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School Leadership in Multicultural Contexts During COVID-19: The Case of Melilla, Spain

Nabila Chilah Abdelkader*

University of Granada, Melilla, Spain

Marina García-Carmona

University of Granada, Melilla, Spain

Francisco Javier Hinojo Lucena

University of Granada, Melilla, Spain

Abstract

Multiculturalism is increasingly present in schools, especially in Melilla (Spain), where cultural diversity is one of its defining features due to its geographical location on the border between Africa and Europe. In the light of the importance of educational leaders in dealing with this diversity, this research proposes two main objectives. First, to analyze initial and ongoing training in terms of interculturality, skills, and knowledge that an educational leader must have in their position, and second, to determine the impact of COVID-19 on school management in education centers. We used a qualitative methodology with semi-structured face-to-face interviews to collect data, and content analysis as a data analysis method. The participants (school leaders) represent the six districts that comprise the city of Melilla, nine infant and primary education and six secondary education school leaders. The results reveal that the training received by educational leaders is rather limited and not very useful in practice. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the

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*Corresponding author:

Email: nabila.chilah@gmail.com



inequality gap between families from the schools, given that the situation exacerbated their economic status.

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Introduction

Today's changing society, in which cultural diversity is one of its defining features, must be addressed from all areas of life: social, political, economic, educational, and alike. School principals carry out a great deal of management work in their schools to address this cultural diversity with the aim of making the cultures belonging to the same school context feel part of the educational community. This task is not easy on many occasions, due to the large number of changes and challenges that must be faced from the school management, without forgetting that at the same time principals must report to the educational administration on aspects of planning, implementation and evaluation of schools (Campos, 2017).

In the culturally diverse context of Melilla, inclusive education (IE) should be promoted to increase social responsibility, improve understanding of diversity, and teach in a way that avoids stereotypes and helps eliminate discrimination (Ruiz-Montero et al., 2023). To this end, educational leaders need to receive IE initial and ongoing

training, as well as the skills needed to manage cultural diversity, which include empathy, active listening, respect, etc. All these skills are essential for managing educational contexts in which up to five different cultures coexist: Christian, Muslim, Hebrew, Hindu and Roma (Instituto de Cultura de Melilla, 2019).

It is important to highlight the main characteristics of Melilla and its relevance to the context of this study. The city is bordered by the northern region known as the Rif in Morocco, North Africa. It covers an area of around 12 km² and has a population of approximately 86,261 inhabitants (INE, 2022). Its high population density is well above the Spanish and European Union average. A distinctive feature of the city is its linguistic and cultural diversity. Interculturality is one of the city's defining characteristics and is reflected in the harmonious coexistence and tolerance between cultures and ethnicities.

The geographical location of Melilla means that it receives large numbers of immigrants from Africa and Asia, who are seeking a better life in Spain and the rest of Europe. Due to this, the city has the highest concentration of young immigrants in public schools in Spain, in addition to being the city with the highest student/teacher ratio (Marmolejo & Montero-Alonso, 2009). Out of the total student body in Melilla, the percentage of foreign students is 13.2% compared to the Spanish average of 10.3% (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2023).

Normore and Brooks (2014) state that the figure of the school leader is central to promoting social justice educational leadership. Hence, as the representatives of pupils, teachers, and community members whose educational experience is directly affected by social justice issues, educational leaders play a pivotal role in addressing and advocating values and ethics. The challenge of interculturality in



schools involves recognizing and respecting the personal and cultural legitimacy of all learners and, evidently, applying the principles of cooperation, solidarity and belief in learning throughout schooling (Leiva, 2012).

The management of cultural diversity and the importance of intercultural training in 21-century society has become one of the main challenges for European Union training institutions, especially in the context of initial and ongoing training for primary and secondary education teachers. The aim is to equip them with the knowledge they need to respond to changes in society and the specific needs of immigrant students. To this end, new theoretical frameworks and best practices must be incorporated to manage cultural diversity (OECD, 2021; United Nations, 2022; Del Olmo, López & Villarrubia, 2023). The UNESCO Report (2021) on the challenges of education in 2021, among other proposals for renewing education, highlights that schools should be protected educational sites because they promote “inclusion, equity and individual and collective well-being”, and that they should be “places that bring diverse groups of people together and expose them to challenges and possibilities not available elsewhere”. Moreover, it should be noted that some studies (Leiva, 2012; Soriano & Peñalva, 2010) highlight the need to open intercultural training to the entire educational community. The aim is to turn schools into community training spaces where education in intercultural competencies is an integral part of the learning framework.

In the culturally diverse context of Melilla, the Spanish Autonomous City located on the northwest coast of Africa, there is a thriving intercultural education movement. The aim of adopting intercultural education in schools is to improve understanding and respect for different cultures by enhancing and unifying collective development



and effort towards creating a wider, intercultural society based on mutual respect (López, 2013; Aguado et al., 2014; García-Carmona, 2014; García-Carmona et al., 2020). In this study, we aim to analyze the reality of Melilla in terms of training and implementation of interculturality by school leaders. This approach is in line with our understanding that by dealing with interculturality from a management level, educational environments can be transformed into spaces where students and educators can foster inclusion to make all cultures that use educational centers feel welcome. The idea is to use the authority or power given to leaders to manage intercultural schools to promote inclusivity and intercultural leadership practices (Ärlestig et al., 2016; Gómez-Hurtado, 2014; León et al., 2018; Ryan, 2016).

After reviewing the literature and comprehending the importance of intercultural training, in this qualitative study, we aim to assess the training and professional development of school leaders working in culturally diverse schools in Melilla. We also analyze the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes that influence the work of school leadership. To this end, we enlisted the participation of nine infant and primary schools and six secondary schools. The research questions that drive our study are: What initial and ongoing training do school leaders in Melilla receive? What knowledge, skills, and aptitudes should educational leaders receive in terms of intercultural education in the context of Melilla? What measures/strategies do they implement in their centers to promote the inclusion of UAMs (Unaccompanied Foreign Minors)? What role has the COVID-19 pandemic played in creating educational inequalities in institutions with diverse student populations?



Multiculturalism and interculturalism: two concepts in society that both converge and diverge

In his study, Kottak (2019) states that the phenomena of immigration and differential population growth seen in many countries has led to the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturality becoming increasingly significant and that they are sometimes considered synonymous. Therefore, it is important to differentiate the terms based on their conceptualization.

Multiculturalism is understood as the coexistence of different cultures in the same space but without socially interacting with one another. Due to the lack of social contact between the different cultures, no cultural enrichment takes place (Bernabé-Villodre, 2012). Unlike multiculturalism, interculturality is based on interaction, reciprocity, and symmetry between cultures that leads to dialogue and communication (Tirzo, Gómez & Hernández, 2010) in which cultural differences are recognized and accepted (Alavez- Ruiz, 2014). In summary, multiculturalism only refers to the coexistence of different cultures in the same physical space but without mutual enrichment or exchange. In contrast, interculturality is defined as the establishment of cultural relationships and integration, which gives rise to reciprocal enrichment.

Interculturality is the concept that lays the foundation for a clear position in defense of universal human rights and equality rather than discrimination. Intercultural Education (IE) is not the same as multiculturalism (the passive coexistence of different cultural groups), given that it advocates the critical acceptance of cultural diversity through negotiation and dialogue, which considers the individual but also their place in the community, as a member of a collective (Molina, 2010). In this regard, the education system must adapt and transform



within a framework of communicative interaction to reflect diverse socio-cultural and economic realities (Molina, 2002).

García-Carmona et al. (2021) highlight that since 1980, IE has been the leading platform for dialogue on democracy and diversity. The authors state that IE has been adopted by the Council of Europe, UNESCO, and the United Nations as a basis for interreligious initiatives and the internationalization of schools. Consequently, for many OECD countries, IE has become the main paradigm for cultural policy, development of teaching methods and curriculum design. IE is being hailed as an inclusive model that helps to reduce xenophobia and racism.

Leiva (2017) argues that school dropout and failure ratios are systemic drawbacks of the institutional-educational framework that targets the weakest and/or most marginalized, especially students with functional diversity, students from immigrant backgrounds, and minorities. In some studies, school leaders, in particular, are singled out as being responsible for failing to implement cultural or structural solutions to eliminate historical inequalities affecting marginalized groups (Burello et al., 2001; Dantley & Tillman, 2006).

Queupil et al. (2023) state that IE incorporates the idea that all students, regardless of differences, should have the same learning opportunities. Thus, interculturality in an educational setting presents an opportunity to rethink the role of schools and that of those who lead them.

In turn, Leithwood et al. (2020) argues that accumulated evidence shows that school leaders are instrumental in the transformational and development processes in their institutions, which becomes even more important in more complex contexts. This confirms that the functions



of school leaders directly impact the work targeted at interculturality in the entire educational community.

The role of educational leaders in multicultural contexts

Traditionally, the role of the school leader was seen as an authoritative figure in schools: head teacher, management team, or other similar positions created for educational institutions. However, this concept has evolved over the years as leadership has come to be understood in different terms. The position is now seen as one that should exercise influence over educational communities in a way that aims to improve student learning by developing the capacity of professional teams (Leithwood et al., 2006; Spillane, 2012). It is now widely accepted that leadership can be exercised by informal positions of authority and anyone who has an impact on the teaching and learning process (Spinalle, 2012).

Educational leadership emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning and the role of leaders in fostering collaboration as regards student learning (Hallinger & Heck 2010; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins 2020; Robinson 2013). As educational leaders, school principals become the culture builders of their education centers (Hallinger 2003). Specifically in the context of the object of this study, Melilla, the role of school leaders is seen as paramount, given that they are responsible for promoting the culture of their school by taking into account the cultural diversity of the city.

As a result, the work of school leaders has become progressively challenging and complex, as they are required to lead school improvements, manage a large number of competing requests, and meet the needs of various stakeholders including students, teachers and families (Park & Datnow, 2022). Added to this is the fact that in a



multicultural context such as Melilla, where as many as five different cultures coexist, school leaders must also meet the contrasting requirements that arise from cultural diversity.

The way in which school leaders conceptualize cultural diversity is important, as it has a significant impact on educational improvement, and school organization has a positive effect on teaching and learning (Leithwood et al., 2020). Leadership, therefore, requires very specific and complex knowledge, skill sets, and aptitudes that are not acquired through the accumulation of experience alone (Silva, 2012). This is why it is important to implement practical training for school leaders prior to them occupying their post so that they can gain a deeper understanding of what they face before taking up their duties.

Consequently, Culturally Relevant Leadership (CRL) may be the best approach to take in order to influence school contexts and address the cultural requirements of the whole educational community. This approach, together with the educational community stakeholders themselves, aims to develop critical awareness to help identify and challenge the inequalities inherent in society at large (Arar et al., 2019; López, 2016).

Studies by Arar (2020) and Horsford et al. (2011) have identified four main components of CRL: sociocultural awareness, inclusive education, policy mediation, and professional leadership. Taking this into account, this leadership model highlights the school leaders' role in building bridges between cultures and working in a more effective educational environment to increase equal opportunities for immigrant children. Ultimately, CRL presents diverse methodologies for teachers to address the unique learning requirements of minority students (Khalifa et al., 2016). This is especially important as regards



migration to Western societies, as immigration has a direct impact on schools and poses diverse challenges to education (Arar & Izhar, 2022).

Brooks et al., (2017) argue that this approach improves leadership for social justice within immigrant school contexts and develops student-centered practice frameworks. Therefore, it is important to understand the culturally relevant leadership trends of school leaders to prevent inequalities in educational settings with a high ratio of minority students with the aim of increasing their academic performance and ensuring equal opportunities in society in general.

Educational leadership in multicultural contexts during COVID-19

In December 2019, the world was unaware of what was about to happen. Every aspect of daily life was abruptly paralyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which gave rise to “undeniable chaos” that shook the field of education (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020).

According to Harris and Jones (2020) in most countries, getting children back to school was an ongoing problem and a real challenge. Schools that reopened faced multiple complications: social distancing, intensive cleaning, and the meticulous organization of all movement around the school itself. School leaders had to deal with all of these situations, in addition to covering every need and contingency.

The closure of educational centers in Spain began on March 11, 2020, and, in most cases, lasted until the end of the academic year, although there were some exceptions in which classrooms were partially reopened on June 2, 2020. The COVID-19 situation had a direct impact on teaching and learning processes in every school across the country. The closure of centers as of March 2020 led to the unanticipated creation of a distance learning system at every level and stage of the education system. This had a direct impact not only on teaching

methodologies, but also on classroom teaching programs and student assessment (Consejo Escolar del Estado, 2021). After the COVID-19 lockdown, a gradual return to school was implemented. In the case of Melilla, the return to school was staggered from September 9, 2020 as follows: infant, primary, first and second Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) were all distributed in two shifts, while third and fourth ESO was semi-presential.

Furthermore, the health crisis also triggered a series of problems among teachers, families, and students, such as stress, lack of coordination, disconnection of students from their learning process, students with unmet special educational needs, lack of resources and/or computer equipment, failings in online educational platforms, and lack of teacher competences, among others (López-Noguero et al., 2021). Researchers also highlight income level inequality, different levels of education, and household typologies as having an inequitable impact on material deficiencies such as computers in some households. This issue is decisive for immigrant families as it highlights social and territorial inequalities, as well as the impossibility for some students living in low-income and low-education households to access online learning models. Not all students have equal access to the resources they need, including computer equipment, and even if they do, access is not always exclusive but shared with siblings and/or parents who also need to perform their respective online activities. Moreover, not all students have the knowledge needed to use devices effectively, and not all can rely on digitally literate adults (Beunoyer et al., 2020).

During the COVID-19 crisis, the response provided by some school management teams through effective team management and by establishing processes was often ahead of the solutions proposed by the authorities, which highlighted their quick reaction to the situation



(Aznar, 2020). The organization and coordination of management teams is always important, and even more so in emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The collaboration and solidarity of the entire educational community is paramount and involves all its members, who must be made to feel that they are co-participants and protagonists in the entire process (Jiménez-Cruz, 2019; Leiva-Guerrero & Vásquez, 2019; Villa, 2019).

Methodology

Research design

In recent decades, the creation of new paradigms regarding teachers' beliefs and knowledge has shed light on the decisions made in planning, intervention, and evaluation processes, as well as the reasons behind teachers' reluctance to change (Núñez & López, 2023). The descriptive case study presented in this paper (Miles & Huberman, 1994) adheres to this framework by using a qualitative approach with the aim of determining school leaders' opinions in Melilla.

The study first analyzes the initial and ongoing IE training received by school leaders of infant, primary, and secondary schools in Melilla. We chose to work with infant, primary, and secondary schools given that they encompass the compulsory stages of education. Next, we analyzed the IE knowledge, skills, and aptitudes that school leaders must acquire in order to access leadership positions. Lastly, we explain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the inclusion of the different cultures that coexist in Melilla's education centers.

This qualitative study uses the semi-structured interview method to collect data, which is characterized by its flexibility and open-ended nature. This method suits the purpose of the study, which is to gather

data on the perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitude of school leaders in order to explore the research questions in greater depth (Vargas, 2012).

Context

The Autonomous City of Melilla

Melilla was given autonomous city status under Spanish Organic Law 2/1995, of March 13. The city has a high school dropout rate, high unskilled unemployed, and a high percentage of the active population lacks training. This makes it very difficult for the population to access the new knowledge society and labor market (Orellana, 2022). The average school enrollment rate for 16-year-olds in the Spanish Autonomous Regions for the 2016-2017 academic year was 96%, compared to 86% in Melilla. The school enrollment rate for 18-year-olds in the city dropped to 63%, while the national average was over 79.5% (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2019).

Within Melilla's multicultural context, there is a thriving intercultural integration movement. For example, by adopting IE, schools aim to enhance understanding and respect for different cultures and, in turn, increase collective development and effort in order to create a wider, intercultural society based on mutual respect (Aguado et al., 2014; García-Carmona, 2014, 2015; García-Carmona et al., 2021).

Lastly, it should be noted that the Spanish state, through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in its capital, Madrid, is exclusively responsible for the regulation and management of Melilla's education system (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2019). This means that according to the Spanish education system's legislative guidelines, school leaders exercise relative autonomy over their own local schools. However, Melilla's geographical separation

from the Spanish mainland limits its bargaining power with the Spanish Ministry of Education located in Madrid (García-Carmona et al., 2021).

It should also be noted that the city of Melilla has twelve public education centers for infant and primary education and six institutions for ESO distributed in the city's six districts. Below is a map of the city with education centers by school district.

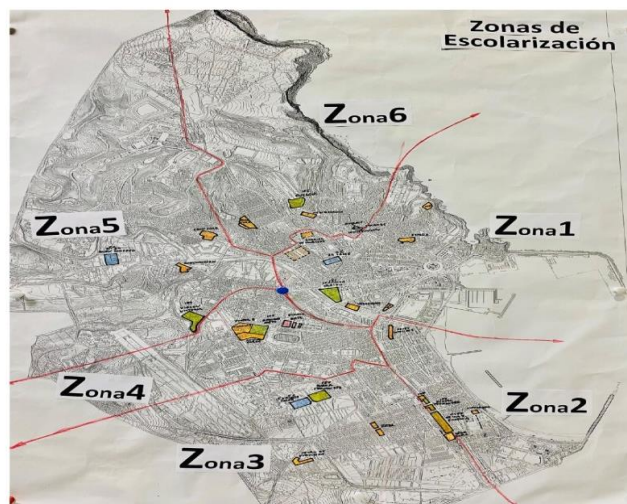


Figure 1. School districts in the Autonomous City of Melilla

Source: Enrique Soler school website
(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wdFS40Gg5PfrrRuBPxtNGN70wEDz05LV/view?pli=1>)

Melilla, an opportunity for UAMs

This research focuses on UAMs with the aim of determining what measures and/or specific strategies are performed in Melilla's

education centers to promote their inclusion. Hence, the term and the characteristics that define it are explained below.

The term UAM (Unaccompanied [Foreign] Minor) refers to all those persons under 18 years of age, who migrate unaccompanied by an adult in unlawful circumstances. Their motivation for migrating could be influenced by situations of abuse, abandonment, poverty, family conflicts, and social/family or media influence regarding Europe. They migrate from a geographical area with high levels of poverty, unemployment, etc. to somewhere they believe is a land of opportunities (De Miguel & Herrero, 2012; Fuentes, 2014; González, 2004).

Due to its location in northwest Africa on the border with Morocco, which promotes a variety of exchanges with its neighbor, Melilla is considered a “frontier city”. This phenomenon has led to UAMs seeing Melilla as the gateway to achieving their dreams (Abderrahman et al., 2018). The most current data on the number of UAMs residing in the city is from 2019. According to Melilla’s Official Bulletin (BOME number 5633, 2019), over 900 minors were received in reception centers that only have capacity for 260 places at most. Before 1997, there was practically no evidence of the existence of UAMs in Melilla. However, in 2014, 283 UAMs were received, and from that year onwards there has been a disproportionate increase until reaching the figure of 1,895 in 2018.

According to Abderahman et al., (2023), 96% of UAMs were born in Morocco and 4% in other African countries (Angola, Algeria, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, and Mali). This data is in accordance with other studies, such as Conde Gallego (2022), López Belmonte et al., (2018) and Vicente Lorca (2022). UAMs come from both urban and rural regions (Jiménez, 2011). Those from urban environments



emigrate on their own initiative and rely on peer networks. Those from rural backgrounds are motivated by their family, who cover their costs (Martínez et al., 2009). The average age of UMAs is 14-15 years and they profess Islam (López Belmonte et al., 2018; Vicente Lorca, 2022).

Another of the significant characteristics of UAMs is their level of maturity, which is higher than their corresponding chronological age. Their clear objective is to become documented and work as soon as possible and they do not contemplate returning to their country of birth. The majority speak Arabic and Central Atlas Tamazight, they maintain regular contact with their families of origin and repeatedly reject or abandon residential care projects (Mohamed-Abderrahman et al., 2018).

Currently, UAMs in Melilla are hosted in reception centers and residential facilities managed by service companies and NGOs, whose work is supervised by the Melilla General Directorate of Families and Minors. The centers and facilities are: Fuerte Purísima, Gota de Leche, and Divina Infantita.

UMAs present high percentages of school and academic failure, which is primarily due to their lack of knowledge of the Spanish language, few social relationships, and the curriculum gap, which is aggravated by late schooling (López Belmonte et al., 2019). Another factor responsible for their academic results is that while the majority of those hosted in Gota de Leche are taught in schools and share the classroom with their peers from Melilla, very few UMAs from Fuerte Purísima find themselves in the same situation. The majority hosted in Fuerte Purísima are enrolled in training courses intended only for them, where they mix with other UAMs. It has been observed that in basic education (primary and ESO) 64% are enrolled from Gota de Leche and 26% from Fuerte Purísima. In contrast, 20% from Gota de Leche and

57% from Fuerte Purísima are enrolled in training courses and workshops such as hairdressing, masonry, hospitality, linguistic immersion, etc. (Abderahman et al.,2023).

Participants

As is typical of qualitative research designs, the participant sample selection was performed using a purposive sampling method (Tójar, 2006). Specifically, we used stratified purposeful sampling which highlights characteristics of particular sub-populations of interest and facilitates comparisons between them. Stratified sampling divides the sample into populations or categories according to the similarities or differences which they exhibit in a study (Friday & Leah, 2024). In this case, the sample comprises fifteen school leaders divided into six school districts, there is a total of 18 school leaders in the city.

Melilla has six school districts for the education of infant, primary, and secondary education. To ensure that every area was represented in the study, we included at least one educational leader per district. We selected nine infant and primary school leaders and six secondary school leaders.

In line with García-Carmona et al. (2021), a major distinguishing feature of Melilla's schools is their cultural diversity. The majority of the UAMs from the fifteen schools that participated in the study were Muslim from Berber and Tamazight language backgrounds, comprising 60 to 90% of the student population. The case of the school in District 6 is of particular interest given that 98% of the student body are Muslims/Berber and the school's teachers have the highest number of years of experience.

Table 1 summarizes key informant data.



Table 1.

Basic data on infant, primary, and secondary school leaders in Melilla participating in the study.

Participant	District	University Education	Level of Education	% Cultures present in schools
P1	4	Psychopedagogical teacher	Infant and primary	70% Muslim (Berber) 29% Christian 1% Roma
P2	5	Teacher	Infant and primary	90% Muslim (Berbers) 9% Christian 1% Roma
P3	4	Teacher	Infant and primary	60% Muslim (Berber) 40% Christian
P4	1	Psychopedagogical teacher	Infant and primary	85% Muslim (Berber) 14% Christian 1% Roma
P5	6	Teacher	Infant and primary	95% Muslim (Berber) 4% Christian 1% Roma
P6	5	Teacher	Infant and primary	95% Muslim (Berber) 4% Christian 1% Roma
P7	3	Teacher	Infant and primary	80% Muslim (Berber) 19% Christian 1% Roma
P8	3	Educational psychologist	Infant and primary	80% Muslims (Berbers) 9% Christians 1% Roma
P9	2	Teacher	Infant and primary	70% Muslim (Berber) 29% Christian 1% Roma
P10	4	Hispanic Philology	Secondary and baccalaureate	70% Muslim (Berber) 29% Christian 1% Roma
P11	3	Bachelor's Degree	Secondary and baccalaureate	70% Muslim (Berber) 29% Christian 1% Roma
P12	1	English Philology CAP*	Secondary and baccalaureate	85% Muslim (Berber) 14% Christian



P13	2	Hispanic Philology	Secondary and baccalaureate	1% Roma 75% Muslims (Berbers) 24% Christians
P14	6	Teacher	Secondary and baccalaureate	1% Roma 98% Muslim (Berber) 1% Christian
P15	5	Bachelor's Degree	Secondary and baccalaureate	1% Roma 90% Muslim (Berber) 9% Christian 1% Roma

* *Certificado Aptitud Pedagógica* (Qualified Teaching Certificate)

The first nine participants in Table 1 are infant and primary school leaders and the remaining six secondary school leaders. All the city's districts are represented in the second column. The third column shows the school leaders' level of training. It is clear that in infant and primary educational centers the training points to a degree in teacher education (former diploma) and in some cases in psychopedagogy (former diploma) while all but one of the secondary education school leaders hold bachelor's degrees. The last column shows which culture the student population belongs to.

