ I/ I do
I/ I'm the boss/ I do

Jennifer's narrative indicates that she knows her value is and is flexible enough to solve any problem on her own ("I am/ I/ I/I"). She believes in her own abilities to help her students succeed and is solely focused on helping her students get there, despite the bureaucratic school culture and pressure from the administration ("I want [to figure it out with them]/ I want [to help them do whatever they can]"). Jennifer also describes herself as the expert, the one in charge in her classroom ("I explain/ I/ I do/ I / I'm the boss/ I do"), almost as if the bureaucratic issues do not impact the work she does in her classroom at all. She suggests a powerful, collective efficacy with her co-teacher and her students through the transcripts ("...it's me and it's them and it's us

together and we'll figure it out"), as she describes an ecosystem where there is equality, belonging and value for each member of the co-teaching classroom community.

Findings and Discussion

In an effort to understand teachers' experiences of a complex and layered school culture, this study explored teacher narratives to give voice to, and uncover how, teachers operate in a coercive and transactional school bureaucracy. Specifically, the study focused on teachers' self- efficacy and how rigid school bureaucratic structures impact teacher efficacy. The contrapuntal voices that emerged from the application of the Listening Guide Method to these data revealed that most of the participants felt that, in addition to the red tape, they were exercising some level of silence, motivated by fear of punishment, and/or harboring feelings of valuelessness.

Consistent with the central tenants of Narrative, Feminist, and Critical theory, and the application of the Listening Guide Method, included narratives reveal three consistent themes around teachers' perceptions of the bureaucratic school culture and the impact on organizational effectiveness: (1) teacher reporting the issue of lack of transparency and communication throughout the system; (2) anger expressed at the increased centralization of power, autocratic control; (3) punishment.

Lack of transparency and communication

This is supported by evidence from the "I" poems where teachers discuss not understanding the rationale behind administrative decisions, absence of any chain of command, specifically where to go for administrative support and confusion around what co-teaching roles look like. The lack of transparency fuels the lack of

communication between administration and teachers, administration and other stakeholders, among administrators, themselves, indicative of low level of proxy efficacy in the participants. In fact, the absence of a chain of command is noted across interviews, creating confusion for all stakeholders, especially impactful for teachers implementing a new instructional model with little training or input.

Expressed teacher anger

Teachers cite their anger at the increased centralization of power, autocratic control. This is evidenced by the descriptions "second class citizens," "cogs in a wheel" and "seeing red."

Punishment

The theme of punishment is also evident across the data set. Teachers indicate that they feel that things were taken away unfairly, like autonomy in their own classes, programs they helped develop and students that they were invested in. The theme of punishment is evidenced by the lack of autonomy, specifically feeling like the new program was "shoved down our throats", illustrating the absence of consent, and absence of voice within the system.

Voice on social elements within the system

Teacher narratives indicate that as a result of the transactional bureaucracy, there were three common themes within voice expressed across these data: (1) alienation within the system; (2) lack of belonging both in/ out of the classroom, and (3) lack of value.

Alienation within the system

Alienation within the system is evidenced by teachers' descriptions of feeling they are "in and out," "just a blip" and that they do not feel

secure in their roles within the system, due to lack of training and support.

Lack of belonging

Lack of belonging is highlighted by teachers' anger and resentment due to the labeling that they are lacking the qualifications necessary to be experts, and the humiliation that comes with teaching assignments that feel like punishment. Additionally, aside from the voices of anger and resentment, there were feelings of confusion that emerged from the "I" poems, specifically in relation to their co-teaching counterparts and roles within the classroom.

Lack of value

Lack of value is evidenced by teachers feeling that they have no voice or input in the decision-making, that administrations does not regard them as experts. The existence of this theme compounds the overall lack of trust in administrative behaviors. The voice of powerlessness, that *this* was happening *to* them, and they had no agency to change anything, contributed to the revelation of the voice of resignation.

Reactions to Red Tape

Teacher narratives revealed two kinds of reactions to the transactional school culture: (1) resignation, and (2) resilience.

Resignation

The theme of resignation is evidenced by teachers' self- reporting "exhaustion" from operating within the system, lack of investment /interest in the programs and administrative decision-making, notably because they have no voice. Several teachers suggest that their job is really about survival- negotiating the system with as little negative impact on them as possible. These data indicate that those teachers

who are resigned to the bureaucratic culture feel attacked, undervalued, and replaceable, focusing much of their energy discussing systems over students, with the researchers.

Resilience

Teachers who demonstrate resilience, which is anchored in their self-efficacy, express spirit to transcend the challenges and feeling undervalued within the system. Instead, they double down on the expertise, strength and abilities, in the classroom, where they demonstrate their commitment to their career – helping students succeed (Gschwend, 1999; Gu, 2014). Although these teachers who demonstrate resilience identify all of the same issues of transparency, value, voice, autonomy and fear as the other participants, they balance the interaction between the external conflicts of the social and organizational environment with their own self-reliance, commitment to students, and personal ethics. These resilient teachers are committed to creating conducive learning environments, focusing their energy and efforts on the students in their classes, voicing the value of inclusion, and seeking out their own resources to answer questions or solve problems.

In some cases, these resilient teachers serve as a bridge between the resigned and enraged teachers and the administration, using soft power, attempting to communicate with the leadership for the collective in a clear, respectful way. The complex and layered transactional bureaucracy was merely something these teachers chose to work around in order to do their jobs to the best of their abilities while focusing on the students. Those teachers who maintain a higher level of self- efficacy were able to focus on their own students and classes, appearing to navigate the complex and layered system *despite* the complex and layered school culture and seeming transactional

leadership (Demirbolat et al., 2014). Those teachers demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity.

The contrapuntal voices of the teachers also indicate that, although each teacher believed in their own efficacy, the lack of transparency, administrative support, and general collaboration in the implementation of the co-teaching program deeply affected teacher proxy efficacy, as well as their desire to perform and thrive in the system. Despite the negative impact of the bureaucratic system, teachers did find ways to feel that administrative choice to implement co-teaching may have positively impacted student classroom experiences, as is consistent with the literature on co-teaching instructional model (Friend et al., 2007; Friend, et al., 2010; Friend, 2015), especially in terms of engagement, destigmatization of students with disabilities and social and emotional growth for students across the spectrum of abilities.

Implications and future research

The bureaucratic school culture is indicative of a system that forces people into certain roles, including educational leaders. School administrators are as much a part of, and victims of, the bureaucratic education system as teachers are. To use these data as evidence: all stakeholders, including administrators, are just "cogs in a wheel". The question, then, remains, how do we address the systemic issues associated with transactional school culture?

In the U.S. educational leadership programs are plentiful and often they subscribe to the teaching of proscriptive and ineffective leadership styles (Tienken & Mullen, 2015; Halliger, 2011). However, it would be essential to educate future leaders on the pitfalls of the complex and layered bureaucratic structure. Ultimately, this means an

examination of the system for corrosive behaviors that lead to OS which erodes the core mission of educational systems, writ large. Suggestions for improvement of the preparation of educational leaders include empowering future leaders to articulate their values and create an appropriate professional plan to operate within a system which may contradict their personal leadership values. It may be significant to draw a distinction between educational leadership and educational management (Shaturaev et al., 2021).

Educational leaders are often removed from the actualities that occur within the classroom (Bush, 2011). A challenge that leaders face is having a real world understanding of the changing trends, behaviors, and issues within the classrooms. This is especially salient in the post pandemic world, where U.S. teachers are raising the alarms of notable shortcoming in the social and emotional development of students when compared to students at the same level, pre- pandemic. It would be important for educational leaders to find ways to immerse themselves in the classroom to collect observable data on the trends and behaviors in the classroom, in order to address the issues that are ever-present in a bureaucratic school system.

Implications for research & practice

Based on this study's findings, school administration should try to clarify goals and objectives with stakeholders when beginning a programmatic change. Clearly communicated goals can result in improved trust in the leadership, as well as a higher level of commitment to achieving goals from stakeholders, communicated through teachers as higher levels of efficacy (Santoli et al., 2008). Relatedly, transparency regarding expectations of teachers within the system, specifically regarding teachers' roles within a co-teaching classroom, may increase feelings of efficacy and thereby teacher

resilience. Conversely, clearly communicated roles and expectations from the school leadership may cut down the feelings of resignation and rage, giving the teachers clear goals to achieve and specific tasks to make the programmatic change successful.

Also, administrators should think about giving teachers an opportunity to sit at the proverbial table, as experienced partners and collaborators working towards the same goals, to create a clear path of communication between policy and practice as well as to allow teachers to feel they have a voice in a system that has historically undervalued and dismissed their roles.

Lastly, those teachers who feel silenced by "red tape" could look to their peers who used their voice and resilience, diplomatically, to meet the needs of students to bridge the divide between bureaucratic layers. These teachers emerge as quiet leaders, often using soft power to influence the bureaucracy on different levels. Based on the research on teacher leadership within a bureaucracy and the impetus for teachers to work as agents of change within a system that often has conflicting goals and challenges for those teachers who operate within the system.

Given the limitations of the study, specifically with sample size and site selection, researchers should examine teachers' perceptions of efficacy within the bureaucratic school culture in a post- pandemic world. This would shed light on the undercurrents of change that are sometimes unknowable, except through teacher narratives. This would allow for future policy and practice to be grounded in the most current trends in education. Additionally, researchers might benefit from longitudinal study of teacher efficacy over time, including the pre and post pandemic time periods.

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About the authors:

Mary Garofalo is an Adjunct Faculty in the Department of Educational Leadership at Kean University where she teaches graduate courses in Educational Research. She graduated with her PhD Higher Education Leadership, Management, Policy in 2019. Dr. Garofalo's research uses qualitative analysis to explore the complexities within teacher and administrative relationships through a focus on survey and field observations.

E-mail: mgarofal@kean.edu

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization, investigation, resources, writing.

Matthew James Graziano is a founding police psychologist in the Health & Wellness Unit of the City of New York Police Department (NYPD). Previous to this work, Dr. Graziano was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology and Family Therapy at Seton Hall University. Dr. Graziano's research emphasizes multicultural competence, social justice, and the complexities of the social, political, cultural, environmental, and economic world. Dr. Graziano continues to work in private practice, serving a multicultural and diverse client base, reflective of fifteen years of clinical work within New York City.

E-mail: matthewjgraziano@gmail.com

Authorship credit details: Methodology, resources, writing

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The Effects of Regulations on Private School Choice Program Participation: Experimental Evidence from the United States

Corey A. DeAngelis*

American Federation for Children, Cato Institute, Reason Foundation & Educational Freedom Institute, United States of America

Lindsey M. Burke

Heritage Foundation, United States of America

Patrick J. Wolf

University of Arkansas, Arkansas, University of America

Angela K. Dills

Western Carolina University, North Carolina, United States of America

Abstract

Private school leaders weigh costs and benefits when deciding whether to participate in school voucher programs. Regulatory costs associated with accepting voucher funding could reduce private school leaders' willingness to participate. We test this hypothesis through the first random assignment analysis of the effects of various regulations on the expressed willingness of private school leaders to participate in hypothetical voucher programs that draws upon national data. We randomly assign different regulations to U.S. private school leaders and ask them whether they would participate in a hypothetical school voucher program during the following school year. Relative to no regulations, we find that open-enrollment mandates reduce the likelihood that private school leaders report being certain to participate in a hypothetical choice program by about 14 percentage points, or 67%. The requirement that private schools

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*Corresponding author
E-mail: cdeangelis@federationforchildren.org

accept the voucher funding amount as payment-in-full reduces the likelihood that private school leaders report being certain to participate by 16 percentage points, or 77%. Some regulations are more likely to deter private schools with higher reported tuitions, higher enrollment trends, more specialization, and more climate problems.

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Introduction

Private school voucher programs allow families to take a portion of their children's taxpayer-funded K-12 education dollars to the private school of their choosing. Legislators supporting these programs argue that voucher programs "[empower] parents to choose the educational opportunity that best suits their children's needs" and provide a "lifeline [for] students to succeed."[1] However, in an attempt to provide top-down accountability and equitable allocation of those taxpayer dollars, these programs often come with various forms of regulations on private schools. These regulations include requirements to administer standardized tests, provide financial reporting, admit all students who apply, and accept the voucher funding amount as payment-in-full (DeAngelis, 2020).

[1] Texas State Senator Mayes Middleton, November 15, 2022 in reference to Texas Senate Bill 176 and Virginia Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears on January 12, 2023 in reference to Virginia HB 1508.

Testing mandates, proponents argue, generate information for parents and policy makers to know how children are progressing academically (Barnum, 2017). Open enrollment mandates and copay prohibitions intend to keep private schools available and affordable for parents. Further, these regulations could pressure participating private schools to improve outcomes and to provide more options to a wider set of students. However, in states where such programs operate, all private schools decide whether to participate in voucher programs each year. When making these decisions, private school leaders weigh the costs and benefits of participating in the voucher program. For private schools, the main benefits associated with participating in these programs are the additional voucher revenues and the expanded ability to meet their broader social goals of educating more children in a way that aligns with their mission. Although this is not a comprehensive list, the main costs associated with participating in a voucher program for private schools are adapting to new student populations and adjusting to additional government regulations (Austin, 2019; Sude, DeAngelis, & Wolf, 2018; DeAngelis, 2020).

All else equal, increasing burdensome regulations could reduce the likelihood that private school leaders decide to participate in a voucher program if the marginal regulatory costs outweigh the marginal benefits of participation. In other words, an increased regulatory burden associated with participating in a voucher program could decrease private school participation in a voucher program. A reduction in the number of private schools available to families participating in a voucher program could limit the program's effectiveness by reducing the chance that families find a school that is the right fit for their students' educational needs.

These regulations may also affect the quality of private schools that participate in a voucher program. Some schools may choose not to participate because they lack confidence in their ability to meet regulatory requirements or they may fail to meet regulatory requirements (Harris 2015). This is likely one motivation for the regulations: to exclude low-performing schools from participating in the voucher program.[2]

On the other hand, regulations may lower the average quality of participating private schools. Although we do not have direct measures of quality, we consider two proxies: tuition and enrollment growth. Price typically correlates with service quality, even in the non-profit realm. For example, in higher education, tuition and fees correlate well with college quality (Smart 1988; Zhang 2005). The maximum price of the voucher is more likely to cover the full cost of the student in low-tuition private schools than in high-tuition private schools, potentially leading high-tuition private schools to be more sensitive to regulations since they may need to subsidize the cost of students on vouchers. Private schools struggling to attract students – presumably those of lower quality – may be more willing to participate, regardless of the regulatory structure, because they are more likely to be financially struggling and would benefit the most from additional revenues (Bedrick, 2016; Hess, 2010; McShane, 2018; Sude, DeAngelis, & Wolf, 2018). Private schools with strong enrollment can afford to decline the voucher offer if regulations are too burdensome. Private schools also may have concerns about losing their existing customer base if the additional regulations fundamentally change the services they provide; some private schools

[2] See, for example, Prothero (2017).

may prefer to remain exclusive in their admissions. If regulations require changes in the educational model already working for their established clientele, these private schools may face greater costs to participating. We might also expect differential deterrent effects of regulations on private schools that have more specialized missions, if those schools believed the regulations associated with participation would require them to generalize their school's mission and purpose.

We perform an experiment in the form of a survey of actual leaders of private schools in the United States. We send nearly identical surveys to private school leaders from over 10,000 private schools, almost a third of the universe of private schools. Surveys differ in one way: we randomly assign a note capturing the control condition or one of four regulations to the last question of the survey. This last question asks whether the private school leader would participate in a hypothetical voucher program. The four randomly assigned regulations include the requirement to admit all students who apply, administer state standardized tests, administer nationally norm-referenced standardized tests, and accept the voucher amount of $6,000 as full payment for educating each voucher student.

We chose these regulations because they are the more common regulations found in the 63 voucher and voucher-like programs such as education savings accounts (ESAs) and tax credit scholarships (EdChoice 2023). Testing mandates –both state and national – are the most common of the four regulations we consider. Of the 10 ESAs, 3 (30%) required state criterion referenced or national normed testing, one (10%) required a state criterion referenced test, and a fifth state had a national normed test mandate; half had some testing mandate. Among the 27 voucher programs, 11 (41%) had state criterion-

referenced test mandates, 7 (26%) national normed test mandates, and 2 (7%) had other testing mandates. Of the 7 voucher programs not requiring testing, five of them only serve students with special needs. Of the 26 tax credit scholarships, 5 (19%) require either state or national tests; 5 (19%) require a national test; 2 (7%) require a state test.

Among voucher and voucher-like programs, whether parents are prevented from supplementing the voucher amount had been the next most common regulation of the four we consider. Note that as recently as 2021, 12 of 58 (21%) voucher and voucher-like programs prohibited parents supplementing scholarships with another 16 (28%) placing conditions on which families can supplement. For the most recent year, 2023, however, only 10 programs of 63 (16%) place conditions on whether parents can supplement scholarships, frequently income-based conditions (EdChoice 2023). For 53 programs, parents are permitted to supplement scholarships.

Requiring participating schools to admit all students who apply is less common. Seven programs require a lottery if a school is oversubscribed, including programs in Indiana, Louisiana (2), Cleveland OH, and Wisconsin (3) (EdChoice 2023). Most programs allow participating schools autonomy in their enrollment; yet the requirement that private schools take all comers remains prominent in debates surrounding the desirability and regulation of school choice programs (e.g., American Federation of Teachers, n.d.; Parents' Campaign Research & Education Fund 2017)

Although our sample size is modest and the response rate is low, we find evidence to suggest that some regulations dissuade private school leaders from participating in hypothetical voucher programs in the U.S. – and that certain regulations are more likely to deter private

schools with higher reported tuitions, higher enrollment trends, more specialization, and more climate problems.

Literature Review

Three descriptive surveys have indicated that private school leaders are concerned about participating in voucher programs because of possible regulatory costs. Austin (2015) found that private schools that chose to participate in the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program were most concerned about how regulations would affect their academic and religious identities; non-participating private schools were most concerned about the program's procedural requirements. Egalite et al. (2018) reported that the main concern for private schools participating in the North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship Program was regulations, as 82% of the participating schools listed future regulations as a concern. Government regulations also were the top reason private school leaders listed for declining to participate in the North Carolina program, as 57% of the non-participating schools listed future regulations as a concern. Kisida, Wolf, and Rhinesmith (2015) found that 64% of leaders of non-participating private schools in Louisiana, 62% in Indiana, and 26% in Florida listed "future regulation that might come with participation" as a major reason for non-participation in voucher programs.

Three studies have found that private schools are generally less likely to participate in more heavily regulated voucher programs in the U.S., controlling for observable differences in schools. Using school-level data from the 2009-10 round of the Private School Universe Survey, Stuit and Doan (2013) reported that an increase in regulatory burden score from 10 to 75 was associated with a 9 percentage point decrease in the likelihood of private school participation in voucher programs

after controlling for differences in school size, urbanicity, religiosity, and enrollment trends. Using data from the 2015-16 round of the Private School Universe Survey, DeAngelis (2020) found that random admissions mandates and state testing requirements were negatively associated with private school participation in voucher programs. Sude, DeAngelis, and Wolf (2018) reported that only a third of the private schools in Louisiana participated in the state's heavily regulated voucher program, whereas over twice that proportion of private schools participated in less regulated programs in the District of Columbia and Indiana.

Descriptive studies have also found that higher-quality private schools – as measured by enrollment trends, tuition levels, and test scores – generally have been less likely to participate in voucher programs in the U.S. (DeAngelis & Hoarty, 2018; Sude, DeAngelis, & Wolf, 2018) and other countries (Bettinger et al., 2019; Sánchez, 2018). Additionally, two random assignment evaluations of the Louisiana Scholarship Program found that private schools with higher tuition levels had higher test-score value-added – and that those types of private schools were less likely to participate in the program (Abdulkadiroglu, Pathak, & Walters, 2018; Lee, Mills, & Wolf, 2020). DeAngelis (2020) reported that more specialized private schools are less likely to participate in voucher programs than are regular private schools. Other evaluations suggest that private schools switching into voucher program environments are less likely to identify as specialized (DeAngelis & Burke, 2017; 2019) – and less likely to report focusing on supporting homeschooling services (DeAngelis & Dills, 2019) – suggesting regulations could lead to homogenization in voucher-participating private schools (Burke, 2016).

Two survey experiments have found that certain regulations decrease the likelihood that private school leaders report a willingness to participate in hypothetical voucher programs in Florida, California, and New York (DeAngelis, Burke, & Wolf, 2019; 2020). DeAngelis, Burke, and Wolf (2019) found that state standardized testing requirements and random admissions mandates reduced the likelihood that private school leaders reported that they were certain to participate in a hypothetical voucher program in Florida by 46 and 70 percent, respectively. Both of those regulations were more likely to deter private schools with higher tuition levels and stronger enrollment trends, those likely of higher quality. DeAngelis, Burke, and Wolf (2020) similarly found that state standardized testing requirements and random admissions mandates reduced the likelihood that private school leaders reported that they were certain to participate in hypothetical voucher programs in California and New York by 29 and 60 percent, respectively.