Data analysis

This qualitative study uses a classic content analysis method (Bardin, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Content analysis is a suitable method for analyzing trends in communication content, such as the narratives in the study (Strauss & Corbin 1990). We chose to work with this method because of its flexibility, which enables us to explore topics in depth while making quantifiable comparisons comprising various stages of categorization, text distribution, and content analysis.

The first step of the analysis was to identify the dissimilar categories which arose from the meta-category (the overarching category), *the IE*



training, skills, and aptitudes of school leaders. To address the research questions, we identified four subcategories: 1) IE initial and ongoing training in leadership; 2) IE knowledge, skills, and aptitudes needed in leadership positions; 3) Measures and strategies implemented in schools to promote the inclusion of UAMs, and 4) Consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the inclusion of the different cultures that coexist in Melilla's schools.

The second stage of the analysis was organized around the following question: What training on interculturality do educational leaders receive and how do they promote inclusion in their schools in the face of adversities such as COVID-19? The third stage entailed the analysis of the answers to the questions in each category.

Table 2.

Relationship between the analysis categories and the interview questions

Analysis categories	Interview questions
<i>Intercultural education in leadership. Initial and ongoing training</i>	Is your initial training adequate for a leadership position? Have you participated in an initial intercultural management training program?
<i>Intercultural education knowledge, skills, and aptitudes needed in leadership positions</i>	What knowledge, skills, and aptitudes as regards intercultural education do you consider are needed in order to access a leadership position, especially in the context of Melilla?



Measures and strategies in schools to promote the inclusion of UAMs What measures or strategies are in place in your school to promote the inclusion of UAMs? What difficulties have you encountered?

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the inclusion of different cultures in schools How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the inclusion of the different cultures in your school? Do you think the situation has aggravated the inequality gap between the families that use your school?

Once the initial stage of the analysis was complete – determining the categories and subcategories – we used NVivo qualitative data analysis software v.12: searches and visualizations. This enabled us to transform the data into graphic language (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to highlight correlations in the data and determine their frequency, in other words, quantifying coding variants (Mayring 2000; Gbrich 2007). This was to determine trends and patterns, the structures and discourses of the communications.

The methodological strategy used in this study was the deductive approach, where the actions performed to fulfill the objectives are based on background information and solid theoretical knowledge (Dávila, 2006). This was made possible through the analysis of the narrative material using a cyclical process centered around three fundamental stages: data discovery, coding, and relativization (Flick, 2014). The categorization and subsequent coding were performed with the consensus of four experts in qualitative research. This was undertaken in line with the criteria of coherence, relevance, clarity, and



significance. Therefore, it guarantees the credibility of the analysis process (Holloway and Todres 2003).

Prior to the study, permission was requested from the Melilla Faculty of Education and Sport Science Research Commission and Provincial Directorate to contact the education centers. Once consent was obtained, an appointment was made with the school leaders of the infant, primary and secondary education centers to conduct the in-depth interviews based on the objectives set out in the study. The interviews were conducted individually and face-to-face in the participating education centers. Audio recordings were used to record the data and informed consent was obtained from the interviewees for the subsequent transcription. The average duration per interview was 60 minutes. All interviews were professionally transcribed and no personal information was registered.

Findings

In order to respond to the research analysis categories, the results are divided into four sections: a) IE initial and ongoing training for school leaders. b) IE knowledge, skills, and aptitudes needed to become a school leader c) Measures and strategies implemented in education centers to promote the inclusion of UMAs d) Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the inclusion of different cultures in schools.

IE initial and ongoing training for school leaders

First, it is important to highlight that school leaders are the principal agents of change in promoting improvements in academic performance and success (Weinstein & Muñoz, 2019). In this regard, the authority or power that are given to manage intercultural schools could be used to promote inclusivity and intercultural leadership

practices (Ärlestig et al., 2016; Gómez-Hurtado, 2014; León et al., 2018; Ryan, 2016).

With regard to the initial IE training that school leaders receive, most of the interviewers highlighted that they had not received any specific training. However, there is an annual course offered by trade unions that deals with interculturality and forms part of state civil servant exams. A minority of the interviewers stated that they had received some specific training prior to starting their job or even in-service in the form of seminars or workshops. As to whether they consider their initial IE training to be adequate for their position, most participants said that they did not. However, the majority also stated that although they had not received adequate initial training for their position, they had acquired everything they needed to perform their duties to the best of their ability through experience. They unanimously stated that their daily experience in their centers means that they are trained in multiculturalism and interculturalism, highlighting the singularity of living in Melilla, which is characterized by cultural diversity. In this respect, some informants highlighted that:

No, no training as such, but rather daily experience (E2).

The best training is the day-to-day training I get in my center (E11).

No, no training, but I've worked a lot in multicultural environments.

So yes, I have had many first-hand multicultural experiences with the type of multiculturalism that is present in Melilla (E3).

In reference to ongoing IE training courses, the majority highlighted that they had not received any specific training, although some school leaders stated that they themselves had been trainers and speakers in talks, seminars, etc., on intercultural matters due to their work experience. When asked, most of the participants stated that they



believed they had not received sufficient formal training on the subject. However, they again highlighted that their day-to-day work means that they are trained in everything they need in order to perform their duties correctly, taking into account the diversity of their schools.

Whatever I wanted, because it's not compulsory, you know that civil servants can't be forced to take courses (E8).

None. But I've given 4-5 [courses]. I mean, I haven't done any, but I've been called on several occasions to give a talk or workshop (E14).

I haven't done any as such, but I've been reading things related to it (E12).

IE Knowledge, skills, and aptitudes needed to become a school leader

The importance of leadership practices aimed at managing cultural diversity cannot be understated as they have a significant impact on school improvement, and school organization has a positive effect on teaching and learning (Leithwood et al., 2020). Therefore, school leaders require very specific and complex knowledge, skill sets, and aptitudes to perform their role successfully (Silva, 2012).

The second section of results, which addresses the IE knowledge, skills, and aptitudes required to apply for school management positions in Melilla yielded the following findings. In terms of knowledge, the informants highlighted the importance of understanding the history of Melilla, the cultures that coexist in the city, the different neighborhoods, etc., as well as the importance of having notions of pedagogy, and acquiring training on interculturality and knowledge of leadership. In terms of skills, they highlighted listening and communication skills. And in relation to aptitudes, they

highlighted empathy, emotional intelligence, persuasion, problem solving, respect, patience, and leadership. They also highlighted the importance of families in schools and how they should be empathetic towards them, as each family has different circumstances. Furthermore, taking into account that Melilla is multicultural, special attention is paid to the families in schools in order to design more democratic and inclusive intercultural methods:

Well, the first thing is to know the history of Melilla, the different neighborhoods, the idiosyncrasies of the different cultures of the inhabitants. Then skills, I think it's about feelings, a little like putting yourself in someone else's shoes. As for skills, above all, having the desire to understand them, get to know and comprehend them (E4).

First, to understand the intercultural reality of Melilla, to really know it, to see the situation and base your work on it. To be an open person, a global person, capable of managing cultural differences, who has patience and above all a lot of empathy (E13).

Measures and strategies implemented in education centers to promote the inclusion of UMAs

It is important to highlight that this study focuses on UAMs with the aim of determining what specific measures and/or strategies are implemented by Melilla education centers to promote their inclusion. In the third section of results, which refers to the measures and strategies performed in education centers for the inclusion of UAMs, most of the participants stated that they were not currently working with groups of UAMs in their centers. However, they stated that they had worked with UAMs in the past and there is currently only one education center that still works with UAMs. The measures and strategies performed consist of a reception plan to collect and analyze



the needs of individual UAMs, which then leads to a work plan in which UAMs are worked with individually for two or three hours a day, and the rest of the time they study in the classroom with their classmates. In the individual sessions, the work focuses primarily on linguistic immersion and the socio-cultural environment. Another measure adopted by some schools is to work with the families involved in the school to raise awareness and sensitize them about IE and its benefits. This is due to the fact that sometimes families are reluctant to allow UAMs to attend schools.

No, we don't. Years ago, we did have children from Syria. It was like a kind of classroom, where we worked with them individually and in groups. We took them in and worked with them individually for two or three hours a day to give them more personalized training and in other sessions in the classroom with the other children (E5).

The ones we have come from CETI. In previous years, we've had a large number of students due to the border issue. This year we have very few. When they arrive, they are given special attention to help them integrate into the classroom and in the classroom, the work that the tutor does with them is also important (E6).

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the inclusion of different cultures in schools

According to UNESCO (2023), the first impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was the digital divide, which especially affected primary and secondary school students. The socioeconomic situation of students and their families was an exacerbating factor. The fourth category of analysis aims to determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Melilla's education centers and the inclusion of different cultures in schools. The participants indicated that the impact of

COVID-19 had less to do with cultural differences and more to do with “social status”. This means that families with more economic resources were able to cope better with the changes that were taking place in schools, given that they had access to devices (mobile phones, computers, etc.) to perform activities and connect with teachers from home during the lockdown. However, it was more complicated to work with families with lower purchasing power, who sometimes only had one device for three or four children and/or did not have a computer. The support provided by the authorities in Melilla, including the loan of tablets and computers, was widely reported. However, in many cases, families did not have an Internet connection to be able to participate in the different training activities. The authorities also provided internet cards. However, those families with a low level of basic computer skills found it very difficult to access the internet, despite the fact that the resources were provided.

Well, with respect to cultures, it hasn't had any repercussions. In any case, the greatest impact was in terms of social status and availability of resources and who had more training in families, not at a professional level, but in the family environment, where there were resources and basic knowledge to be able to manage the online issue and all the devices and all that, but it was not a cultural conditioning factor (E1).

Well, there was no difference between them. The pandemic affected everyone equally, what it has affected has nothing to do with interculturality or anything like that, but with families' economy (E7).

Well, here the students we have are 100% Muslim, I mean, perhaps here it's exasperated by the fact that it's a center on the outskirts of the city, so I think that for the education of these children, the center



needs to be here. The pandemic has caused damage, it has caused the children to fall further behind than they should have (E15).

In relation to whether the inequality gap between the families that use the education centers had increased, the participants stated that it had. This highlights the fact that inequalities already existed and continued to exist during the pandemic but became more evident due to the crisis. Above all, they highlighted the acquisition of computer resources, as low-income families could not afford what was required of them by education centers. In more heterogeneous schools, participants also indicate that the inequality gap between families in the educational community has become more evident:

It couldn't be any other way, as usual the most disadvantaged family always suffers the most. The less well-off classes have noticed it more because the support they have is taken away and mom and dad do't know how to help them. There's a clear gap (E9).

No... I think we have a very heterogeneous student body, there are all sorts of pupils in the school. The Melilla Acoge association and another one that is also here collaborating with us, they came weekly, collected the materials that we gave them and then brought us the children's homework (E10).

Once the process of reducing, categorizing, and coding had been performed, as well as the transformation of the data, the following word cloud was obtained, which reflects the most frequently repeated words from the interviews:



Figure 1. Word cloud extracted from NVivo software.

Source: The authors.

Figure 2 highlights the most repeated and therefore most important words for the respondents in the study. The concepts that appeared most frequently in the discourse of the key informants include intercultural, educational, and training. These three aspects were repeated throughout the data collection process to describe the educational reality experienced in Melilla’s education centers. In short, the results highlight the importance of intercultural training for educational leaders in order to respond to the specific needs of the educational community, especially in the context of Melilla. They also highlight the presence of cultural diversity in schools as a defining feature of the city’s educational landscape. The data reveals the concern and importance given to the subject of the study by the participants. In summary, as already highlighted (Leiva, 2012; Peñalva & Soriano, 2010), the importance of IE training for school leaders and cultural diversity in schools is paramount.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the practices implemented by school leaders to promote interculturality in the context of Melilla:



a city characterized by its vast cultural diversity with five major cultures coexisting together (Christian, Muslim, Hebrew, Hindu, and Roma (Campos, 2017). The analysis of the literature review and the in-depth interviews conducted for this study revealed that most schools in Melilla have a high student population comprising mostly ethnic-religious Muslim minorities (Moroccan/Berber), while educational centers are managed by a Christian minority (Spanish).

In the following section, the objectives of the study are discussed, recommendations made, and some limitations highlighted.

First, IE initial and ongoing training for Melilla's school leaders was analyzed. This enabled us to determine how cultural diversity is managed and why intercultural training for 21st-century society has become one of the main challenges for European Union training institutions (Guilherme & Dietz, 2015; Piekut & Valentine, 2017). Despite the fact that the study context comprises different cultures, the participants highlighted the lack practical and useful IE training courses for their field of education. They also stated that the management preparation course lacks sufficient content relating to interculturality. The results show, as Vázquez, Liesa, and Bernal (2016) also argue that training courses are currently mere formalities through which there is no real improvement in the professional development of school leaders. Among other reasons, this is due to the fact that they are far removed from the contextual reality. Therefore, training programs need to motivate participants to subsequently implement their newly acquired skills in their schools (Jerdborg, 2022). Furthermore, they highlight the importance of implementing the aforementioned training programs not only for top school management, but for all intermediate leaders (heads of study, teachers, etc.), which would facilitate management work and increase the

involvement of the educational community (Peñalva & Soriano, 2010; Leiva, 2012). Other recommendations suggested were to hold workshops with families, teachers, and members of the educational community to learn more about cultural diversity and create a better school climate; an important aspect in improving academic success and the social integration of UAMs and their families.

Second, in relation to the IE knowledge, skills, and aptitudes required to qualify for school leadership positions, the study also provides important findings. The work of school leaders has become increasingly challenging and complex, as they are expected to lead school improvement, handle a multitude of competing requests, and address the needs of diverse stakeholders (Park & Datnow, 2022). In order for school leaders to do all of the above, as reflected in the findings of this study, they need to have knowledge, skills, and aptitudes orientated towards the constituencies they work with in the school community.

In the context of Melilla, Muslim families with restricted resources face cultural, class, and even racial inequality. In context with a long history of immigration, it is argued that schools play a key and unique role in the education and cultural socialization of ethno-racial, lower-class minority students (García-Carmona et al., 2021). Thus, we can confirm that the results of the study are consistent with the idea that school leaders have an impact on school improvement and academic success. This statement is concurrent with other reviews and research on the subject, including studies by Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins, (2020), Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016), Hallinger (2018), and Jerdborg, (2022), among others.

The importance of knowledge in school management should be highlighted, although the imperative need to develop and promote



skills in relation to interculturality is more notable. As the interviewees state, the main skill most in demand is empathy. It is evident that when working in a diverse context and more so in the school context, social skills such as: empathy, active listening, tolerance, and so on are essential aspects of educational leaders. Therefore, it is necessary to implement activities which promote these types of skills which can be implemented within educational centers or shared external spaces with other professionals.

Third, the measures and strategies implemented in the city to promote the inclusion of UAMs were addressed, who are fleeing very difficult situations and see Europe as the land of opportunities, (De Miguel & Herrero, 2012; Fuentes, 2014; González, 2004). The results show that the majority of UAMs do not attend ordinary education centers but are primarily hosted in the La Purísima reception center (Floristán, 2022). Owing to this, only a small number of the participants in this study have worked with UAMs in their centers. In the case of the education centers that have worked with UAMs, they use a reception plan, the same one referred to in BOME number 5633. The plan involves responding to each individual child in relation to their educational, social, etc. needs. It should be noted that UAMs are considered a group at risk of social exclusion, therefore, not only inclusion work must be done with them, but also work relating to knowledge of the language, social norms, and alike. In addition, the community at large should also be included in the programs implemented. It is important for educational leaders to understand that this group needs to integrate into social contexts where the whole community is present with the idea of promoting their integration through social relationships without generating exclusion that separates them from society (López Belmonte et al., 2019). One of the limitations or shortcomings

presented in Melilla, and generalized in the rest of Spain, is the lack of knowledge and skills needed to interact with UAMs. Breaking prejudices such as “they are going to rob me” and “they are dangerous” must be worked on from all levels, especially in the educational context. The integration of UAMs into society is not only the responsibility of school leaders but also that of the rest of the community, who need to have an open, flexible and, above all, empathetic outlook.

And lastly, we look at the results of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which suddenly paralyzed all aspects of daily life by creating “undeniable chaos” that shook the field of education (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020). It should be noted that according to UNESCO, 1.6 billion learners worldwide were affected by school closures. The physical closure of schools has impacted 94% of the world’s student population (United Nations, 2020). Stone-Johnson and Weiner (2020) define school leaders as key frontline workers, as they also face social issues and communicate with families to provide them with information.

By analyzing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the inclusion of the different cultures in education centers, the study revealed that there were notable inequalities that are determined by the socioeconomic level (low, medium, or high) of the families from the different communities. As previously confirmed in various studies (Bonal & González, 2021; Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Van & Parolin, 2020), the digital divide increased in more deprived situations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The results confirm that schools situated in low socioeconomic conditions have restricted technological resources to create a suitable online educational solution. However, it must be said that the authorities in Melilla provided technological resources to



cover the needs of education centers, including tablets and computers for those families who lacked the means to perform activities and participate in online classes. Unfortunately, not all students were able to take advantage of these resources as a high percentage went to Morocco (to cities located on the other side of the border).

In summary, the situation that arose due to COVID-19 ought to be seen as an opportunity to implement alternatives and design new strategies to involve the entire educational community in IE. By doing so, it would be easier to reach each member of the educational community, and provide minorities, who occupy a significant proportion of education centers, with the attention and answers they need. This requires a holistic approach that enables interculturality to be taught in a cross-cultural way using diversity as a source of enrichment and learning. In addition, the needs detected in families in relation to their low training in technology should be addressed by implementing workshops to train them in the use of mobile and other devices in order to access online educational environments. This would help UAMs to access more resources and improve learning.

Limitations and Future lines of Research

The results of this study highlight one of the main limitations of the research, which is the complexity of the managerial position in terms of the number of challenges that society presents, and educational centers must respond to (Weinstein et al., 2019). School leaders are immersed in so many bureaucratic procedures, school management, etc. that sometimes they feel overwhelmed without being able to achieve all their goals.



Second, due to the nature of systematic literature reviews, we found inherent limitations. Restricting the search to a time interval, a type of publication, or a specific database might have resulted in not having taken into account other studies of interest and relevance to our object of study.

Third, it is important to highlight the difficulty in conducting interviews with some school leaders due to their heavy work schedules. However, although this further lengthened the process, in the end the participation of key informants from all school districts was achieved, so that all areas of the city are represented in this research.

To give continuity to the investigation, we propose the following future lines of:

- In order to obtain a more global vision of the educational community, integrate family perceptions.
- Replicate the study in a different context outside Spain but with similar characteristics for comparison.

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About the authors:

Nabila Chilah Abdelkader is a PhD student in the Education Sciences programme at the Department of Didactics and School Organization at University of Granada (Melilla, Spain), and coordinator of the Caixaproinfancia programme at the Melilla Acoge association. Nabila's research focuses on educational leadership, intercultural education and ICT.

E-mail: nabila.chilah@gmail.com

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization/Administration-formulated research goals and aims, and administered the research; Writing, original draft preparation - creation and/or presentation of the published work; Funding acquisition - acquired financial support for the project leading to this publication.



Marina García-Carmona is an Associate Professor at the Department of Didactics and School Organization at the University of Granada (Melilla, Spain), Visiting researcher at ICS-U Lisbon (Lisbon, Portugal), and a member of the Analysis of the Educational Reality Research Group (HUM-672). She has carried out funded research stays at foreign universities, including Fordham University (USA), CUNY (USA), UNCUYO (Argentina), National University of Salta (Argentina), University of Oxford (UK), and University of Lisbon (Portugal). Marina's research focuses on educational leadership, parents' participation at school, intercultural education, and ICT.

E-mail: marinagc@ugr.es

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization - formulated research goals and aims; Methodology - designed the methodology; Writing, review, and editing - prepared and/or presented the published work; Funding acquisition - Acquired financial support for the project leading to this publication; Supervision - oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.

Francisco Javier Hinojo Lucena is a Full Professor at the Department of Didactics and School Organization at the University of Granada (Spain), and a member of the Analysis of the Educational Reality Research Group (HUM-672). Francisco's research focuses on educational leadership and ICT.

E-mail: fhinojo@ugr.es



Authorship credit details: Writing, review, and editing - prepared and/or presented the published work; Supervision - oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.

Scoping the Literature on Professional Development for Educators and Educational Leaders in the UAE

Zeina Hojeij* 

Zayed University, Dubai, UAE

Shayma Ali AlSuwaidi 

Zayed University, Dubai, UAE

Shanzila Ahmed 

Zayed University, Dubai, UAE

Abstract

This comprehensive scoping review aimed to identify and synthesize the existing research on professional development (PD) for educators and educational leaders in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) between 2018 and 2023. Fourteen scholarly articles covering a wide range of topics related to education in the UAE were collected and analyzed. The review revealed that PD initiatives in the UAE often focus on enhancing teacher effectiveness and leadership skills, particularly in the context of educational reforms and inclusive education practices. However, significant challenges were identified, including implementation gaps, cultural barriers, and resistance to centrally imposed PD programs. The findings suggest that while PD programs positively impact teacher performance and educational quality, further efforts are needed to address the challenges within the UAE's unique socio-cultural context.

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*Corresponding author:

Email: Zeina.Hojeij@zu.ac.ae



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Introduction

The UAE is committed to establishing a progressive and adaptable education system that aligns with its vision of creating a knowledge-based economy. High standards and continual adaptation to global trends characterize the country's educational framework (Hathorn & Dillon, 2018). As the UAE's education sector continues to evolve rapidly, there is an increasing demand for ongoing professional development (PD) among educators and leaders. Such development is essential for equipping them with the competencies to address the emerging challenges within this dynamic environment (El Afi, 2019; Azaza et al., 2023). Recent studies have highlighted the diverse needs of the UAE's educational sector, particularly in light of rapid socio-economic changes and ambitious national goals (Abdelaziz et al., 2023; Baroudi, 2023).

The UAE's education system operates within a unique socio-cultural and economic context, significantly influencing the effectiveness of PD programs. The country's diverse population, rapid economic growth, and ambitious national goals create a complex environment where educational leaders must navigate global best practices and local cultural expectations (Hathorn & Dillon, 2018; Abdelaziz et al., 2023). This duality requires PD initiatives to be both innovative and culturally sensitive, ensuring that educators are up to date with

international standards while being adept at applying them within the specificities of the UAE's educational landscape (Azaza et al., 2023; Blaik Hourani & Litz, 2018). Despite considerable investments and efforts in PD, a comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness in the UAE still needs to be explored. While various programs have been implemented, there is a need for more research on their impact on educational outcomes, particularly within the UAE's unique socio-cultural and economic context (Alneyadi, 2022). This context introduces specific challenges that conventional PD approaches may not adequately address (Abbasi & David, 2021).

Given these considerations, this review seeks to bridge this research gap by analyzing existing literature on PD practices and the challenges faced by educational leaders in the UAE. The findings from this study aim to inform strategies for enhancing PD initiatives, thereby supporting the UAE's broader educational objectives. This research investigates the PD landscape for educators and educational leaders in the UAE, drawing on a thorough review of relevant literature to examine the opportunities, challenges, and outcomes associated with PD in this context. The following research questions guide the study:

1. What characterizes the professional development initiatives available to educators and leaders in the UAE?
2. What challenges do educational leaders encounter in the context of professional development?
3. What are the observable effects of professional development programs on teacher performance and the overall quality of education in the UAE?



Background on Professional Development

PD is foundational to ongoing learning and growth within diverse professional domains. PD is essential for educators and leaders in education, providing them with the tools and insights needed to adapt to evolving challenges and enhance their competencies (Abbasi & David, 2021). In that sense, Saeed (2023) defines teacher training as a structured plan aimed at enhancing teachers' understanding, abilities, and perspectives. Teacher training programs must provide educators with continuous opportunities for professional growth and encouragement.

The field of PD has evolved, changing from traditional workshops to personalized, technology-driven approaches that meet the needs of professionals. Teachers and leaders require training in new skills to effectively engage with a generation that learns beyond traditional learning methods and settings. Thus, teacher training is essential for acquiring innovative educational methods, technological advancements, and emerging trends in education, as well as implementing them in their classrooms (Saeed, 2023). Coady et al. (2023) assert that educator professional development can positively influence teachers, leaders, and students by creating healthy work and learning environments. So, teacher training programs are precious and can occur in various settings, such as meetings, training sessions, formal or informal talks, and other gatherings (Saeed, 2023).

Ratnayake et al. (2020) argue that PD is important for teachers since it links theory with practice. PD also aims to change beliefs, attitudes, and skills positively. Effective PD does not focus on content alone but also on the delivery method, where active learning has shown more promising outcomes. Efficient PD should be innovative and involve active learning. In such programs, the teachers construct their



knowledge through collaborative activities whose content is related to their specific needs in their teaching practices. The targeted outcome should improve students' learning outcomes (Coady et al., 2023).

PD is also about acquiring subject-specific knowledge and extends to developing broader competencies such as leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and adaptability. Its effectiveness depends on aligning with the institution's aims and the constantly changing educational environment (Blaik Hourani & Litz, 2018). Successful PD initiatives are relevant and practical, contributing to individual growth, organizational resilience, and the broader professional community (Azaza et al., 2023). Furthermore, effective PD requires peer collaboration, which promotes efficient communication, socialization, and cooperation in a group (Coady et al., 2023). This is ultimately rewarding in terms of creating members who are problem solvers, leading to better outcomes. Through social interdependence, team members become more efficient. Despite having expertise in subject content and teaching practices, the study suggests more teacher training on other skills, such as integrating technology in their teaching activities (Wei et al., 2023). Teachers can link their theoretical knowledge with practice through PD programs that expose teachers to diverse teaching cases and engage them in reflective practices and collaboration with peers. Thus, targeted PD programs can promote professional competence.

Finally, research reveals that self-efficacy is highly related to performance. If educators feel that they have the necessary skills, they become more confident and motivated to use those skills in their teaching practices (De Simone, 2020; Saeed, 2023).

Methodology

This study utilizes a systematic approach to examine the literature on professional development for educational leaders in the UAE. The methodology is organized into four key stages: data identification, extraction, coding, and analysis.

Data Identification

To comprehensively review the relevant literature, a thorough search was conducted across various academic databases, which aligns with the approach used by Abdelaziz et al. (2023) in their study of professional development needs in the UAE. The selection of databases was based on their relevance and accessibility, ensuring the inclusion of a wide range of studies pertinent to professional development in the UAE. The search focused on literature published between 2018 and 2023, centered on educational leaders in K–12 and higher education settings. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were meticulously outlined (see Table 1), providing a consistent framework for selecting articles that met the study's objectives, as shown in similar research by Baroudi (2023). The search was guided by key terms such as "professional development," "teacher performance," and "United Arab Emirates."

Table 1.

Guiding Questions and Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

Main topic	Scoping the literature of Professional Development for Educators and Educational Leaders in the UAE.
Research questions	What is the nature and scope of professional development initiatives for educators and leaders in the UAE? What challenges do educational leaders perceive as inherent in professional development?



	What are the discernible outcomes and impacts of professional development programs on teacher performance and overall educational quality in the UAE?
Goal	The goal of this study is to systematically compile and summarize the existing literature, explaining the current status and comprehension of professional development in the UAE. This includes an examination of the opportunities available, the challenges confronted by educational leaders, and the resulting outcomes.
Data evaluation and Inclusion/ Exclusion Criteria	Articles published between 2018 and 2023 only are used. Geographical emphasis is strictly on the UAE context. Articles not directly related to defined themes were excluded.
Main Results	Various PD initiatives in the UAE cover specialized training, sustainable modules, inclusive education, and gifted education through workshops, seminars, conferences, and online platforms. Challenges like implementation gaps, cultural barriers, and resistance to centrally imposed PD are being faced, requiring collaborative solutions. Despite obstacles, PD programs showed positive outcomes such as increased teacher confidence and performance.

This table outlines the guiding questions and criteria for inclusion and exclusion during the article selection process. It helps ensure a transparent and consistent approach to identifying relevant literature.

Table 2.

Database Accessibility Comparison for Research Resources

Database	Access	Internet Site	Pay Site	Articles Count
Taylor & Francis Online	Online database and publisher	https://taylorandfrancis.com/	Yes	5
Google Scholar	Online search engine	www.google scholar.com	No	4
ProQuest	Online database and publisher	www.proquest.com	No	2



ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center)	Online search software	https://eric.ed.gov	No	1
The Social Science Research Network (SSRN)	Online search engine	www.ssrn.com	No	1
Wiley Online Library	Online database and publisher	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com	No	1

This table compares the accessibility of various databases used for this literature review, including their respective website URLs, whether they are freely accessible or require payment for access, and the number of articles retrieved from each database.

Scoping Review Explanation

This study adopts a scoping review methodology, which is increasingly recognized for its effectiveness in synthesizing evidence across broad and complex topics, particularly in educational contexts (Azaza et al., 2023). Unlike systematic reviews that aim to answer specific research questions, scoping reviews map the available literature on a particular topic and provide an overview of its scope, nature, and key characteristics. This approach is particularly beneficial for identifying gaps in existing research, clarifying complex concepts, and laying the groundwork for future studies (Munn et al., 2018). A similar approach is exemplified by Bellibaş and Gümüş (2019) in their systematic review of educational leadership and management research in Turkey, where they conducted a content analysis of topics,



conceptual models, and methods to provide a comprehensive overview of the field. Scoping reviews have been used in various fields, including education, to explore broad topics where more focused, systematic reviews may not be feasible or appropriate (Pham et al., 2014).

Data Extraction

After identifying relevant articles, a systematic process was employed to extract essential information from each study. This process follows the method outlined by Ewen et al. (2023), ensuring that all relevant data is captured systematically. This included details such as the title, authors, year of publication, research questions, methodology, educational setting, and specifics about the professional development initiatives discussed. The extracted data were organized into a structured format, as summarized in Table 3, allowing for a comprehensive overview of each article's contributions to the field.

Table 3.

Overview of Selected Articles on Professional Development in the UAE

This table summarizes critical details such as the title, authors, publication year, journal, database, abstract, keywords, research questions, methodology, educational setting, country, type of PD, participants, duration, mode of delivery, timing about COVID-19, and funding source (if mentioned). This overview helps readers understand the selected articles' primary focus, findings, and implications regarding professional development in the UAE.



Article	Title	Author(s)	Year	Journal	Methodology	PD Purpose	Delivery Mode
1	Investigating Teacher Professional Learning in a Context of Change: A UAE Case Study	Azaza, M., Litz, D., & Hourani, R. B.	2023	Leadership and Policy in Schools	Exploratory case study / qualitative	Job-embedded PD	F2F
2	Professional Development Needs and Challenges Faced by K-12 Teachers in Delivering Effective Online Education in the UAE	Abdelaziz, H. A., Ankit, A., Almekhlafi, A. G., Aderibigbe, S., Alawani, A., & Goyol, A. B.	2023	International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research	Descriptive research design / Mixed Methods	Enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, using technology tools	Online
3	Exploring Teacher Education for Sustainable Development in the UAE	Baroudi, S	2023	Sustainability	Qualitative case study	Improving assessment skills	Blended
4	Evaluation of an Innovative Model for Teacher Professional Development on Educational Inclusion in the UAE	Ewen, M., Ferreira, A., & Helder, M. G.	2023	Professional Development in Education	Mixed methods	Inclusive Education	Blended
5	"I Have Removed My Ceiling": Qualitative Experiences of Teachers on Their Professional Development	Garces-Bacsal, R. M., Elhoweris, H., Mohamed, A., Almuhaury, O., Safi, M., Moustafa, A., & Alzyoudi, M.	2022	Journal for the Education of the Gifted	Qualitative study	(a) higher order thinking skills, (b) best practices in gifted education, and (c) curriculum differentiation for gifted and talented learners	Blended

Data Coding



6	High School Science Teachers' Professional Development Experiences in the United Arab Emirates	Alneyadi, S. S.	2022	Journal of Science Teacher Education	Mixed methods	Science education: classroom management, instructional skills, technology integration, differentiated instruction, student-centered strategies	F2F
7	The Role of School Leaders in Facilitating Continuous Professional Development to Empower Teachers in Private Schools in Dubai	Phogat Neena	2022	The British University in Dubai	Mixed methods	Continuous Professional Development	Not mentioned
8	The Impact of Continuous Professional Development on Teacher's Performance, A Case Study Among Teachers in a Private School in Dubai	Abbasi, M. A., & David, S. A.	2021	Globus Journal of Progressive Education	Quantitative study	Ongoing professional development, induction programs, mentoring programs, and professional learning community	Not mentioned
9	The Role of Education Leadership in Managing Teaching Competencies of Selected Secondary Teachers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (An Exploratory Study)	Kumari, V., Hameed, S., Krishnadas Mazumder, L., & Sathyan, A	2020	International Journal of Management	Quantitative study	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
10	Investigating Teachers' Perceptions of the Influence of Professional Development on Teachers' Performance and Career Progression	Tantawy, N.	2020	Arab World English Journal	Qualitative interpretive study	Pedagogy, classroom management, content knowledge	F2F
11	Listening to and Supporting Teachers in the United Arab Emirates: Promoting	Goe, L., Alkaabi, A., &	2020	ETS Research Report No. RR-20-06	Qualitative study	Not mentioned	Not mentioned

	Educational Success for the Nation	Tannenbaum, R. J.					
12	The Impact of Professional Development Training on Teachers' Performance in Abu Dhabi Cycle Two and Three Schools	El Afi, A.D.	2019	Teacher Development: An international journal of teachers' professional development	Mixed methods	New School Model	Not mentioned
13	Aligning Professional Development, School Self-Evaluation and Principals' Performance Standards: A UAE Case Study	Blaik Hourani, R., & Litz, D. R.	2018	School Leadership & Management	Qualitative case study	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
14	Action Research As Professional Development, Its Role in Education Reform in the UAE	Hathorn, C., & Dillon, A. M.	2018	Educational Research	Quantitative study	Action Research	F2F

The next step involved categorizing the extracted data through a coding process, following the approach taken by El Afi (2019) in his study on the impact of professional development training in Abu Dhabi. This coding process entailed assigning codes to different elements of the studies, such as the type of professional development, participant demographics, mode of delivery, and the timing of the initiatives about the COVID-19 pandemic. The coding framework was developed iteratively, adapting to emerging themes and ensuring that all relevant aspects were systematically addressed. This process facilitated the organization of the data into meaningful categories for subsequent analysis.

Data Analysis



Finally, the coded data were analyzed to address the research questions posed by this study. The analysis aimed to uncover patterns, trends, and gaps in the literature, providing insights into the current state of professional development for educational leaders in the UAE. This analytical approach is consistent with that used by Saeed (2023) in their evaluation of teacher training programs. The findings were synthesized to explain the challenges, opportunities, and outcomes associated with these initiatives, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on educational leadership and professional development.

Results

To address the research questions proposed, articles from existing literature were summarized to explain the status and understanding of professional development in the UAE. This process involved examining available opportunities, challenges faced by educational leaders, and the resulting outcomes. Articles were sourced from various databases, including Taylor & Francis Online (5), Google Scholar (4), and others such as ERIC, ProQuest, SSRN, and Wiley Online Library and the publication years of the articles varied, with (4) published in 2023, (3) in 2022, (1) in 2021, (3) in 2020, (1) in 2019, and (2) in 2018. Articles published before 2018 were excluded from the study (see Table 1 for inclusion/exclusion criteria). Of the 14 identified studies, six used qualitative, three used quantitative, and five used mixed methods.

Additionally, all studies were conducted in a school education setting. The duration range of professional development programs discussed in the articles spans from as short as eight weeks to as long as two years, with variations in hours per week and total workshop duration.



However, many articles did not explicitly state the duration of the PD program.

Research Question 1: What is the nature and scope of professional development initiatives for educators and leaders in the UAE?

The literature findings show an overview of PD initiatives and programs targeting educators and leaders in the UAE. These initiatives include various themes, strategies, and specific programs to enhance teacher effectiveness, promote innovation and education practices, and enhance leadership skills. Below are the key findings:

Specialized Training and Professional Development Programs

Professional development initiatives in the UAE use a multifaceted approach, addressing different topics and themes important for educator growth and school improvement. The Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) introduced PD plans and standards for school administrators to align with ongoing school reforms, focusing on enhancing teaching effectiveness and leadership skills, aligning with educational authorities' vision, covering areas such as curriculum design and pedagogical strategies, and fostering collaboration among educators. (Blaik Hourani & Litz, 2018). Tamkeen is one of the formal recent PD programs established by ADEC, which aims to enhance teacher performance by providing training on different PD topics such as behavior management, classroom management, critical thinking, differentiation, information and communication technology (ICT), school improvement plans, and teacher evaluation. (Azaza et al., 2023).

In addition, there are PD initiatives in Abu Dhabi's education system that aim to enhance teachers' performance at schools by conducting activities, including sessions delivered by external educational



advisors, school leadership, peer observations, coaching, and mentoring. These sessions focus on pre-planned content, lesson planning, teaching methods, teaching tools, classroom management, and cooperation. Examples of PD topics include lesson planning focusing on objectives, assessment, and time management; teaching methods focusing on modern approaches and student engagement; teaching tools such as smart boards and PowerPoint presentations; classroom management strategies including disciplinary measures and rapport building; and cooperation addressing group work and effective collaboration among teachers. (El Afi, 2019).

According to Hathorn and Dillon (2018), PD in the UAE is crucial for education reform initiatives, focusing on improving teacher quality. Various models of PD exist across the UAE, managed by different educational entities such as the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Knowledge Health and Development Authority (KHDA), and ADEC. These initiatives aim to align with international standards and enhance teacher performance. PD initiatives extend beyond traditional training sessions to include action research (AR) to promote teacher autonomy and effectively address classroom challenges. Based on critical theory, AR encourages teachers to engage in authentic learning experiences, fostering collaboration, research, and reflection to drive pedagogical improvement.

Furthermore, professional development initiatives for educators and leaders, as mentioned in the article by Tantawy (2020), include various activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences, peer observations, discussions with colleagues, and formal courses. These programs cover pedagogy, classroom management, content knowledge, and leadership skills. Both in-house sessions organized by schools and external opportunities sponsored by organizations like the Middle



East and North Africa (MENA) Teacher Summit are mentioned, indicating a diverse approach to professional development.

Sustainable Professional Development Module

A study by Baroudi (2023) involved a sustainable professional development module structured to be over 25 hours across ten weeks and designed to meet the needs of teachers and head teachers at various branches of a specific private school in the UAE. It focuses on assessment skills and new teaching methods and techniques. The study employed qualitative methods, including interviews, post-PD surveys, and reflections, to collect and analyze data to explore the PD program's effectiveness and sustainability in enhancing teachers' skills and practices.

Inclusive Education Practices

The professional development initiatives in the UAE focus on promoting inclusive education practices through a comprehensive model, aiming to promote the capability of teachers to meet the needs of all students in their regular classrooms, including 'students of determination.' This model integrates various elements such as training sessions, mentoring, portfolio completion, and participation in professional learning communities (PLC). Emphasizing active learning, collaboration, and sustained duration, these initiatives aim to enhance educators' knowledge, attitudes, and practical application skills related to inclusive classroom practices. It includes instructional sessions covering topics such as inclusive education, universal design for learning, specific learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), physical disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and encouraging positive student behavior. (Ewen et al., 2023).



Gifted Education Initiatives

The government, recognizing the importance of prioritizing giftedness and innovation in education, has strategically invested in training teachers to align classroom pedagogies with national initiatives. One notable program is a two-year PD training program administered in a blended format, offered by a teacher-training university in partnership with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). This program focuses on enhancing teachers' expertise in higher-order thinking skills, differentiation, and best practices in pedagogies for gifted and talented students. The PD uses various methods, such as district-sponsored workshops, university courses, professional conferences, and online learning experiences, catering to both seasoned and beginning teachers. (Garces-Bacsal et al., 2022).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The CPD program offers the development of critical and reflective practices, problem-solving skills, teaching practices' references, practitioner's dialogue skills, increased links, cooperation and collaboration with a different teacher, personal satisfaction and promotion opportunities, and best practices sharing their capability towards students. This program is tailored for educators in private schools in Dubai. (Phogat, 2022).

These CPD initiatives mentioned include coaching, mentoring, and training programs aimed at improving teaching practices and keeping educators updated with changing trends in education. The study emphasizes the importance of instructional leadership in supporting teachers and enhancing student learning outcomes through PD and highlights the role of technology in facilitating PD. (Abbasi & David, 2021)



Research Question 2: What challenges are inherent in professional development as perceived by educational leaders?

Different studies have been conducted to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of PD programs and initiatives. Below are the key findings of the challenges faced by educational leaders.

Implementation Gap in Professional Development

There is a significant gap between formal policy objectives regarding PD and their actual implementation. Teachers need more agency and face different obstacles that hinder their engagement in PD activities. Additionally, the absence of clear goals and strategies for PD implementation leads to confusion and inefficiency. This lack of coherence contributes to the dissatisfaction and disengagement of educators (Azaza et al., 2023).

Teachers who participated in the 2-year PD program expressed many perceptions regarding innovation in gifted education and the program's impact on their teaching practice. Despite receiving training in innovative strategies, educators faced challenges implementing them effectively in their classrooms. Some obstacles include proper information and training on gifted programs, heavy workloads, and a gap between national policies and actual implementation (Garces-Bacsal et al., 2022).

Cultural and Language Barriers

Gender, language, and cultural differences have been identified as challenges to effective communication and collaboration among teachers, especially between Arabic and English-medium teachers (Garces-Bacsal et al., 2022). Additionally, the limited involvement of school leaders and logistical complexities present obstacles to practical



implementation. These challenges include language accessibility, geographical considerations, and the relatively new concept of inclusion for many teachers (Ewen et al., 2023).

As stated by Azaza et al. (2023), despite the findings indicating that cultural diversity was perceived as an opportunity for professional learning and collaboration, some teachers noted that cultural factors such as gender, language, and cultural values affect teacher collaboration and interaction, hindering effective PD and impacting communication and collaboration among teachers, necessitating strategies to address these issues.

Furthermore, some teachers expressed concerns that PD content was designed based on Western educational practices and needed to consider their schools' cultural context and student demographics fully. This made implementing new teaching techniques challenging. Additionally, teachers, especially those teaching Arabic and humanities subjects, mentioned a need for more resources and support specific to their subject areas during PD sessions. This limitation hindered their ability to implement new teaching strategies effectively. Moreover, teachers highlighted the burden of excessive paperwork and administrative tasks associated with PD implementation. They felt overwhelmed by the workload, which affected their ability to fully engage in the activities (El Afi, 2019).

Resistance to Centrally Imposed PD

Teachers resist externally mandated PD programs, preferring more autonomy and control over their professional learning experiences. This resistance indicates a need for more participatory and teacher-driven approaches to PD (Azaza et al., 2023).



Baroudi (2023) also explains that the pressure of mandatory assessments limits the extent to which changes from PDs can be sustained. However, leaders are taking action to solve these problems and support teachers by arranging professional training that meets their specific needs.

Inadequate Evaluation and Support

There needs to be more systematic evaluation and support mechanisms for PD programs, leading to uncertainty regarding their effectiveness and impact on teacher practice and student learning (Azaza et al., 2023).

Transitioning to Online Education

The study titled "Professional Development Needs and Challenges Faced by K-12 Teachers in Delivering Effective Online Education in the UAE," conducted by Abdelaziz et al. (2023), discusses how, although teachers in the UAE are generally exposed to PD workshops and programs, these workshops need to be regularly revised in line with the changing needs and contexts of teachers and their students. This study targeted all schools' K-12 teachers that had transitioned to an online mode of education due to the spread of COVID-19. The study results indicate that challenges related to online education are significant, including adapting to new technologies, redesigning curriculum for online delivery, managing online classrooms effectively, and ensuring student engagement in virtual learning environments.

Another article addresses these challenges in PD programs within the context of the changing educational landscape. It highlights the importance of teachers adapting to new tasks such as task differentiation, online teaching, content delivery, feedback provision,

and online assessments. It focuses on the importance of teachers' technological pedagogical knowledge and access to opportunities for improving digital skills during training. Additionally, it identifies a prevalent need for more basic ICT skills among educators, affecting their effectiveness in online learning and ongoing PD efforts. The study, conducted through a questionnaire distributed to 436 secondary teachers, underscores the urgent need for educators to continuously update their competencies and skills, particularly in response to evolving teaching and learning environments, including challenges posed by events like the COVID-19 pandemic (Kumari et al., 2020).

Unmet Teacher Needs in PD Initiatives

A study conducted in Al Ain targeting high school science teachers involved qualitative data collection through semi-structured interviews and quantitative analysis through a questionnaire survey. Despite highlighting several strengths of PD, weaknesses, and areas for improvement were also identified, such as language barriers, theory-heavy activities, a lack of contextual relevance, time constraints, high teaching loads, and inadequate school support. The study suggests the need for a CPD model tailored to individual schools' needs and subject-specific contexts. Digital platforms for training and sharing expertise are recommended, along with adopting best practices (Alneyadi, 2022).

While PD offers numerous benefits, educators may encounter challenges such as maintaining high teaching standards amidst evolving educational landscapes, managing workload stress associated with PD, and ensuring that PD initiatives align with the needs of both teachers and students. Additionally, the article suggests the importance of effective leadership in navigating these challenges



and fostering a supportive environment for teachers to engage in continuous PD (Abbasi & David, 2021).

To support teachers in the UAE, a study was conducted through focus group research involving 94 educators from public and private schools in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The results included the challenges faced by educational leaders, which encompassed career progression, fairness in teacher assessment, teaching students with special needs, dissatisfaction with teaching, lack of teacher support, curriculum issues, student behavior and attitudes, parental support, school leadership, and online platforms (Goe et al., 2020).

Research Question 3: What are professional development programs' discernible outcomes and impacts on teacher performance and overall educational quality in the UAE?

The results of the different studies showcase the positive outcomes and impacts of professional development programs on teacher performance and overall educational quality in the UAE, underscoring the importance of continued investment in professional growth and institutional development. Below are the perceived outcomes of PD programs.

Increased Confidence and Performance Enhancement

The piloted sustainable PD program in the UAE had noticeable impacts on teacher performance, leadership efficacy, and overall educational quality. Teachers reported increased confidence in assessment practices, improving students' higher-order thinking skills. The program also increased teachers' awareness of their role in creating a learning environment that is sustainably developed. Despite challenges, the study suggests sustainable PDs can positively impact leadership skills, teacher attitudes, and student learning outcomes,



contributing to inclusive and improved quality education (Baroudi, 2023).

An additional study in which data were collected using a survey questionnaire among 150 teachers in a private school in Dubai shows significant positive impacts of continuous PD on teacher performance, as evidenced by correlations and regression analyses. Key outcomes include improved teaching effectiveness, enhanced learning abilities among students, and the generation of innovative teaching ideas. The article concludes that PD initiatives contribute to the better delivery of quality education and emphasizes the interconnectedness between teacher performance, student learning outcomes, and the success of PD programs. Recommendations are made to enhance PD efforts further and support continuous improvement in teaching practices (Abbasi & David, 2021).