Although two survey experiments exist on the topic of regulations and private school leaders' willingness to participate in hypothetical voucher programs in the U.S., the studies are geographically limited to just a few states. We add to the literature in two main ways. First, this is the first random assignment analysis of the effects of various regulations on the expressed willingness of private school leaders to participate in hypothetical voucher programs that draws on national data. Specifically, our survey experiment received responses from leaders representing private schools in 30 states. Second, this study is the first to examine heterogeneous effects of various regulations on program participation decisions based on measures of school climate.

Data and Research Design

We conducted a survey experiment by randomly assigning a different note on the final question of an otherwise identical survey to five groups of private school leaders across the United States. The final question, capturing whether the respondent would likely participate in a hypothetical private school voucher program in the following year, asked each private school leader "If your state launched a new school choice program next academic year, with a value of $6,000 per student, per year, how likely is it that your school would participate in the program?" The private school leaders were able to provide a response on a five-point Likert scale from "certain not to participate" to "certain to participate." Most state voucher programs provide the state per-pupil revenue; some provide a set figure such as Ohio's $6,000 for high school and $4,650 for elementary (ECS 2021). We chose $6,000 as a mid-range value for a voucher; average state revenue per pupil was somewhat higher, at $7,000 (NCES 2021).

The control group, representing no changes in regulations, was randomly assigned a note on this final question stating that "This program would not require any changes in school operations or additional government regulations." The first treatment group, representing the open-enrollment mandate, was randomly assigned a note on the final question stating that "The only requirement would be that your school would have to accept all students who applied (and you would be required to use a random lottery for admissions in the case of oversubscription)." The second treatment group, representing the state testing mandate, was randomly assigned a note on the final question stating that "The only requirement would be that every student would have to take the state standardized tests each year." The

third treatment group, representing the nationally norm-referenced testing mandate, was randomly assigned a note on the final question stating that "The only requirement would be that every student would have to take nationally norm-referenced standardized tests each year." The fourth and final treatment group, representing the requirement that private schools accept the voucher amount as full payment, was randomly assigned a note on the final question stating that "The only requirement would be that your school would have to accept the voucher amount ($6,000) as full payment for voucher students."[3] The full survey instrument can be found in Appendix B.

We partnered with an independent third party, Hanover Research, to collect a sample of private school leaders from the U.S. Hanover Research randomly assigned each of the private school leaders from the complete list to one of the five experimental groups and sent the surveys to 10,406 private school leaders via email on November 12th, 2019. By February 6, 2020, we have received 156 responses. The Hanover Research team continued to send reminders through the fall of 2020. Hanover Research initially offered a $20 gift card for respondents' time and subsequently increased the incentive to $50 before finally increasing the amount to $100 to increase response rates. The team ultimately received 164 responses which produced an overall

[3] Note that only the wording for treatment group 4 contains the term 'voucher'. Using the 2018 EdNext survey of 4,601 adults, Cheng et al. (2022) compare support for voucher programs when described as a voucher versus when described as "wider choice". They find similar support for means-tested vouchers with the two different language choices. However, for universal vouchers, using the word "voucher" lowers approval by 10 percentage points compared to "wider choice".

response rate of 1.68%. Hanover Research then sent the de-identified set of responses to our research team to conduct the main analyses.[4]

Despite providing monetary incentives and sending several reminder emails, the current study's response rate was substantially lower than the response rates reported in similar private school survey experiments in Florida (11.05%) (DeAngelis, Burke, & Wolf, 2019) and California and New York (8.24%) (DeAngelis, Burke, & Wolf, 2020). However, the response rates for each of the five experimental groups were not statistically different from one another (Table 1), suggesting random assignment likely was effective. The smaller sample reduces the chances of detecting statistically significant effects of regulatory burdens on the likelihood of participating in a program that provides economic security in the form of voucher revenues.

We further evaluate our results' internal validity by testing for equivalence on observable characteristics between our experimental groups. Table 2 reports the means of 28 observable characteristics for each of the five experimental groups. Out of the 112 different comparisons of observable characteristics between treatment groups and the control group, we found 15 differences at the $p < 0.10$ level. Because Type I errors occur about 10% of the time at this threshold, by definition, we would expect about this many significant differences to

[4] As of February 6, 2020, we had received 156 responses. We paused our reminder emails with the onset of COVID-19. In Summer 2020, we implemented nonrespondent conversion subsampling by randomly selecting half of the nonrespondents and only sending that group the additional reminder emails. We received 11 responses from the targeted group and double-weighted them in our analyses. We received 164 total responses with 11 of those observations double-weighted, which brought our analytic sample to a total of 175 private school leaders. Only 135 of the responses included answers to all the questions generating control variables, including 10 that are double-weighted.

be detected by chance with effective random assignment. In other words, we can be relatively confident that results from subsequent analyses provide unbiased estimates of the relationships between expected regulations and private school leaders' reported participation in hypothetical voucher programs, in spite of the relatively low response rate in our study. Further, we estimate specifications including the full set of observable characteristics to allay concerns about covariate imbalance.

The distribution of survey respondents included in our analyses can be found in Figure 1. Private school leaders from 30 states responded to the survey, but over two-fifths of the respondents were from three states: Florida (19.4%), California (14.9%), and Texas (9.7%). 56% of our sample is located in states with private school choice programs.[5],[6]

Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 3. Most responding schools experience physical conflicts among students only on occasion (55%) or never (41%); robbery or theft is similarly uncommon with all schools reporting never (73%) or on occasion (27%). Similarly, student verbal abuse of teachers, student racial tensions, and student bullying occur at most on occasion for almost all participating schools.[7]

[5] In the analysis below we control for whether the school is in a state with a private school choice program. States *without* private school choice programs include Texas (15), California (26), Michigan (12), New York (9), New Jersey (2), Massachusetts (2), Alaska (1), New Mexico (2), Colorado (1), and Oregon (1).

[6] In results available upon request, we separately estimate Table 4 below using only respondents in non-voucher states. In the fully specified model, we continue to observe reduced reported participation under open-enrollment and also observe statistically smaller reported participation under co-pay participation. Thank you to a referee for highlighting current state policy as a particular concern.

[7] Ideally, we would have per pupil incidence rates for these behaviors. Although we have data on enrollment, we do not have data on counts of behavior.

Schools tend to be majority white with 45% reporting the percent of students who are racial or ethnic minorities as 0 to 25%, 30% of schools as 26-50%, 11% as 51-75%, and 14% as 76-100%. Most participating schools report a Great School Review score of 4 (54%) or 5 (40%). The average school has experienced an enrollment decline of -2.27% between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.[8] Tuition averages a little over $9,000. About half of the participating schools offer a non-specialized curriculum with 11% Montessori, 8% early childhood, 8% special education, and 20% offering an educational program that doesn't fit in these categories. The typical private school leader is female (67%), white (77%), and likely the principal (44%) (although other administrators (24%) and directors (20%) are common).

Although we do not possess data on any specific characteristics for our non-responding schools, it is worthwhile to consider how the respondents compare to the universe of private schools in the United States. We use data from the 2019-2020 Private School Universe Survey for comparison. Table 9 reports that 66% of private school students are white, non-Hispanic; in other words, 34% are racial or ethnic minorities. In this regard, our sample appears similar although direct comparison is challenging given the categorical nature of the data we collected. Table 3 reports that 8.4% of private schools are Montessori, 3% with special program emphasis, 9.9 early childhood, and 6.6 special education. Our respondents are somewhat more likely to be Montessori schools (11%) and special education (8%) and less likely to be early childhood (8%).

[8] Note that the vast majority of the sample responded by early February 2020, prior to shutdowns due to the pandemic.

About 21% of the private school leaders who responded to the survey indicated that they would be "certain to participate" in the hypothetical voucher program (Table 3). For comparison, in a study of Florida private school leaders, 25% reported being certain to participate (DeAngelis, Burke, and Wolf, 2019). The average private school in the sample reported a tuition level of about $9,180 and an enrollment reduction of 2.27% related to the previous school year.

Table 1.

Response Rates by Experimental Group

Distribution	Control	Open-Enrollment	State Testing	National Testing	Copay Prohibition
Contacted	2078	2079	2079	2080	2090
Responded	30	34	33	41	37
Response Rate (%)	1.44	1.64	1.59	1.97	1.77

Notes: Statistical significance was calculated using a chi-squared test for each treatment column. "Contacted" excludes observations with duplicate emails and observations with emails that bounced. "Response Rate" equals "Responded" divided by "Contacted." The control group received no regulation. The regulations for the treated groups are as follows.
Open-enrollment group: "accept all students who applied" or use random lottery if oversubscribed.
State testing group: "every student would have to take the state standardized tests each year."
National testing group: "every student would have to take the nationally norm-referenced standardized tests each year."
Copay prohibition group: "School would have to accept the voucher amount ($6,000) as full payment for voucher students."

Table 2.

Equivalence on Observables

Observable	Control	Open-Enrollment	State Testing	National Testing	Copay Prohibited
Regular School	0.48	0.50	0.55	0.48	0.54
Alternative School	0.22	0.21	0.21	0.23	0.14
Montessori School	0.07	0.09	0.03	0.13	0.19
Early Childhood School	0.11	0.06	0.12	0.10	0.03
Special Education School	0.07	0.12	0.06	0.08	0.08
Tuition ($1,000s)	8.67	10.38	10.21	7.32	9.51
Enrollment Change (%)	2.07	-4.38	0.17	-4.31	-3.79
Climate Problems	-0.02	0.09	-0.20	0.13	-0.03
Fights	1.70	1.59	1.58	1.71	1.69
Bullying	1.70	1.72	1.79	1.71	1.89
Racial Tensions	1.22	1.22	1.36	1.26	1.22
Verbal Abuse	1.44	1.06***	1.33	1.26	1.42
Robbery or Theft	1.15	1.28	1.36*	1.24	1.28
Minority Students	1.88	1.97	2.16	1.86	1.82
School Choice State	0.67	0.56	0.52	0.56	0.51
Florida	0.30	0.21	0.21	0.17	0.11**
California	0.10	0.15	0.24	0.07	0.19
Texas	0.07	0.18	0.03	0.15	0.05
White	0.82	0.74	0.76	0.78	0.78
Black or African American	0.11	0.03	0.09	0.10	0.03
Hispanic or Latino	0.07	0.12	0.09	0.03	0.05
Prefer Not to Share Race	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.08	0.14**
Principal	0.43	0.26	0.45	0.54	0.49
Administrator	0.14	0.26	0.24	0.15	0.38**
Director	0.32	0.32	0.09**	0.22	0.08**
Other Leader	0.11	0.15	0.21	0.07	0.05
Female	0.86	0.65*	0.52***	0.68*	0.68*
Male	0.14	0.35*	0.48***	0.33*	0.32*
N	30	34	33	41	37

Notes: * p<0.10, **p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Statistical significance was calculated using a t-test for each treatment column.

Figure 1

States Represented in the Analysis

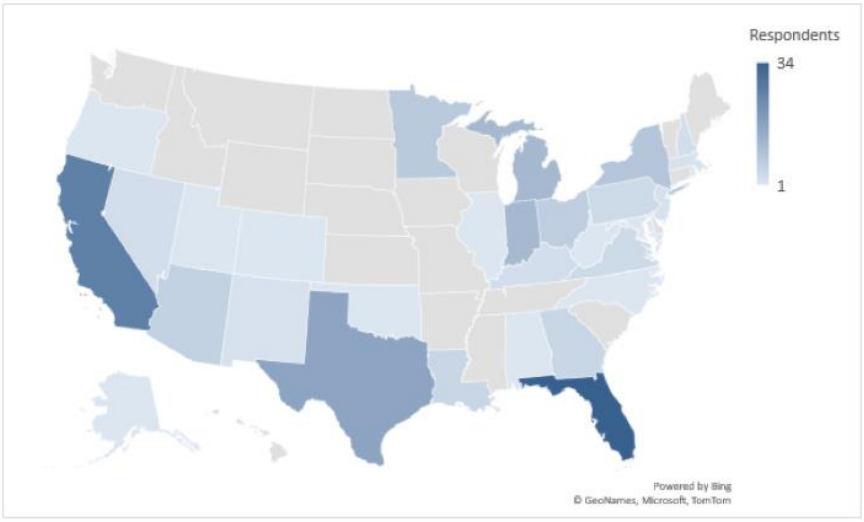

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	N
Certain to Participate	0.21	0.41	0	1	163
Control Group	0.17	0.38	0	1	175
Open Enrollment	0.19	0.40	0	1	175
State Testing	0.19	0.39	0	1	175
National Testing	0.23	0.42	0	1	175
Copay Prohibition	0.21	0.42	0	1	175

Table 3 (continued)

School Characteristics					
Climate Problems Index	0.00	1	-1.19	4.102	166
Physical Conflicts	1.66	0.66	1	5	166
Robbery or Theft	1.27	0.44	1	2	165
Verbal Abuse of Teachers	1.30	0.61	1	4	166
Racial Tensions	1.26	0.45	1	3	166
Bullying	1.77	0.58	1	5	166
Minority Student Population	1.94	1.06	1	4	160
Great School Review Score	4.31	0.66	2	5	48
Enrollment Change (%)	-2.27	20.69	-100	86.67	165
Tuition ($1,000s)	9.18	9.99	0	64.50	160
Regular	0.51	0.50	0	1	171
Alternative	0.20	0.40	0	1	171
Montessori	0.11	0.31	0	1	171
Early Childhood	0.08	0.27	0	1	171
Special Education	0.08	0.27	0	1	171
School Choice State	0.56	0.50	0	1	175
Respondent Characteristics					
Female	0.67	0.47	0	1	172
Male	0.33	0.47	0	1	172
White	0.77	0.42	0	1	172
Black	0.07	0.26	0	1	172
Hispanic	0.07	0.26	0	1	172
Principal	0.44	0.50	0	1	173
Administrator	0.24	0.43	0	1	173
Director	0.20	0.40	0	1	173
Other Leader	0.12	0.32	0	1	173

Method

We employ an ordered probit regression approach of the form:

$$Prob\ (Participation_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Open\_Enroll_i + \beta_2 State\_Test_i + \beta_3 National\_Test_i + \beta_4 No\_Copay_i + \beta_5 X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where the categorical dependent variable of interest, *Participation*, captures private school leader *i*'s expectation of participation in a hypothetical private school choice program in 2020. The dependent variable is the private school leader's response on the final survey question, a Likert Scale ordered from one to five, with one indicating that the leader is "certain not to participate" and five indicating that the leader is "certain to participate." We use ordered probit regression (and ordered logit regression as a robustness check) because the dependent variable of interest is ordered and categorical. When interpreting marginal effects, we focus on the relative likelihood of private school leaders to choose the fifth outcome category ("certain to participate").

Because effective random assignment eliminates the need for controls, the base model only includes the four treatment indicators as independent variables. The first binary independent variable of interest, *Open_Enroll*, takes on the value of one if the private school, *i*, was randomly assigned a random-admissions mandate, and zero otherwise. The second binary independent variable of interest, *State_Test*, takes on the value of one if the private school was randomly assigned a state standardized testing mandate, and zero otherwise. The third binary independent variable of interest, *National_Test*, takes on the value of one if the private school was randomly assigned a nationally norm-referenced standardized testing mandate, and zero

otherwise. The fourth binary independent variable of interest, *No_Copay*, takes on the value of one if the private school was randomly assigned a mandate stating that the school had to take the voucher funding as full-payment, and zero otherwise. We expect the coefficients on all four of these independent variables to be negative, indicating that these regulations reduce the likelihood of participation in private school choice programs.

Because we observe some differences in observables across randomly assigned treatments, we also include models with vector X of observable control variables as robustness checks. These models control for the gender, race, and leadership positions of all respondents, school type, highest tuition paid, enrollment change from the previous year, the proportion of the student population identified as racial or ethnic minorities, whether the school is located in a state with a private school choice program, and reports of school climate problems (physical conflicts, bullying, racial tensions, robbery or theft, and verbal abuse of teachers). We also include overall results based on ordered logistic regression as a robustness check in Appendix A.

Results

The coefficients from the more parsimonious and the most complete specification are negative for each treatment, suggesting regulations reduce the likelihood of participation in a hypothetical voucher program (Table 4). Statistically significant results are detected for two of the four regulations. Similar to the results from the previous survey experiments on the topic (DeAngelis, Burke, & Wolf, 2019; 2020), the fully specified model indicates that the random admissions mandate reduces the likelihood that private school leaders report being certain

to participate in a hypothetical voucher program by about 14 percentage points, a 67% reduction relative to the sample mean. Unlike the two previous studies, the fully specified model suggests that mandating private schools to accept the voucher amount ($6,000) as full payment reduces the likelihood that private school leaders report being certain to participate in a hypothetical program by 16 percentage points, a 77% reduction relative to the sample mean. This difference in findings across studies could be explained by rising private school tuitions or demographic changes increasing school leaders concern about the school's financial situation.[9]

The overall results are consistent across response categories (Appendix Table A1) and are robust to ordered logistic regression (Appendix Table A2). We also consider combining categories, creating an indicator for 'likely to participate' that combines those saying they are either "certain to participate" or have a "very good chance to participate". In results available upon request, we continue to observe, in the fully specified probit model, that copay prohibition reduces likely participation. We also consider the reverse, generating an indicator for "unlikely to participate" by combining those who say they are "Certain not to participate" or "Very good chance not to

[9] As pointed out by a referee, we may be concerned that larger schools are more likely to have more behavior incidents. Our measure of frequency of bullying, for example, is never, once a month, and the like. We address this concern in two ways. We include the additional control variable of current year enrollment. In these results, the open enrollment coefficient becomes smaller and not statistically significant; the coefficient on copay prohibition remains statistically significantly negative. In addition, instead of including the frequency of behavior incidents, we include indicators for whether each behavior type never occurs. Because zeros are zeros in both levels and rates, these are comparable across school sizes. These results are similar to those report in column 2 of Table 4.

participate". In the fully specified probit model, we continue to observe that the copay prohibition increases the prohibition that school leaders report being unlikely to participate. We also observe that national test increases the likelihood that school leaders are unlikely to participate.

Table 4. *Effects of Regulations on Reported Participation (Ordered Probit)*

	(1) Participation	(2) Participation
Open-Enrollment	-0.144*	-0.139*
	(0.086)	(0.094)
State Testing	-0.073	-0.080
	(0.379)	(0.316)
National Testing	-0.068	-0.115
	(0.378)	(0.167)
Copay Prohibition	-0.116	-0.160*
	(0.151)	(0.059)
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0073	0.0929
Controls?	No	Yes
N	152	135

Notes: P-values in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Average marginal effects are reported for the last outcome category of "certain to participate." The last column includes controls for the gender, race, and position of respondents, school type, tuition, enrollment change, whether they are in a voucher state, percent enrolled who are minority students, and frequency of fights, bullying, verbal abuse of teachers, racial tensions, and robbery.

Heterogeneous Effects

It is possible that certain regulations are more likely to deter certain types of private schools from participating in voucher programs. In

theory, regulations might be more likely to deter more specialized schools if the regulations make it more costly for schools to remain specialized (DeAngelis & Burke, 2017). The survey asks school leaders whether their school is a regular school, Montessori school, special program emphasis school, special education school, Career/Technical/Vocational school, early childhood program or day care center, or alternative/other school.[10] We define specialized schools as those not reported as being "regular".

Once we include control variables, results in column 2 of Table 5 suggest no statistically significant differences in responses from leaders of specialized and non-specialized schools. Point estimates on the regulation variables tend to be more negative and statistically significant for specialized schools. The fully specified model indicates that the random admissions mandate reduces the likelihood that leaders of specialized private schools report being certain to participate in a hypothetical voucher program by 23 percentage points. The fully specified model also indicates that the mandate for private schools to require the voucher as full payment reduces the likelihood that leaders of specialized private schools report being certain to participate in a hypothetical voucher program by 24 percentage points. These two results are statistically significant with and without the control variables.

In theory, regulations might be more likely to deter financially successful private schools, on average, if private schools that are financially struggling are more willing to accept the regulations regardless of the regulatory structure. The financial success of these

[10] The full text of the question appears in Appendix B.

schools likely reflects a higher quality service. Regulations could also theoretically disproportionately deter lower-quality private schools from participating, on average, if struggling schools are concerned about the public transparency and results-based accountability elements of many regulatory regimes.

We have access to two proxies for school quality: tuition and enrollment change from the previous school year. The first metric represents the amount families are willing and able to pay for the services provided by the private school. The second metric represents the change in demand for the services provided by the private school relative to the previous school year. Both metrics are imperfect measures of school quality, but they likely serve as valid proxy variables. Two experimental evaluations have found that private school tuition and enrollment changes are positively correlated with the effect of a private school voucher program on students' math and reading achievement (Abdulkadiroglu, Pathak, & Walters, 2018; Lee, Mills, & Wolf, 2020).