The study by Kumari et al. (2020), which targeted responses from 436 secondary school teachers in the UAE, reveals a significant positive relationship between various competencies possessed by secondary school teachers and their professional development and lifelong learning. Factors such as professional knowledge, pedagogical practice competence, subject knowledge, teaching strategies, and curriculum knowledge greatly predict the effectiveness of professional development initiatives. Additionally, the research identifies that age and teaching grades impact the relationship between competencies and professional development, suggesting potential areas for targeted support and interventions.

Enhancing Pedagogical Impact

The study titled "The Impact of Professional Development Training on Teachers' Performance in Abu Dhabi Cycle Two and Three Schools" by



El Afi (2019) reveals significant improvements in teachers' performance across various domains using quantitative analysis. These domains include lesson planning, teaching tools, teaching methods, classroom management, and cooperation. Teachers who participated in PD demonstrated higher effectiveness in these areas than those who did not receive PD.

The qualitative analysis study conducted in Al Ain, targeting high school science teachers, reveals strengths inherent in PD programs using the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) framework. These strengths include enhanced classroom practices, differentiation, technology integration, and student-centered strategies. Teachers experienced the positive impacts of PD on job satisfaction, morale, self-efficacy, and confidence while facilitating networking opportunities, knowledge sharing, and the creation of a supportive learning community among educators (Alneyadi, 2022).

Enhanced Leadership Efficacy

PD initiatives that included opportunities for teacher leadership roles, coaching, and mentoring were found to impact teachers' leadership efficacy positively. Teachers who took on leadership roles reported increased motivation and engagement in the PD program (El Afi, 2019).

Enhanced Knowledge and Skills in Inclusive Education

Teachers participating in the PD model reported improved knowledge, attitudes, and practical skills related to inclusive education. These positive changes impacted and enhanced their classroom practices, benefiting students with special needs and their



typically developing peers. Moreover, the PD model facilitates the dissemination of inclusive practices at the whole school level, leading to changes in school policies, assessment practices, and staff training initiatives. However, further research is needed to independently assess student outcomes and evaluate PD initiatives' long-term sustainability and scalability (Ewen et al., 2023).

Advancement in Gifted Education Practices

Through the two-year PD program, teachers gained valuable insights into innovative practices in gifted education. They developed a deeper understanding of how to meet and embrace the needs of gifted and talented students. Despite facing challenges in implementation, teachers reported improvements in their teaching practices and observed changes in their students' processes and performance. Additionally, the focus on innovation in education aligns with the UAE's broader goals of becoming a center of educational and research excellence in the Middle East. By engaging in professional development and assisting teachers as they improve in educating gifted students, the UAE is progressing in educational excellence and creating an atmosphere of innovation within its educational institutions (Garces-Bacsal et al., 2022).

PD Outcomes and Alignment with Educational Frameworks

Blaik Hourani and Litz's (2018) research used a qualitative case-study approach and interviewed fourteen school administrators, including principals, vice principals, and academic principals representing six cycles in public school. These interview outcomes (post-PD program) revealed several key findings, including participants reporting enhanced knowledge and skills regarding their roles, a comprehensive understanding of ADEC's mission and vision, implementing student-



centered teaching-learning approaches, and conducting teacher appraisals. Moreover, improvements in teaching-learning practices were noted, such as adopting new teaching strategies and catering to the needs of special education students. The alignment between PD initiatives and the SSE-Irtiqaa framework was also recognized, resulting in an understanding of school self-evaluation criteria and enhancing school performance.

Facilitation of Action Research for Continuous Improvement

Action research initiatives have significantly impacted teacher performance, leadership efficacy, and overall educational quality. Teachers report that AR enables them to find practical solutions to classroom challenges, promote reflective practice, and enhance their teaching efficacy. Participation in AR positively affects current and future instructional practices, as teachers have the tools to make impactful changes within their schools, implement best practices, and improve lesson planning processes. Peer observations and collaborative learning experiences enhance teaching methods (Hathorn & Dillon, 2018).

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the nature and scope of PD initiatives in the UAE, highlighting the significant efforts made to enhance teacher effectiveness and leadership skills through formal programs such as Tamkeen and various in-house sessions. Despite these concerted efforts, educational leaders have reported several challenges. Among these are the implementation gap between policy objectives and on-ground realities, cultural and language barriers, and resistance to centrally imposed PD programs. The transition to online education, necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, further

complicated these efforts, with concerns about maintaining class engagement emerging as a critical issue. Similar challenges have been noted in other studies, such as those by Coady et al. (2023), who identified logistical barriers like distance and location, and by Bădoi-Hammami (2023), who pointed out issues related to inadequate guidance, organization, and resources, as well as the ongoing need for continuous professional development.

Nevertheless, the positive outcomes of PD programs are evident. These initiatives have significantly impacted teacher performance and overall educational quality, leading to increased confidence, enhanced pedagogical practices, and improved leadership efficacy. Supporting this, various studies have asserted the success of professional development programs, suggesting they serve as effective models for equipping teachers with the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, when PD programs are thoughtfully designed to meet the specific needs of targeted teacher groups, they can address these needs effectively, leading to beneficial outcomes (Coady et al., 2023; Richman et al., 2019). For instance, Richman et al.'s (2019) study emphasized the role of PD in enhancing teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge, particularly in meeting the demands of science curricula and standards. As highlighted in these studies, collaboration plays a crucial role in building knowledge and sharing expertise. Similarly, Saeed's (2023) research demonstrated that teacher training programs significantly boost teachers' motivation, professional development, and self-efficacy.

Furthermore, the studies reviewed highlight a growing recognition of the importance of PD in enhancing student learning outcomes, improving teacher practices, and driving school improvement efforts. Coady (2023) found that long-term PD programs enabled teachers to



implement changes in teaching strategies for English language learners, improving student engagement and academic achievement. Richman et al.'s (2019) participants also reported enhancements in student learning outcomes, further emphasizing the value of well-designed PD programs.

Finally, this review underscores the urgent need for more professional development that explicitly targets technology integration in educational settings. With the increasing importance of technology in education, it is vital to provide educators with the necessary training to incorporate digital tools effectively into their teaching strategies. Bădoi-Hammami (2023) notes the significant challenges faced by teachers who lack digital competence, as these difficulties impede their ability to support student learning. Echoing this, ElSayary (2022) found that a targeted upskilling training program in the UAE significantly improved teachers' digital competence, with participants expressing positive perceptions of how this training enhanced their teaching and learning experiences.

Suggestions

These studies and evaluations will contribute to coherent and strategic approaches to PD implementation, adapting and improving the use of technology tools and maximizing their impact. Based on the research findings, addressing the challenges and optimizing teachers' needs is crucial to enhancing PD programs for educational leaders. One of the main recommendations is revising PD content to incorporate comprehensive training and programs on elements of performance standards, addressing identified knowledge and skill gaps such as strategic planning, curriculum design, and documentation processes. Additionally, efforts are required to align formal policy, practice, and implementation, considering teachers' perspectives and experiences to



meet their needs. Moreover, language barriers and cultural differences should be considered when designing PD based on Western educational practices to ensure effective communication. Finally, evaluation is critical to understanding the challenges and effectiveness of any changes made in PD programs.

Moreover, although the study has a geographical emphasis on the UAE, some of the studies specified the emirates where PD was implemented and evaluated, including and limiting to Abu Dhabi and Dubai. So, it is suggested that the PD program outcomes in the other emirates be studied as well to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the PD initiatives in the country.

Conclusion

In summary, the review highlights the diverse range of professional development initiatives in the UAE, addressing challenges and outcomes. Despite challenges like implementation gaps and cultural barriers, PD programs significantly positively impact teacher performance and student outcomes. Optimizing PD programs, aligning policy with implementation, and conducting systematic evaluations are crucial. Exploring PD outcomes in all emirates would provide a comprehensive understanding of nationwide improvements in education.

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About the authors:

Zeina Hojeij is an Associate Professor in the College of Interdisciplinary Studies at Zayed University. She holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration from Saint Louis University, USA. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a Blackboard Certified Associate and Accredited Facilitator and a Certified Online Instructor. She is also a teacher mentor for the Taa'louf Inclusion Program with Al Jalila Foundation. Her research interests include educational leadership, mobile learning, and teaching & learning.

E-mail: Zeina.Hojeij@zu.ac.ae

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization of the framework, outlining the structure, leading the research and writing process; Conducting the literature review, synthesizing findings, and formulating core arguments; Coordinating co-author contributions, managing editing and revision processes.



Hojeij, AlSuwaidi, & Ahmed (2024). Scoping the literature on professional development for educators and educational leaders in the UAE.

Shayma Ali AlSuwaidi is a fourth-year Public Health and Nutrition major with a minor in Psychology at Zayed University, graduating in 2024. She is currently a research assistant, co-writing literature reviews and analyzing data and findings. Shayma has experience as a Mental Health Gatekeeper and served as a Student Council Club Coordinator. She holds certifications in HACCP, Level 2 Extended Award for Young Leaders, and The MHF-ASAP!.

Email: 201908602@zu.ac.ae

Authorship credit details: Substantial assistance with data collection and analysis; Significant contribution to developing the methodology section, ensuring precision and clarity; Provided valuable insights to the results and discussion sections; Assisted in manuscript review, ensuring academic rigor and relevance.

Shanzila Ahmed is a third-year Business Transformation major at Zayed University, set to graduate in 2025. A consistent Dean's List honoree, she has participated in several research projects and currently serves as a research assistant. Specializing in Design Thinking, Shanzila is preparing for a career in Research and Design.

Email: m80008600@zu.ac.ae

Authorship credit details: Offered critical feedback on manuscript drafts, enhancing logical coherence of arguments.; Provided



constructive suggestions for improving clarity; Actively involved in proofreading and refining the final version of the paper.

The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and School Happiness: The Mediator Role of School Culture

Tuba Çakır 

Ministry of National Education, Istanbul, Türkiye

Mustafa Özgenel* 

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul, Türkiye

Abstract

The aim of this study is to reveal the mediating role of school culture in the effect of school principals' transformational leadership style on school happiness. For this purpose, the research was conducted according to the quantitative research method and relational screening model. Transformational leadership style was determined as the independent variable, school culture as the mediating variable, and school happiness as the dependent variable. The study group of the research consists of 403 teachers working in public schools on the European side of Istanbul. Data were analyzed with correlation and mediation tests. The research findings indicate a significant and positive relationship between school principals' transformational leadership style and teachers' perception of school happiness. While the transformational leadership style directly and positively impacts school happiness, this effect continues even when support culture, achievement culture, and task culture are included in this dual relationship. However, support culture and task culture "partially mediate" this relationship, thereby indirectly contributing to the impact of transformational leadership style

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*Corresponding author

Email: mustafa.ozgenel@izu.edu.tr

on school happiness. In light of these findings, the transformational leadership style of school principals can be considered as an important strategy to increase the overall happiness of the school community by developing and supporting a culture of support and a culture of task.

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Introduction

The concept of organizational happiness is gaining increasing attention in contemporary research. This trend emerges from the understanding that enhancing the happiness of individuals in the workplace significantly contributes to the development and effectiveness of schools and organizations (Achor, 2018; Gavin & Mason, 2004). Consequently, many recent studies emphasize the necessity and importance of investigating the concept of school happiness and its antecedents. For example, research has shown that happy individuals perform better and achieve more in their professional lives (Achor, 2018; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Mendoza-Ocasal et al., 2022), thereby contributing more to organizational outcomes (Cropanzano & Wright, 1999; Marescaux et al., 2019; Tanwar, 2019; Yusof et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2007). Furthermore, happy employees are reported to have better physical health, job performance, job retention intentions (Wright & Quick, 2009), job satisfaction, job engagement (Aruoren & Oisamoje, 2023), emotional



commitment (Abdullah & Ling, 2016), organizational citizenship behaviors (Al-Abedie & Al-Temimi, 2015), problem-solving skills, and higher productivity (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The happiness of teachers is as important as fostering positive student experiences in the educational environment. This is because the general happiness of teachers not only affects their personal job satisfaction but also deeply impacts the quality of education delivered and, consequently, student and institutional outcomes. In this light, identifying the antecedent factors affecting school happiness can provide school principals with insights into developing strategies to create a supportive and conducive environment for enhancing school happiness.

School principals are among the key factors influencing teachers' school happiness (Döş, 2013; Kılıç et al., 2023). The primary responsibility of leaders is to develop strategies to achieve organizational goals (McGregor, 1966) and promote the happiness of employees (Csikszentmihalyi, 2004). Specifically, school principals should prioritize enhancing teachers' happiness to increase the effectiveness of educational institutions. However, the school happiness of teachers, who bear multifaceted responsibilities in school environments, has been overlooked (Talebzadeh & Samkan, 2011). Yet, in recent years, interest in research on the school happiness of teachers (Al-Bataineh et al., 2021; Akyürek & Göktaş, 2023; Akyürek & Aypay, 2023; Alkan & Özgenel, 2024; Aunampai et al., 2022; Bahat & Işık, 2023; Sezer & Can, 2020) and students (Akyürek, 2024; López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2018; Xiang & Choi 2024; Yam, 2022; Yoon & Shin, 2014) has increased. Existing literature examines the bilateral and linear relationships between school administrators' leadership styles and school culture (Özgenel, 2020; Özgenel & Dursun, 2020; Yu et al., 2002), leadership styles and school happiness (Şahin & Özgenel, 2020),



and school culture and teachers' happiness (Raj et al., 2019). However, there is a noticeable lack of evidence regarding the mediating role of school culture, which significantly influences the school community and shapes the identity of educational institutions, in the relationship between principals' transformational leadership approaches and organizational/school happiness. This study proposes transformational leadership and school culture as antecedents of school happiness. Specifically, we tested a mediation model in which transformational leadership enhances school happiness through school culture. The research model of this study is unique in that it is the first (to our knowledge) to test the mediating effect of school culture in the relationship between transformational leadership and school happiness. In this context, the research aims to provide school principals with a conceptual model and empirical evidence for enhancing teacher happiness. The present study will deepen our understanding of the antecedents and possible mechanisms associated with school happiness.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

The Relationship between Transformational Leadership, School Culture, and School Happiness

While happiness is generally considered a series of positive emotions or overall well-being (Achor, 2018), school/organizational happiness is defined as the emotional well-being arising from the harmony among individuals and groups that constitute the school/organizational community (Engels et al., 2004). School/organizational happiness is gaining increasing importance in terms of organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Imran et al., 2023). Warr (2011) suggests that individuals can experience various emotional states in their

organizations, and reaching the desired happiness will be effective in realizing their potential. Januvarson (2015) found that happy employees in organizations are more willing to help their colleagues, perform better, handle a significant portion of their work independently, and exhibit high organizational commitment. Additionally, recent studies on the general well-being and happiness of teachers provide compelling evidence that happy teachers perform better and have a higher potential to improve and enhance school and student outcomes (Abdullah & Ling, 2016; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2009; Imran et al., 2023; Özgenel & Canuyulası, 2020).

School administrators are prominent among the factors affecting teachers' school happiness and satisfaction levels (Bulut, 2015; Döş, 2013; Ouellette et al., 2018). This is because the leadership practices exhibited by school administrators in the school environment affect the entire school community, especially the teachers. In other words, effective school leadership influences school management processes, operations, and outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2006; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013). For example, the management of diversity within an organization (Arslan & Polat, 2021) and the organizational justice behaviors of the leader (Çetin & Polat, 2021) are factors that affect teachers' happiness. Furthermore, research has shown that leadership styles are associated with teacher satisfaction, student engagement, and overall school effectiveness (Waters et al., 2003). According to research findings, teachers report being happier when working with transformational leaders rather than laissez-faire or transactional leaders (Kılıç et al., 2023). Transformational leadership is said to impact school happiness because it encourages looking beyond personal interests for the group's welfare, meeting emotional needs (Bass, 1990), and showing great sensitivity and interest in the

happiness of others (Rosenberg, 2010). This claim is supported by research findings. Empirical evidence indicates that school principals' transformational leadership style enhances school happiness (Abdullah et al., 2017; Şahin & Özgenel, 2020). Based on this theoretical foundation and empirical evidence, we hypothesize that transformational leadership is positively related to school happiness (Hypothesis 1).

Transformational leaders, as part of modern leadership approaches, are individuals who can change the goals and values of their followers during the leadership process and activate their potential (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders act in accordance with ethical principles and values, provide vision, pay attention to followers' needs, inspire and motivate them, make their efforts valuable, encourage creativity and innovation, and serve as role models (Bass, 1996; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Bass et al., 2003). In other words, transformational leaders make their followers inspirational and intellectually stimulating (Bass, 1999), gradually transform followers' attitudes and values into other-oriented values (Starratt, 1995), increase followers' levels of awareness (Antonakis et al., 2003), develop leadership capacities, and promote a shared vision and positive organizational culture (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

A positive culture contributes to the success of the organization/school when aligned with leadership practices (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). The school leader plays a key role in creating a positive school culture. Organizational culture is built (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Daft, 2015), transformed, and managed by leaders (Schein, 2004). The primary duty of the school leader is to manage the culture towards the goals of the school (Schein, 2004). Despite the acknowledged importance of school culture on school effectiveness and efficiency (Cogaltay &



Karadag, 2016; Peterson & Deal, 1998; Schreiber, 2019), there is insufficient research identifying the specific behaviors of school leaders that contribute to a positive school culture (Fullan, 2007; Rutter & Maughan, 2002; Turan & Bektaş, 2013). A study aimed at filling this gap found that school principals contribute to a positive school culture when they are visible and participatory in the daily operation of the school, clearly communicate values, involve all stakeholders in the process, encourage shared decision-making processes, support collaboration opportunities, use recognition and appreciation systems, engage in face-to-face communication, show respect to others, and build trust (Schreiber, 2019). School leaders who can articulate a clear vision, empower and support their staff and students, set high expectations, and create a culture of community are more likely to succeed in creating a positive school culture. A study reported that transformational school leaders are more successful in creating a positive school culture by clearly expressing the school's vision, empowering and supporting their staff and students, setting high expectations, and fostering a sense of community (Sasan, 2023). Research underscores the importance of the connection between school leaders and school culture (Huguet, 2017; McKinney et al., 2015; Özgenel & Dursun, 2020; Özgenel, 2020). In summary, research findings show that transformational leadership influences school culture and contributes to its development (Windasari et al., 2023). Considering the pattern of association and past evidence, we hypothesize that transformational leadership is positively related to school culture (Hypothesis 2).

The Relationship between School Culture and School Happiness

Culture is a fundamental factor that strongly predicts happiness (Mathews, 2012; Oishi & Gilbert, 2016; Ye et al., 2015). Organizational



culture is a pattern of assumptions developed by an organization to solve its internal and external adaptation problems, and it is adopted by group members as valid when similar situations arise (Schein, 1990). Positive cultural elements within a school, such as values, heroes, rituals, ceremonies, and stories, help unite the school community around a common mission or purpose (Deal & Peterson, 1998). Schwartz and Davis (1981) noted that the most important factor underlying the success of the world's most effective organizations is a distinct culture that sets them apart from others. Organizations with strong cultures are more cohesive, have higher member motivation and commitment, are more collaborative, better at resolving conflicts, have greater innovation capacity, and are more effective in achieving their goals (Peterson & Deal, 1998). School culture reflects the positive relationships within the school environment and the shared experiences of key stakeholders, such as administrators and teachers. The more accepted this sharing is, the happier the school community becomes. A strong and established school culture framed by a set of shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and norms supports school happiness. In other words, high school happiness requires a positive school culture that supports it. Stoia (2016) concluded in his study that an organization must have a culture based on development and progress for organizational happiness. Based on this theoretical foundation and empirical evidence, we hypothesize a positive relationship between school culture and school happiness (Hypothesis 3).

The Mediating Role of School Culture

The school principal is the person who best understands the strength and importance of school culture in management. This is because the behaviors and practices of leaders become symbols of organizational culture (Bass, 1999). The primary duty of school leaders is to create a



positive school culture (Schein, 2004) and shape the school culture to focus on student learning (Peterson & Deal, 1998). In this sense, transformational school leaders build school culture by involving teachers in decision-making processes, serving as role models, keeping their motivation high, establishing self-regulation, and communicating effectively in their daily work (Arifin et al., 2022). They convey core values through their actions and words, which teachers reinforce (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Principals shape culture positively when they share leadership and assume responsibility for shaping classroom improvements (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011).

When considering organizational culture in schools, it encompasses the unwritten norms, traditions, rituals, rules, values, and beliefs created by school members (Kaplan & Owins, 2013; Peterson & Deal, 1998). Therefore, school culture is seen as an invisible force that is not immediately noticeable in the school. Although invisible, a meta-analysis study reported that a positive school culture positively contributes to teacher productivity, job satisfaction, and student success (Cogaltay & Karadag, 2016). Additionally, it has been determined that school culture needs to reflect a supportive learning environment for teachers to perform at their best (Schreiber, 2019).

Culture is a dynamic phenomenon continuously created through our interactions and shaped by leadership behavior. It also represents a set of structures, values, rules, and norms that guide and constrain the behavior of individuals in the organization (Schein, 2004), shaping how people think, feel, and act in schools (Peterson & Deal, 1998). School culture mediates transformational leaders' organizational change efforts. In other words, transformational leadership indirectly affects organizational change through school culture (Atasoy, 2020; Windasari et al., 2023). Transformational leaders establish the

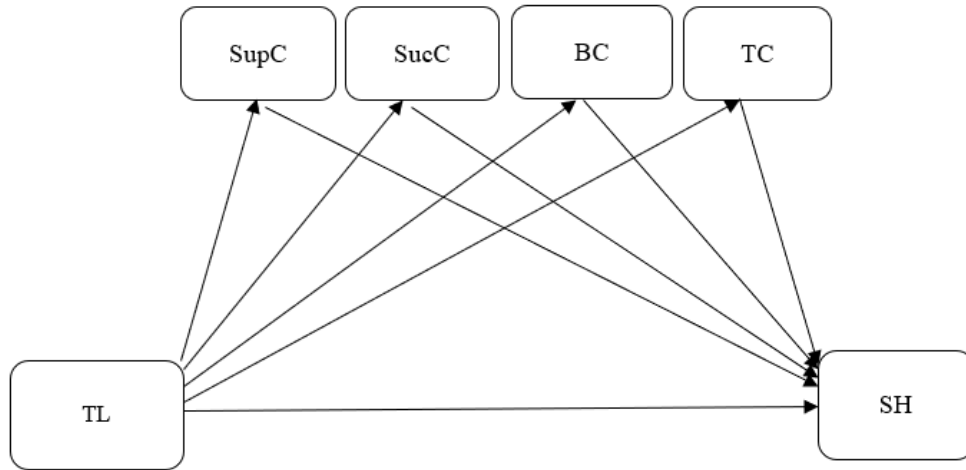


fundamental values and norms of school culture, ensuring these values are embedded in daily practices. By shaping school culture positively, transformational leaders strengthen relationships within the school community, increase motivation, create a supportive environment, and enhance school happiness. Empirical studies consistently suggest that transformational school leadership behavior promotes school happiness (Hypothesis 1) and positive school culture (Hypothesis 2). Based on this knowledge, we predict a positive relationship between school culture and school happiness (Hypothesis 3). Additionally, considering Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, we hypothesize that transformational leadership indirectly influences school happiness through school culture (Hypothesis 4).

Methodology

Research Model

Since this study aimed to test the mediating role of school culture in the effect of school principals' transformational leadership style on school happiness, it was conducted according to the relational survey model. The relational survey model is a study in which the relationships between two or more variables are examined (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The relationships between the independent variable (transformational leadership style), mediator variable (school culture) and dependent variable (school happiness) in the research are shown in Figure 1.



Note: TL= Transformational Leadership; SupC= Support Culture; SucC= Success Culture; BC= Bureaucratic Culture; TC= Task Culture; SH= School Happiness; SC= School Culture

Figure 1. Theoretical model

H₁: Transformational leadership (TL) directly affects school happiness.

H₂: Transformational leadership (TL) directly affects school culture (SC) (support culture; success culture; bureaucratic culture; task culture).

H₃: School culture (support culture [SupC]; success culture [SucC]; bureaucratic culture [BC]; task culture [TC]) directly affects school happiness.

H₄: SC (SupC, SucC, BC, TK), mediates the relationship between TL and SH. In other words, TL indirectly affects SH through SC.



Participants

403 teachers working in public schools in Istanbul participated in the research voluntarily in the 2021-2022 academic year. Participants were identified using non-probability convenience sampling, which involves collecting data from participants who were “convenienced” for the study (Edgar & Manz, 2017; Galloway, 2005). Data were collected face to face by the researchers by visiting schools over a period of approximately two months. Participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the research. 4.9% (302) of the teachers were female, 91.6% (369) had a bachelor's degree, 32.3% (130) had a seniority of 11-15 years, 40.2% (162) are in the age range of 31-40, 60.5% (244) work in primary schools, 71.5% (288) work at their current school for 4 years or less, and 78.9% (318) are working with the same principal since maximum 4 years.

Data Collection Tools

In the research, Personal Information Form, Transformational Leadership Scale (TLS), School Culture Scale (SCS) and School Happiness Scale (SHS) were used.

Transformational Leadership Scale (TLS). In the research, the 8-item and one-dimensional TLS established by Berger et al. (2012) and adapted to Turkish by Okan and Okan (2021) was used (*Example item= He/she develops ways of motivating us*). There are no reverse items in the scale. It is a 5-point Likert type. The total score is assessed by summing the scores from all items. TLS: It is coded as “Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4), Totally agree (5) points”. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the test reliability for the TLS was found to be .960.

School Culture Scale (SCS). Scale established by Terzi (2005) was used to determine the current cultural structure in schools. SCS contains 29 items and 4 sub dimensions. SCS was coded with an increasing point system in the form of 1- 2- 3- 4- 5 and was graded as "Never", "Rarely", "Occasionally", "Usually", "Always" as a 5-point Likert Scale (*Example item= In this school, sufficient effort is made to achieve the school's goals*). Subdimensions in the SCS; It represents Support culture, Bureaucratic culture, Success culture, and Task culture.

School Happiness Scale (SHS). SHS developed by Sezer and Can (2019) was used to determine the perceptions of teachers' school happiness. SHS consists of 5 subdimensions and 26 items (*Example item= Teachers at school love their profession*). These are determined as: "Physical Equipment (1.- 2.- 3.- 4. Items)", "Learning Environment (5.-6. -7.-8.- 9.- 10.-11. Items)", "Cooperation (12.-13.-14.-15.-16.- 17.-18.-19. Items)", "Activities (20.- 21.- 22. Items)", "School Administration (23.- 24-25-26. Items)". The scale is a 5-point Likert type. Scale items are coded as "Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Usually (4), Always (5)". The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the SHS was calculated as .872.

The necessary legal and ethical permissions for the research process and the data collection tools used in the research were obtained from the developers (Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education dated 28.03.2022 and numbered E-59090411-20-46622054 and Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Ethics Committee dated 24.02.2022 and numbered 2022/02).

Analysis of the Data

Before testing the mediation model proposed in the study, the reliability values (Cronbach Alpha [α]) of the scales, normality (kurtosis and skewness), multicollinearity (Tolerance Value [TV] and

Variance Inflation Factor [VIF]) and autocorrelation assumptions (Durbin-Watson [DW]), and outliers (Mahalanobis and Cook's distance) values were examined.

Table 1.

Kurtosis and Skewness Values of Scales and their Reliability Coefficients

Variable	Skewnes	Kurtosis	<i>a</i>	TV	VIF
1-Transformational Leadership (TL)	-0.626	-0.449	0.961	0,496	2,015
2-Support Culture (SupC)	-0.514	-0.224	0.878	0,236	4,240
3-Success Culture (SucC)	-0.589	-0.039	0.832	0,211	4,737
4-Bureucratic Culture (BC)	-0.001	0.067	0.788	0,897	1,115
5-Task Culture (TC)	-0.580	0.431	0.808	0,436	2,291
6-School Happiness (SH)	-0.358	0.089	0.948		

When the scale's kurtosis and skewness values are examined, it can be understood that they are in the range of ± 1 . According to George and Mallery (2019), when the kurtosis and skewness values of the data are in the range of ± 1 , they show a perfect distribution. When the reliability values of the scales are examined, it is understood that the reliability values of the transformational leadership, support culture, task culture, success culture and bureaucratic culture and school happiness scales are high (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance Value (TV) are often recommended to detect multicollinearity. According to Table 1, TV values vary between 0.211-0.897; VIF values vary between 1.115-4.737. There is no multicollinearity problem when $VIF \leq 10$ and $TV > 0.10$



(Bruin, 2006; Gunst & Webster, 1975). The Durbin-Watson (DW) test was examined to determine whether there was an autocorrelation problem between the error terms in the data of the scales. In DW statistics, it takes values between $0 < d < 4$. If the DW value is less than 1 and greater than 3, it indicates that there is an autocorrelation problem. Since the DW value in the study 1.882, it is understood that there is no autocorrelation (Yavuz, 2009).

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine multicollinearity, autocorrelation and outliers of the scales. Transformational leadership, support culture, success culture, bureaucratic culture and task culture were determined as independent variables, and school happiness was determined as the dependent variable and analysis was carried out. Relevant findings are given in Table 2.

Table 2.
Residual Statistics for Variables

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	DW
Mahal. Distance	,122	20.431	4.988	3,793	401	1.882
Cook's Distance	,000	,055	,003	,007	401	

In structural equation modeling analysis, outliers need to be detected because multivariate outliers have an impact on fit indices (Kline, 2019; Simmons et al., 2011). Outliers can completely change the model because they are usually caused by an error in measurement and have the potential to skew the data (Leys, Klein, Dominicy, & Ley, 2018). In this respect, Cook's distances and Mahalanobis distances are the most effective techniques for outlier detection (Olive, 2008). The Mahalanobis distance critical value can be calculated with a chi-square

(χ^2) distribution table (Rousseeuw & Van Zomeren, 1990). Since there were 5 independent variables in the study (transformational leadership, success culture, support culture, bureaucratic culture, task culture) and one dependent variable (school satisfaction), the critical value of Mahalanobis distance was determined as $\chi^2 < 20.52$ according to the chi-square table (Fisher & Yates, 1953). Cook's distances value must be less than 1.00 (Cook, 1977). In the multiple regression analysis, 2 outliers were identified, these values were removed from the data set and the analysis was re-done. When Table 2 is examined, it is understood that there is no outlier since the Mahalanobis distance value ($\chi^2 = 20.431$) is less than $\chi^2 > 20.515$ and the Cook's distances value is less than 1.00 (Max. = .055).

In the study, after it was determined that the data showed normal distribution, was reliable, and did not have multicollinearity, autocorrelation and outlier problems, the model was tested according to the multiple mediation analysis suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986): (i) There must be a significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent and mediating variables; (ii) there must be a relationship between the mediating variable and the dependent variable. (iii) When a mediating variable is added to the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable should either disappear or be noticeably reduced. In addition, the Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation method was used to test the predictive power of the theoretical model. Indirect effect values were calculated to test the mediating role and effects of school culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and school happiness. The bootstrap technique was used to determine the effect size and statistical confidence level, and 95% confidence

intervals (CI) with 5000 iterations were used as the basic reference (Hayes, 2022; Hayes & Scharkow, 2013).

Findings

To test the theoretical model of the research, first the relationships between TL, SC and SH variables were examined.

Table 3.

Relationships Between Variables

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-Transformational Leadership (TL)	4.089 (0.807)	-	,680**	,653**	,083	,570**	,648**
2-Support Culture (SupC)	3.954 (0.717)		-	,860**	,173**	,637**	,710**
3-Success Culture (SucC)	3.874 (0.755)			-	,179**	,716**	,682**
4-Bureaucratic Culture (BC)	3.246 (0.697)				-	,298**	,135**
5-Task Culture (TC)	4.038 (0.626)					-	,576**
6-School Happiness (SH)	4.040 (0.593)						-

Note(s)=403; *p<.05 level; **p<.01 level

According to Table 3, the mean values of all scales and subscales in five-point Likert-type scales are relatively high, ranging from 3.246 to 4.089 (0.807); standard deviation values vary between 0.593 and 0.807. When Table 3 is examined, school principals' TL and SupC, there is a moderately significant relationship between (r=.680; p<.01), culture of SucC (r=.653; p<.01), TC (r=.648; p<.01) and SH (r=.648; p<.01). Nevertheless, it has been determined that there is no significant relationship between the TL and the BC. (r=.083; p>.05).

While it is detected a moderately significant and positive relationship between SH and SupC (r=.710; p<.01), SucC (r=.682; p<.01), and TC (r=.576; p<.01); It was determined that there is a positive but low-level

significant relationship between SH and BC ($r=.135$; $p<.01$). After determining the relationships between TL and SH and SC, mediating analysis was performed.

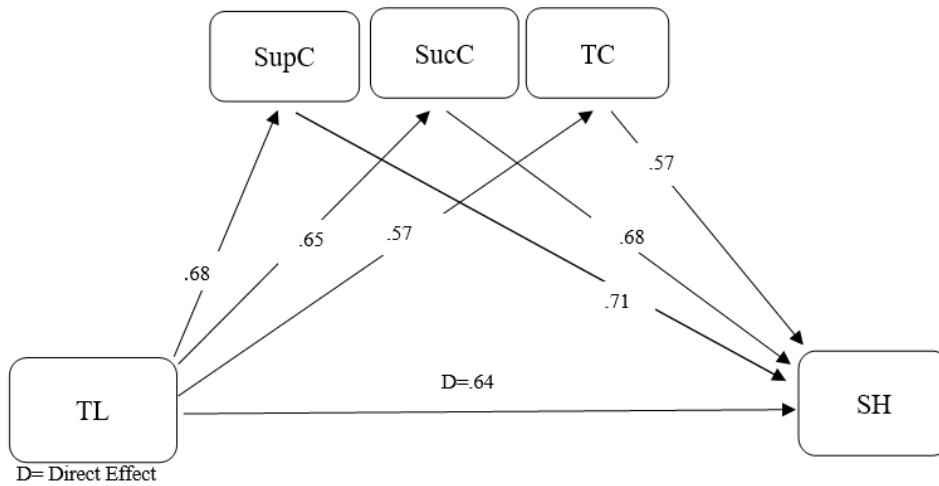


Figure 2. Research Model

SupC, TC and SucC were included and analyzed in the relationship between TL and SH. Transformational leadership was explained 41% of the total variance in school happiness. After the analysis, it was checked again whether the regression path coefficients between the variables were significant (Table 4).

Table 4.

Regression Coefficients Between the Variables

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
Support Culture	<---	Transformational Leadership	,604	,033	18,525	***

Task culture	<---	Transformational Leadership	,443	,032	13,888	***
Success Culture	<---	Transformational Leadership	,610	,035	17,225	***
School Happiness	<---	Transformational Leadership	,193	,034	5,693	***
School Happiness	<---	Support Culture	,287	,056	5,163	***
School Happiness	<---	Task culture	,104	,045	2,286	,022
School Happiness	<---	Success Culture	,104	,056	1,864	,062

According to Table 4, it was seen that the regression path coefficient between school happiness and success culture was not significant ($p > .05$), this path between school happiness and success culture was deleted and the analysis was performed again.

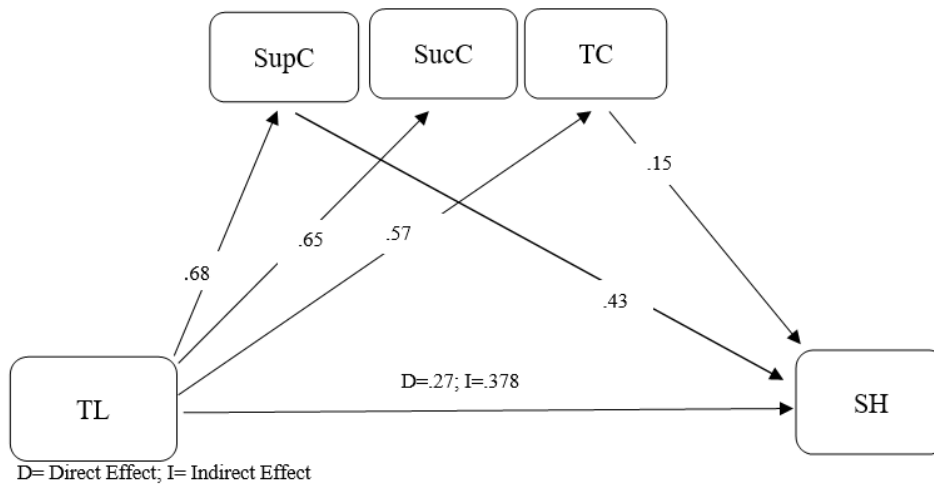


Figure 3. Model with School Culture as Mediator Variable

For the validity of the model, the regression coefficients given in Table 5 were reexamined.

Table 5.
Regression Coefficients Between Variables

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
Support Culture	<---	Transformational Leadership	,604	,033	18,525	***
Task Culture	<---	Transformational Leadership	,443	,032	13,888	***
School Happiness	<---	Transformational Leadership	,199	,034	5,858	***
School Happiness	<---	Support Culture	,359	,041	8,807	***
School Happiness	<---	Task Culture	,138	,042	3,303	***
Success Culture	<---	Transformational Leadership	,610	,035	17,225	***

When Table 5 was examined, all regression path coefficients between the variables were found to be significant ($p < .01$) and it was understood that the fit indices showed perfect fit [$\chi^2=3.461$, $df=1$; $p=.063$], [RMR=.003; SRMR=.007; NFI=.998; CFI=.998; TLI=.983; GFI=.996; AGFI=.997] and acceptable fit [AGFI=.948; RMSEA=.078] (Kline, 2019; Ullman, 2006). In addition, the standardized direct and indirect effect values of the model were examined (Table 6).

Table 6.
Standardized Direct and Indirect Effect Values



	Direct Effect			Indirect Effect		
	TL	TC	SupC	TL	TC	SupC
TC	,570	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
SupC	,680	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
SucC	,653	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
SH	,271	,145	,434	,378	,000	,000

According to Table 6, TL affects the TC ($\beta=.570$; $p<.01$); SupC ($\beta=.680$; $p<.01$), SucC ($\beta=.653$; $p<.01$) and SH ($\beta=.271$; $p<.01$) directly. Furthermore, TC ($\beta=.145$; $p<.01$) and SupC directly affect SH ($\beta=.434$; $p<.01$).

When the indirect effect value in Table 5 is examined, the TL indirectly affects SH through the TC and SupC ($\beta=.378$; $p<.01$). TL affects school happiness directly and indirectly through TC and SupC. Namely, TL directly influences SH in a positive way. Moreover, when SC is added to this dual relationship, the effect of the TL on SH continues, but the SupC and TC indirectly contributes to the effect of the TL on SH by "partially mediating" this bilateral relationship. While the TL explains about 46% of the total diversity in SH ($\sigma^2=.46$); TLS, SupC and TC together explain 57% of the total variance in SH ($\sigma^2=.57$). This finding provides evidence both for the strong effect of TL on SH and for the school culture variable's "partial mediating" role in this relationship. The final step of the mediation analyses involved analyzing the mediating role of school culture in the relationship between transformational leadership and school happiness using bootstrap analysis with 95% confidence interval (CI) and 5000 resamples (Table 7).

Table 7.

Confidence Interval Values

Parameter			CI	Lower	Upper	p
Support Culture	<---	Transformational Leadership	,604	,537	,667	,000
Task Culture	<---	Transformational Leadership	,443	,372	,516	,000
School Happiness	<---	Transformational Leadership	,199	,130	,266	,000
School Happiness	<---	Support Culture	,359	,273	,440	,001
School Happiness	<---	Task Culture	,138	,049	,232	,002
Success Culture	<---	Transformational Leadership	,610	,535	,684	,000

The analysis revealed that school culture mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and school happiness, with a standardized indirect effect coefficient of .378. Bootstrapping indicated that the confidence intervals for the indirect effect ranged from .049 to .537 for the lower limit and from .232 to .684 for the upper limit. Since the confidence intervals do not include zero (0), the indirect effect is considered significant (Hayes, 2022). These results indicate that school culture partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and school happiness.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study contributes to the knowledge base of educational leadership by focusing on the complex dynamics between school principals' transformational leadership style, school culture, and school happiness. By showing that school principals' transformational leadership style directly affects task culture, support culture,



achievement culture, and school happiness, and that task and support cultures partially mediate this relationship, the study highlights the multifaceted impact of transformational leadership in educational settings. It also advances our understanding of the antecedent factors of school happiness by drawing attention to the mediating role of support and task culture.

The positive relationship between transformational leadership and school happiness (Abdullah et al., 2017; Kılınc, 2023; Şahin & Özgenel, 2020) and school culture (Sasan, 2023; Schreiber, 2019; Yu et al., 2002; Windasari et al., 2023) and between school culture and school happiness (Raj et al., 2019) seems to be consistent with previous research findings. The partial mediating role of support culture and task culture between transformational leadership and school happiness is a critical finding. School principals directly affect school happiness by embodying transformational leadership qualities and indirectly by developing supportive and task-oriented cultures. This mediation emphasizes the fundamental function of school culture as a channel through which transformational leadership practices translate into overall school happiness. The concepts of justice, freedom, and equality form the basis of transformational leadership (Bass, 1999). School transformational leadership fair and egalitarian behaviors positively and strongly affect school happiness and school culture (Aytaç, 2021; Şahin & Özgenel, 2020; Dursun & Bilgivar, 2022). There is considerable empirical evidence supporting the mediating role of school culture. Mert and Özgenel (2020) provide supporting evidence that school culture mediates the relationship between leadership resources, psychological climate, and empowerment, reinforcing the idea that a strong school culture is vital for effective leadership outcomes. Furthermore, transformational leaders indirectly contribute

to organizational change by mediating school culture in their desire to make changes in the organization (Atasoy, 2020; Windasari et al., 2023). In this respect, transformational leadership, which is consistent with a school's culture that encompasses shared values, beliefs, and behaviors, plays a crucial role in shaping school happiness. In other words, transformational leadership can increase school happiness through a culture of mission and support. A task culture mediates this relationship through goal-setting and results-oriented behavior, while a culture of support mediates this relationship through collaboration and emotional commitment.

In conclusion, this research reaffirms the critical role of transformational leadership in creating a positive and strong school culture and increasing school happiness. Transformational leadership, together with a supportive culture and a task culture, contributes to teachers' sense of school happiness and supports school development and effectiveness. The partial mediation of school culture highlights the need for principals to develop supportive and task-oriented environments. These findings provide a solid foundation for both practical applications and future research aimed at optimizing educational leadership and school effectiveness.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study emphasize the pivotal role of transformational leadership in enhancing school happiness through both direct influence and the mediation of supportive and task-oriented school cultures. Principals who embody transformational leadership qualities—such as fairness, egalitarianism, and inspirational motivation—can significantly boost the overall well-being of the school community. Therefore, it is essential for school



leaders to focus on developing a positive school culture that supports and engages teachers, thereby indirectly improving school happiness.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The research is limited to the perceptions of teachers working in Istanbul during the 2022-2023 academic years. This geographical and temporal limitation restricts the generalizability of the findings to other regions or time periods. The data collected is based on self-reported measures, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability or respondent's mood at the time of completing the survey. The study used data from teachers. Including a more diverse set of participants, such as administrators, parents, and students, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The study employs a correlational survey design, which captures a single point in time. This design limits the ability to make causal inferences or to observe changes and developments over time. The study does not account for various contextual factors that might influence the relationships among transformational leadership, school culture, and school happiness. Factors such as the environment where the school is located, school and class size, and the number of teachers in the school may play important roles in the relationship between variables, but they were not examined in this study. The findings from this study are specific to the educational context and may not be applicable to other organizational settings. Caution should be exercised when generalizing the results beyond the studied context.

Future research should involve diverse sample groups beyond teachers working in Istanbul to enhance the generalizability of the



findings. Including students, parents, and administrators from various regions and school types can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between leadership, culture, and school happiness. Further studies could investigate other organizational concepts that may mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and school happiness, such as emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and teacher autonomy. Examining the impact of different leadership styles (e.g., transactional, servant, or ethical leadership) on school happiness and culture can provide comparative insights and broaden the scope of educational leadership research. Conducting longitudinal studies to track changes over time in leadership practices, school culture, and happiness can offer deeper insights into causal relationships and long-term effects.

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About the authors:

Tuba Çakır is a graduate of Classroom Teaching. She completed her master's degree in educational administration at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. She continues to work as an deputy principal in a public primary school affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in Istanbul.

E-mail: egitim_tuba@hotmail.com



Authorship credit details: Conceptualization, methodology, software, investigation, resources, data curation, formal analysis, writing- original draft, visualization.

Mustafa Özgenel is an associate professor at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, specializing in professional development, performance, organizational and professional commitment, organizational agility, and agile leadership. He has authored numerous studies on these topics, with a particular focus on educational management, teacher development, and research methodologies. Özgenel is actively involved in international projects aimed at advancing teachers' professional growth.

E-mail: mustafa.ozgenel@izu.edu.tr

Authorship credit details: Methodology, software, validation, formal analysis, writing - review and editing, visualization, supervision.

The Implementation of Teachers' Continuous Professional Development: The Role of Teachers' Personal Characteristics, Perception towards CPD, and Support of School Leaders

Kelemu Zelalem Berhanu 

University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

Abstract

Professional development for teachers propels schools to excellence and contributes to school growth. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the role of teachers' personal characteristics, perception towards Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and support of school leaders in the implementation of teachers' CPD at Finote Selam town secondary school in Ethiopia. To accomplish this, Ecological Theory served as a theoretical lens, and a convergent parallel mixed design was used. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 304 teachers selected using a comprehensive sampling strategy, as well as 11 interviewers. As findings, teachers' implementation of CPD has no correlation with age, length of service, and perception of teachers towards CPD. However, there is a significant, strong, and positive relationship between teachers' implementation of CPD and school leaders' contribution to CPD. The support of school leaders explains 39.6 % of the total variance of teachers' CPD implementation. Finally, lack of good school culture among use in professional development activities, lack of commitment, lack of funding, and lack of common understanding related to CPD were the most prominent challenges affecting teachers'

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Email: kelemub@uj.ac.za



implementation of CPD. The findings provide theoretical implications to the literature and practical implication to educational institution leaders by identifying the main challenges of teachers in the implementation of CPD.

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Introduction

Quality education is a crucial element that shapes the advancements of society (Tulu, 2019). Educational and developmental theories are available to assist good quality education and make lessons enjoyable for students (Vadivel et al., 2021). Quality education is influenced by rapid changes in the contemporary world. Changes in the globes and nation's education system required staff development in their profession to update their competencies and to add value for the overall enhancement of students' the learning and education system (Evers et al., 2016; Srinivasacharlu, 2019). One means to update teachers' competencies is teachers' Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (MoE, 2015). According to the MoE (2009, p. 16), CPD is "anything that makes me a better teacher, targeting the improvement of teachers' performance in school situation to learners." CPD can be also explained as an in-service program that consists of learning, disseminating, and reflecting to keep alert to the



contemporary fluctuations and advancement in the teaching world (Evers et al., 2016; Vadivel et al., 2021).