The coefficients of the interaction terms between tuition and each of the four regulations are negative in both specifications, suggesting that leaders from higher-tuition private schools are more likely to be deterred from participating in a hypothetical voucher program (Table 6). The relationships are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level in the fully specified model for the random admissions mandate and the requirement that private schools administer the state standardized test each year. The fully specified model indicates that a $1,000 increase in tuition is associated with a 1.3 and 1.5 percentage point larger reduction in the likelihood that private school leaders report being certain to participate in a hypothetical voucher program for the state

testing requirement and the random admissions mandate, respectively.[11] Leaders of private schools with higher tuitions may be deterred by the requirement that private schools accept the $6,000 voucher amount as payment-in-full, as expected, but the relationship becomes statistically insignificant in the fully specified model.[12]

The coefficients of the interaction terms between enrollment change and each of the four regulations are negative with and without control variables, suggesting that leaders from growing private schools are more likely to be deterred from participating in a hypothetical voucher program (Table 7). However, only one of the four regulations reaches marginal significance. Specifically, for the mandate that private schools administer a nationally norm-referenced standardized test each year, the fully specified model finds that a one percentage point increase in enrollment change from the previous year is associated with a 1.1 percentage point larger reduction in the likelihood that private school leaders report being certain to participate in a hypothetical voucher program. This result appears to be driven by smaller schools who, by the nature of their size, may experience larger percentage changes in their enrollment from year-to-year. When we focus on above median enrollment schools, we again observe that leaders are statistically significantly less likely to report being certain to participate under a copay prohibition.[13]

[11] In results available upon request, we allow the effect of each regulation to differ by whether the school charges a tuition more than $6,000 (the amount of the voucher). The results are qualitatively similar to those in Table 6.

[12] We also explore whether reported participation differs in states with higher per pupil current expenditures in public schools. We find no statistically significant differences for any of the policies by public school per pupil expenditures.

[13] Results available upon request.

We additionally provide exploratory analyses of heterogeneous effects based on school climate and racial/ethnic demographics. We create an index capturing school climate problems using the average of the reported incidents of five climate problems: fighting, bullying, verbal abuse, racial tensions, and robbery. The survey asked private school leaders to report how often each of these five climate problems occurred on a five-point Likert Scale from "never" to "daily" (Never, On occasion, At least once a month, At least once a week, Daily). Schools in the sample report few climate problems on average, implying responses of "never" and "on occasion" for most questions. We then standardize the index to be mean zero and standard deviation of one. The coefficients of the interaction terms between the climate problems index and each of the four regulations are negative in both specifications, suggesting that leaders from private schools with more climate problems are more likely to be deterred from participating in a hypothetical regulated voucher program (Table 8). These results are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level for each of the four regulations in the fully specified model. We do not find any evidence of heterogeneous effects of regulations based on the racial/ethnic composition of students in the school (Table 9).

Table 5. *Effects of Regulations on Reported Participation (Specialized Schools)*

	(1)	(2)
Open-Enrollment (Specialized)	-0.288***	-0.230**
	(0.006)	(0.014)
Open-Enrollment (Regular)	0.002	-0.012
	(0.989)	(0.939)
Difference	-0.290*	-0.218
	(0.085)	(0.228)
State Testing (Specialized)	-0.034	-0.088
	(0.741)	(0.352)
State Testing (Regular)	-0.101	-0.052
	(0.438)	(0.711)
Difference	0.067	-0.037
	(0.685)	(0.831)
National Testing (Specialized)	-0.103	-0.099
	(0.246)	(0.283)
National Testing (Regular)	-0.028	-0.118
	(0.831)	(0.401)
Difference	-0.076	0.019
	(0.632)	(0.909)
Copay Prohibition (Specialized)	-0.192*	-0.241**
	(0.075)	(0.040)
Copay Prohibition (Regular)	-0.043	-0.078
	(0.723)	(0.556)
Difference	-0.148	-0.163
	(0.360)	(0.363)
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0264	0.1013
N	152	135

Notes: P-values in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Average marginal effects are reported for the last outcome category of "certain to participate" after ordered probit regression. Column (2) includes all controls. See Table 1 notes for treatment conditions. "Specialized" refers to schools who report being in a category other than "normal school". The last column includes controls for the gender, race, and position

of respondents, tuition, enrollment change, school type, whether they are in a voucher state, percent enrolled who are minority students, and frequency of fights, bullying, verbal abuse of teachers, racial tensions, and robbery.

Table 6

Effects of Regulations on Reported Participation (by Tuition)

	(1)	(2)
Tuition interacted with		
Open-Enrollment	-0.010	-0.015**
	(0.171)	(0.034)
State Testing	-0.015**	-0.013**
	(0.029)	(0.044)
National Testing	-0.008	-0.007
	(0.278)	(0.356)
Copay Prohibition	-0.013*	-0.008
	(0.061)	(0.207)
Tuition ($1,000's)	0.007	0.005
	(0.235)	(0.328)
Controls?	No	Yes
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0229	0.1017
N	146	135

Notes: P-values in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Average marginal effects are reported for the last outcome category of "certain to participate" after ordered probit regression. See Table 1 notes for treatment conditions. The last column includes controls for the gender, race, and position of respondents, enrollment change, school type, whether they are in a voucher state, percent enrolled who are minority students, and frequency of fights, bullying, verbal abuse of teachers, racial tensions, and robbery.

Table 7

Effects of Regulations on Reported Participation (by Enrollment Change)

	(1)	(2)
Enrollment change interacted with		
Open-Enrollment	-0.004	-0.007
	(0.448)	(0.268)
State Testing	-0.002	-0.007
	(0.731)	(0.258)
National Testing	-0.008*	-0.011*
	(0.087)	(0.087)
Copay Prohibition	-0.007	-0.003
	(0.188)	(0.623)
Enrollment Change	0.006	0.010
	(0.129)	(0.123)
Controls?	No	Yes
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0193	0.1070
N	152	135

Notes: P-values in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Average marginal effects are reported for the last outcome category of "certain to participate" after ordered probit regression. See Table 1 notes for treatment conditions. Enrollment change is the difference between the self-reported current year and last year enrollment. The last column includes controls for the gender, race, and position of respondents, tuition, school type, whether they are in a voucher state, percent enrolled who are minority students, and frequency of fights, bullying, verbal abuse of teachers, racial tensions, and robbery.

Table 8

Effects of Regulations on Reported Participation (by Climate Problems Index)

	(1)	(2)
Climate Problems Index interacted with		
Open-Enrollment	-0.056	-0.221**
	(0.588)	(0.019)
State Testing	-0.143	-0.320***
	(0.165)	(0.001)
National Testing	-0.155*	-0.328***
	(0.082)	(0.000)
Copay Prohibition	-0.215**	-0.447***
	(0.014)	(0.000)
Climate Problems Index	0.136*	0.241*
	(0.093)	(0.052)
Controls?	No	Yes
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0289	0.1580
N	152	135

Notes: P-values in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Average marginal effects are reported for the last outcome category of "certain to participate" after ordered probit regression. See Table 1 notes for treatment conditions. Climate Problems is an index of self-reported frequency of physical conflicts among students, robbery or theft, student verbal abuse of teachers, student racial tensions, and student bullying. The last column includes controls for the gender, race, and position of respondents, tuition, enrollment change, school type, whether they are in a voucher state, percent enrolled who are minority students, and frequency of fights, bullying, verbal abuse of teachers, racial tensions, and robbery.

Table 9

Effects of Regulations on Reported Participation (by Minority Student Population)

	(1)	(2)
Percent Minority Students interacted with		
Open-Enrollment	0.097	0.008
	(0.244)	(0.925)
State Testing	0.001	0.049
	(0.988)	(0.550)
National Testing	0.079	0.019
	(0.278)	(0.785)
Copay Prohibition	0.088	0.090
	(0.308)	(0.214)
Percent Minority Students	-0.069	-0.054
	(0.254)	(0.368)
Controls?	No	Yes
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0130	0.0976
N	145	135

Notes: P-values in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Average marginal effects are reported for the last outcome category of "certain to participate" after ordered probit regression. The last column includes controls for the gender, race, and position of respondents, tuition, enrollment change, school type, whether they are in a voucher state, and frequency

Discussion

The expansion of school choice programs across the U.S. has attracted debate around which regulations, if any, states should attach to private school participation. Our research indicates that additional regulations often reduce private school leaders' willingness to participate in a

hypothetical voucher program; these effects are stronger among schools with growing enrollments and higher tuition, those likely of higher quality. Regulations are likely to reduce private school participation in a way that lowers the average quality of participating schools that are available to participating students.

We survey private school leaders nationwide, asking how certain they would be to participate in a hypothetical voucher program, conditional on a randomly assigned government regulation or no regulations being part of the program. We find that random admissions mandates and copay prohibitions reduce private school leaders' expressed willingness to participate in a private school choice program. Specialized private schools and higher-quality private schools – those with higher tuition or positive enrollment growth – more negatively respond to regulations, as theory predicts. Regulations also have larger effects on private schools reporting greater climate problems.

Our results confirm that the findings in DeAngelis, Burke, and Wolf (2019; 2020) hold for a nationwide sample. In contrast to these studies, we find the novel result that school leaders are also sensitive to copay prohibitions. An exploratory analysis of heterogeneous effects based on school climate measures suggests that leaders from private schools with more climate problems are more likely to be deterred from participating in a hypothetical voucher program than are leaders of schools with more benign climates. This finding might be because these private schools would like to focus on getting their climates in order before dealing with the costs and changes associated with adapting to new regulations.

Future research might expand on this research with a larger sample size and more direct measures of school quality. As states continue to

expand school choice options, exploring the composition of participating private schools will provide additional insight as to the role of regulations in the supply of private school choice. The charter school sector may also learn from this research. Charter schools operate under open-enrollment rules and copay prohibitions. Our results suggest that more charter schools may open if allowed more control over their admissions process. Private school leaders may benefit from planning ahead to how they might accommodate voucher-receiving students under various regulatory regimes.

As more states provide financial support to parents, allowing them to select a private school for their child, more research should examine the factors that affect the quality and diversity of those private schooling options. Our experimental research suggests that policy makers be cautious in the regulations that they incorporate into school choice legislation, as those government requirements will likely reduce the quantity, diversity, and quality of the schools participating in voucher programs. It would be a pyrrhic victory for parents to receive the opportunity to choose private schooling for their child, but then have precious few high-quality and distinctive schooling options available to them.

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About the authors:

Corey DeAngelis is the national director of research at the American Federation for Children, the executive director at Educational Freedom Institute, an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, and a senior fellow at Reason Foundation.

E-mail: cdeangelis@federationforchildren.org

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization, formal analysis, writing- original draft.

Lindsey Burke is the director of the Center for Education Policy at The Heritage Foundation, a fellow at EdChoice, on the national advisory board of Learn4Life, on the boards of the Educational Freedom Institute and the Independent Women's Forum's Education Freedom Center, and a Trustee of Choice Media.

E-mail: lindsey.burke@heritage.org

Authorship credit details: Resources, writing- review & editing.

Patrick J. Wolf is a Distinguished Professor of Education Policy and 21st Century Endowed Chair in School Choice in the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas College of Education and Health Professions.

E-mail: pwolf@uark.edu

Authorship credit details: Writing- review & editing.

Angela K. Dills is the Gimelstob-Landry Distinguished Professor of Regional Economic Development at Western Carolina University.

E-mail: akdills@email.wcu.edu

Authorship credit details: Funding acquisition, writing- review & editing.

Appendix A

Table A1

Effects of Regulations on Reported Participation by Response Category

	Certain Not to Participate	Very Little Chance	Some Chance	Very Good Chance	Certain to Participate
Open-Enrollment	0.124*	0.051	0.023	-0.058*	-0.139*
	(0.092)	(0.111)	(0.164)	(0.100)	(0.094)
State Testing	0.071	0.029	0.013	-0.033	-0.080
	(0.321)	(0.328)	(0.348)	(0.334)	(0.316)
National Testing	0.102	0.042	0.019	-0.048	-0.115
	(0.169)	(0.187)	(0.220)	(0.183)	(0.167)
Copay Prohibition	0.143*	0.058*	0.026	-0.067*	-0.160*
	(0.060)	(0.098)	(0.127)	(0.089)	(0.059)
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0929	0.0929	0.0929	0.0929	0.0929

Notes: P-values in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. There are 135 observations. Average marginal effects are reported for each outcome category. All models employ ordered probit regression with all controls included. Those controls are: controls for the gender, race, and position of respondents, tuition, enrollment change, school type, whether they are in a voucher state, percent enrolled who are minority students, and frequency of fights, bullying, verbal abuse of teachers, racial tensions, and robbery.

Table 2A

Effects of Regulations on Reported Participation (Ordered Logit)

	(1) Participation	(2) Participation
Open-Enrollment	-0.136	-0.136*
	(0.101)	(0.092)
State Testing	-0.065	-0.086
	(0.412)	(0.256)
National Testing	-0.067	-0.115
	(0.371)	(0.154)
Copay Prohibition	-0.120	-0.164*
	(0.125)	(0.071)
Controls?	No	Yes
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0074	0.1020
N	152	135

Notes: P-values in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Average marginal effects are reported for the last outcome category of "certain to participate." In column (2) we include controls for the gender, race, and position of respondents, tuition, enrollment change, school type, whether they are in a voucher state, percent enrolled who are minority students, and frequency of fights, bullying, verbal abuse of teachers, racial tensions, and robbery.

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

Control Group

Q1: What is your position at the school?

Principal

Director

Administrator

Other Leader

Q2: Please describe your race/ethnicity

White or Caucasian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Asian or Asian American

American Indian or Alaska Native

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Another race/ethnicity

Q3: What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other

Q4: Which of the following best describes this school or program?

Regular school

Montessori school

Special program emphasis school (such as science or math school, performing arts schools, talented or gifted school, etc.)

Special education school (primarily serves students with disabilities)

Career/Technical/Vocational school (primarily serves students being trained for occupations)

Early childhood program or day care center (such as kindergarten only, prekindergarten and kindergarten only, day care and transitional kindergarten only, etc.)

Alternative / other school (offers a curriculum designed to provide alternative or nontraditional education; does not specifically fall into the other categories listed)

Q5: What is your school's total enrollment?

Q6: What was your school's total enrollment last year?

Q7: What percentage of your students are racial/ethnic minorities?

0-25%

26-50%

51-75%

76-100%

Prefer not to respond

Q8: What is your school's average rating on *GreatSchools* (rounded to the nearest whole number)?

0

1

2

3

4

5

Not Available

Q9: What is the highest level of tuition charged at your school (In U.S. dollars)?

Q10: To the best of your knowledge, how often do the following types of problems occur at

this school? (*Daily, At least once a week, At least once a month, On occasion, Never*) Physical conflicts among students

Robbery or theft

Student verbal abuse of teachers

Student racial tensions

Student bullying

Q11: If your state launched a new school choice program next academic year, with a value of $6,000 per student, per year, how likely is it that your school would participate in the program?

Note: This program would not require any changes in school operations or additional government regulations

Certain not to participate

Very little chance

Some chance

Very good chance

Certain to participate

Treatment Group One

Exactly the same as Control Group, but the note on Q11 says "The only requirement would be that your school would have to accept all students who applied (and you would be required to use random lottery for admissions in the case of oversubscription)."

Treatment Group Two

Exactly the same as Control Group, but the note on Q11 says "The only requirement would be that every student would have to take the state standardized tests each year."

Treatment Group Three

Exactly the same as Control Group, but the note on Q11 says "The only requirement would be that every student would have to take nationally norm-referenced standardized tests each year."

Treatment Group Four

Exactly the same as Control Group, but the note on Q11 says "The only requirement would be that your school would have to accept the voucher amount ($6,000) as full payment for voucher students."

Control group: https://hanoverresearch.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_1Mrko5zk9

prPKg5?Q_SurveyVersionID=current&Q_CHL=preview&Experiment Group=Control

Treatment 1 (State Standardized Tests):

https://hanoverresearch.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_1Mrko5zk9 prPKg5?Q_SurveyVersionID=current&Q_CHL=preview&Experiment Group=Treatment1

Treatment 2 (Open Enrollment):

https://hanoverresearch.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_1Mrko5zk9 prPKg5?Q_SurveyVersionID=current&Q_CHL=preview&Experiment Group=Treatment2

Treatment 3 (Copay Prohibition):

https://hanoverresearch.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_1Mrko5zk9 prPKg5?Q_SurveyVersionID=current&Q_CHL=preview&Experiment Group=Treatment3

Treatment 4 (National Tests):

https://hanoverresearch.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_1Mrko5zk9 prPKg5?Q_SurveyVersionID=current&Q_CHL=preview&Experiment Group=Treatment4

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Education Policy Transfer and Policy Change: Examining the Case of the National Assessment and Examination Center of Georgia

Sandro Tabatadze*

Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

Salome Dundua

Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

Abstract

Policy change is an integral part of the modern education policymaking process. Policy changes can be done with different tools, one of which lies in policy transfer. The cons and pros of the education policy change and transfer can be seen comprehensively in post-socialist states, as the education system changed fundamentally in line with transferring policies and its aims, content, and instruments. The article deals with the process of education policy transfer and change based on the National Assessment and Examination Center (NAEC) case of Georgia. Based on the orthodox framework proposed, elaborated with the policy change concept, the article tries to determine the links between policy change and policy transfer and to identify facilitating and hindering factors of education policy change in the case of NAEC. Results show that all hindering factors are more or less linked to Soviet Inertia and post-soviet heritage: societal fears and pressure and the supra-centralization way of policymaking slow down the path of education policy transfer. However, if political, financial, and organizational support, both from outside and inside the country, coincides, it is more likely that education policy transfer and change to be successful. The article's findings can benefit the education policy theory in terms of developing and criticising the proposed assumptions, focusing on either post-soviet education transformation or policy administration.

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*Corresponding author
E-mail: sandro.tabatadze@tsu.ge

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Introduction

In public policymaking, policy change has never been an unknown phenomenon. The same can be said about policy transfer. In the era of globalization and the spread of mass communications, transferring policies has become essential for policymaking and policy change. This practice has already been applied in the education sector. National states are still considered prominent actors in the policy change and transfer process. At the same time, the influence of international agencies and organizations, foreign consultants, and regional and local NGOs are growing in all sectors of education (see: Novoa, 2002; Phillips and Ochs, 2004; Tanaka, 2005; Beech, 2006; Forestier and Crossley, 2015, Etc). Generally, when any education policy is questioned inside the country, authorities and decision-makers look for other policies abroad to either justify the crisis or plan new reforms (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006). Despite the growing academic interest, critical attitudes toward education policy transfer have been reflected. One of the best illustrations is Sadler's (1990, cited in Higginson, 1979) metaphor that education reformers look like a child running outside, cutting flowers from different bushes, putting them in a planter at home, and expecting to receive a living plant.

Assessing the cons and pros of education policy transfer can be best done by focusing on the transformation of post-socialist education. Scholars note that the collapse of the socialist bloc and the emergence

of new states on the map was followed by a desire to revise national education systems' goals, content, methods, and structures (Hanson, 1997; Birzea, 1994; Silova, 2006; 2009). Education policy transformation was not carried out similarly in all post-soviet countries. The primary path to education policy change lies mainly in policy transfer. There are two significant reasons for this. Firstly, since the goal of the states lacked an alternative to socialist education, it became necessary to draw lessons from the West (Silova and Steiner-Khamsi, 2008; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). Therefore, the process can be described as transferring liberal and democratic educational values and policies: administrative and financial decentralization, competency-based curriculum, transparent assessment system, market-oriented initiatives, Etc (Elliott and Tudge, 2007; Chankseliani and Silova, 2018; Silova and Steiner-Khamsi, 2008).

Similar observations can be made about Georgia, South Caucasus's post-Soviet country. Its current parameters are US$5.015 - GDP per capita, 0.8 - Human Development Index (HDI), 36 - GINI index, and a population of less than 4 million (World Bank, 2021; Geostat.ge, 2022). After regaining independence in 1991, Georgia faced civil conflicts and still struggles with creeping occupation by Russia (Kuroptev, 2020; Tabatadze, 2022; Vermetten, 2020). However, after the 2003 Rose Revolution, Georgia, having close relationships and active partnerships with NATO, signed an Association Agreement (AA) with the EU in 2016. Also, its government sent a statement to become the EU candidate state but was rejected until fulfilling recommendations provided by the EU (Gigauri, 2022; Freedom House, 2021; Khuroshvili, 2021; Machitidze and Temirov, 2020). The Georgian case of the post-soviet education transformation is noteworthy for some reasons. Firstly, before Rose Revolution, the Georgian education system was

mainly driven by Soviet Inertia (Kobakhidze, 2016), while after the post-revolution, the country's Euro-Atlantic integration was fostered. Moreover, while transforming the national education system, the role of international organizations (including WB, IMF, and OSF) is clear while examining the Georgian case. One of the most important and successful projects is linked to the establishment of a national assessment and examination center (NAEC). As a counter-reaction to the spread of corruption, this organization is seen as a successful tandem of policy change and transfer (Bakker, 2014; Gabedava, 2013; Gorgodze and Chakhaia, 2021).

Therefore, this article examines the policy change and transfer issue based on the example of NAEC. Thus, the research questions can be formulated as follows: 1. How is policy transfer linked to policy change in the case of NAEC 2. What factors facilitate and hinder education policy transfer success based on the case of NAEC?

The article is divided into four parts. Firstly, the theoretical background and research methodology are shown. Secondly, a brief overview of Georgia's post-Soviet education transformations is presented, followed by outlined discussions and results. Finally, the conclusion is made.

Theoretical and Methodological Background

Academic literature on policy transfer is fragmented and less systematic. The primary classification of scientific papers is based on whether the author uses the term "policy transfer" or replaces it with a different concept, like policy diffusion, convergence, innovation, Etc. (Dolowitz and Marsh; 1996; Dussage-Laguna, 2012). The most popular, frequently used, and cited conceptualization of policy transfer is "a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative

arrangements, institutions, Etc. in one time and/or place is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place." (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, p.344). McCann and Ward (2012) see this heuristic approach as Orthodox. We believe that this heuristic, so-called Orthodox approach to studying policy transfer should consist of three parts:

- Identification of facilitating and hindering factors (see: Walker 1969; Collier and Messick 1975; Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, 2000; Stone 2014, 2010, 2016; Evans 2009);
- The process-oriented research questions: why, from where, what, to what extent, to what degree, by whom is transferred (see: Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, 2000, 2012; Evans 2004; Benson and Jordan 2011; 2012; Stone 2004, 2010, 2012);
- The influence of causes and processes on its outcomes should be studied in detail that is linked to the success and failure of its results (see: Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; James and Lodge 2003; McConnel 2010; Marsh and McConnel; 2012; Fawcett and Marsh 2012).

Using the social constructivist perspective, McCann and Ward (2012) criticized the heuristic approach. The authors point out that the heuristic (orthodox model) shares only the positivist or realist ontological principles. Indeed, the concept of policy transfer is getting more popular in non-political science literature. Later, Dolowitz and Marsh (2012) answered most of the critics and pointed out that they are against the social constructivist approach. However, their paper does not formulate the future directions of studying policy transfer. We believe the orthodox frame of policy transfer should be understood as a three-part model: causes, process, and outcomes. Relying on

different authors, we presented the figure that presents our understanding of the orthodox frame of policy transfer (see figure 1).

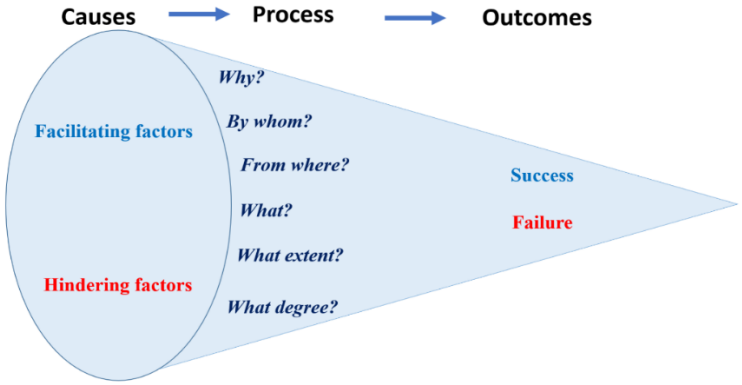


Figure 1.

Orthodox framework for studying policy transfer

Source: own elaboration. Rely on Dolowitz (2003); Dolowitz and Medearis (2009); Benson and Jordan (2012); Fawcett and Marsh (2012); Marsh and Evans (2012); Pojani (2020).

Other scholars believe that policy transfer cannot provide independent theoretical explanations and should be studied with different frames (e.g., Wolman, 1992, James and Lodge, 2003, Evans, 2009a). For instance, with policy development process (Wolman 1992; Evans 2004, 2009a, 2009b); rational choice model (Wolman 1992); incrementalism (Patel 2009); social constructivism (McCann and Ward, 2012); new institutional approach (James and Lodge 2003); policy change (Wolman 1992; Evans and Davis 1991; Evans 2009b); multiple Stream Approach and garbage can model (Wolman 1992; Cairney, 2009, Stone, 2012), advocacy coalition approach (James and Lodge 2003); policy networks, and epistemic communities (Evans and Davis 1991; Evans 2009; Stone 2012).

The explanation developed by Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, 2000) understanding allows us to differentiate policy transfer from policy diffusion or convergence concepts, sometimes accidental processes that occur more suddenly and rapidly. Based on this definition, policy transfer cannot be seen as accidental or unintentional, whether voluntary or not, it aims to provide (at least small-scale) changing current policy. As Capano and Howlett (2009, p.3) note "all policy is policy change". However, we rely on the classic definition of policy change that refers to incrimental shifts in existing structures, or new and innovative policies (Bennet and Howlett, 1992).

Hence, we assume that policy transfer can be seen and studied as a tool and way of policy change. Thus, policy change can be put on the policy agenda for different reasons. One of the ways and tools to make it lies in the policy transfer, which is a result-oriented, not accidental, process that aims to change (at least gradually) some policies. Hence, doing a policy transfer changes the policy.

Besides defining the concept of policy transfer and studying it with the different frameworks (like policy change), one of the crucial and underdeveloped issues of the academic literature deals with determining the success and failure of policy transfer. In terms of discussing the issue, Harold Wolman is a pioneer. The author focuses on two main criteria for a successful policy transfer: adopting the policy into the existing institution design and continuous political support. Wolman also stresses the importance of the following factors: public opinion, political culture, and social-economic structure (Wolman, 1992). In terms of formulating a relatively more academic typology, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) identify three main types of unsuccessful policy transfer: imperfect, uninformed, and incomplete. Policy transfer is uninformed when decision-makers have insufficient

information about the nature of transferring policies and their functioning, and incomplete policy transfer is linked to the social, economic, political, and ideological contextual differences between lending and borrowing jurisdictions (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000). Therefore, imperfection of policy transfer is related to the loss of the policy's fundamental element(s) that makes it successful.

Interestingly, all types are somehow related to the concept and idea of bounded rationality; when a policy transfer fails, it is ultimately explained by the fact that decision-makers make mistakes or do not have complete information about what and how to transfer. However, we believe the decision-makers role is excessive as the importance of structural and institutional factors is neglected. The typology of Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) is strongly criticized by James and Lodge (2003). They believe that, in practice, it is difficult to determine and measure the success or failure of policy transfer.

In response to this critique, the works of Marsh and McConnell (2010) and McConnell (2010), to some extent, attempt to formulate a more sophisticated typology. They rely on Bowens, Hart, and Peter's (2001) classifications of programmatic and political success and add to it the category of process success. Thus, Marsh and McConnell (2010) formulated the types of policy transfer successes and their measurement indicators (see table 1). Although this typology is more operationalized than the previous one, several issues remain unclear. For instance, does this classification refer only to the success or failure of policy transfer or any general policy process? It seems there is no nuanced feature of policy transfer.

Table 1. *Successful policy transfer: types and measurements*

	Type of success	Indicators
1	Programmatic	measurable analysis of the performance of the states, goals, objectives, the efficient use of resources, and results obtained
2	Process	strict adherence to the legislative framework, frequency of discussions, debates, and hearings, number of actors involved, and interest of unofficial actors.
3	Political	results of elections and public opinion polls

Source: Marsh and McConnell, adapted version.

A review of the academic literature has shown that despite the issue's importance, there is still no consensus on how to study the success or failure of policy transfer. Therefore, for a comprehensive study, the success and failure of policy transfer should be linked to the critical questions: who, when, where, in what form, to what degree, why, and how transfers. (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, 2000). In this article, we rely on Marsh and McConnel's (2010) typology but try to make links with the orthodox framework.

Due to the article's aims, we used qualitative research methods: case studies and in-depth interviews. NAEC, with its policies, are descriptive and instrumental types of case study. Also, using a targeted sampling method, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with three representatives of the top management Ministry of Education (MoE) of Georgia, five representatives of the management of NAEC, 5 Georgian experts in the field of education, and two foreign consultants working with NAEC. To avoid judging the book by its cover, we interviewed all stakeholders involved in the NAEC design, administration, and policy evaluation. In-depth interviews were conducted both face-to-face and online from

November 2021-April 2022. Research ethics and principles, confidentiality and privacy, dignity, and intellectual property were protected. No conflicts of interest were declared, and all respondents were aware of being part of the survey by giving verbal informed consent.

The interview guide consists of five main parts: what happened before NAEC: the situation overview(i), how and why policy changed (ii), how NAEC was established and practices of lesson-drawing and transfer (iii), assessing the results of NAEC and its policies (iv); evaluate success and failures of policy transfer (v). The interview coding process was conducted by asking eight main questions:

1. Do respondents remember the period before NAEC? If so, how?

2. Do respondents remember when the idea of NAEC was introduced? If so, how is it explained and refined?

3. Do they have a positive or negative stance on NAEC and why? If positive/negative stances are outlined, why?

4. How the process of establishing NAEC was going on? By whom?

5. How the initial ideas of NAEC and its policies occurred? By whom?

6. Was there any example of lesson drawing? If so, how and by whom?

7. How do respondents assess the results of NAEC and its policies? Why?

8. How do respondents assess the success and failures of NAEC and its Policy transfer? Why?

Respondents' names are coded as R1, R2 … R15 during the research and reporting to ensure their confidentiality.

Education transformation in Georgia: NAEC in focus

As a post-Soviet state, it is not surprising that after the collapse of the Soviet Union and regaining independence, due to social and economic problems and increased emigration, education became one of the most neglected public sectors in the 1990s, teachers and professors received almost no salaries public spending on education has dramatically declined in Georgia (Chankseliani, 2013; Janashia, 2016; Orkodashvili, 2010; Kitiashvili and Chkuaseli, 2013). However, at that time, international donor organizations (WB, IMF, OSF) prioritized to change education system and policy of Georgia. Initially, WB became the key player in transforming and strengthening the general education system in Georgia. The WB's project, approved by the Ministries of Education and Finance of Georgia, was the highest loan since regaining its independence. One of the components of the project dealt with establishing a transparent and standardized assessment system.

Due to social-economic problems and increased emigration caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union, education became one of the most neglected public sectors in Georgia in the 1990s. Teachers and professors received almost no salaries; public spending on education has dramatically declined in Georgia (Chankseliani, 2013; Janashia, 2016; Orkodashvili, 2010; Kitiashvili and Chkuaseli, 2013). However, at that time, international donor organizations (WB, IMF, OSF) prioritized changing Georgia's education system and policy. Initially,

WB became the key player in transforming and strengthening the general education system in Georgia. The WB's project, approved by the Ministries of Education and Finance of Georgia, was the highest loan since regaining its independence. One of the components of the project dealt with establishing a transparent and standardized examination model to reduce the level of corruption that was a massive problem in Georgia (Temple, 2006). In 2002, the National Examination and Assessment Center (NAEC) was established (Bakker, 2014; Chankseliani, Gorgodze, Janashia and Kurabayev, 2020; Gorgodze and Chakhaia, 2021).

After the 2003 Rose Revolution, policies started to shake. Although the legacy of the Rose Revolution is differently assessed (Cheterian, 2008; Dobbins, 2013; Jones, 2012; Papava, 2006; Wheatley, 2017), this period is characterized by large-scale political changes, including in the education sphere. It is described as turning to the path of Westernization and modernization as all public institutions declared to foster Euro-Atlantic integration (Coene, 2016; Dundua, Karaia and Abashidze, 2017; Fairbanks, 2004; Tabatadze, 2019).

In terms of NAEC, the main change was that it became the legal entity of MoE, not an independent institution as the WB's project planned it. Also, the first national-wide project of NAEC was implemented: Unified National Examinations (UNEs) were introduced. It is an ongoing state-centralized model when NAEC (as a state legal entity) plans, conducts, and assesses the results of applicants who want to enroll at higher education institutions. So, the role of universities is totally neglected, and they receive the lists of people who will be their first-year students.

Although NAEC still plays a vital role in the education system of Georgia, academic literature lacks papers relating to this institution or

its policies. The academic literature focuses on UNEs, SGEs, and their societal effects. UNEs are portrayed as a successful anti-corruption policy that strengthens the ideas of equal opportunities and meritocracy (Chakhaia, 2018; Gabedava, 2013; World Bank; 2012). However, others point out that UNEs has also contributed to strengthening the private tutoring system and increased the inequality between entrants from urban and rural backgrounds (e.g., Bregvadze, 2012; Chankseliani, 2013, Gorgodze and Chakhaia, 2021, Kobakhidze, 2018).

Results and Discussion

Reviewed academic literature can be divided into three parts: the orthodox framework of policy transfer, the interrelationship between policy transfer and policy change, and determining the success/failure of policy transfer. The section on the study results is in line with these parts.

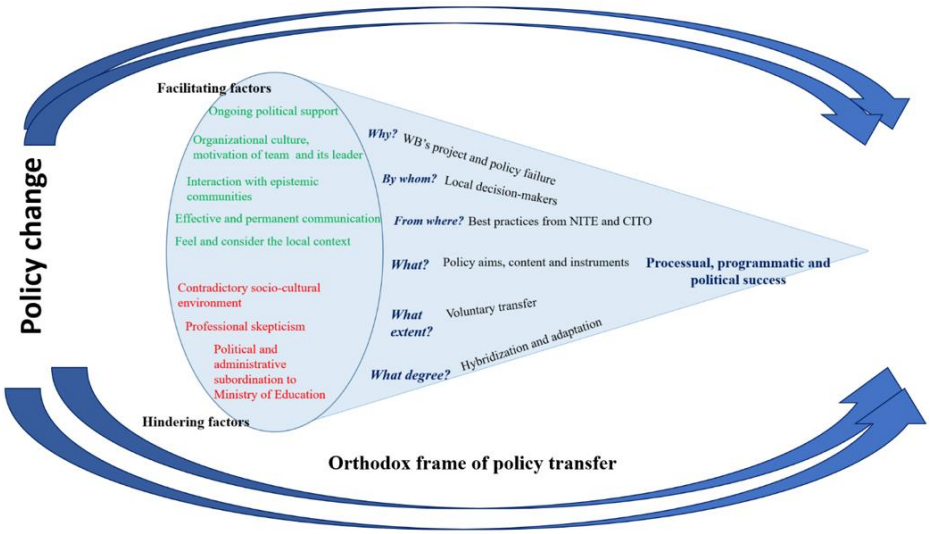
The policy change and transfer of NAEC are rooted in WB's project (the highest loan in education since regaining independence), which started in 1999. WB and MoE of Georgia initially agreed that at examination and assessment, policy change should be started as there were almost no essential data in most sub-fields of general education. Respondent worked as a foreign consultant in the project and recalls that WB instructed them to describe and analyze the current situation and prioritize ways to change the existing assessment and exam policy. Then, the competition was announced to select a thematic group of experts from different study disciplines (math, chemistry, Etc.) to form a temporary contract with them: "Due to the lack of experience, there was almost no alternative, but lesson-drawing and policy transfer" (R4). Project participants were trained via seminars and workshops

that covered general and particular issues, focusing on general theory tests, test implementation at the national level, Etc. Mainly, foreign experts and consultants arrived in Georgia and conducted these on-site training and seminars. At the same time, project members went to several international conferences and study tours. For instance, the first took place in 1998 in CITO, Netherlands.

The first policy draft introduced UNEs, state-centralized entrance examinations, and the submission of universities' lists to the universities by NAEC. UNEs, firstly conducted in 2005, consisted of General Ability Tests. It was a novelty, and respondents note that GAT arose after lesson drawing from international conferences, "Since everything was changing at a large scale, we were afraid to announce such experiments" (R7). From in-depth interviews, we can assume that the Georgian version of GAT is a hybrid that consists of two major parts: verbal and mathematical. "The first is almost identical to the Israeli version, while the second looks similar to the American SAT" (R5). Respondents recall that after participating in the study tour in Sweden, the item of information sufficiency in GAT was added. Therefore, we can conclude that GAT is an example of policy transfer as it is a result-oriented and purposeful action that started with inspiration and ended with some hybridization. Respondents note that due to cultural sensitivity, items in GAT were not translated, and all of them were based on the local social environment. Noteworthy, "cultural similarity" was named among the reasons why Israel was selected for the verbal part of GAT and not, for example, the USA. Indeed, unlike foreign models, the Georgian version of GAT had "unprecedentedly high transparency, which was also the call of the then Minister of Education of Georgia (R2).

In this article, we rely on the definition of policy transfer as bounded rational action(s) when global, national, or local policies are transferred to other jurisdictions on any level of government. At the same time, as mentioned above, policy transfer should be studied in the context of policy change. Indeed, the case of NAEC demonstrates that policy transfer was undergone within the policy change. When the necessity of policy change was put on the policy agenda (When both W.B. and local decision-makers put the problem on the policy cycle), one of the solutions and ways was to make policy transfer. The aims, content, and instruments of establishing an assessment and examination center, and implementing state-centralized examination, GAT, and other policies are transferred voluntarily from different jurisdictions. Indeed, the respondent notes: "we started to look for foreign analogs that would be the fastest, cheapest, and fairest way" (R10). For a better understanding, see figure 2.

Figure 2 *Orthodox Frame of Policy Transfer*



Source: own elaboration

Interestingly, different authors claim that the education policy transfer of NAEC was successful for all stakeholders: lenders and receivers, implementers and beneficiaries (Bakker, 2014; Charekishvili, 2015, Chakhaia and Gorgodze, 2021, Gabedava, 2013). Academic Literature suggests that the most effective and well-known typology to determine the success of policy transfer is developed by McConell and Marsh (2010). NAEC's policies are outlined to be successful in policy change and transfer in all criteria of the given classification. As Table 2 presents, NAEC and its policies were successful regarding programmatic, process, and political types.

Table 2.

Successful policy transfer: the case of NAEC

N	Type of success	Indicators	**Evaluation done by sources:** NAEC (2019); Transparency International Georgia, (2005; 2006); World Bank (2012).
1	Programmatic	measurable analysis of the performance of the states, goals, objectives, the efficient use of resources, and results obtained	• The main goal and objectives were to fight against education corruption and achieve equal and fair conditions for university entrance exams; • The level of corruption declined; • The number of entrants from lower SES was doubled; • The free and equal conditions were established and still ongoing;
2	Process	strict adherence to the legislative framework, frequency of discussions, debates, and hearings, number of actors involved, and interest of unofficial actors.	• NAEC was introduced as a legal entity without any resistance; • UNEs were implemented initially in 2005; • MoE, NAEC, professional communities, schools, and universities were involved; • All legal procedures were followed, and either official or unofficial actors outlined no essential resistance;

3	Political	results of elections and public opinion polls	• Electoral support of the government was increased; • Public polls showed NAEC was the most significant success of education reform;

However, it is still unclear which factors facilitated and hindered education policy transfer success in the case of NAEC. We can identify five possible facilitating factors based on the in-depth interviews and documents studied. These are ongoing and strong political support, organizational culture, high motivation and competence of the team and its leader, interaction with foreign epistemic communities, effective and permanent communication inside and outside the country, and effectively considering the local context.

We can assume that education policy transfer cannot be successful without ongoing and robust political support. As already mentioned, in 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia shifted the policies profoundly toward westernization and modernization. At that time, NAEC was already introduced, but policies had not been implemented yet. A key factor facilitating NAEC's policy transfer success was ongoing political support for pre-and post-revolutionary governments and their MoEs. In the first case, it was more personal: pre-revolutionary Minister of Education Kartozia supported the initiative of the centralized and anti-corrupted system of exams, was interested, and often visited the NAEC's team and stressed the need for policy change at government meetings. However, the pace of progress was still slow as the ruling team aimed at maintaining the status quo, mainly in all policy spheres. After the Rose Revolution, political support continued and was greatly strengthened by a new government. Foreign experts and NAEC managers recall that financial and administrative support was unprecedentedly high, and the whole bureaucracy and policy were fully mobilized to safely conduct the UNEs in 2005 (R9, R11, R5). Post-

revolutionary minister Alexander Lomaia also often visited the team of NAEC to find out the processes gone and to stress the full support from the newly elected president of Georgia (R3, R6). Therefore, continued political support helped NAEC establish and implement its projects.

Another essential factor that helped NAEC's policy transfer to be successful is linked to organizational culture, high motivation, and competence of the team and its leader. Based on the interviews, foreign consultants noted that the NAEC team was highly qualified and motivated for new knowledge and experience (R2, R3). Interestingly, training and seminars were attended by members of all expert groups from NAEC, who then shared experiences with colleagues. Also, staff returning from study tours conducted seminars and workshops with local experts. The role of the team leader, Maia Miminoshvili, should be mentioned: "a professional, highly qualified, risk-taking and maneuverable manager" who participated in the process of sorting the necessary inventory and packing it in boxes while preparing for UNEs, also attended exams in every examination center, supported local experts without exception (R2, R8). Despite the change of MoE administration, she managed to stay at the top of NAEC for many years. Synthesis of high motivation and competence of the team and its leadership provided to maintain NAEC's organizational culture: Family and friendly environment, which had a robust system of norms about what the best practices are" (R4). Therefore, it has become the organization that "learned itself" (R3).

High motivation of local decision-makers and a small amount of luck helped NAEC to interact with foreign epistemic communities, "a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant

Knowledge within that domain or issue-area" (Haas, 1992, p.46). The NAEC's decision-makers stress that they were fortunate to have S. Baker, WB project consultant and later advisor of NAEC. Using his contacts, NAEC started contacting ETS, PEARSON, CITO, NITE, Cambridge Assessment, and other education policy-relevant organizations and their expert teams. According to local decision-makers, they were lucky because Baker "allowed us to learn from different experiences" (R1). Interestingly, after the WB project, NAEC's managers contacted these organizations and hired consultants to assist and consult, as "we first look for an experience abroad, when the problem or the will of policy change occur" (R3). Therefore, closed relationships and interaction with foreign epistemic communities helped NAEC with further policy transfer, like GAT exams.