There are two main methods to CPD: traditional and modern, according to Wan (2011). Because they cannot adequately prepare teachers for the new role of knowledge facilitator rather than knowledge transmitter, traditional approaches to CPD—such as one-stop workshops, formal courses, or one-off seminars with a top-down approach to knowledge dissemination—are criticized for their flaws (Wan, 2011). Conversely, modern CPD methods like conferences, informal conversations with coworkers, in-service training, peer mentoring, additional studies, training courses, study networks, collaborative teaching, and research on interest are all collaborative in nature. According to Abakah et al. (2022) and Srinivasacharlu (2019), modern approaches to CPD place a strong emphasis on the value of fostering learning communities where educators may experiment with new ideas, evaluate their performance, and build their understanding of teaching and learning within real-world contexts. There are two approaches to professional development for teachers (Job-Related and Job-Embedded), according to Joyce and Nicholson (1976). Committee work for program design and organization, team teaching, communication with district consultants, professional reading, and curriculum analysis are all included in the job embedding method. Workshops, teacher exchanges, and visits are examples of job-related methods. For the purpose of this research, CPD refers to any activity of teachers in secondary schools of Finote Selam town that contribute to increase knowledge, skills and personal qualities related to learning and teaching process. Teachers' CPD practices may influence student standardized test scores (Martínez et al., 2009). Teachers who have had



opportunities to learn something can predictably offer the same to their students (Vadivel et al., 2021).

Association of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and support of school leaders

Chappuis et al. (2009) strongly claimed that obtaining clarity of CPD's goals has crucial significance for its effective and efficient implementation. According to MoE's (2009) research report, approximately 4 out of 5 schools had either absent or inadequate structure of CPD. Several studies by Demelash (2012), Tulu (2019), and Gebre-Yesus (2014) displayed that the practice CPD activities in Ethiopian schools were scanty. However, Rikitu (2019) revealed that teachers' practices of CPD activities were somewhat adequately implemented.

Regarding the association of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD, several existing scholars found different results. The literature search from 27 empirical studies over how CPD differs across teachers' personal characteristics in a general age group in particular revealed that older workers were less likely to involve in CPD than young workers (Pool et al., 2013). Younger employees are also more likely to participate in development training and education, according to Tones et al. (2010) and Abakah et al. (2022). However, research looking mainly at non-formal and informal learning activities (Lammintakanen & Kivinen, 2012) found a positive correlation with age, while studies looking at more formal CPD (Felstead 2010; Thangavelu et al. 2011) found a negative relationship between age and participation in CPD. Using several age perspectives, a thorough assessment of age-related aspects in CPD was produced, and research gaps were found. Beard and



Wilson (2006); Pajare (1992); Torff and Session, 2008; Torff and Session (2009) noted that attitudes and perceptions about CPD has had a strong influence on the implementation of CPD programs. Qader (2020) also found that teachers' perception of CPD has a crucial role in the delivery of teaching and implementation of CPD activities. A study in Iran showed that teachers have had a positive belief in what they do and recognized the significance of CPD to advance as professional teachers (Vadivel et al., 2021). Saleem (2021) and Widayat et al (2021) exposed that many teachers had a positive attitude towards CPD program. A study in primary schools of Somali region of Ethiopia found that a majority of teachers and school leaders have a clear appreciative perception and knowledge about CPD while it was not fully practiced (Endale & Demessie, 2020).

Several scholars also supported that teachers' implementation of CPD is also influenced by the support of school leaders (Chappuis et al., 2009; Rikitu, 2019). For instance, Chappuis et al. (2009) stated that education leaders could assist teachers to comprehend the CPD process and provide adequate support. However, Gebre-yesus (2014); Fagense (2019); Tulu (2019), and Rikitu (2019) revealed that the school leaders and district education experts were providing unsatisfactory support for the teachers. Particularly, Rikitu (2019) revealed that the lack of well-trained CPD facilitators in the school was linked to the low level of CPD implementation.

Challenges of implementing CPD

There are several personal and institutional challenges that affect the successful implementation of CPD in schools. As Vadivel et al. (2021) stated, the concerns that should not be left out for better implementation of CPD were positive social interaction and allocation of appropriate time. Moreover, disorganized CPD training manuals



and contents, lack of well-trained CPD facilitators, inadequacy of school leaders' supports, and lack of funds to carry out CPD activities were the major challenges in implementing CPD programs (Rikitu, 2019). Qader (2020) also indicated that a mismatch between teachers' needs and CPD policy. The followings were identified as the prominent challenges of implementing CPD: a poor CPD training policy outline and scarce school support (Obiero & Onduso, 2020); restricted funding (Hustler, 2003); lack of institutional strategy, and low commitment of decision makers (Brekelmans, 2013); and lack of teachers' commitment, teachers' resistance, and inadequacy of need-based trainings (Birkel & Johnson, 2003; Day, 1999; Davidson et al., 2006; Falk, 2001). These challenges vary in terms of the type of context and CPD activities offered in schools (Gebre-yesus, 2014; Fagense, 2019; Tulu, 2019). More specifically, there was not any study that clearly examined the association of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and support of school leaders in Finote Selam town secondary school. Therefore, it was essential to carry out a study on the association of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and support of school leaders and related challenges in secondary schools of Finote-Selam town, Ethiopia.

Teachers' Continuous professional development in Ethiopian Context and Rationale

Although Ethiopia has been successful in expanding education at all grade levels, quality of education has become a serious issue for all education stakeholders. One manifestation of this, for instance, in 2022, more than 900,000 Ethiopian students took the entrance exam but only 3.3% passed. The pass rate for natural sciences was 3.6% and for social



sciences, it was only 1.3%. Shockingly, 39.2% of the schools had no students who passed the national examination (Addis standard, 2023).

In Ethiopia in 1994, an Education and Training Policy (ETP) that targets at the ruling education system clearly stated the professional development and personal quality of teachers. Later on, MoE (2018) also stated the importance of CPD program for better provision of quality education in Ethiopia. CPD is one of the professional responsibilities of teachers to address problems in the teaching and learning process (MoE, 2018; TESO, 2003; TGE, 2002). CPD is also one of the six main national programs to address the quality of education. However, despite the majority teachers have been involved in the CPD program in various forms; there existed research agreed that the program could not bring a noteworthy enhancement on students' academic achievement and teachers' professional competence. The researcher's interactions with teachers in various occasions we also affirmed that there is still a gap between the anticipated and actual teachers' competence, which creates a gap in students' actual academic achievement (MoE, 2018). The absence of noticeably well-defined purposes, lack of shared vision among CPD partners, lack of satisfactory awareness, and absence of linkage between CPD practice and teachers' career structure are also recognized as factors influencing teachers' CPD practice (MoE, 2009; 2010; 2018).

When researcher come to the research gaps of this study, first, elsewhere outside current research setting, numerous researchers (e.g. Asheber, 2014); Demelash, 2012; Fagense, 2019; Gebre-yesus, 2014; Teshome, 2014; Tesfaye, 2014; Tulu, 2019) simply assess the practice and challenges of teachers CPD in certain schools of Ethiopia. The context of the geographical location where the studies were conducted is different from the setting of this study. CPD for secondary school



teachers is more likely to be different from that for primary and vocational secondary teachers as secondary school teachers strive to acquire crucial subject matter and teaching methodology to equip students for tertiary institutions (Fox 1992; Widayati et al., 2021). That means there is no study carried out on relationship of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and the support of school leaders in the Finote Selam town. Thus, this study will shed light on how teachers' personal characteristics and perception towards CPD affected their implementation of CPD. Second, even though there is a large body of literature on CPD, earlier studies have mostly used dispersed approaches to study factors affecting teachers' CPD practice across different educational organizations. In particular, there is a fragmentary and disjointed treatment of the Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Theory aspects. These research, however, have not been able to offer a comprehensive, all-encompassing, and adaptable paradigm for attaining CPD in terms of personal characteristics, perception towards CPD and support of leaders and so forth. Third, there are inconsistencies among scholars regarding factors affecting teachers' CPD practice as they varied in terms of the context and CPD activities offered in schools (Gebre-yesus, 2014; Fagense, 2019; Tulu, 2019). These showed that the level of practice and challenges of teachers' CPD activities are inconsistent and site-based. Some of them found similar results, others didn't. This required further studies on this topic. Therefore, as the practice and challenges of CPD activities are inconsistent and site-based and various teachers would likely have different perceptions and practices of CPD, this study aimed at examining the role of teachers' personal characteristics, perception towards CPD, and support of school leaders in the implementation of teachers' CPD activities in the case of Finote-Selam town secondary



schools. To achieve this general objective, the following basic research questions are raised:

1. What are the relationship of teachers' CPD practice with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and the support of school leaders?
2. What are the major challenges that affect the implementation of CPD programs?

Research conducted on CPD in a local context of Ethiopia can offer numerous benefits to international readers, researchers, policy makers, practitioners and so forth. First, this study can offer numerous benefits for researchers and international readers by enhancing school cultural understanding in CPD using the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model and bringing diverse perspectives to the table, enriching the academic discourse with unique viewpoints on CPD that might not be present in international or Western-centric research. Moreover, this local research can open up collaborative opportunities, allowing international scholars to participate in projects that can lead to mutual learning and shared resources. This research will also be useful as a future reference for academics from throughout the world studying CPD. More significantly, it will reveal the extent to which secondary schools are benefiting from CPD. Essentially, by providing context-specific knowledge, encouraging partnerships, and adding to a more complete and integrated understanding of global concerns, this local study may greatly enhance the work of international researchers.

Second, on top of these, studying continuous professional development for secondary school teachers is quite an important research project for practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders. One, the study can be an alternative technique to



improving teachers' CPD implementation by systematically looking into various elements of the relationships of the study variables. If secondary schools of Finote selam town develop a culture of solving problems by conducting research of this kind, a huge amount of resources will be saved from being invested for the wrong reasons. Here, it is fundamental to not forget that our country has very scarce skilled human resources among other things. Therefore, the researcher thinks that the findings of this study will be able to provide policy implementers with information about the levels and challenges to raising teacher participation rates in CPD programs. This study on CPD also helps practitioners maintain and enhance their skills, ensuring they remain competent and effective in their profession. It also aids in career advancement. Second, this study can inform policy development by providing evidence-based insights into what works in continuous professional practice. It also helps policy makers understand the relationship between their perception towards CPD program and challenges of professionals, leading to better support and resources. Third, the education minister's office, educational leaders, and other stakeholders may appreciate the results of this research and provide resources to raise teachers' CPD practice.

Theoretical Framework

This study followed Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecology of Human Development theory, which underlines the cooperating practices between the individual and the environment. This theory strongly believes that those individuals' events, responsibilities, and interactions in any environments have a great contribution to all aspects of development. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model could also be helpful in examining the teachers' CPD (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013; Widayati et al., 2021). According to the Bronfenbrenner's (1979)



Ecological Theory, development towards identified goals is sustained through interaction within the environment. In the case of the present study, teachers' main goal is to enhance professionalism via CPD.

In this conceptual model as shown in Fig. 1, the teacher is at the center of the model and the succeeding layers are responsible for the teachers' CPD practice. In the present study, this denotes teachers' personal characteristics such as age and length of service. At the next level teachers' developments are influenced by the environment in which they relate with others (microsystem layer). The microsystem contains the most immediate environmental setting containing the developing teachers. Relationships in a microsystem are bidirectional, meaning that other school stakeholders like the school principals, CPD facilitators, supervisors, and colleagues can affect teachers' CPD practice and change their beliefs and actions. The second layer is the interaction in the school environment (school level) (mesosystems layer) including interactions within the school stakeholders. For example, the conflict between these microsystems, like teachers and the principal blaming each other or blaming teachers for a student's poor academic achievement, creates tension that negatively impacts the teachers' professional development. The third layer is formal and informal social structures (community level) (exosystems layer) which includes local government, education policies, laws, mass media, funds, community resources, politicians, and so forth that can affect teachers' CPD. The last layer is the macrosystems layer which consists of the appropriateness of cultural ideologies, culture, social conditions, attitudes, values, education laws, and regulations to the teachers' CPD practice (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013).

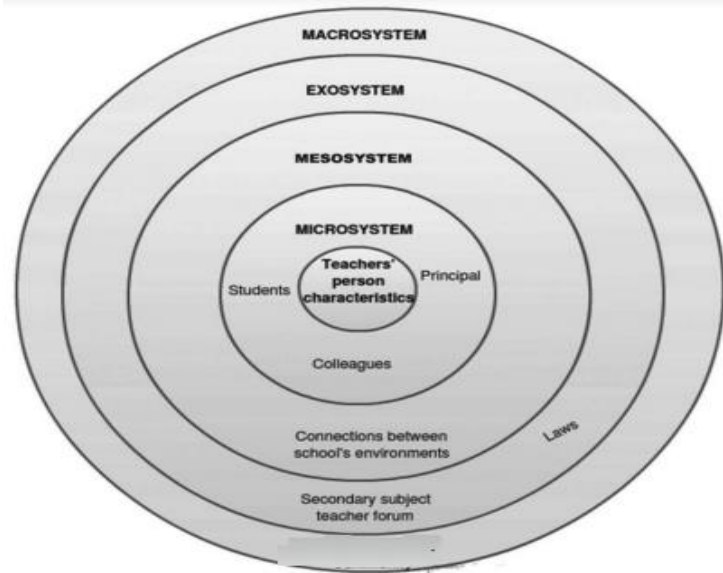


Figure 1. Factors Affecting Teacher’s CPD implementation: Personal and Environmental factors, adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979) Ecological approach

Methods

Research Design

A convergent parallel mixed research design was utilized by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods due to several reasons. First, this design aids the researcher to gather and explain a large diversity of data from various school stakeholders related to the teachers’ implementation of CPD and associated challenges (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Second, this design allows the researcher to combine, integrate, and triangulate both the quantitative and qualitative data to strengthen each separately and to fill the limitations behind using one of the two alone. That means a better understanding of the research



topic is also hoped to be achieved by integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Third, this design is also the most prevalent method of mixed method design in educational studies by collecting quantitative and qualitative data to elucidate the findings (Creswell, 2015).

Participants

All the secondary school of Finote Selam town's teachers, CPD facilitators, principals, and education experts were the total target population of the present study. Secondary and preparatory schools of Finote Selam town, Ethiopia, were chosen by purposively sampling technique. In those schools, there are 335 teachers which included as a sample through comprehensive sampling methods in the quantitative study. However, 304 teachers (90.7%) were completing the survey. For qualitative data, the researcher selected 3 principals, 3 CPD facilitators, and 5 concerned educational experts of the district and province education office, totally 11 samples were selected via maximum variation sampling method since it assists the researcher to choose small people that foster the variety appropriate to the research questions.

Eleven interviewees were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: they had to be employed for at least ten years; they had to be working on CPD-related duties; they had to be enrolled in secondary school prior to the interview; they had to be willing to participate in the study and expect good knowledge about CPD. Regarding demographic factors, respondents had more than ten years of experience, strong academic backgrounds, and CPD knowledge or proficiency. To get distinct and generally good viewpoints from each group, the researcher needed to involve principals, CPD facilitators from three secondary schools, and significant specialists from the

provincial and district education bureaus. Research involving a range of groups is beneficial because it may enhance the range of opinions and fields of expertise that may be used to the research topic, as well as boost the study's applicability and relevance for end users (Stalley et al., 2021). As a result, data collection from a diverse range of participants based on their roles within the school may provide a reasonably balanced set of perspectives and a range of views to studies on CPD practice and related difficulties.

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants (Quantitative and Qualitative)

Personal Variables	For quantitative (teachers)		For qualitative		
	N	%	N	%	
Sex	Male	248	79.7	9	81.8
	Female	56	18.0	2	18.2
Length of service	<10 years	19	6.1	0	0
	11-20 years	223	71.7	5	45.45
	>21 years	62	19.9	6	54.55
Age	<29	39	12.5	0	0
	30-34	119	38.3	0	0
	35-40	65	20.9	2	18.2
	>40	81	26.0	9	81.8
Total	304	97.7	11	100%	

As shown in Table 1, most of the teachers in the secondary schools of Finote Selam are in adulthood stage. With regard to length of experience, the majority (71.7%) of the respondents were having 11-20 years of experience. Moreover, all school leaders (Interviewees), district and province Education Office experts have been working for



more than 10 years. Hence, it can be said that the majority of respondents are experienced teachers, school leaders, and education experts.

Instruments, Validity and Reliability

Both qualitative and quantitative data gathering instruments were used in this study. Since the questionnaire is more appropriate for the investigation as it is inclusive of a variety of questions, closed-ended and open-ended the latter one potentially allows the respondents to generate more ideas. To collect quantitative data from the teachers, three scales were used using Likert scale which is not difficult to construct and takes less amount of time to reply. The likert scale ranges from 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) for all scales. Sound instruments must meet the tests of validity and reliability. Questionnaire used for this study was initially developed by Abebaw (2019). Hence, the previous researchers proved the validity of the questionnaires and used in Ethiopian context. Hence, the studies involved a questionnaire that has two parts. The first part deals with the background of respondents. The second part consist of items that measure the perception, school leaders, support, practice, and challenges of CPD. For the second part, the details are described as follows:

Teacher's perception towards CPD scale. This scale was adapted from previous empirical studies in Ethiopia (Abebaw, 2019; Al Asmari, 2016; Hustler et al., 2003). Originally, Abebaw (2019) adopted from Al Asmari (2016) and Hustler et al. (2003) and validated in Ethiopian schools. According to Abebaw (2019), Cronbach Alpha for teacher's perception towards CPD scale was 0.83. He constructed and validated in Ethiopian context. The scale has 9 items (sample of items: Professional development activities help me to develop my own



instructional skills; Set my own learning goals to improve myself professionally continuously and CPD in education has a positive impact on teacher effectiveness and efficiency). When investigating the scale of Cronbach's coefficient alpha using SPSS-25, this scale has an alpha value of 0.612. Regarding fitness of the scale, the researcher carried out CFA which revealed. Chi-square(χ^2)/df =2.45, which is less than five, the scale has a good fit. IFI=.95, NFI=.95, CFI=.96, RMSEA=.052, RFI=.94, and NNFI =.95, which corresponded to a reasonable fit (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). A wide range of different Cronbach's coefficient alpha labels was used by different scholars to interpret alpha values calculated (Griethuijzen et al., 2014; Taber, 2018). For instance, Taber's (2018) alpha value between 0.61– and 0.65 was categorized as moderate. Even if several scholars identified 0.7 as benchmark for reliability analysis, a Cronbach's alpha above 0.6 is considered acceptable due to several context matters. First, in this study, sample sizes are somehow small which tend to yield lower alphas. If sample size is somehow small, between 0.6 and 0.7 might be reasonable (Taber, 2018). Griethuijzen et al. (2014) also reported a cross-national study's Cronbach's alpha around 0.6 was acceptable. Second, Alpha is influenced by the number of items in scale. If scale has only a few items, above 0.6 might be acceptable (Taber, 2018). Third if item-total correlation is moderately high to high (.40+), then the item will make a good component of a summated rating scale which shows a good internal consistency. Item-total correlation of the scale is above 0.4 (Leech et al., 2015). Lastly homogeneity of participants or teachers was also contributed for low Alpha level. Hence, Cronbach's coefficient alpha of teacher's perception towards CPD scale had a reasonable reliability level (Field, 2009).



School leaders such as supervisors, principals, and CPD facilitators, contributed to CPD implementation scale. Author adopted this scale from Abebaw (2019). The scale has 12 items. Sample of items include: the school CPD facilitators prepare a training opportunities based on my training needs; the school principals prepare discussion forums with other schools; and the school leaders encourage and support me to exercise peer evaluation on CPD practices). This scale has sub dimensions such as school principals support for CPD (4 items); School facilitators (CPD) (3 items), and supervisor support (5 items). To investigate the fitness of the scale, the researcher carried out CFA which showed. Chi-square(x^2)/df =2.23, which is less than five, the scale has a good fit. CFI=.97, IFI=. 96, RMSEA= .072, RFI= .96, NFI= .96, and NNFI =.96, which corresponded to a reasonable fit (Schermele-Engel et al., 2003). For reliability studies, author utilized Cronbach Alpha and its value for school principal contribution to CPD sub dimension 0.883, for CPD facilitators 0.9, and for supervisor the contribution to CPD implementation 0.9. The total Cronbach Alpha was 0.9. Thus, the scale is highly reliable in all sub dimensions and in the whole scale (Field, 2009).

Teachers' CPD practice /implementations scale. Practice is the vital phase in any type of CPD activity. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), a CPD program's implementation requires careful preparation, honest communication, collaboration among implementers, and support from a variety of sources. The teachers' CPD practice scale made an effort to measure the extent to which CPD is being implemented in Finote Selam town's secondary schools. The findings showed how much the respondents agreed with the activities of CPD. It has a total of 13 items. Total Cronbach Alpha was .875. By conducting CFA, the researcher was able to determine the scale's fitness. The scale



has a very good fit as $\chi^2/df = 1.9$, which is less than five. Very good fit was shown by $IFI=.97$, $NFI=.98$, $CFI=.98$, $RMSEA=.041$, $RFI=.96$, and $NNFI=.97$. Sample items include: I am preplanning for CPD activities based on the evaluation of implemented CPD practices and I have prepared portfolio by recording all CPD documents; and I frequently conduct action researches with other teachers or groups.

The challenges of implementation of CPD program in the school. List of major challenges from previous scholars (Fagense, 2019; Gebre-yesus, 2014; Tulu, 2019) that affect the implementation of CPD programs were mentioned and teachers responded their level of agreement according to their respective schools. It has 12 items. Sample items include: I was not well oriented about the significance of CPD activities. The summary of the reliability of the scale was presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Summary of Reliability Results

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	N of Items	Scale mean	Scale Std. Dev
Teachers' Perception of CPD	.612	9	25.8059	5.40674
Teachers' implementation of CPD	.875	13	26.8322	8.41664
School leaders' support of teachers	.9	12	21.1184	8.63865

In order to support and strengthen the data that were collected using the questionnaires, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with principals, CPD facilitators, and district and province educational office experts. To design semi structured questionnaire, author followed the following procedures. First, author prepared questions from the literature reviews in line with the objectives and basic questions of the study. Thus, the semi-structured questions



included information about the perception of teachers, practice and its personal and institutional factors that affect the implementations of CPD programs. Regarding factors that affect the implementations of CPD programs, in line with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecology of Human Development theory, the teacher is at the center of the model and their practice of CPD were influenced by their personal characteristics, interactions with school stakeholders and environments (microsystem); formal and informal social structures (ecosystems layer); and macrosystems layer (appropriateness of cultural ideologies, culture, social conditions, attitudes, values, education laws, and regulations) (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013). Second, author validated questions based on the comments of subject matter experts. Third, author ensured trustworthiness of the semi structured questionnaire via the following procedures: first, the selection of participants was not comprehensive, but was conducted by setting inclusion criteria before data were collected to avoid bias and subjectivity (see participant subsection). Second, author performed audio recordings from participants based on their full volunteerism.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed on the collected data. Quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage (to summarize personal information), mean scores (to address research question 2-challenges), and inferential statistics such as Spearman correlation and linear regression (to address research question 1). Spearman Rho is utilized because the data's variables are ordinal or interval-scaled, namely, the five-point Likert interval scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Given that the dependent variable in this study has a normal



distribution and multicollinearity is not an issue, linear regression is also suitable (Ross & Willson, 2017).

Narration was used to assess qualitative data in order to corroborate and strengthen quantitative findings that aligned with the primary study research questions. The researcher and the researcher's assistance conducted interviews in Amharic before translating and transcribing the material. The researcher double-checked those audio recordings to make sure the translation and transcription were accurate because author is also fluent in Amharic. Listening audio recordings that correspond with transcripts in order to acquaint the author with the entirety of the interview response. The researcher used paragraph style to do data cleansing after transcription. This is employed to categorize data in accordance with the study questions. Next, the researcher imported the information into NVivo. Third, the researcher rearranged data via categorizing the data according to the study questions. Fourth, to identify the words or phrases that address the study questions, the researcher performed data exploration (using the "Query command"). Subsequently, the researcher started categorizing pertinent data. Ultimately, the researcher has exported the nodes and included verbatim quotes from the participants to clarify themes or study objectives. Throughout the results section, the researcher used several, in-depth quotations to highlight specific features of the quantitative findings.