Interaction with foreign epistemic communities and organizational clan culture somehow fostered effective and permanent communication inside and outside the country. NAEC management with the MoE of Georgia held numerous meetings with stakeholders (school principals, teachers, university staff, and supervisors) throughout the year prior to the UNEs. A similar practice had continued since 2005, when the NAEC's managers, along with members of the subject-based expert group, held meetings in almost all urban centers of Georgia and held open days to increase its reputation and legitimize policy change by making things transparent. A good example of indirect communication is that all UNE tests with answers were published on the official website (R5). At the same time, communication outside the country has reached a new level of development, including organizing international meetings and conferences, making new memorandums with different international organizations, Etc (R13). Thus, the high quality and level of

communication inside Georgia facilitated the more or less easy adaptation of large-scale policy change. In contrast, effective communication with foreign actors helped NAEC create new cooperations and internal legitimacy.

Last but not least no matter how large-scale the policy change is, one of the essential factors for education policy transfer success lies in effectively considering the local context. From this point of view, work done by NAEC was not duplicating foreign experience but was based on existing realities: "All the changes were research and evidence-based (R3). What do we mean under the "local context"? Both social and political as well as cultural factors. We can present some examples:

- During the UNEs in 2005, the idea articulated that cameras should be installed in the examination centers, while outside, the entrants' parents would be able to see how the process was going. Although foreign consultants were surprised by the news, they realized that the idea of cameras (implemented in practice successfully) was driven by a transparent anti-corruption policy narrative (R6).
- Despite having an item of synonyms-antonyms in the Israeli model, decision-makers of NAEC decided not to transfer it, as in the Georgian language, no frequency dictionary made it harder to make such types of tests in GAT (R2).
- MoE of Georgia considered that CAT exams should be held in examination centers of urban areas; however, managers of NAEC disagreed as they believed it would be challenging for every school student to take exams very far from home (R1). Taking into account Georgia's socio-economic situation and geographic characteristics, NAEC refused to do so and decided

> to make a logistically more complicated but more fair decision to hold exams in every school (more than 2500) in Georgia.

However, we can outline three main factors that hindered the education policy transfer in the case of NAEC. Despite continued political support, a fundamental policy change in the assessment and exam sector did not reveal without resistance. The first such resistance turned out with the case of GAT when public myths (that GAT is against national and cultural heritage and traditions) were created and articulated, raising societal fears about the new examination model and its possible results. However, it should be noted that despite strong political, financial and administrative support from the post-revolutionary government, the staff of NAEC did not feel fully protected from public groups. In Georgia, this period is still the beginning of the social transformation, often characterized by uncertainty and contradiction. Respondents recall cases: "I remember that when we went to the pilots from the capital to the regions, we hid the tests under a jacket so that no one would take them away" (R9); "We slept with the memory cards on which the test database was placed (R2). Therefore, in the first years of NAEC, there was a risk that someone should have an intent to get tests and answers, and this condition would surely hinder the policy change, transfer, and implementation. Therefore, the first factor is linked to a contradictory socio-cultural environment.

Logically, any large-scale policy change that promoted social fears and public myths led to skepticism in professional circles. In this case, UNEs affected secondary schools and universities involved in the corruption schemes (R10, R11). Professional skepticism is evident in the meetings organized by members of NAEC with representatives of schools and universities and education experts. Instead of relevant and

result-oriented discussions, accusations were often heard at these meetings: "Many thought that with this model, corruption would remain, but it would pass into the hands of the government" (R3). Interestingly, respondents recall that some colleagues from MoE of Georgia and its entities felt the reform and change would be doomed and somewhat hopeless (R4, R12, R14). This issue was the most frequently asked of NAEC decision-makers to emphasize that policy worked abroad could not be successful for Georgian society and the political system. We can conclude that in such cases, professional skepticism tries to be based on the view that specific policies are copied from elsewhere.

Another hindering factor for successful policy transfer and change is linked to political and administrative subordination to the Ministry of Education of Georgia. Raising societal fears and public myths, on the one hand, and professional skepticism, on the other, was coupled with Georgia's centralized public governance system. As already mentioned, contrary to the original version of the WB project, NAEC has become a legal entity of public law (LEPL) of MoE. The reasons can be simplifying the coordination of educational institutions and processes and "maintaining political leverage" (R1). In the policy transfer process, NAEC's leadership agreed with MoE on all crucial decisions as NAEC had an executing, not constantly policy formulating, function. The acceleration of conducting UNEs in 2005 instead of 2007 can be an excellent example of existing standing administrative relationships.

Moreover, despite the resistance of the NAEC's team, in 2009, at the request of the Minister of Education, they were instructed to design and implement school leaving exams within only ten months. Also, due to logistic reasons and political fears, the NAEC team was asked

to increase the number of test versions and decrease the number of questions while implementing UNEs in 2005. More specifically, the MoE of Georgia claimed that a confused society could not understand if the maximum score at GAT would be 80 instead of 100, as a hundred is easy to calculate. One respondent recalls that it was the first, and not the last, time when she saw a fundamental clash between the system's interest and content. Indeed, despite agreed conditions with foreign consultants, NAEC had to make changes as soon as possible (R15). We can assume that, despite mentioned hindering factors, facilitating ones are robust enough to successfully make education policy change and transfer.

Conclusions

The article aimed to examine the policy change and transfer issue based on the example of NAEC. Several findings can be outlined based on the explained methodology and proposed approach. First, to study education policy transfer comprehensively, it can be studied in the context of policy change. The first RQ of the article deals with the linkage between policy change and policy transfer in the case of NAEC. The case of NAEC and its policies have shown that policy transfer can be studied with the policy change, and at the same time, the orthodox framework (see figure N1 and N2) should be in focus. It allows us to examine how causes, processes, and results can correspond to each other and the general shifts of policy change. Secondly, assessing the success or failure of education policy transfer and change can be done with Marsh and McConnell's (2010) typology. NAEC is a successful policy transfer and change in post-socialist Georgia. From this point of view, some hindering and facilitating factors are outlined that answers the second RQ. We can conclude that all hindering factors are more or less linked to Soviet Inertia and post-

soviet heritage. Societal fears and pressure about policy change, subordination to the MoE of Georgia, and supra-centralization way of policy-making slowed the policy transfer and change path. However, results suggest that the process can be successful if some facilitating factors come together. In NAEC's case, external and internal support and motivation were in place. All stakeholders, government(s), World Bank, foreign consultants, epistemic communities, and NAEC's team were self-motivated and mostly in line with each step.

These conclusions can merit the theory of education policy transfer and change, as it proposes some assumptions about why and how education policy transfer succeeds or fails. Also, these factors can be examined in other post-socialist countries, where education policy transfer and change have occurred.

Furthermore, the results of this work can be valuable in three terms. Firstly, it tries to demonstrate that studying education policy transfer cannot be done without examining the context and period, focusing on policy change. Secondly, it proposes the framework in which the heuristic approach (presented as a three-part model: causes, process, and outcomes) is studied based on assessing facilitating/hindering factors, the actual process, and success indicators of NAEC's policy change and policy transfer. Last but not least, the article's findings can be used with other scholars, focusing on either post-soviet education transformation or policy administration to develop and criticize the proposed assumptions.

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About the authors:

Sandro Tabatadze is MA in education sciences, PhDc of political science at Tbilisi State University. He is the head of the office of research and development at the faculty of social and political sciences. He is the author/co-author of articles/conference papers dealing with education policy and administration, knowledge commercialization, far right and Euroscepticism, social movements. His current research project is about education policy transfer.

E-mail: sandro.tabatadze@tsu.ge

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization, administrated, writing and editing – formulated research goals and aims, conducted research and investigation process, prepared and presented the work.

Salome Dundua is PhD in political science, associate professor at Tbilisi State University. She is the vice-dean on the faculty of social and political sciences. She is the author/co-author of articles/conference

papers dealing with education policy and administration, knowledge commercialization social movements and nationalism. Her current research projects are about social science knowledge commercialization and urban social movements.

E-mail: salome.dundua@tsu.edu

Authorship credit details: Methodology, formal analyses, review and editing – designed the methodology, application of techniques to analyze data, prepared and presented the work.

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Education in Emergency: Lessons Learned About School Management Practices and Digital Technologies

Angélica Monteiro*

CIIE - Center for Research and Intervention in Education, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

Carlinda Leite

CIIE - Center for Research and Intervention in Education, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

Marcelo Coppi

CIEP - Research Centre in Education and Psychology, University of Évora, Évora, Portugal

Isabel Fialho

CIEP - Research Centre in Education and Psychology, University of Évora, Évora, Portugal

Marília Cid

CIEP - Research Centre in Education and Psychology, University of Évora, Évora, Portugal

*Corresponding author

E-mail: armonteiro@fpce.up.pt

Abstract

In a period strongly marked by constraints and abrupt societal changes, school leaders had to manage the pandemic crisis, guide changes, and find new solutions to respond to the demands of increasingly digitalised schools. In this context, a study was carried out to identify the main challenges faced by school leaders in Portugal and how digital technologies (DTs) were used by school leaders to address those challenges. From the methodological point of view, a questionnaire with closed and open questions on DTs during the COVID-19 pandemic was submitted to Portuguese school leaders between November 2020 and March 2021. Based on a descriptive statistical analysis of the closed questions and the content analysis of the open answers of 145 school leaders, the results point to aspects related to lack of training, lack of resources, widening inequalities and communication issues. The DTs are the same as used before. However, these technologies were used more frequently. These findings imply the need to invest in continuous training for school leaders in managing crises, how to optimise the use of DT in schools; and to capitalise on internal and external partnerships in collaborative efforts and to network to overcome the lack of resources, social needs, and inequalities. The lessons learned during the process of finding and evaluating solutions can contribute to improving school management processes in crises, in a post-pandemic future.

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Introduction

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 imposed on school leaders the task of taking decisions and organising measures to provide immediate responses to the new and incoming contingencies (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020; McLeod & Dulsky, 2021). In this situation, most schools developed a process denominated "Education in Emergency" (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). This process, which school leaders were obliged to undergo, implied the change from traditional face-to-face learning to distance education through various digital technologies (DT).

According to the DIGICOMP 2.2, the European digital competence framework, the term digital technology "comprises any product that can be used to create, view, distribute, modify, store, retrieve, transmit and receive information electronically in a digital form" (Vuorikari et al., 2022, p. 64). It includes hardware, software, digital resources, and platforms. UNESCO (2022, p.27) states that digital platforms "allow users to disseminate content to the wider public. Such platforms include social media networks, search engines, app stores, and content-sharing platforms".

While acknowledging the existence of schools around the world that were already developing learning through the combination of face-to-face and distance learning environments (Eurydice, 2019), the UNESCO report (2020) refers to schools that had to adopt this regime abruptly due to social isolation and school closures during the pandemic. According to this document, the distance education strategy of these schools during the pandemic crises comprised three phases: phase 1 – rapid response; phase 2 – the daily routine of distance learning practices; phase 3 - the new normal of school education after

the crisis. Since the data collection was concluded at the beginning of 2021, the information presented in this article is related to phase 1 and phase 2.

Emergency remote education (ERE) occurred mainly in phase 1, representing the temporary shift of instructional delivery mode to fully remote teaching solutions for education during the crisis (Hulges et al., 2020), differing from distance education.

The main difference between ERE and distance education is that ERE is characterised by the use of videoconference tools for synchronous online classes (e.g. Colibri Zoom, Google Meet) and by the exchange of resources by e-mail or cloud. Distance education encompasses the different forms of communication involving remote learning (e.g. e-learning, b-learning, m-learning) and demands a careful plan, a pedagogical model and teacher training (Monteiro, Mouraz & Dotta, 2021).

After some months of confinement, some schools began to adopt more consistent distance learning practices (phase 2) through the generalised adoption of digital platforms such as learning management systems (e.g., Moodle, Blackboard, Canva), other workspaces for online collaboration and communication (e.g., Teams, Classroom) or other digital technologies to promote interaction and share contents (e.g. online noticeboards such as Padlet or Jamboard).

The development of structured action plans, the mass promotion of teacher training courses, and some rules for online and distance education, including evaluation processes, were also used. The schools that already had those distance learning practices settled also had to develop a strategic plan due to the need to generalise this means of content delivery and pedagogical interaction.

Although the pandemic has not been overcome, the lessons learned during the process of finding and evaluating solutions can contribute to improving school management processes in phase 3, where the development of an online education ecosystem is expected (European Commission, 2020). Online education goes beyond distance learning, encompassing learning mediated by digital technologies, despite the distance or the time synchronicity (Singh and Thurman, 2019).

Taking this idea into account, the aim of the study developed was to take stock of the challenges encountered by school leaders in managing the use of DTs during the pandemic due to COVID-19 and answer the following questions: What were the main challenges for schools and school leaders during the pandemic crisis in Portugal? How were digital technologies used by school leaders to address those challenges, and for what purpose?

School management practices and digital technologies during the pandemic crisis

The unprecedented context gave rise to studies focused on the mediation of technologies and the effects on teaching-learning processes. Oliveira et al. (2021) developed an exploratory study on the emergency remote education experience of higher education students and teachers from Portugal and Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's main findings suggest that the ERE can be characterised by the educational process, information and communications technology (ICT) usage, and personal adaptation. The results evidenced increased teacher-student interaction and content development, difficulties in the online evaluation process for achieving the expected outcomes, a lack of training and struggle in adopting technologies, and negative personal experiences, including workload and mental health.

Similar results were presented by Khan (2021) in a literature review focused on learning, teaching, and assessment approaches adopted by higher education institutions since the COVID-19 outbreak. That study identified the following main themes: digital learning, E-learning challenges, the digital transition to emergency virtual assessment, the psychological impact of COVID-19, and creating collaborative cultures. The findings highlighted the importance of "training in digital literacy, the use of online flipped classrooms, encouraging students to use peer-to-peer learning, and the building of community collaborations" (p. 10). It also mentioned that there must be more studies about the "role of leadership in handling the transformative change, leading in crisis, and structuring effective communication" (p. 11), which aligns with the study presented in this article.

In the same line of reasoning, Parpala & Niinistö-Sivuranta (2022) affirmed that articles about school leadership processes and experiences were less represented. They conclude that leaders need more training and support to face crises collaboratively and informally. Other aspects involving leadership experiences and changes in practices caused by COVID-19 in primary school leaders are presented by Howard & Dhillon (2021). The same authors indicated that leadership has been in a state of turbulence rather than crisis because leaders had to respond to a backdrop of constantly changing government guidance and organisational demands as a result of the ebb and flow of the pandemic. Based on a previous study about outstanding leadership characteristics in primary Education (Dhillon, Howard & Holt, 2020), the study aimed to examine the impact that the changes caused by COVID-19 had on the leadership of serving head teachers. The main findings point to a shift in the importance attributed by the leaders to "high expectations of all

members of staff and pupils" (p. 34) (considered the most important characteristic relating to outstanding leadership in the first study) to the acknowledgment of the importance of the relationship with stakeholders (considered the most important characteristic relating to outstanding leadership in the second study).

Regarding digital technologies during this period, the focus and main results of studies were related to the *impact of digital leadership among school principals* (AlAjmi, 2022): principals' digital leadership positively influences technology use in schools and also influences teacher engagement.

According to Rincones, Peña, & Canaba (2021), Torrato, Aguja, & Prudente (2021), Wilson et al. (2021) and Yildiz, Kilic, & Acar (2022), school leaders also have an important role and must be prepared to take decisions regarding the delivery of educational content by utilising technology.

Another finding is associated with *education equity* (Cordeiro et al., 2021): the responses to COVID-19 From non-state school leaders in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and India point to the support provided during school closures (35% of the participants indicated that they offered some support through technology and 53% through paper methods). Technologies utilised included messaging apps, video or audio conferencing, and/or LMS.

One study also pointed to the *leadership behaviours that influence educational technology adoption and implementation in higher Education* (Lalani, Crawford, & Butler-Henderson, 2021): the study emphasised the importance of empowerment, involvement, and collaboration; academic leaders with emotional intelligence and emotional stability; the necessity of distributing leadership responsibilities to a network of

teams and the quality of communication to all stakeholders through a variety of communication channels. These ideas align with the study of Price & Mansfield (2021), which considers the importance of community stakeholders as school educational leaders' advisors.

Another aspect regarding the use of digital technologies during the pandemic crisis was related to the *resilience in learning environments* (Raghunathan, Darshan Singh, & Sharma, 2022): the results highlighted the importance of strong leadership that provides "trust of teachers, increased self-motivation, enhance communication with stakeholders and emphasise systems that enhance student-teacher communication" (p. 1).

From a broader temporal perspective, there have been several studies related to the issue of the role of school leadership in promoting the integration of digital technologies into the school environment and practice (Piedade & Dorotea, 2021; Piedade & Pedro, 2014), both at the curricular and pedagogical levels and related to management and institutional communication (Piedade & Pedro, 2014). Piedade and Dorotea (2021), in conducting a literature review focused on this topic, found that the research results highlight the decisive role of school leadership in integrating digital technologies in the school context. However, many of the studies analysed indicate the need to develop programmes to increase skills in technologies and innovation directed at school leaders and to encourage policies for the use of technologies. Regarding the use of digital technologies in school management and administration practices, the studies analysed by Piedade and Dorotea (2021) indicate that despite positive beliefs and attitudes towards technologies, the school leaders' practices and decisions on the purchase of school licenses are usually limited to Office applications, as word processing and desktop publishing and presentation software,

internet tools and other platforms provided by the Minister of Education. The use of other specific tools for management tends not to be reported.

In turn, research reveals the scarcity of studies conducted in Portugal involving digital technologies by school leaders in their daily activities (Piedade & Dorotea, 2021; Piedade & Pedro, 2014). According to Piedade and Pedro (2014), "this absence of studies in a national context may be justified by the scarcity of training initiatives in the area of digital technologies targeting school directors" (p. 4). Piedade and Dorotea (2021) corroborate this idea, claiming that this absence of studies with school leaders at the national level "may, in part, be justified by the scarcity of initiatives and training programmes in the area of digital technologies aimed specifically at school directors" (p. 759), since, in recent years, most of these initiatives and programmes have been aimed at primary and secondary school teachers (Piedade & Dorotea, 2021; Piedade & Pedro, 2014). There is a lack of research on this issue and the relevance of the role of school leadership in integrating and using technologies and modernizing practices in the school context.

The Role of Leadership in the Integration of Digital Technologies in School Education in Portugal

Regarding the integration of digital technologies in Portugal, the first National Program was the project "MINERVA" (1985-1994) (Portugal, 1985), which had the objective of introducing ICT in primary and secondary schools. After MINERVA, many other programmes and initiatives were developed with more specific focuses (e.g., Programme Nonio-Século XXI, 1996-2002; uArte – Internet at schools, 1997-2002; Initiative Schools, Teachers and Portable Devices, 2006-2007), however, the next big national programme, which generated

several initiatives, was the Technological Plan in Education (TPE) (Ministério da Educação, 2009).

The organic and operational model for the implementation of DT in the services of the Ministry of Education was amended by Order No. 143/2008 of 3 January (Ministério da Educação, 2008), published in the Official Gazette (Diário da República). The following year, 2009, through Dispatch no. 700/2009, of 9 January (Ministério da Educação, 2009), TPE teams were created as well as structures for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation and development of TPE projects at the level of educational establishments. Within the teams, the coordinator function is inherently held by the school leader, who is also responsible for the designation of the other members of the TPE team.

There was a regulation gap between 2010 and 2021 regarding ICT in Education in Portugal. During this period, policies regarding the use of ICT in schools were guided by general European guidelines (e.g., Digital Agenda for Europe 2010-2020, European Commission, 2010) through national directives (e.g. Digital Portugal Agenda, Portugal, 2012).

Technology in education started to gain more visibility in 2020 when all Portuguese schools were closed. From one day to the next, given the impossibility of face-to-face teaching, classes had to be mediated by television broadcasting and digital platforms, such as Moodle, Teams, or Classroom. This situation continued until the end of the year, the first return to a face-to-face regime. During this period, school leaders were faced with the need to reorient strategies and reinvent solutions capable of solving problems, even if in part, posed by the pandemic and health issues (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021). One highlighted need was the importance of creating conditions for all

students to access online classes, seeking to reduce pre-existing situations of inequality that were intensified in this pandemic period (Bonal & González, 2020; Muchacho, Vilhena, & Valadas, 2021).

In the same year (2020), following what was established in the Action Plan for Digital Education 2021–2027 (European Commission, 2020), in Portugal, the Digitalisation Programme for Schools was implemented, under the Action Plan for Digital Transition (Presidência do Conselho de Ministros, 2020), which foresees the development of a programme for the digital transformation of schools.

This programme also includes a digital teacher education plan based on the European Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DIGICOMPEDU) (Punie & Redecker, 2017), as explained before. In the same framework, each school was asked to develop a school digital development action plan (SDDP) focusing on the domains of school organisation referred to in DIGCOMPEDU: professional involvement, teaching and learning, assessment, continuous professional development, and leadership. Once again, leaders were called on to find solutions for digital education involving the entire educational community in school decisions. Their in-depth knowledge of the realities of each context was considered essential to ensure inclusive and democratic education and contribute to achieving social justice (Leite & Sampaio, 2020; Sampaio & Leite, 2018, 2021; Bolívar, 2012).