Results

A total of 335 questionnaires were disseminated to all teachers of secondary schools in Finote Selam town, however, 304 respondents (90.7%) were filled the questionnaire, which is a reasonable amount of samples to head the analysis.

Correlation among teachers' characteristics, support of school leaders, teachers' perception towards CPD, and teachers' implementation of CPD

In addition to the correlation between study variables, this section of the research deals with the status of perception of school-based CPD, support of school leaders for CPD implementation, and status of teachers' implementation of CPD via mean and the relationship between study variables through Spearman correlation.

Table 3.

Correlation among Teachers' Characteristics, Support of School Leaders, Teachers' Perception Towards CPD, and Teachers' Implementation of CPD

Variables	Mean	1	2	3	4	5
Age	32.5 years	1				
Length of service	12.24 years	.425**	1			
Support of school leaders	1.760	-.093	-.036	1		
Teachers' perception towards CPD	2.867	-.113*	-.132*	.024	1	
Teachers' implementation of CPD	2.064	-.087	.016	.59**	-.095	1

** is significant at 0.01 and * is Significant at 0.05 levels

As shown in Table 3, for a five-level Likert scale, means (M) can be classified into 3 groups: $M \geq 3.66$ is high; $2.34 \leq M < 3.67$ is moderate, and $M < 2.34$ is Low (Yamashita & Millar, 2021). Thus, except teachers' perception towards CPD program, which is moderate, teachers' views about composite scores of school leaders' the contribution of CPD, and teachers' implementation of CPD are at the low level.

Teachers' perception towards CPD program. In the qualitative data collection session, then the principals, CPD facilitators, and education experts were asked to explain the perception of teachers towards CPD program. During the semi-structured interviews, participants replied that they lacked interest and desire to involve in the CPD program. In

line with this, one interviewee (CPD facilitator) addressed the issue using the following words:

On the condition that teacher education is supported with training based on the interests and needs of the trainees, a training designed after gaps between actual performance and expected performance, it could have fruitful outcomes; however, it would be unsuccessful to invest on such an endeavor if trainees do not give due perception and consideration on the continuous professional development program.

Supporting the above argument, during the interview, some participants agreed that to enhance their perception towards CPD activities, there should be an alignment of CPD tasks and teachers' needs in skills and knowledge. However, the reality in the school is different. Supporting this, during this idea, one school principal stated the following statements

Teachers do not view CPD as involving the professional growth of them through gaining knowledge in teaching and experience. However, scholars in the field of education also argued that CPD is a process whereby a teacher achieves professional growth in teaching and becomes effective and efficient in his or her execution of duty protocol. However, teachers in my school don't perceive CPD positively.

Implementation of continuous professional development program.

From quantitative findings, we can understand the implementation of CPD activities in secondary schools of Finote Selam town are insufficient and needs improvement. In the same vein, the interview section was also shown similar findings. For instance, a school principal replied as:



The goal of the CPD program was to promote student accomplishment by keeping instructors' skills and knowledge up to date. However, neither the students' nor teachers' knowledge was updated. The students always complain due to lack of teachers' teaching skills and subject matter knowledge. These all indicate the CPD training did not attain its objectives. Therefore, there was no effectiveness of the implementation of CPD program in schools.

The other contributor (a district education expert) replied that:

In the selected schools, the implementation status of CPD program is almost in bad condition. That means the school leaders and teachers ignored the CPD issues. They are focusing on other teaching and learning issues. They forget the principle that without updating teachers it is impossible to bring the desired changes in the school.

In general, both qualitative and quantitative data showed that the implementation of CPD programs in schools was inadequate.

The school leaders such as supervisors, principals, and CPD facilitators, contributed to CPD implementation. Over this issue, qualitative findings also support quantitative results. For instance, a CPD facilitator replied as follows:

The CPD training was not given in the regular way and nobody could pay attention to the issues of CPD training; teachers do not have awareness about CPD and there was no coordination in the school for CPD training. The school leaders have also no awareness to give support and guidance for teachers.

A district education expert is also commenting his ideas as:

In this year, we did not give any training and did not make discussions with school leaders and teachers rather than trying to



supervise the implementation of it. This is because we gave mandates for school leaders to lead CPD training effectively.

The other interviewee (a school principal) also expressed in the way that:

We are preparing checklists to check the practice of CPD training for the second semester in this year, to speak frankly; we did not give attention for CPD training in the schools. We have not led the training in a regular way. We did not design a systematic way of supporting and following up activities. In addition to this, the negative attitudes of teachers towards CPD training made difficulty to follow up and give support. Therefore, we did not give adequate support for teachers.

The data gathered from the questionnaire and interviews confirmed that there were inadequate school leader support activities of the CPD program in the schools.

Moreover, according to Cohen's (1998) interpretation of the correlation (< 0.30, small; 0.3-0.5, medium; and ≥ 0.5 , large), Table 3 also displayed that there was a significant, strong, and positive relationship between teachers' CPD practice and school leaders' contribution to CPD activities ($r=0.59$, $p < 0.01$). However, teachers' CPD practice has no correlation with age, length of service, and perception of teachers towards CPD. Teachers' perception towards CPD were negatively corrected with length of service at a low level ($r=-.132$, $p<.05$). In this respect, it can be said that the increase of school leaders' contribution to CPD activities will yield to an escalation in teachers' CPD activities.

There is no way for running regression analysis to examine whether age, length of service, and perception of teachers towards CPD have had an impact on teachers' implementation of CPD since there is no



correlation among the composite sets of variables (Leech et al., 2015). However, since a correlation of below .60, which doesn't run the risk of multicollinearity (Leech et al., 2015), linear regression was carried out to investigate the influence of school leader support on teachers' implementation of CPD.

Table 4.

The Influence of School Leaders Support on Teachers' Implementation of CPD

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	P
1 (Constant)	13.949	.985		14.154	.000
Support of school leaders	7.984	.565	.631	14.138	.000

R=.631^a, R²=.398, Adjusted R² =.396, P<0.01, ΔR² =.398, F(1,302)= 199.869, P<0.01 Durbin-Watson=1.896

As shown in Table 4, one model was obtained by including school leaders' support of teachers as independent variables. According to Model, school leaders support significantly predicted teachers' implementation of CPD (R=.631^a, R²=.398, Adjusted R² =.396, P<0.01, ΔR² =.398, F(1,302)= 199.869, P<0.01). The support of school leaders regarding teachers' implementation of CPD activities explains 39.6 % of the total variance of teachers' implementation of CPD. When t-test, results showed that school leaders' support was an important predictor of teachers' implementation of CPD. As a result, it is understood that school leaders' contribution to CPD activities is highly predicting with teachers' practice of CPD.

Challenges of implementation of CPD program in the School

Teachers' responses to challenges that hinder the implementation of CPD programs in their respective schools are presented in Table 5 as follows:



Table 5.

Challenges of Implementation of CPD Program in the School

No	How much do you agree with the following statements?	Mean
1.	There is not a school culture among my colleagues that encourages me to participate in professional development activities.	4.04
2.	My colleagues and I don't share a common understanding related to teacher development.	3.8
3.	Lack of funding for additional personnel to cover classes prevents me from participating in professional development activities.	3.62
4.	I am not motivated by the school or district or province to better apply CPD practices	3.54
5.	I am less committed to implement the CPD practices	3.53
6.	The available CPD trainings do not meet my needs	3.37
7.	I was not well oriented about the significance of CPD activities	2.98
8.	I have not understand the CPD training manuals	2.91
9.	The working environment in my school is not positive and supportive.	2.86
10.	Teaching-related duties prevent me from participating in professional development activities beyond the work day.	2.69
11.	The contents of the CPD manuals are irrelevant	2.45
12.	The timing of provision, in our school, significantly affected teachers' access to CPD.	2.33
13.	Salary supplements would encourage me to participate in professional development activities.	2.24
14.	The contents of the CPD manuals are unclear	2.15

As indicated in Table 5, lack of good school culture among use in professional development activities, lack of commitment, lack of funding, and lack of common understanding related to CPD were the most prominent challenges affecting teachers' implementation of CPD.



Interview results revealed that shortage of material and financial resources and support from the district education bureaus as challenges to implement CPD effectively and efficiently. A CPD facilitator also remarked that “The contents of the available CPD material are not only irrelevant but also unclear and inapplicable within the ongoing school context”. A school principal responded that “the Ministry of Education declared a quality education assurance package containing six pillars, one of which is CDP (as part of the teachers ‘development program). They said that the program was working in all schools and education offices of different levels. However, there is still a lack of common sense of ownership and various aspects of supports and continuous follow-up of the process”.

A province expert also suggested that teachers, CPD facilitators, principals, and district experts were not taking full responsibility of having a common sense of ownership to boldly implement the planned activities of school-based CPD. Interviewees also commented that the school-based CPD activities were not directly linked with the teacher’s career development structure and not integrated as criteria for performance evaluation. Moreover, a supervisor suggested that some principals were not willing to support the staff during the actual practice of school-based CPD. There was not informally in the overall school-based CPD implementation processes due to the absence of standardized procedures across schools in Finote selam as participants further pointed.

In conclusion, it is believed that less involvement of teachers in the implementation process, insufficient professional support executed by district and province experts, secondary school principals and CPD facilitators, less organized school situation to support CPD and less



attention to allocate sufficient budget and materials to encourage the implantation of CPD are the major challenges against the best performance.

Discussion

This study aimed at examining the role of personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and the support of the school leaders in predicting teachers' implementation of CPD and associated challenges in secondary schools of Finote-Selam town through Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecology of Human Development as a theoretical lens. The present study revealed that even if teachers' perception towards CPD program, which is moderate, teachers' views about composite scores of school leaders' the contribution of CPD, and teachers' implementation of CPD are at the low level. This was further supported by the interviewees' justifications as majority teachers do not view CPD as involving the professional growth of them through gaining knowledge in teaching and experience. That means they don't perceive CPD positively. In line with the present study, in Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education's research report found that nearly 4/5 schools' CPD structure is either absent or inadequate. Congruently with the present finding, Chappuis et al. (2009) and Rikitu (2019) revealed that the school leaders and district experts were offering insufficient teachers' support. Congruently, Demelash (2012), Tulu (2019), Gebre-Yesus (2014), and Rikitu (2019) displayed that the implementation of CPD activities in Ethiopia were scant and needs improvement. Due to this, there is a gap between the planned teachers' professional knowledge and skills and actual competence (MoE, 2018). Therefore, these teachers' professional development gap is challenged by both contextual and personal factors (Clardy, 2000).



As show the results of this research, the school leaders such as supervisors, principals, and CPD facilitators were poorly contributed effectively in implementation CPD in school. The interviewees also attested to the fact that, although school administrators are vital in putting Continuing Professional Development (CPD) into practice in educational settings by fostering a culture of support, formulating and communicating a clear CPD vision, and guaranteeing that personnel have access to the necessary training and resources, their own input was minimal. Some other interviewees also stated that school leaders have also no awareness to give support and guidance for teachers. These indicate that their main responsibilities contradict with this study. Supervisors and school principals have the responsibility to implement and strengthen teaching- learning process by giving support and creating suitable circumstances for the development of the learner (MoE, 2018).

The present study displayed that there is no relation between teachers' implementation of CPD and their personal characteristics such as age and length of service. On the contrary, prior scholars showed that CPD implementation differs in terms of age group and length of service (Pool et al., 2013; Tones et al., 2010). For instance, Tones et al. (2010) noted that younger employees' professional development desires and implementation are higher in most organizations. Incongruently with the present result, teachers' profession development is affected by prior knowledge and experience (Microsystem layer in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of development) (Martínez et al., 2009). The present study found that there is a negative relationship between the attitudes of teachers toward CPD activities and length of service. In contradictory to the present finding, Silane (2003) argued that there was no correlation between the attitudes of teachers toward



CPD activities and length of service. This showed that Ethiopian teachers' implementation of CPD were inadequate irrespective of their personal characteristics such as age and length of service.

The present study found that there is no correlation between teachers' implementation of CPD and their perception towards CPD programs. Incongruently, Hargreaves (1994) also stated those teachers' perceptions as the springboard for what teachers practice in real situations. Moreover, Beard and Wilson (2006); Pajare (1992); Qader (2020), Torff and Session (2008); Torff and Session (2009), attitude and perception about CPD has had a strong influence on the implementation of CPD program. Perception is one of the factors implementing teacher's CPD in schools (Davidson, 2006). This means that the present study showed teachers have a positive clear understanding and perception about CPD while it was not fully practiced.

This paper also noted that there is a significant, strong, and positive relationship between teachers' implementation of CPD and school leaders' contribution to CPD activities. The support of school leaders is significantly predicting by teachers' implementation of CPD activities. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory supported the present findings in the way that the relationships between individuals and staff's working environment constitute contexts of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Similarly, prior scholars also found that teachers' professional development occurs when favorable and supportive learning environments are provided by school leaders (mesosystem layer in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of development) (Bransford et al., 1999; Julian & Ruiz, 2020). CPD facilitators in CPD



also play a crucial role in establishing favorable learning environments for teacher professional development (Bransford et al., 1999).

The present study also found lack of good school culture among use in professional development activities, lack of commitment, lack of funding, and lack of common understanding related to CPD were the most prominent challenges affecting teachers' implementation of CPD. Interviewed participants also identified that lack willing and commitment of some principals to support the staff during the actual practice of school-based CPD is a challenge that affecting teachers' implementation of CPD. Similar to the present finding, there are numerous factors affecting teachers' CPD including personal and environmental factors (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013; Widayati et al., 2021). The present study is also supported by the exosystem layer in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of development). The exosystem layer includes the local education district's uncoordinated CPD, practices, laws, funds, and community resources that can affect teachers' CPD. The last layer is the macrosystems layer is supported by the present finding; particularly the contents of curriculum and CPD activities are relevant to the teachers' profession development (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013). Moreover, congruently to the current study, disorganized CPD training manuals and contents, lack of well-trained CPD facilitators, inadequacy of school leaders' supports, and lack of funds to carry out CPD activities were the major challenges in implementing CPD programs (Rikitu, 2019). Qader (2020) also indicated that a mismatch between teachers' needs and CPD policy. The followings were identified as the prominent challenges of implementing CPD: a poor CPD training policy outline and scarce school support (Obiero & Onduso, 2020); lack of institutional strategy, and low commitment of decision makers (Brekelmans, 2013); and lack of teachers'



commitment, teachers' resistance, and inadequacy of need-based trainings (Birkel & Johnson, 2003; Day, 1999; Davidson et al., 2006; Falk, 2001). These challenges vary in terms of the type of context and CPD activities offered in schools (Gebre-yesus, 2014; Fagense, 2019; Tulu, 2019).

Conclusions, Implications and Suggestions for Future Scholars

In this study, data for examining the role of personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and the support of the school leaders in predicting teachers' implementation of CPD and associated challenges were obtained from both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Even if teachers' perception towards CPD is a moderate level, the overall implementation of teachers' CPD program and the level of school leaders' support in thus study areas were low. This showed that the implementation of CPD program in secondary school of Finote Selam town is insufficient and it needs improvement. Teachers' implementation of CPD has no correlation with age, length of service, and perception of teachers towards CPD. However, there is a significant, strong, and positive relationship between teachers' implementation of CPD and school leaders' contribution to CPD activities. The support of school leaders explains 39.6 % of the total variance of teachers' implementation of CPD. Finally, lack of good school culture among use in professional development activities, lack of commitment, lack of funding, and lack of common understanding related to CPD were the most prominent challenges affecting teachers' implementation of CPD. The findings provide theoretical implications to the literature and practical implication to educational institution leaders by identifying the main challenges of teachers in the implementation of CPD.



Based on the major findings, first, this study has a theoretical contribution in the literature on perception towards CPD; support of school leaders and teachers' implementation, and challenges of CPD. Secondly, this study has the following practical implementations. First, the study strongly recommends to education institution leaders to create a shared and common culture among teachers and schools, which is suitable to their active engagement in CPD activities. Region, province and district education bureaus can prepare conferences, discussions, and experience sharing platforms among schools to assist teachers to have more experience sharing about CPD programs. Principals, supervisors, and education officers can formulate systems and make available material and financial resources so that help teachers to understand the essence of CPD and apply accordingly. A needs analysis can also assist school leaders in crafting a good CPD content for teachers. Therefore, school CPD facilitators can give speedy replies and endorse teamwork occasions with coworkers to build up a shared learning culture.

This study was also limited to one town, Finte Sealam town; thus, the paper can be extended by incorporating different towns and districts where school culture can influence teachers' implementation of CPD. Some respondents may have biased outlooks owing to their school and societal and cultural differences, which influence the results of the study (Zhang et al., 2021). Using numerous respondents through a questionnaire and interview is crucial to attain better objective conclusions. Furthermore, with a convergent parallel mixed design, by gathering data at one time, it is less likely to conclude the general teachers' implementation of CPD and its associated factors. Therefore, future scholars should use longitudinal designs to deliver more decisive and validate evidence, and this study won't include the



primary teachers' views. Moreover, control variables such as school type, and participation in in-service courses might have various impacts on teachers' CPD practice. Thus, future scholars can understand and consider these control variables as essential for studying and designing effective educational interventions in CPD practice.

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About the author:

Kelemu Zelalem Berhanu is a senior postdoctoral research fellow at University of Johannesburg, South Africa. He holds a PhD in Educational Management, inspection, economics and planning from Akdeniz University – Turkey. His research focuses on leadership, empowerment, school-based management, and organizational commitment and behavior. His research has been published in several international journals.

E-mail: kelemub@uj.ac.za / lkelemu@yahoo.com

Gender Inequality and Collective Action in School Committees: Evidence from Tanzania

Kenny Manara 

University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Abstract

The making of education governance reforms has led to the transfer of school management powers to teachers' and parents' representatives through primary school management committees. However, the committees have been found to be inadequate in ensuring that collective action is taken by their male and female members in most low- and middle-income countries. In response, this paper examines the possibilities that collective action by school committees is related to gender inequality, controlling for demographic and socio-economic factors across the rural (Iringa District) and urban (Arusha City) contexts of Tanzania. The results of a simple linear regression analysis using Ordinary Least Square techniques show that gender inequality predicts the collective action in school committees in both Arusha City and Iringa District. However, the multiple linear regression model predicts gender inequality in Arusha, and not in Iringa, controlling for membership experience and occupational status for both the rural and urban samples. This paper has implications for both policy and practice. In particular, the next round of school autonomy reforms needs to consider the criteria for school committee membership to incorporate membership experience and occupational status into the qualifications of parents' representatives. In practice, head teachers need to devise

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* Corresponding Author:

Email: manara.kenny@udsm.ac.tz



innovative, sustainable approaches using the readily available resources to provide planning, budgeting and monitoring skills-based training to newly elected parent representatives.

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Introduction

Since the start of governance reforms in the 1990s, the African continent has witnessed considerable proliferation of participatory public service management teams, a process by which committees have become increasingly important to organising collective action in overseeing public service delivery (Archambault & Ehrhardt, 2022). In Tanzania, the trend includes the rolling out of a school-based management (SBM) programme to transfer school management powers from the government to schools (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001). This includes gender representation in school committees (SCs) to ensure that there is women's participation in school management (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001, 2018). However, gender mainstreaming has not been carried out systematically to ensure that women participate in collective action in school committees (ActionAid Tanzania, 2011).

Previous research conducted in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) reports that, despite various attempts to promote collective action in school

committees through formal rules (Prinsen & Titega, 2008), gender inequality seems to permeate school management committees (SMCs). For example, in Nigeria, one common struggle facing women members of school-based management committees (SBMCs) is the battle against the frequent insults, ridicules and jeering they receive while conducting committee activities (Coinco, 2012). In South Africa, women's participation in school governing bodies (SGBs) was mainly in non-leadership roles: Having a male figure as a leader was a meaningful social norm and identity (Brown & Duku, 2008). In particular, unmarried female members seemed to be particularly isolated and ostracised (Duku & Salami, 2017).

There appear to be differences in the motivation and participation in school-related collective action between men and women in rural and urban areas (Carr-Hill, 2017). One explanation for this state of affairs is that, in more disadvantaged contexts such as rural areas, schools have had a particularly difficult time to respond to school autonomy reforms (Holme & Rangel, 2012). This paper examines the relationship between gender inequality and collective action in school committees in rural and urban contexts of Tanzania, controlling for demographic and socio-economic factors. Specifically, two questions are posed: Is there any difference in collective action in school committees between rural and urban Tanzania? Does gender inequality influence the collective action in school committees in rural and urban Tanzania?

Answering these research questions is important because collective action problems facing school committees could also arise because of gender inequality (Cossyleon & Woolley, 2020) emanating from respect for informal rules (Prinsen & Titega, 2008), some of which discriminate against women (Pandolfelli et al., 2007). Hence, it is possible that women members of school committees in Tanzania are



culturally marginalised, since most local communities are shaped by patriarchal values (Nemes, 2013). For example, a recent study observes that participation in monitoring school projects was limited and constrained by the gender imbalance characterising school committees (Masanyiwa et al., 2023). In such a context, neoliberal SBM reforms may both empower and disempower the women involved in school management (Barreto & Doyle, 2023; Dhakal, 2021), depending on the specific social context. Therefore, it is necessary in the Tanzanian context to identify the patterns of relationship between gender inequality and collective action in school committees.

The Policy Context

The current SBM model in Tanzania originates from the Education and Training Policy (ETP), 1995, and the Education (Amendment) Act, 1995. While the former calls for the establishment of enhanced partnerships in the provision of education as well as the streamlining of education management structures through the devolution of authority to districts and schools (United Republic of Tanzania, 1995a), the latter requires each primary school to have a school committee (United Republic of Tanzania, 1995b). Following these school autonomy reforms, the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) was launched in 1997 to initiate the making of several major changes to the management of primary school education, including the decentralisation of the educational administrative structures and the devolution of authority to the local level.

The rolling out of the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) in 2000 coincided with the promulgation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2001–2003, which recognised primary school education as one of the priority and pro-poor sectors. In response, the government revised the ESDP and formulated the first Primary

Education Development Plan (PEDP) 2002–2006 to accommodate the LGRP and PRSP mechanisms in the provision of primary school education. In the same year the government formulated the Women and Gender Development Policy (WGDP) to facilitate, inter alia, women’s participation in decision-making processes through affirmative action in line with the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977, which prohibits discrimination based on gender (United Republic of Tanzania, 2000).

The PEDP’s institutional arrangements (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001) and the recent school autonomy reforms (United Republic of Tanzania, 2018) show that the main roles and responsibilities of school committees in Tanzania are (i) overseeing teaching and learning in schools by ensuring that teachers perform their duties in an efficient manner, (ii) preparing/approving school plans and budgets, (iii) approving school expenditure and ensuring prudent management of recurrent and development expenditure, (iv) organising and conducting parents’ meetings (where school development reports are tabled), and (v) ensuring that all students attend classes as required by the law. The assignment of these functions to school sites necessitates teacher and parent representatives to join hands to provide public goods while at the same time ensuring gender composition.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a theoretical foundation for the paper. Section 3 describes the methods used. Section 4 presents the results and discussion of the findings. Section 5 concludes the paper.

Theoretical Foundation

Central to the influence of gender on collective action is the composition of a group (Kekana & Makura, 2020; Pandolfelli et al.,



2007; Peshkovskaya et al., 2019). The main argument is that the female members of school committees tend to hesitate to participate in deliberations when their number at a meeting is surpassed by the number of their male counterparts by far (Dhakal, 2021). Such critical mass effects (Oliver et al., 1985) suggest that a sufficient number of women on SCs will automatically result in substantive representation of women and in deepening their engagement in decision-making process. However, this argument depends on such women being both motivated and having the capacity to do so in institutional contexts (Unterhalter et al., 2018). In this view, school committee members are highly likely to collaborate with members who are related to them, as predicted by relational demography theories, particularly social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorisation theory (SCT) (Turner et al., 1987).