Among the competencies assigned to the school leader is also responsible for all procedures involving the definition of strategies, intervention plans, and educational integration of digital technologies in the school context (Piedade & Pedro, 2014). Thus, the responsibility of school leaders is clear in implementing processes of incorporation and insertion of digital technologies into the daily activities of the

various actors who make up the school framework. Therefore, the study presented below is relevant.

Method

A questionnaire was used for data collection between November 2020 and March 2021. The questionnaire consists of 11 items in Portuguese, including open-response and closed-response items – a multiple-choice, five-point Likert-type scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and dichotomous scale (yes and no) – organised into three groups of questions: 1) sociodemographic data, allowing a profile of the respondents; 2) DT used, addressing the DT most used during management tasks and about the specificities of the pandemic period; and 3) effects of the use of DT, specifically alluding to the advantages or contributions and the problems and difficulties in their use, including an open question about the difficulties faced due to the pandemic.

The questionnaire was validated by panels of school leaders, mainly about the wording of the items in the closed-response questions. This procedure was intended to exhaust the most significant number of existing possibilities for each question, ensuring the appropriateness of these questions which, being closed-ended, facilitate data processing in extension. After this validation process, the questionnaire was submitted to a pre-test and applied to a sample selected "by convenience" (Ghiglione & Matalon, 1992; Hill & Hill, 2005). This application was performed online on the Google Forms platform during June and July 2020. After this pre-test phase, some adjustments were made to the terminology used, some questions were eliminated, and others were added that allowed collection of data on the pandemic situation that was being experienced in schools. The final

version of the questionnaire was developed on the LimeSurvey platform and its application took place between November 2020 and March 2021, authorised by the Ministry of Education. An e-mail with the link to the questionnaire was sent to all Portuguese school leaders from the 732 Portuguese public school clusters. The researchers ensured that the participants understood what was involved in the study, how that information would be used and how and to whom it could be reported. Participants were ensured and informed of the right to free and voluntary participation, without financial compensation, as well as the right to withdraw from the research at any time. The confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data was also guaranteed (BERA, 2018).

This was a descriptive study, with descriptive statistics. The intentional sample was composed by 145 school leaders responded, of whom 62% (N = 90) are female and the remaining 38% male. The average age is 53 years old (SD = 6.24), with an average professional experience of 29 years (SD = 7), belonging to public schools from different regions of mainland Portugal (North 33%, Centre 14.6%, Lisbon 3.9%, Alentejo 14.6%, Algarve 3.9%).

Data obtained through the responses to closed-ended questions were subjected to statistical analysis using the SPSS v.28 software package, which included frequency analysis performed to identify the frequencies of DT use by leaders, and the purposes and frequency of DT used during the pandemic period.

The open-ended responses were content analysed (Bardin, 1977) using the NVivo 1.6.1 software package. The analyses followed these steps: pre-analysis (fluent reading); exploration of the material (coding and categorisation) taking excerpts of the discourse with relevant meaning for the respective category as the unit of analysis – the categories

emerged from the answers given by the school leaders; and then treatment, inference and interpretation of results in the light of the study objectives. The quantification of the frequency of the responses in each category was supported by the NVivo software.

Results

Challenges for School Leaders during the Pandemic Crisis

The results about the challenges faced during pandemic were obtained via content analysis of the open questions. When asked about the main challenges faced, most leaders referred to issues related to the lack of resources/equipment and lack of internet access for teachers and students; the increase in inequalities, namely because some students did not have computers or had difficulty accessing the internet; the lack of training and communication difficulties. Figure 1 systematises the content analysis categories and the absolute number of references to each challenge made by the school leaders.

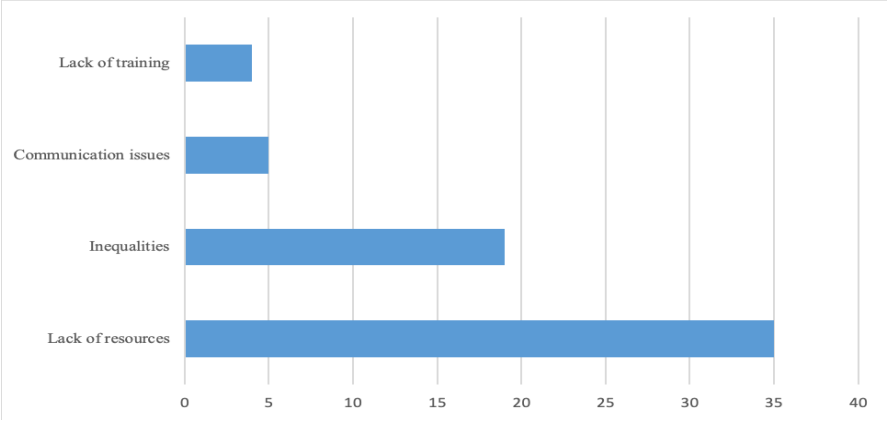

Figure 1.

Main challenges due to COVID that emerged from the leaders' responses (absolute number of references obtained in the content analysis)

Regarding the digital resources, the lack of equipment or the fact that it is obsolete or of poor quality as well as difficulties with internet access, were the aspects most referred to, as evidenced in the following statements:

> Evidence of: the mismatch between the existing equipment and the requirements of the most up-to-date software (…) and the scarcity of digital resources in households (L3).
>
> Pupils are in areas with no mobile network (L35)
>
> Evidence of conflict in the timing of using equipment in each household (L3).

As can be understood from the answers, in 2021, many families were still without equipment or an internet connection. In Portugal, the lack of efficient computers and the weakness of the Internet network affected more than 75% of students belonging to all regions during the initial period of the pandemic (CNE, 2021). These elements also revealed and accentuated pre-existing student inequalities, which are also visible in the following perceptions:

> Access to digital platforms and technologies is not universal ... and even generates more and bigger inequalities among students, which had a negative impact on learning and consolidation of knowledge (L17).
>
> Increasing inequalities in access to the teaching and learning process (L61).

The intention to leave no one behind, expressed by official Portuguese documents (Presidência do Conselho de Ministros, 2020), is jeopardised by the growing conditions of social inequality in Portuguese schools. School leaders' statements referred to exacerbated

social inequalities (mentioned by almost 50% of the leaders). It can be identified that despite the efforts to combat or minimise the barriers of access for students belonging to less favoured groups, the period of the pandemic showed that many students and families did not have the necessary conditions, in terms of equipment and/or digital literacy, to meet the new demands caused by social confinement.

The respondents mentioned the lack of training in terms of computer expertise and knowledge about the distance learning modality:

> The age of the vast majority of teachers with whom I work and the need for greater awareness of the use of digital platforms and technologies, even though a brilliant job has been done, from one moment to the next, without specific training, for teachers to have to move to distance learning (L43).

> The deficient level of computer knowledge (technical and basic functioning – working with Word, Excel, educational platforms) of most of our students, and the lack of resources/internet in most Portuguese families (L48).

Even though there is no direct relationship in the literature between teachers' age group and the use of digital technologies (Monteiro, Mouraz & Dotta, 2021), many leaders mentioned that teachers' advanced age might be a factor in their lack of digital skills. Respondents noted the need for training in the areas of technology concerning students, families, teachers, and the leaders themselves.

Communication difficulties expressed concerns include too many contacts to manage, a lack of face-to-face interactions (L43); personal and individualised connection, and isolation of students, teachers, and non-teaching staff (L119). Some of these concerns can be found in the following statement:

> Students who, due to image rights, do not turn on cameras or microphones and it is not possible to know if someone is on the other side or if the equipment is just on. Parents were intervening in the middle of a synchronous class (L62).

The problems presented, from the management of communication processes to the issue of the personal data protection regime, show that, although digital platforms may help in the internal and external communication processes of schools, the pandemic period highlighted some aspects to be improved. These include the effectiveness of communication, optimisation and standardisation of means, and clarity in communication processes between leaders, teachers, staff, family, and the wider community.

Digital Technologies Used in the Pandemic Period

The results about the DT used in the pandemic and the effects of the period of use were obtained from the answer to the closed questions in the questionnaire. Figure 2 shows the most commonly used DT mentioned by the respondents. The graphic represents the means of the Likert scale (1-5).

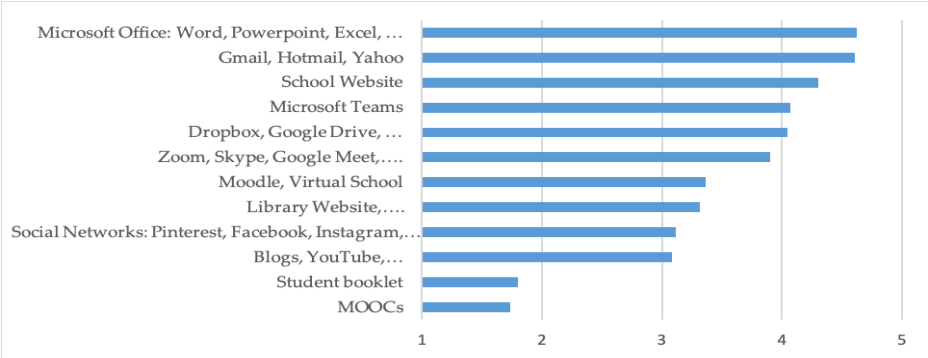

Figure 2.

Digital technologies used by school leaders (means from 1-5 Likert scale

As can be seen, the DT most used was the Microsoft Office applications ($\bar{x}$ = 4.62; SD = 0.61), followed by e-mail ($\bar{x}$ = 4.61; SD = 0.80), the school's web page ($\bar{x}$ = 4.3; SD = 0.88), Microsoft Teams ($\bar{x}$ = 4.7; SD = 1.15), and the cloud ($\bar{x}$= 4.04; SD = 0.98). Videoconference platforms ($\bar{x}$ = 3.9; SD = 0.88) were also widely used. On the other hand, the DT least used were MOOCs ($\bar{x}$ = 1.74; SD = 1.11) and the student's digital booklet ($\bar{x}$ = 1.80; SD = 1.26), respectively.

When asked about the frequency and use of DT during the pandemic, the vast majority of leaders (95.2% of respondents; N = 138) responded that they started using them more frequently, although, according to many leaders, for the same purposes as before (69%; N = 100). This result may be associated with the fact that school leaders already used online media and strategies for sharing and completing tasks before the pandemic. The 31% of school leaders who indicated they used DT for other purposes referred: "carry out administrative tasks remotely", "online meetings"; "teacher and staff training", "follow-up and monitoring of covid-19 in the school setting".

As demonstrated by the study presented in this article, most school leaders admitted not using DT to perform tasks they did not previously perform, except for bureaucratic tasks entailed by the health situation, including the need to prepare teachers and staff for the new professional demands.

Figure 3 shows the effects of using DT selected by the school leaders in the questionnaire. The graphic represents the means of the Likert scale (1-5).

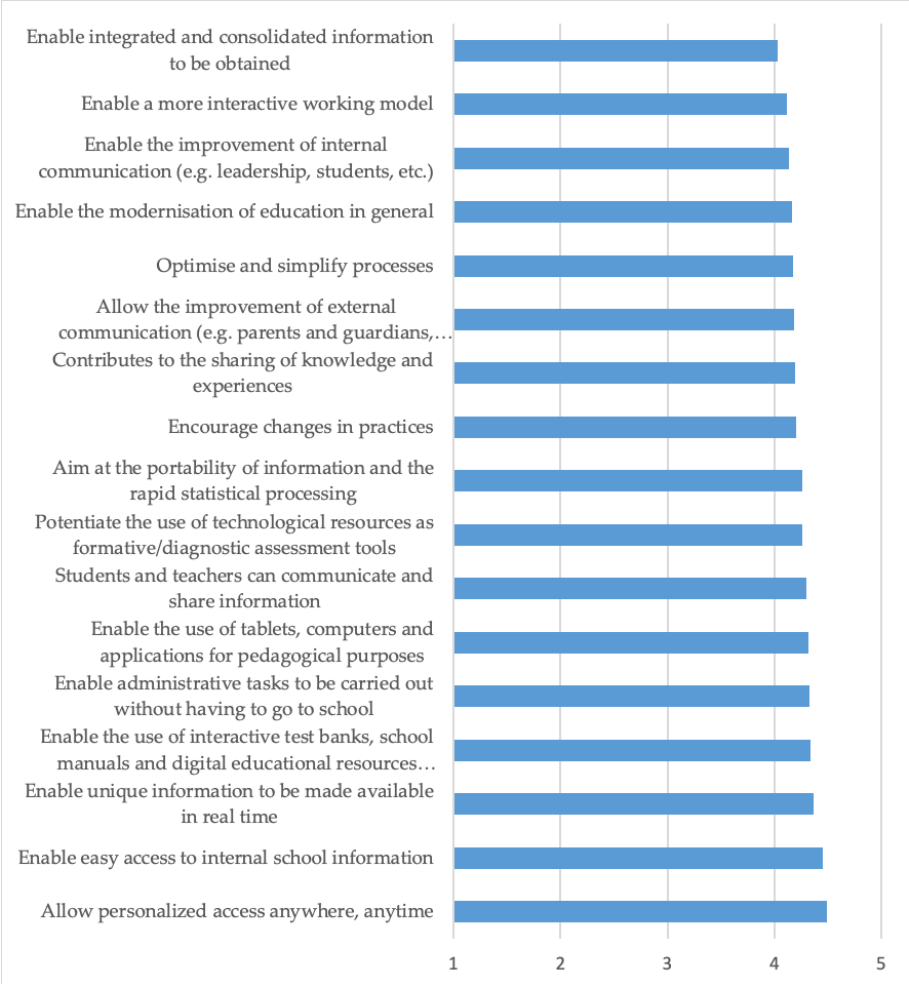

Figure 3.

Effects of using digital technologies, in the framework of the quarantine situation, due to COVID-19 (means from 1-5 Likert scale)

Concerning the effects of using DT in school, all the items had an average rating above 4. Of these, the aspects with the higher score were: increased access to personalised information at any time and place ($\bar{x}$ = 4.49; SD = 0.65); enabled easy access to internal school information ($\bar{x}$ = 4.45; SD = 0.62); increased availability of data in real-time ($\bar{x}$ = 4.37; SD = 0.60); broader access to didactic and curricular materials ($\bar{x}$ = 4.34; SD = 0.54); made it possible to carry out tasks remotely ($\bar{x}$ = 4.33; SD = 0.73); increased the access to equipment for teaching purposes ($\bar{x}$ = 4.32; SD = 0.73); and improved the diversification of the means of communication and sharing of information between teachers and students ($\bar{x}$ = 4.30; SD = 0.60).

Conclusions

Given the emergency education caused by the pandemic, school leaders had to innovate their management practices, evidencing their ability to quickly redefine strategies, networking, and distribution of responsibilities (Harris & Jones, 2020; McLeod & Dulsky, 2021; Giordano, 2021). The schools were closed during the pandemic, which required leaders to find solutions to keep classes running and intervene in unexpected problems and challenges.

Regarding the first research question of the study presented, the most referred challenges were the lack of resources, increased inequalities, the lack of training, and communication issues. The same reasoning is stated by Alajmi (2022) when he identified the main factors that prevented teachers and school leaders from integrating technology into Kuwaiti schools. In his opinion, there are problems related to the lack of information and communications technology (ICT) preparation, teacher competence, and inadequate technology

resources. These challenges aren't entirely new since previous studies have reported this situation (Afshar et al., 2010; Cakir, 2012).

Concerning the second research question, the school leaders used DTs more frequently for communication, administrative tasks, teacher and staff training, and learning mediation, unexpectedly changing the school routine. This finding is in line with the Page and Paiva (2021) study. However, the increased intensity of the use of DTs did not mean increased diversity of functionalities for most school leaders, except when using platforms to manage health issues during the pandemic period. This circumstance may indicate the need for investment in the professional development of school leaders, as some of them recognised it.

The lessons learned during the pandemic crisis have leadership implications. One of the implications is related to the importance of an intervention that guarantees access and conditions for all students to use and participate in digital environments (CNE, 2021; Cordeiro et al., 2021; King & Logan, 2022). Even though the European governments have developed programmes to reinforce students' digital equipment and teacher training (European Commission, 2020), the pandemic showed inequalities. This situation is in line with the Commission Internationale sur Les futures de l'éducation (2020) conclusions.

Another lesson learned showed the importance of investing in leaders' professional development regarding managing uncertain situations (Alajmi, 2022; Parpala & Niinistö-Sivuranta, 2022). According to Rincones, Peña, and Canaba (2021), this training investment would help to create opportunities to explore emotional aspects of leadership.

The findings reported in this article also corroborate Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021) and Price and Mansfield (2021) when they point out the

importance of establishing partnerships and networking to foster knowledge sharing and conditions to develop new solutions to common problems. The COVID-19 pandemic can be considered an opportunity to make open technologies and networks available to teachers and students. Contrary to this more optimistic view, Mohamed et al. (2022) drew attention to the importance of the sustainability of digital transformation supported by an "innovative architectural design" (p.2), which remains an underdeveloped area.

In sum, besides the lessons learned, the study revealed the importance of considering the schools' socioeconomic characteristics in future studies (Harris et al., 2020; Patrick & Newsome, 2020).

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About the authors:

Angélica Monteiro PhD in Education Sciences and Master in Multimedia Education from the University of Porto. Researcher at the Centre for Educational Research and Intervention (CIIE) of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto. Her research interest includes e-learning, b-learning, education science, teacher's training, technology and education, with special focus on digital inclusion of people in vulnerable situation, with several projects and publications in these areas.

E-mail: armonteiro@fpce.up.pt

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization, resources, validation, writing- review and editing.

Carlinda Leite PhD in Education. Full Professor Emeritus at the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto. Senior Researcher at the Centre for Educational Research and Intervention (CIIE). She coordinates the Practical Research Community "Curriculum, Evaluation, Training and Educational Technologies" (CAFTe). She has coordinated several research projects and is the author of numerous articles.

E-mail: carlinda@fpce.up.pt

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization, resources, validation, writing- review and editing.

Marcelo Coppi Degree in Biological Sciences, Master in Education (Training of Trainers - Pedagogical Action and Evaluation) and Doctoral student in Education Sciences at the University of Évora. Researcher with a scholarship from the Research Centre in Education and Psychology of the University of Évora. He works mainly in the area of Scientific Literacy and Pedagogical Evaluation.

E-mail: mcoppi@uevora.pt

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization, resources, data analysis, validation, writing- review and editing.

Isabel Fialho PhD in Education Sciences, Assistant Professor at the Department of Pedagogy and Education of the University of Évora. She teaches and researches predominantly in the areas of educational

assessment and pedagogical supervision. She is a researcher at CIEP-UE and has participated in national and international research projects with scientific production in these areas.

E-mail: ifialho@uevora.pt

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization, resources, data analysis, validation, writing- review and editing.

Marília Cid PhD in Education Sciences, associate professor at the Department of Pedagogy and Education of the University of Évora, teaches and researches predominantly in the fields of educational assessment and science didactics. She is a researcher at CIEP-UE and has participated in national and international research projects, with publication in these areas.

E-mail: mcid@uevora.pt

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization, resources, data analysis, validation, writing- review and editing.

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Expert Teams in Instructional Leadership Practices Based on Collaboration and Their Transference to Local Teaching Improvement Networks

Paulo Volante*

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Magdalena Müller

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Álvaro Salinas

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Xiu Cravens

Peabody College, Vanderbilt University, United States of America

Abstract

This article shows the research results of implementing a professional learning model based on instructional leadership practices and structured teacher collaboration. The primary purpose was to promote a collaboration model focused on developing communities of practice, formed by school leaders and teachers, focusing on instructional improvement in 8th grade Math and English. The model consists of a cycle with 4 iterative practices: planning, classroom observation, feedback, and refinement and three guiding principles: deprivatisation, collaboration, focus on learning. The methodological approach was a design-based research model, with school teams (within-school level) and collaboration networks (between schools-level) that included principals and teachers. 22 schools in two districts in Chile, 44 school leaders, 74 teachers, 49 non-participating teachers as a control group, and at least 1,000 students in 40 classes were part of the study sample that participated

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*Corresponding author
E-mail: pvolante@uc.cl

in the research between 2019 and 2020. Mixed methods were used for data analysis. The research team conducted a five-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with participants and non-participants teachers as the control group. The main progress was the deprivatisation of pedagogical practice and joint decision-making for teaching improvement. The practical implications of the model, adjusted for local characteristics, are that it facilitates professional development at three levels: individual, within school teams, and allows professional exchange between schools. It enabled the enactment of peer collaboration practices, and the role of instructional leadership shared between teachers and the school leadership team members were bolstered.

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Introduction

International evidence shows that instructional leadership is critical in explaining teaching practices, student learning improvement and teachers' professional learning. From its origins to the present, and in different contexts, this approach has focused on the quality of teaching to achieve learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hou, Cui & Zhang, 2019; Özdemir, Gümüş, Kılınç, & Bellibaş, 2022). Instructional leaders pays attention to the school mission, curriculum management and instruction to bolster teacher performance, monitor student progress and establish a harmonious instructional environment (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). In local studies, we have seen how instructional leadership teams worked as a network of relationships that generated

co-influences of principals and teachers, distributing itself throughout the system.

The instructional practices, exercised in a collective and articulated way, show significant effects on student achievement, teachers' perception of effectiveness, and leadership capacity, focusing on teachers and intermediate leaders (Supovitz & Christman, 2003). Thus, it is crucial to empower headteachers and teachers individually; it is also vital to mobilise and empower leadership teams, focusing their efforts on collaboration and professional development, emphasising learning improvement. The principals' instructional practices can influence teacher learning and collaborative practices among teachers changing diverse components of classroom instruction (Bellibas, Polatcan, & Kilinc, 2020). Furthermore, global research has described that collaboration networks between schools further mobilise capacities and knowledge beyond the school.

Communities of practice (CoP) can expand and distribute instructional influence in and between schools. Wenger (2004) defined CoP as 'groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. They share elements, such as a focus on a specific domain and commitment to work in it; participation in activities and discussions; mutual support and shared information; and practice, a shared repertoire of resources (Wenger, 2004). According to the comparative research between the English-speaking and Asian contexts, Cravens & Drake, (2017) indicate that the basic steps to forming a CoP in the school environment are: individual and group learning with access to peer observation, participation in practices, and co-construction of new practices or improvement of existing ones. They also identified four fundamental aspects for the development of CoPs: (1) instructional leadership of the

director, (2) teachers with a sense of community work, (3) an environment of trust and (4) teaching effectiveness (i.e., feeling capable of enabling and achieving their students' learning).

Supovitz & Christman (2003), systematically described the concept of 'Instructional Communities of Practice' as communities within schools whose specific focus is the improvement of teaching and student learning. After analysing two experiences in Philadelphia and Cincinnati, they highlighted that one of the main effects is moving teachers from lonely classroom work towards a collaborative exploration of how their teaching relates to student learning, thus 'institutionalising' the teaching practice and producing mutual learning. However, they also emphasise that CoPs require specific conditions and organisational strategies to fulfil their purposes, such as a protected meeting time and tools that allow them to explore student performance and its link to effective teaching.

A recent model of CoPs with an instructional focus is the Teacher Peer Excellence Groups model (TPEG) was designed to support teaching improvement, which 'is comprised of iterative cycles of collaborative lesson planning, peer observations, feedback, and revision by teachers based on the Shanghai model` (Cravens, Drake, Goldring & Schuermann, 2017). This experience has been applied in two different contexts: in Shanghai, where teachers have solid collaborative ties and an inclination towards collective values, and in the U.S., where teachers' culture emphasises teaching as an individual act, with autonomy and isolation between teachers. The results of these teacher-led collaborative inquiry cycles have demonstrated growth in the instruction ratings of the teachers involved and value-added scores in the subsequent year of the study (Cravens & Hunter, 2021).

In both contexts, the application of TPEG had promising results. However, there is no evidence of its application in Latin American countries, which shows a less teacher collaboration culture. According to Talis (2018), for example, compared to Shanghai and the U.S., Chile has a higher percentage of teachers who declare 'never' to carry out professional collaboration activities in five of the eight indicators (observe, provide feedback, exchange teaching materials, work with others to ensure standards in the evaluation and participate in collaborative professional learning). Shanghai shows the lowest percentages of teachers who indicate 'never' for these indicators.

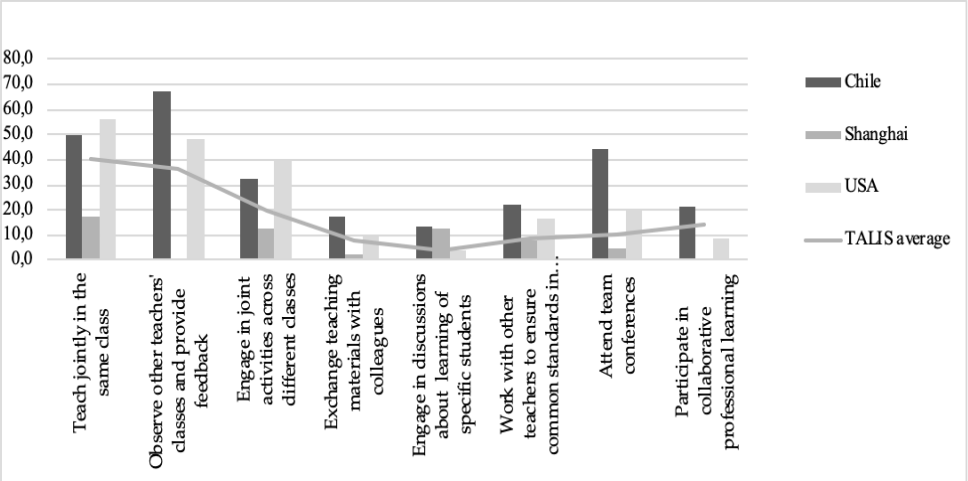

Figure 1.

TALIS 2018 (OCDE 2019) average performance in deprivatized practices in countries that implemented TPEG project

Teachers and management teams from the U.S. who participated in this experience reported a positive impact in that it allowed for 'collaboration in an open and non-threatening environment; and allowed for greater exchange of ideas, strategies, and materials. It was

the first time for many, if not all teachers (including many veteran teachers), observing teaching regularly within their school' (Cravens & Drake, 2017, p.359). However, the model has not yet been implemented in other contexts. In Tennessee's statewide teacher collaboration initiative, known as the Instructional Partnership Initiative (IPI), a study found that the frequency of collaborative activities, the focus on instructional activities, and the perceptions of IPI as beneficial, were significantly predicted by school supports and characteristics of teacher partnerships (Caroll, Patrick & Goldring, 2021). This article shows the results from applying the TPEG model, modified for the Chilean context. The proposed leadership and collaboration model is based on local (Volante & Müller, 2017) and international experience (Cravens & Drake et al., 2017), which has advanced in defining and implementing distributed instructional leadership practices. The TPEG cycle, which operationalises collaboration and exchange between professionals, was adapted based on three principles: 1) the teaching practice is made visible to others; 2) collective work is shareable; 3) teachers' expertise helps validate teaching strategies. The model adapted for this project, called Collaborative Research Cycles ('Ciclos de Investigación Colaborativa', CIC), considers four collaboration practices: 1) joint planning, 2) peer observation, 3) feedback and 4) refinement.

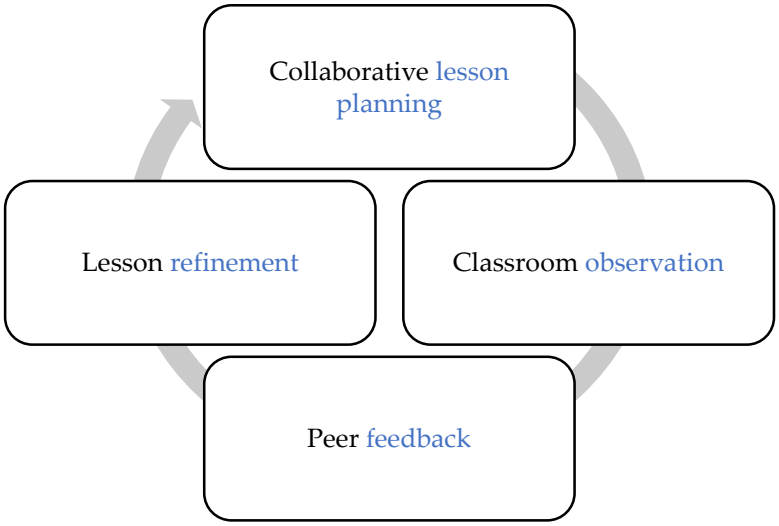

Figure 2.
Teacher Peer Excellence Groups Model (Cravens, Drake, Goldring, & Schuermann, 2017).

Since the collaboration structure is focused on pedagogical improvement and involves the interaction of the teams with the 4 iterative practices described above, it was adjusted and tested in an online format in the context of the pandemic for a continuity study which includes a third district. The model was adjusted to the online context and was valued by the participants as a very useful support tool for collaboration in the pandemic scenario.

These results are relevant in evaluating policies that promote teacher collaboration in Chile and highlight the importance of the role of school leaders in generating conditions and making these policies and practices viable at the local level. This is especially relevant in light of Chile's structural reforms of the teacher professional development system (Law 20,903 of 2016), and due to the changes in the type of

administration promoted by the New Public Education reform (Law 21,040, 2017).

Instructional leadership and teaching improvement

In Chile, a quasi-experimental experience of instructional CoPs was carried out, whose purpose was to develop Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT) in six schools, with 24 school leaders and 78 teachers, impacting over 500 secondary school students. The objective of the intervention was to improve pedagogical management and learning outcomes in mathematics in students from Year 9 to 11 through the following practices (Fromm, Olbrich & Volante, 2015; Volante & Müller, 2017):

· Practice 0: Constitute Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT)

· Practice 1: Assemble a shared vision around teaching and learning

· Practice 2: Define critical learnings in a specific domain

· Practice 3: Lead students to set their own goals

· Practice 4: Ensure that all students have successful experiences

· Practice 5: Monitor curriculum and student goals

· Practice 6: Give feedback to teaching practice

· Practice 7: Carry out observation and feedback loops

· Practice 8: Create Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

After a two-year intervention that compared experimental schools (with ILT intervention) with a control group (without ILT intervention), it was possible to account for the impact on leadership and teaching teams, as well as on the academic achievement of the

students (Volante & Müller, 2017). Collaboration between teachers appears as a mediating variable for change in teacher practices in contexts of leadership focused on learning (Cagatay, Sukru & Polatcan, 2020; Sükrü, Gümüş & Liu, 2021).One common element between the three initiatives of CoPs with an instructional focus relates to deprivatising teaching practice or making teaching public: teachers observe other teachers, are continuously observed and reflect on their practice with a focus on improving student outcomes (Lingard, Mills & Hayes, 2000; Louis & Marks,1998). Local studies have also shown that observation skills can be trained deliberately in the short term to achieve expertise in this specific task (Müller, Volante, Grau & Preiss, 2014). The focus seems especially relevant in the implementation of collaboration strategies. The target feedback guides the instructional practices that could contribute to the achievement of the goals stated by the teams (Papay et al., 2020). As Ainscow et al. (2012) point out, the best way to expand professional expertise in schools and between schools is strengthening collaboration. In Chile, a law creating the Teacher Professional Development System was enacted in 2016 (MINEDUC, 2016). One of its focuses is that leadership teams promote collaboration as a strategy to strengthen the professional development of teachers. However, professional collaboration is not a common practice in OECD countries or economies that participate in TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey). In Chile, according to the TALIS 2018 study (in which a representative sample of 1,963 7th- and 8th-grade teachers and 169 principals participated), 24% of teachers indicate that they participate in collaborative professional learning at least once a month (OECD average: 21%) and 29% are engaged in the team teaching just as often (OECD average: 28%) (OECD, 2020). In this context, it becomes imperative to study evidence-

based collaboration strategies that focus on the learning of teachers and students, generating learning communities.

As noted above, the primary purpose of the research presented in this paper is to promote a model of collaboration focused on developing communities of practice formed by school leaders and teachers, focusing on instructional improvement in 8th grade Math and English. Specifically, the objectives of our study are to 1) facilitate the transference of effective teaching and instructional leadership practices to peer teams that need to improve these focused teaching areas; 2) evaluate the implementation of crucial teaching and leadership practices in the context of pedagogical improvement processes and 3) systematize a model for the transfer of critical leadership and teaching practices in schools that belong to local networks and require support to improve educational quality.

Methods

The research is framed within the design-based research (DBR) approach, which 'seeks to test educational interventions within the context of classrooms, programs or learning environments' (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017, p.15), developing materials and teaching practices that can be implemented, while advancing in research and theory on how to improve in natural contexts (Coburn, Penuel & Geil, 2013). The research is situated in the educational context and focuses on designing and testing a meaningful intervention through mixed methods. It included multiple iterations and collaboration between researchers and practitioners to refine the collaborative model to achieve tangible impact in practice (Anderson and Shattuck, 2012) and identify the factors that influence the consolidation of the instructional leadership teams.

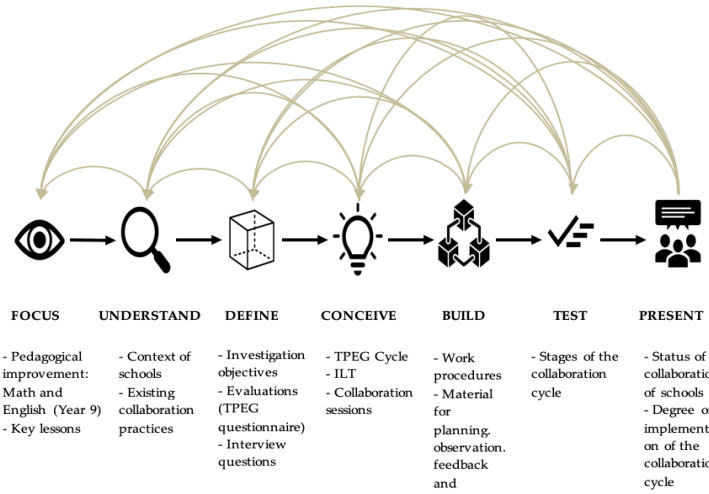

Figure 3.

Design-based research approach (adapted from Easterday, R. & Gerber, 2018)

According to the systematisation and the recent literature on DBR, the stages and moments of application are somewhat recursive and iterative, and each project can vary in its sequence and progression. In this experience, the researchers simultaneously evaluated the initial state of the factors involved, designed, tested, validated an intervention model, and conducted participant-reported change assessments about distributed instructional leadership and proposed collaborative actions.

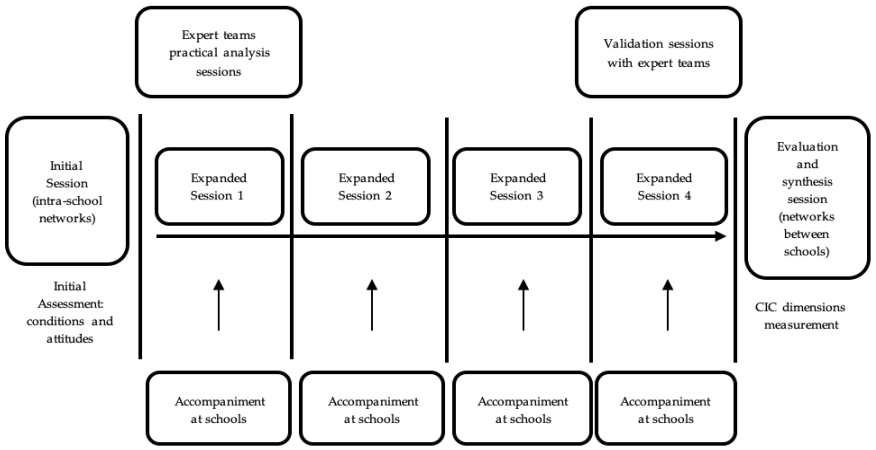

Figure 4.

Diagram for the transfer of leadership practices and teaching collaboration

Figure 4 shows four instances organized to enable and transfer the model of professional development and collaboration: (1) dissemination sessions between schools, (2) guided sessions at each school, (3) independent work by each school team and (4) modeling and exchange sessions between schools. The opportunities, activity sequences to build ILTs, and the development of the CIC in and between schools are highlighted.

Participants

Two Chilean public school districts were invited to participate in the first year: one from the Metropolitan Region (central zone) and one from the Maule Region (southern zone). More than 40 schools are located in these districts, administered by the local municipal authority, and have leadership teams in each school. Eleven schools from each municipality were invited to participate voluntarily (n = 22), which agreed to participate in the research and form collaborative

teams with their teachers. The teams were made up of two members of the school leadership team (n=44) and 8th grade English and Maths teachers (n=74). The school leaders suggested incorporating the professionals (special educators) from the School Integration Program (SIP). Table 1 summarizes the total number of schools (22) and the distribution of participants (118).

Table 1. *Participants in Project 2019-2020*

Municipalities	Central Zone	Southern Zone	Total
Schools	11	11	22
Directors (female)	10	7	17
Directors (male)	1	4	5
Heads of UTP (female)	10	10	20
Heads of UTP (male)	1	1	2
Mathematics Teachers (female)	5	4	9
Mathematics Teachers (male)	7	11	18
Professor of English (female)	4	9	13
Professor of English (male)	7	4	11
SIP special educators *	11	12	23
Total participating professionals	56	62	118

Note: All SIP special educators who participated in this project were women.

Participating schools serve a high percentage of low-income families. Most of them report that over 80% of the families they serve are socioeconomically vulnerable, and only three oscillate between 68% and 79%, according to a national vulnerability index that includes information on socioeconomic characteristics of families, household access to basic services, educational level of parents, and others (Junaeb, 2022). The inclusion criteria of the schools are that they have consolidated leadership teams, that they have support from the local

administration (district authorities) and that they are willing to participate in the project (voluntarily). The selection criterion for the teachers was that they teach Math or English in the 7th and/or 8th grade. Most of them had more than 10 years of experience in the school system. There were no selection criteria for the students, but consent was requested from the families.

The research team set up a control group of teachers (n=49) within the schools to evaluate and validate the model. They were not part of the educational leadership team formed for the research. A final questionnaire and semi-structured interview were applied to compare results.

Instruments

The 'Instructional Leadership and Collaboration Practices Scale' instrument was applied to explore conditions that allowed and enabled the implementation of collaborative practices and the degree to which schools implemented joint work (one version for headteachers and another for teachers). The instrument was translated and adapted from the TPEG questionnaire (Cravens & Drake, 2017).

The original questionnaire evaluates seven dimensions. Based on the criteria of relevance, five dimensions were selected: (1) Collaboration with an instructional focus; (2) Comfort with deprivatised practices; (3) Commitment to the deprivatised practice; (4) Instructional leadership of the principal; (5) The school's sense of professional community. Of these, comfort and commitment to deprivatised practice are of great interest and therefore essential to analyze in this study. Comfort refers to how comfortable teachers and administrators feel about collaborative activities associated with the CIC, whereas commitment refers to the observed involvement and performance reported by

teachers and school leaders with these collaborative activities. In addition, the research team designed a set of questions to evaluate the perceived benefit of this project and expectations of scalability and satisfaction. This instrument was applied only to teachers and school leaders who applied the model at their schools.

Finally, at the end of the intervention, to examine the experience more deeply, semi-structured interviews were carried out with school leaders, participating and non-participating teachers, focused on investigating the collaborative practices and the enabling and hindering factors, in addition to exploring their experiences surrounding the deprivatised practices.

The data collected includes the perceptions of the teachers participating in the project. To avoid the usual biases in self-report studies, a control sample of teachers who worked in the same schools as the participants, but did not participate in the project, was included in this study. Additionally, the research team periodically monitored the work carried out in the schools, and were able to directly verify both the performance of the collaborative meetings, and the projection of this work at the end of the intervention.

Data Analysis

For the Collaborative Practices analysis, the data obtained in the TPEG questionnaire were descriptively analysed, and a comparison of means (T-Student) between the participating teacher's group (n=48) and the teachers in the control group (n=49), allowing for the establishment of parameters of perception and implementation of practices. Of the 74 participating teachers, 48 answered, and valid questionnaires were collected.

On the other hand, to more profoundly examine the teams' experience, the interviews were processed (N=21), and a content analysis was applied to them by two coders using the Nvivo 11 software. Open coding was performed, including emergent categories and axes of analysis established according to the project's objectives, prioritizing the identification of enabling and hindering factors for teaching collaboration, perceived effects of the experience, and necessary conditions for future applications and possible scaling of the project. Axial coding contributed to the refinement and differentiation of concepts and gave them the character of categories (Flick 2003).

Figure 5 shows the organization of the nodes and subnodes used in the qualitative analysis. The “CIC Project” (Collaborative Research Cycle) node includes text segments with specific evaluations and meanings that the participants attributed to the most important perceived results in the collaborative research cycle: the collaboration between schools, within the school and between the teachers and the results in the students, including the support mechanisms (the materials and the organization of the sessions, the monitoring of the participating teams). The "implementation factors" node includes the assessments and meanings of the elements that facilitated or hindered the achievement of goals, and the challenges for future interventions. Lastly, the "synthesis" node of the project integrates the evaluations and global meanings that the participants highlighted as the most important learning they obtained during the implementation of the project, the aspects that should be maintained in future implementations, and the recommendations for improvement.

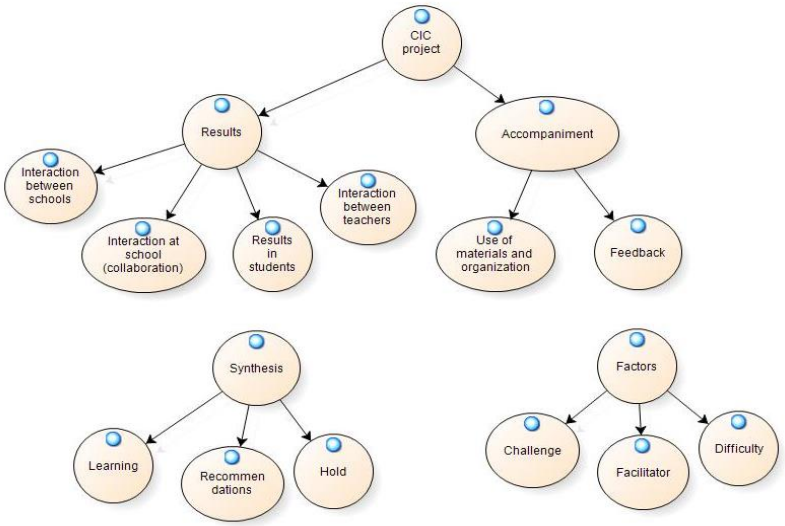

Figure 5.

Nodes organization in qualitative analysis (own elaboration)

The project was submitted to the ethical protection procedures defined by the National Research Agency (Agencia Nacional de Investigación, ANID) and the institution that carried out the research. These include the signing of informed consent of the participants, procedures to ensure their anonymity, and the careful handling of the generated databases. The research will have to prepare periodic reports, which – alongside an audit – will allow the university to monitor these ethical aspects.

Results

The participants were asked how satisfied they felt with the experience, the model, and some critical factors of its application. The results summarized in Figure 6 show satisfaction levels higher than 3 on a scale of 1 to 4. Some results that stand out are the recognition of

the role of the school leadership teams (leadership dimension); the exchange between peers; the quality of materials used to plan, observe and provide feedback; the guided sessions (in schools); and the extended work sessions with other schools. These results are consistent with the elements that stand out as enablers when implementing systematic collaboration practices. The lowest score — an average of 2.77 — was given to the time available to work on the proposed activities. This data is highly consistent with the results reported in the qualitative analyses regarding the main factors that hinder the execution of this initiative. This issue is important and poses a challenge in improving the efficiency of the proposal and in establishing conditions to protect the instructional time and ensure more agile possibilities for an effective transfer. These optimisation elements challenge coherence and coordination between teachers, school leaders and local authorities.

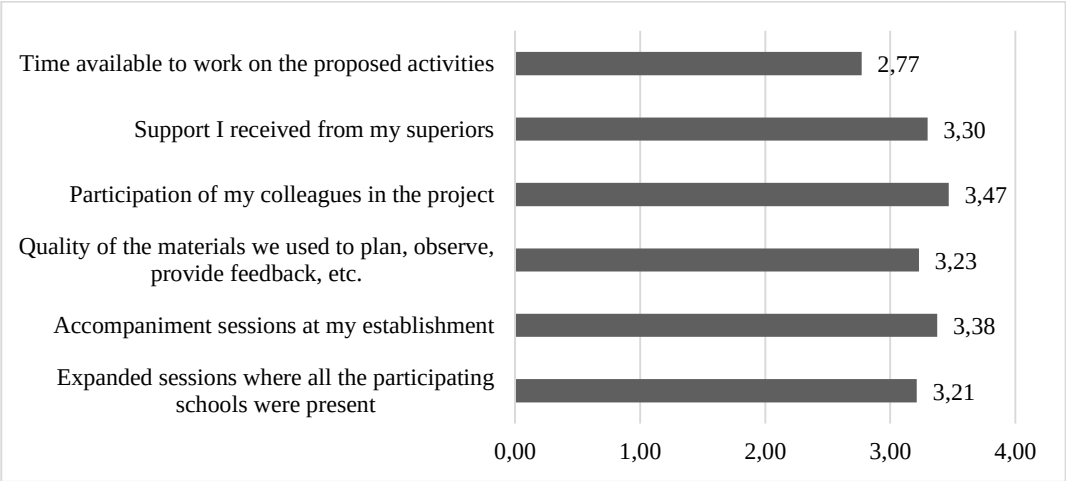

Figure 6.

Satisfaction with the implementation of the model according to key factors

On the other hand, to carry out a more detailed analysis of the scores in the five selected dimensions, the means (T-Student) were compared between the group of participating teachers and another group who did not participate directly (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Comparison between participants and non-participants in the Collaboration Practices for Teaching Improvement questionnaire*

Participants v/s Non-participants		N	*M*	*SD*	df	t	Sig.(p)
Instructional focus collaboration	Participants	48	3.13	0.61	95.997	-0.884	0.378
	Control	49	3.02	0.61			
Comfort with deprivatised practices	Participants	48	91.17	10.38	87.657	-0.979	0.329
	Control	49	88.70	14.28			
Commitment to deprivatised practice	Participants	48	2.48*	0.77	95.736	-2.193	0.030
	Control	49	2.15*	0.73			
Instructional Leadership	Participants	48	3.18	0.78	93.278	0.419	0.675
	Control	49	3.24	0.66			
Sense of professional community	Participants	48	2.74	0.60	90.265	0.000	1.000
	Control	49	2.74	0.77			

*p<.05

The results show a significant difference between participants and non-participants from the same schools in the dimension of commitment to deprivatised practice (p<0.05; t -2.193; n 98). This result provides substantive evidence that participating teams get involved in joint planning, peer observation, feedback, and joint improvement, which allow the teachers to open their classrooms and are a stimulus for more intense professional development among peers. In more detail, this dimension refers to putting into practice, focusing on

collective performance, and maintaining a constant exercise of the collaborative practices proposed in the CIC model.

On the other hand, given the brief intervention (eight months) and the 'authentic' conditions of public education, it was predictable that no significant differences would be observed in other dimensions more related to dispositions (attitudes) associated with deprivatised practices. In fact, in terms of dispositions toward collaborative practices and professional development among peers, there is a high interest, and slight variance between teachers and school leaders, who consider these practices necessary, desirable, and timely, but their level of application and sustainability make the difference. In this sense, the group that more systematically and coherently participates in the project perceives a higher level of transfer of the knowledge and tools provided in actions materialised in an experience consistent with the hypothesised model.

Perceptions and foundations of collaboration practices from those involved

To examine teachers' perceptions more deeply, in-depth analyses are reported below based on 21 semi-structured interviews with school representatives: a member of the management team, the participating teacher, and a non-participating teacher.

Regarding deprivatisation, the participants highlight a progressive advancement in their ability to publicly share teaching practices within and between schools. Some mention that their schools previously applied observation and feedback practices, but these practices were carried out by teachers in higher positions (the principal or TPU); it was not systematic (it did not always happen, the feedback was not

timely or specific) and its purpose was to supervise teacher performance. Therefore, in their experience, this project adds:

1. A greater systematicity in collaborative work
2. A more explicit focus on student learning
3. Greater horizontality in teaching work and
4. A more active exchange between peers

Some excerpts from the interviewees illustrate this:

> 'It allowed us to enrich practices we had already been working on concerning collaboration among teachers, departments, and subjects, but now I feel... entering the classroom and allowing another teacher to observe you, and that the teacher who does the class looks at themselves, it is very innovative, it was what I liked the most.' (Principal - School II_4)

> 'The deprivatisation contributed at least to two directions: to teachers' professional development and the improvement of pedagogical practices.' (Director - School II_2)

> 'Class observation was no longer about observing the teacher's performance, but the focus was on the student. The final objective was how they interacted with each other, with the teacher, and what they learned. (Head of TPU, Technical Pedagogical Unit – School I_1)

Although observation and feedback appear more frequently in the previous excerpts, the interviewees also valued the refinement of the plans as a contribution, especially concerning re-planning the initial

class, which they mentioned as one of the elements with less previous experience.

> 'You make a lesson plan, but there is no time to refine, adapt, evaluate. We have 30 minutes of joint planning, so little is done, but through this project, the principal gave us the time to carry out each one of the steps that they gave us' (SIP Professional - School II_2).

> 'But if I had to plan with other people, that is much better, because you share ideas, "this or that can work for you". For example, I consulted the library girl, if I am going to do an activity with books, or take them weekly to the library, see what books can be and be there with them.' (Non-participating teacher - School I_5)

> '...From this experience, we collected all the concrete evidence to improve it in a new scenario that was applicable in the future, and all the evidence we observed, nothing dressed up, we wanted to do it in the other scenario, as refinement, it can be an improvement, a transformation.' (Participating teacher - School II_7).

Concerning the sense of collaboration, the participants express that this opportunity to work collaboratively contrasts with teachers' everyday experiences.

> As a non-participating teacher describes: 'Each of us works on their planning alone and sends them to the TPU (supervising teacher), she makes the suggestions or adjustments that she deems appropriate.' (Non-participating teacher - School II_4).

The horizontal relationship was also highlighted and had critical consequences on teachers' work at school. One element reported is that horizontal collaboration generates trust and enables improvement.

> 'It flipped the switch for me. Before observing the teacher's practice, observe if the planning was consistent with what was done in the classroom. I would observe the fulfilment of the objectives, activities, etc., but observing the development of the student regarding learning, I found it super innovative; it changed my perspective as part of the management team that accompaniment in the classroom my point of view. It was tremendously positive for me.' (Director - School II_4).

> 'It also contributes to trust between teachers, which occurs in parallel with work itself. I speak for myself (…) critiquing others seems very constructive. (…) It is not only from above, from the school leaders, (…) this changed thanks to the research project, and offers the possibility for colleagues to enrich each other, to enter a state of trust that allows them to listen to each other, in a different way that I had not seen before at any school.' (Director - School II_4).

Even from a positive assessment of the collaboration in teams of managers and teachers, one teacher points out limits to the contribution of colleagues from other areas. He is sceptical towards the recommendation that his colleagues, technical heads (TPU) and teachers of other subjects can propose, for example, on generic criteria for new curricula.

> 'If they evaluate me with a standard test, I cannot spend every class doing crafts. When can I take advantage of that?

> When it is the first class, when one must go to the daily routine; for example, in the class about the Pythagorean theorem, demonstrated with a practical activity, there is no problem in doing that. But I cannot do this practical activity every class because my evaluation instrument must be consistent with the Ministry's: SIMCE, PSU.' (Participating teacher - School I_8)

This limitation seems to be produced by disciplinary and methodological differences between teachers. This teacher is reluctant to include specific activities suggested by his TPU head and SIP professional since he assumes they do not correspond to what is expected in the teaching of his subject. On the other side, a SIP professional from another establishment describes math teachers as:

> '(…) They are very structured, not very flexible, so there was an exchange about certain methodologies. We [special] educators are more flexible, which was difficult.' (SIP Professional - School II_2).

There is a significant agreement in the elements that the participants report from their own experiences regarding the enabling and hindering factors for the implementation. As enabling factors, they highlight the importance of support from the principal and school leaders for a good execution of the project. This support comes to fruition, especially in providing time to participate in project activities and prioritizing collaborative activities.

> 'I believe this has to come from the principal and school leaders; there must be a commitment. They must be the most involved in this effort because deep down in schools; there are many things that you see during the year; there is

> much work being done; the teachers also have a high workload; therefore, it is the management team, or the principal, who motivates these teachers to see this activity as a great possibility to improve the processes inside the school'. (Principal - School II_5).
>
> 'We were given the time, something essential that sometimes we do not have, we have a lot of work and little time, but the school leaders tried to give us the time to develop it.' (SIP Professional - School II_2).
>
> The availability of time in the project context contrasts with the difficulties of this type that teachers usually have. A non-participating teacher points out: 'In my case, I did not have the opportunity for another colleague to observe my class due to a scheduling issue. That is why no one came to see me.' (Non-participating teacher - School II_4).

An additional element that contributed to the achievement of the objectives was the flexibility in scheduling activities on the part of the executing team. The participants highlighted that:

> 'The work at the school continued; the school had to continue working, so you were very flexible in that sense to discuss the times.' (Director - School I_7).
>
> 'There were some adjustments, flexibility because there was a strike between, etc., but we never lost… I do not want to say "control" because some words today are difficult to mention in front of teachers, but project supervision, project focus, to keep moving forward despite the difficulties in the dates, that horizon was never lost.' (Principal - School II_4)

In contrast, one of the factors that hindered the project's objectives was the resistance of some teachers to the proposed practices:

> 'Resistance by many colleagues to accept that a member of the leadership team or another peer enters their classroom (…). (In) Unfortunately, English did not do well with the colleague because she is not there on Tuesday either, so I do not think she understood the dynamics of what was intended very well, or she simply didn't want to open her classroom.' (Director - School II_6).

> 'That intervention that appears from the moment someone is recording puts the person in a defensive disposition to watch their manners, but I think it is necessary to continue practising, and we must move forward (…). I think it is no longer so strange, invasive, and we should continue moving forward.' (Principal - School II_4).

If the protected time allocated by the administration was a factor that positively contributed to the project's achievements, the lack of time is a factor that hindered those achievements.

> 'The main adverse factor is the lack of time because we have a curriculum to cover, and of course, there is a requirement, and sometimes [the time] is not enough to do all this work that takes much planning, that is so oriented toward improving, toward having the students exposed to the subject, or toward deepening their understanding of it, which is what this program allows, I think that is the first obstacle, the extensive curriculum, with a tight timeframe, which forces the teacher to go forward and forward.' (Director - School II_6).

Finally, in some schools, there was only one teacher per subject (especially in English). This condition limited the possibilities of collaborative work within a subject, even though contact across subjects was also experienced:

> 'It is not done here because there is only one teacher per subject, there is no mathematics department, so we have to talk among colleagues.' (Participating teacher - School I_5).

In this way and concerning evaluating the implementation of the model and proposed practices, there is abundant material for a quantitative and qualitative description of the leadership practices and teaching collaboration observed in the participating teams. Additionally, the effort to store and systematise this experience made it possible to produce useful audio-visual material to demonstrate and transfer the process, the learning and the observable effects on the dynamics of the work teams.

Discussion

This study has made it possible to more deeply examine the relevance of an adaptive research methodology to the characteristics of the school system, primarily to approach processes of change and structural reforms that require coherence between leadership at the national policy level, at the district administration level and at the local school leadership level. The DBR approach was of great value: its iterative and flexible nature allowed for modifications to the original model and their immediate testing with different agents of the school system (Ainscow et al., 2012; Coburn, Penuel & Geil, 2013). Along with the completion of the project, methodological knowledge has been generated, as well as a model and tools for the implementation of what

we call professional research, particularly its applications for the development of collaborative capacities in managers and teachers.

In this sense, in this line of research on leadership, collaboration and pedagogical school improvement, a very close approach to the dynamics of collaboration has been possible in situ, in an 'authentic context' and highly exposed to the contingency of the current scenario. This is even more relevant in the uncertain scenario of the following years, with the pandemic and the disturbances of the school system.

Therefore, the implementation and results have high ecological validity and have been tested by representative users at different school system levels and with very diverse points of view: teachers, principals, local authorities, ministerial representatives, etc. The resulting proposal and model have been validated with the pressures and barriers that schools experience: lack of time and resources, simultaneous demands for numerous projects and initiatives, and tensions related to union and political contingency. These factors are frequently reported as barriers to the implementation of collaborative strategies both within and between schools. For this reason, it is especially relevant that although the model was adjusted to local characteristics, it was implemented in contexts that managed to minimize the effects of these barriers by being integrated as instructional collaboration routines. The TPEG has already been applied in three countries with very different cultures and it seems that the focus is to maintain the non-negotiables proposed in the original project: deprivatization; shareable and storable collective work; and teaching strategy validation. The proposed research model makes it possible to enable the encounter and exchange between different points of view, not only within each school but also between teams from different schools, whether they belong to the same territory.

Secondly, the project provides evidence that allows us to think about the implementation of collaborative processes in close relation to pedagogical improvement efforts, focusing on subjects and specific teaching levels. It seems feasible to adapt the CIC model, proposed by the TPEG team, in combination with an instructional leadership logic (ILT), in improvement processes at the local network level since it provides tools and a shared sense of practice-based professional learning processes. In this sense, the proposed collaboration model aligns perspectives and enables both principals and teachers to focus on more specific conversations focused on learning opportunities in specific subjects. Therefore, it provides opportunities to expand the sources of instructional influence, empowering formal leaders and fostering confidence in teachers as leaders (Supovitz & Christman, 2003).

Therefore, the research approach, as well as the background of the problem and opportunity for a solution, seem to be validated by this experience precisely because the research provides evidence and experience to describe and influence actions that seek teaching improvement from a collaborative approach while expanding the sources of instructional leadership in schools.

Implications of the study

As a summary of the and implications of the main results of the research carried out, it is possible to make the following propositions:

(1) Some conditions must be considered for the implementation, such as: having leadership teams with advanced knowledge in shared practices, guaranteeing support from school leaders and local authorities, providing protected time for the formation of the collaboration team and the joint activities of the model, in addition to

outlining a work agenda for schools that is consistent with the objectives of the model and with available resources for collaborative work. Such conditions operate as critical organizational resources, which this type of experience will enrich since effective collaboration constitutes a factor in developing other essential elements of professional capital in schools (Kahne et al., 2001).

(2) Based on the evidence collected from participants and non-participants in this experience, a general willingness to adopt deprivatised teaching practices is observed. This factor seems to be an enabler at the beginning of initiatives like this one. However, favorable attitudes will not be enough during implementation since the most significant challenge is promoting action and, even more so, stimulating the permanence of collaborative activities in schools' daily operations. As observed in other instructional leadership practices, maintaining the focus and giving continuity to the collective effort is one of the critical dimensions when evaluating the effect of the leadership of principals and teachers (Levine & Marcus, 2010).

(3) For this reason, it is advisable to accelerate the experience, encourage them to act, even when there are conditions and aspects to be optimized. It is convenient that the teams start pilot experiences, that the leaders stimulate the initiative and that the teachers trust in trying, testing, and improving as they go. It is also convenient to start pilot activities in a few subjects to avoid overwhelming the effort of the schools and instead guarantee the quality of an authentic collaboration experience.

Additionally, when considering the sustainability of collaboration models with an impact on improving teaching practices, it is essential to more deeply examine the factors that enable and hinder implementation in state schools (Muijs, 2015). The schools included in

this project operate in highly vulnerable contexts, and patterns are observed in leadership and administrations that show difficulty focusing their influence on educational improvement and in the final teaching levels of primary education. Among the enabling factors, it is important to highlight the support and time that local authorities and principals can prioritise for professional development in the schools themselves and within a territory. Both agents contribute significantly to validating the importance of teaching collaboration when they protect time and ensure the organizational conditions for its implementation. In some cases, it was also observed that headteachers who were closely involved in the pedagogical conversation of the teaching teams in their schools accelerated decisions and made the collective commitment visible to distribute instructional leadership that inspired enthusiasm in subject teachers and other school leaders (Spillane, Hopkins & Sweet, 2015). Among the factors that hindered implementation is the assimilation effect of this specific model concerning other practices established in schools but not guided by the principles of making public, sharable and storable that were at the base of this project. For example, in some schools, at the beginning of the intervention, the teams claimed that they planned, observed, and provided feedback collaboratively, so the model offered little novelty to the practices they were already developing. During implementation, the research team emphasised the quality of the implementation and the execution of actions required by the proposed model. In several cases, changes were observed in the team's notion of collaboration and the quality of observation and feedback, especially in the roles and interactions between the participants of the teams. The main contrast with previous ideas about collaboration has consisted of a more focused look at student learning and a perspective of analysis of practices less focused on the teacher's individual performance and

more coherent with communities of practice and with the improvement of evidence-based classroom planning, with an emphasis on improvement rather than supervision (Müller, Volante, Grau & Preiss, 2014).

Three limitations of the study need to be considered. First, the teams from the participating schools voluntarily joined the project, so they are interested in and motivated by the research proposal. Second, self-reporting is used to quantitatively and qualitatively assess project implementation. Third, it was not possible to completely isolate the teachers who did not participate in the project, so there may be some degree of contamination in the control group, especially in the schools that implemented the model with greater intensity.

The design-based research methodology has consistently been particularly relevant in high contingency circumstances in the school system, but especially in any research that aims to simultaneously design, intervene, and produce resources for professional learning in authentic contexts. On the other hand, we sought to generate initiatives to adapt the model to emerging conditions while advancing in scaling up the collaborative practice in times of high uncertainty.

The identification of conditions, factors and results shows that the proposed model can maintain its fidelity and be applied considering each school's particularities. The model needs to be implemented under certain conditions. Above this 'baseline', it should obtain results associated with instructional leadership teams and collaboration for teaching improvement, as observed in the schools classified as having a high commitment to these practices. In this sense, the model's innovation can interact with previous experience and lead to a greater depth of professional development capacities at the level of intra-school teams and networks between schools, complementing and

focusing the interest on collaboration for its application in specific subjects. Undoubtedly, a permanent challenge is to examine the conditions more deeply for sustaining these practices, which requires influencing the different agents to maintain focus and coherence with a notion of pedagogical collaboration, which implies the deprivatisation of teachers' performance and the orientation to impact the quality of student learning.

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About the authors:

Paulo Volante, Ph.D. in Psychology, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education (Department of Theory and Policy) from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

E-mail: pvolante@uc.cl

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization- formulation of overarching research goals and aims, funding acquisition- fund application, investigation- conducting a research and investigation process, data/evidence collection, methodology- design of methodology, writing- original draft.

Magdalena Müller, Ph.D. in Psychology and Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Education (Department of Learning and Development) from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

E-mail: mbmuller@uc.cl

Authorship credit details: Formal analysis- interview coding, investigation- data/evidence collection, writing- review & editing.

Álvaro Salinas, Ph.D. in Social Sciences, Information and Communication, and Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education (Department of Curriculum) from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

E-mail: asalinase@uc.cl

Authorship credit details: Formal analysis- interview coding, methodological advice, results systematisation, investigation- data/evidence collection.

Xiu Cravens, Ph.D. in Educational Policy's and Associate Dean for International Students and Affairs, Office of the Dean; Associate Professor at the Peabody College of the Vanderbilt University.

E-mail: xiu.cravens@vanderbilt.edu

Authorship credit details: Validation, verification- verification of the overall replication/reproducibility of results.