Social identity theory explains scenarios of in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination, i.e. a self-concept based on membership of social groups (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, such postulation predicts collective action-related problems rather than collaboration in intra-group situation such as school committees. With the development of social categorisation theory, there has been an increasing focus on intra-group structural differentiation, especially the way people vary in their actual or perceived match to a group's norms (Hogg et al., 2017). Since SCT has defined a social identity along the stereotypes inherent in in-group and out-group categorisation (Turner et al., 1987), the theory may still fail to explain how these subordinate and ordinate groups engage in joint collective action-taking (Hasan-Aslih et al., 2020).

In addition, a number of variants of SIT attempt to explain the possibility of collective action involving female in-group and male out-

group members, particularly the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008) and its extension (van Zomeren et al., 2018), as well as the gender identity model (GIM; Becker & Wagner, 2009). However, the theoretical base of all these SIT modifications is still social identity salience. While social identification can facilitate collective action in the in-group, Hasan-Aslih et al. (2020) show that it plays a complicated role in predicting collective action in intra-groups such as school committees, especially when the female members are in direct conflict with the male ones. After all, identification with a female in-group is limited to supporting women's issues, which indicates that the identity claim of SIMCA and GIM is not relevant for predicting collective action (Mikołajczak et al., 2022) in school committees.

Given the inherent shortcomings of social identity assumptions in relation to CASC, the social identity model of system attitudes (SIMSA; Owuamalam et al., 2018) agree that system justification exists, albeit in the case of high-status groups (Rubin et al., 2023). SIMSA is an umbrella model that unites an unfolding series of social identity-inspired explanations for system-supporting attitudes, including the occurrence of system justification (Owuamalam et al., 2019) on the basis of social reality constraint, i.e. the reality of gender inequality in a particular society makes it difficult for women to challenge it (Owuamalam et al., 2023). In other words, system justification theory (SJT) (Jost & Banaji, 1994) and its modifications (Jost et al., 2004) are influenced by social identity models, since all of them recognise that people are motivated to support their egoistic and group interests (Caricati & Owuamalam, 2020).

Originally, SJT was developed to support and strengthen SIT, but it was later turned into an alternative theory (Akdoğan & Alparslan,



2020). Since SJT distinguishes between three justification motives (ego, group and system) more clearly than any other theory, it has taken the lead over its predecessors in identifying the social and psychological consequences of supporting the status quo (Jost et al., 2004). This is especially the case when women have a weak moral conviction against gender inequality (Cocco et al., 2023; De Cristofaro et al., 2021). For example, in India, Jain and Nandwani (2022) show that increased female representation is associated with improvement in school quality despite incidences of gender discrimination in school management committees. Specifically, both male and female members collaborate in improving the quality of school infrastructure (Guha, 2023).

Similarly, three case studies conducted in South Africa show that young female members of SGBs are prohibited from contributing their ideas during meeting debates but they manage to submit their views through male members (i.e., identifying with outgroup) who had power to act on their behalf (Duku & Salami, 2017). In this sense, changing the status quo requires female members' strong moral conviction against the prevailing gender-insensitive leadership (Cocco et al., 2023). However, such a move will ultimately undermine the existing system justification motives (De Cristofaro et al., 2021) and hence discourage the joint collective action (Hasan-Aslih et al., 2020), unless the moral conviction of in-group members is weak (Cocco et al., 2023; De Cristofaro et al., 2021).

Although gender inequality has attracted sufficient scholarly attention in the last four decades (Dick, 2024), the attention is focused more on the workplace imbalances than on collective action forums with in-group female and out-group male members such as those of school committees. Despite being scant, the existing literature (Berhanu, 2023;



Coinco, 2012; Dhakal, 2019, 2021; Duku & Salami, 2017; Guha, 2023; Jain & Nandwani, 2022) focuses on the roles of in-group female members of school management committees rather than on their collective engagement with their out-group male counterparts. This paper extends this literature by showing how gender inequality influences collective action in school committees, especially when system-justifying beliefs of female members are higher in the rural and urban settings of school governance in a developing country.

Methods

Data

This paper draws on data from a school governance cross-sectional research project undertaken in Arusha City and Iringa District under the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Dar es Salaam (Author, 2015, 2022). Ethical approval was granted by the Postgraduate Committee, University of Dar es Salaam. Similarly, research clearance was provided by the Directorate of Research and Publication, University of Dar es Salaam.

Area of the Study

Comparisons of multiple cases are needed in collective-action studies in order to assess equally plausible causal arguments, examine the relative importance of explanatory variables and determine the generality of causal patterns (Poteete & Ostrom, 2008). Hence, the study was conducted in Arusha City and Iringa District because there are notable differences in the collective action taken in rural and urban settings (Beard & Dasgupta, 2006). On the one hand, Arusha is a multicultural city with a majority of the residents coming from different ethnic groups and with a diversity of social norms (more



heterogeneous). On the other hand, the majority of villages in Iringa (Rural) District still maintain their cultural identities (less heterogeneous), particularly gender norms.

In addition, the selection of Arusha City and Iringa District had to do with the experience in decentralised education management as both areas were part of the first phase of the LGRP. In particular, the two subnational units have been implementing school autonomy reforms since the promulgation of the first PEDP in 2002. While sharing similar characteristics in terms of school autonomy reforms, the two areas represent two different contexts in terms of gender norms. Therefore, they provide compelling cases for studying and comparing the extent of collective action in school committees (CASC) in relation to GI.

Sampling Procedure

School committees were treated as a unit of analysis. There were 145 public primary schools under Iringa District Council and 48 public primary schools in Arusha City. This means that the target population comprised all 145 school committees in Iringa and all 48 school committees in Arusha. The SBM policy (PEDP) requires school committees to have eight official members, namely five parent representatives, including a chairperson, and three teachers' representatives, including head teachers as secretaries. From each school committee, the survey covered four parent representatives, excluding the chairpersons, and two teacher representatives, excluding the head teachers. Thus, six members filled in the questionnaire (four parents' representatives and two teachers' representatives) from each committee; hence there were 156 respondents in each site.

Output Variable

Since it is inherently difficult to measure collective action directly because it is a dynamic process that relates to social relationships, proxy indicators are generally used in operationalising the concept (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2004). Using various definitions of collective action (Gilbert, 2007; Wade, 1987) and SMC (Bruns et al., 2011; Prinsen & Titega, 2008) as well as their roles and responsibilities (United Republic of Tanzania, 2018), collective action in school committee is operationally defined as the collaboration between and among parent representatives and teacher representatives in assuming their mandated roles and responsibilities in supervising school operations, school planning and budgeting, school financial management, information sharing, and school enrolment and attendance (Author, 2022).

On the basis of the operational definition above, five proxies of CASC were developed as sub-scales: (i) collaboration in the supervision of school operations (CSO), (ii) collaboration in school planning/budgeting (CSP), (iii) collaboration in school financial management (CSF), (iv) collaboration in information sharing (CIS) and (v) collaboration in ensuring school enrolment and attendance (CSA). Each sub-scale yielded two items; thus, there was a combined total of 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert-scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = very few times, 3 = sometimes, 4 = most of the time, and 5 = all the time. The resulting CASC scale in Table 1 comprises 10 items that measure an underlying construct of collective action in school committees yielding parametric data (Author, 2015, 2022) after meeting the standard psychometric rule-of-thumb criterion of comprising at least eight reasonably related items (Norman, 2010; Robitzsch, 2020; Sullivan & Artino, 2013).



Table 1.

Items of the CASC Scale

Proxies	Items
Collaboration on Supervision of School Operations	How often have you visited the school to monitor teaching in the last two years? How often have you attended meetings per year since you joined the committee?
Collaboration on School Planning and Budgeting	How often have you spoken at the school planning/budgeting sessions? How often have you understood plans/budgets in your committee meetings?
Collaboration on School Financial Management	How often have you participated in approving school procurements? How often have you participated in approving school financial reports?
Collaboration on School Information Sharing	How often have you reached consensus on information dissemination format? How often have you reached consensus on the contents of information disseminated to public?
Collaboration on School Enrolments/Attendance	How often have you combined efforts to increase pupil enrolment? How often have you taken joint measures to combat truancy in your school?

Validity and Reliability of the CASC Scale

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to assess the internal structure of the CASC scale to ensure that the items load on the factors

and that the scale reflected a common construct, i.e. unidimensionality (Sijtsma, 2009). Both the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (0.818) and the Bartlett test of sphericity (558.037, $df. = 45$, $p = 0.000$) were significant. The first two factors were identified using the eigenvalue-greater-than-one rule. The validity test indicates that the eigenvalue of the first factor is larger than the eigenvalue of the next factor (3.2 versus 1.2). It also shows that the first and second factors account for 46% of the total variance. A cumulative percentage of variance of 46% is higher than the 40.6% obtained by Williams et al. (2010) in a total of 7 factors having an eigenvalue greater than one. This suggests that the items of the CASC scale are unidimensional.

The reliability test indicates that Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the 10 items is $\alpha = .75$; and hence the CASC scale is acceptable. Its reliability ranges from .72 to .77, which suggests greater internal consistency of the items in the scale. Therefore, it could be argued that the items used in the CASC scale are reliable.

Input Variable

The paper adopts the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to measure the extent of gender inequality (Branisa et al., 2009). The 2012 SIGI is made up of 14 unique variables, which are divided into five sub-indices: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and entitlements and restricted civil liberties (Cerise & Francavilla, 2012). The most relevant sub-indices for measuring gender inequality adopted in this paper are restricted civil liberties (RCL) and discriminatory family code (DFC).



Table 2.
SIGI for Measuring Gender Inequality

SIGI sub-index	Variables	Items
Discriminatory Family Code	Parental Authority	To what extent do women have the same right to be a legal guardian of a schooling child during marriage? To what extent do women have custody rights over her schoolchild after divorce?
	Inheritance Rights	Do widows inherit properties of their deceased husbands in your community? Do relatives marry widows following a death of a husband in your community?
Restricted Civil Liberties	Access to Public Space	To what extent do legal restrictions and discriminatory practices hinder women participation in community activities? To what extent do women participate in community activities compared to men?
	Voice	Do the voices of women members of school committee get heard equally? Do women in the school committee influence decision-making processes?

The measure of gender inequality above is consistent with the SIGI Country Report for Tanzania, which observed the highest level of DFC, currently known as discrimination in the family (DF) and RCL dimensions (OECD, 2022). In the SIGI sample, two out of five people live in households where the male head is the sole decision maker regarding expenditure on basic needs (i.e. food and clothes) as well as large purchases such as buying or renting a house, agricultural land or vehicles. At the same time, more than 90% of the surveyed population shares the opinion that a woman should ask her husband's or partner's

permission if she wants to go to certain public places, including community meetings (OECD, 2022).

Control Variables

In addition to GI, the paper controls for age, educational attainment, occupational status, membership experience and school distance. The sex variable was excluded from the model due to potential multicollinearity. Here, correlation-based principal component analysis (PCA) was employed to find out whether the input variables were independent of each other. The two rules of thumb used in this paper to obtain the main principal components (PCs) are eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (also known as Kaiser rule) and components loadings greater than 0.5. Table 3 shows that there are no outliers among input variables because there is no mean variable that is less than the corresponding standard deviation, indicating that there is no need to perform any standardisation measures prior to PCA computation.

Table 3.

Summary Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Gender Inequality	311	3.3152	0.8613	1.5	10.25
Age	311	43.2154	8.7732	25	68
Education Attainment	312	3.0929	1.2375	1	5
School Distance	312	3.8846	1.2499	0	5
Membership Experience	311	2.8650	1.5116	1	5
Occupation Status	311	2.4598	1.4846	1	5

To ensure that all data have equal weight, the paper performs the analysis using the Correlation Matrix. The matrix shows that the eigenvalue rule retains PC1, PC2 and PC3, which altogether explain about 61.5% of the variation in the data. The PC1 accounted for more

than a fifth (22%) of all the variance. No eigenvalue which is negative, implying that the model is well-conditioned. Therefore, the combination of components 1, 2 and 3 explained more than 60% of the total variation and hence all six input variables were retained.

Model Selection

The paper uses a one-model approach to identify the relative importance of GI in CASC and employs Ordinary Least Square (OLS) techniques to determine how much of the difference between SLR and MLR can be attributed to the control variables (Wojtkiewicz, 2017). The variables in SLR were denoted as follows: X_1 = gender inequality and Y = collective action in school committee. The simple linear regression equation takes the following form:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

where, b_0 is the Y intercept and b_1 is the estimated regression coefficient that quantifies the association between SA and the CASC. To control for demographic and socio-economic factors, the potential covariates X_2 through X_p were added. The MLR equation takes the following form:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \dots + \beta_p x_{ip} + \epsilon \quad (2)$$

where, Y_i = CASC, X_{i1} = GI, X_{i2} = Age, X_{i3} = educational attainment, X_{i4} = occupational status, X_{i5} = membership experience and X_{i6} = school distance; B_0 = y -intercept at time zero, B_1 = regression coefficients that measure a unit change in the dependent variable when X_{i1} changes (i.e. change in CASC when GI changes); and B_2 = the coefficient value that measures a unit change in the dependent variable when X_{i2} changes (i.e. change in CASC when GI changes).

Results

Respondents' Characteristics

This section first summarises the ratings from the CASC scale by presenting the percentage distribution of respondent characteristics for both Arusha City and Iringa District. In Arusha, 79 respondents (51%) were male and 77 respondents (49%) female. In Iringa, 89 respondents (57%) were male and 67 respondents (43%) female. While the gender representation in Arusha is almost balanced, the male members of the sampled school committees in Iringa have a simple majority.

The results suggest that the PEDP's institutional arrangements requirement of ensuring that women are represented on school committees is being fulfilled in both urban and rural Tanzania. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily lead to collaboration between men and women members in the provision of public goods. For example, the existing evidence shows that male members tend to dominate debates and deliberations when gender identity is salient.

Descriptive Results

Descriptive analysis was performed to describe the data from the survey. The findings show that the mean CSP (collaboration in school planning/budgeting) score in Arusha City ($M=4.59$, $SD=0.66$) is the highest and the mean CSO (collaboration in school operations) score ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.92$) is the lowest. Similarly, the mean CSP score in Iringa District ($M=4.43$, $SD=0.83$) is the highest and the CSA (collaboration in school attendance) score ($M=3.28$, $SD=0.93$) is the lowest. Therefore, the individual mean scores indicate variations among the measures of collective action in school committees in both sites.



The standard deviation results indicate less variability in the mean CSP than in any one of the other dimensions of CASC and hence confirm the high mean collaboration in school planning and budgeting in the two sites. This should be expected because one of the key responsibilities of school committee is developing a Whole School Development Plan (WSDP) to provide estimates of teaching and learning requirements as well as infrastructural improvements as part of the bottom-up planning process of educational decentralisation in Tanzania. Therefore, participatory planning and budgeting seems to preoccupy school committees in the country.

Table 4 shows that collective action in school committees is higher in Arusha City (M=4.4) than in Iringa District (M=4.1). The t-tests $t(310) = 4.5$, SEM = 0.00, $p < 0.001$ confirm the observed difference in the mean CASC between Arusha and Iringa. Since the school committee is the unit of analysis, the observed collective action is for all 156 members, who participated in the survey in Arusha City and for all 156 members in Iringa District.

Table 4.

Differences in CASC between Arusha City and Iringa District

Group	Obs	Mean	T-test	Sig. (2-tailed)
Arusha City	156	4.4082		
Iringa District	156	4.1133		
Combined	312	4.2607	4.5115	.000

The high mean CASC in Arusha City indicates that the SC members in the urban context collaborate more in skill-based tasks than their counterparts in the rural context do. As the respondents' characteristics indicate, the number of SC members in Arusha with

post-secondary school education exceed that of Iringa District by around 16%. In other words, the skills needed for collaboratively providing public goods by school committees are more likely to be obtained from the post-secondary school level of education

Regression Results

OLS techniques were used to estimate the coefficients of input variables in the basic model. The results from the SLR given in Table 5 show that GI predicts CASC in both Arusha City (0.177, $p < 0.01$) and Iringa District (0.169, $p < 0.05$). The number obtained by the R^2 coefficient is 0.059 (Arusha) and 0.034 (Iringa), meaning that GI explains the total variance in the CASC scale at 5.9% and 3.4%, respectively.

Table 5.

Simple Regression Analysis for GI and CASC

Variables	Arusha CASC	Iringa CASC
Gender Inequality	0.177*** (0.0564)	0.169** (0.0733)
Constant	3.736*** (0.218)	3.645*** (0.211)
Observations	156	155
R-squared	0.059	0.034

Standard errors in parentheses

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

The significant relationship between GI and CASC observed in Arusha is maintained in the MLR results (0.117, $p < 0.05$) presented in Table 6 below. Membership experience (0.226, $p < 0.01$) and occupational status (0.0593, $p < 0.05$) also predict CASC in Arusha. The significant predictors in Iringa are educational attainment (0.0593, $p < 0.05$),

membership experience (0.226, $p < 0.01$) and occupational status (0.0593, $p < 0.05$).

Table 6.

Multiple Regression Analysis for Model Inputs and CASC

Variables	Arusha CASC	Iringa CASC
Gender Inequality	0.117** (0.0542)	0.111 (0.0723)
Age	0.0479 (0.0471)	-0.0163 (0.0487)
Education Experience	-0.0036 (0.0339)	0.103** (0.0458)
School Distance	-0.0272 (0.0323)	0.0499 (0.0384)
Members Experience	0.325*** (0.0700)	0.231*** (0.0747)
Occupation Status	-0.0698*** (0.0245)	-0.117* (0.0658)
Constant	2.844*** (0.352)	2.593*** (0.472)
Observations	156	155
R-squared	0.220	0.167

Standard errors in parentheses

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

The percentage changes of the GI coefficient from the SLR is 73% in Arusha City and 79.8% in Iringa District, meaning that membership experience and occupational status are the control variables in both sites, while educational attainment is important in Iringa. While the

relative importance of GI in Arusha City may not necessarily depend on members' experience and occupational status, the same could not be said about Iringa District, where the effect of GI seems to be contingent upon not only members' membership experience and occupational status, but also on the members' level of education. Since the majority of SC members in the urban sample are formally employed (65%) compared with the rural sample (35%), it could be argued that school committees in Arusha City are more likely to be composed of professionals (such as economists, accountants and lawyers) who can use their technical skills to facilitate collaborations in skill-based tasks such as school planning and budgeting.

The results from the R^2 coefficient (0.220) for Arusha indicate that the basic model explains a proportion of the variability in CASC. In other words, GI, membership experience and occupational status may explain the total variance in the CASC scale at 22%. The results from the R^2 coefficient (0.167) for Iringa suggests that a insignificant prediction of GI is likely to be influenced by the presence of educational attainment, membership experience and occupational status in the model, which puts the total variance in the CASC scale at 17%.

The effect size of model input in both Arusha City and Iringa District is small but significant, meaning that the patterns of the observed relationships between GI and CASC can be theoretically important. This suggests differential effects of gender inequality on CASC between the two sites. Simply put, the school committees in rural settings such as Iringa District are likely to struggle in organising collective action compared to their urban counterparts. In other words, gender identity is more likely to be pronounced in the rural settings more than in the urban settings of school committees.



Discussion

Collective action in school committees was measured using the CASC scale, a 10-item operational measure based on five dimensions (i) CSO, (ii) CSP, (iii) CSF, (iv) CIS and (v) CSA. The t-test confirmation suggests that urban school committees have a comparative advantage for collective action. Such rural-urban patterns of collective action in school committees indicates that remote, underserved public schools lag behind in terms of carrying out school autonomy reforms.

Looking at the respondents' characteristics, one notices that the gender composition of school committees is almost balanced in Arusha City and that the level of women representation is not very far from that of the male members in Iringa District. Contrary to the critical mass postulation (Oliver et al., 1985), this paper suggests that the increase in the number of women may not necessarily matter as far as collective action in school committees is concerned. Although the Indian case (Guha, 2023; Jain & Nandwani, 2022) supports the critical mass postulation, the same could not be said with respect to South Africa, where more women served as SGB members but their gender identity was clearly a limiting factor for them in the school governance process (Brown & Duku, 2008). A similar trend was observed in Zambia (Okitsu & Edwards, 2017) and Nepal (Dhakal, 2019; Sijapati, 2019). In that case, acting together with out-group (male) members is likely to shift attention away from the identity of in-group (female) members, and hence generate a superordinate identity that includes both female in-group and male out-group members (Hasan-Aslih et al., 2020), regardless of the extent of gender composition (Unterhalter et al., 2018).

The key assumption of this paper is that GI is likely to predict CASC for both rural and urban contexts, thus controlling for demographic and socio-economic factors. Results of the regression analyses confirm this assumption, suggesting that members can be more willing to cooperate in groups where both women and men are engaged in decision-making process (Peshkovskaya et al., 2019) due to their system justification (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2004; Jost, 2019). For example, the nine case studies of women participation in Nepal show that collective action in SMCs is taken through the participation of local men and women as parents although women members are discriminated against during extracurricular activities (Sijapati, 2019).

After all, female SMC members are not homogeneous, but rather they are composed of professionals such as female teacher representatives, formally employed mothers as well as working-class women such as self-employed mothers, single mothers and housewives (e.g., see Dick, 2024). One inference that can be drawn here is that women members who can be personally affected by low school attendance, dropouts or poor grades of their children are likely to prioritise working together with the rest of SC members, regardless of their gender status. This lends support for the hypothesis that, when the moral conviction against gender inequality (in an inter-group such as a school committee) is weak, the condition of a high system justification demotivates women's in-group identification and, ultimately, their collective action intentions with a male out-group (De Cristofaro et al., 2021). This has implications for school autonomy reforms because ensuring gender composition in school committees may not necessarily matter in collective action in all contexts.

Given the need for technical skills on school committees, both female and male members can be considered as a cadre of volunteer experts



in school management, as long as they justify the prevailing social system (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2004). However, this social reality is not currently well captured by school autonomy policy designs in Tanzania. In other words, the spread of neoliberal SBM reforms in school governance has influenced gender equality, but, for women, this shift has not been supported by adequate policy and structural support, particularly inadequate gender mainstreaming or lack thereof (Barreto & Doyle, 2023). While SCs aim for inclusive and deliberative decision-making, their deep functions can be quite different, if social contexts are not considered, a phenomenon which Archambault and Ehrhardt (2022) call a façade for accessing gendered recognition or a club for male members to pursue their shared interests.

Following SJT, it can be said that the influence of GI on CASC seems to depend on the extent of the moral conviction of in-group female members on the basis of the gender composition that considers membership experience and occupational status. Therefore, future school autonomy reforms need to consider these two aspects in the SC membership criteria. In practice, capacity-building training needs to be provided for SC members, as required by the ESDP. This should include raising male members' awareness of the role of women in school governance and of their privileged position in school committees (e.g., see Mazzuca et al., 2022), regardless of the system justification beliefs of their female counterparts.

Conclusion

This paper has shown different patterns of the relationship between GI and CASC between the rural and urban settings of school committees. Overall, it demonstrates that the prediction of GI on CASC is dependent upon the social context of SC members, particularly the moral convictions of female members. This reveals the multifaceted ways in which parent representatives in school committees are collaboratively engaged in the provision of public goods, regardless of the existence of gender inequality.

SBM reforms seem to have successfully altered the composition of school committee membership in both the urban and rural settings. However, membership experience and occupational status appear to be missing from the criteria for membership. Their presence may facilitate the election of experienced female in-group members with a high occupational status who can potentially engage in collective action, regardless of whether gender identity is salient or not.

Generally, the study demonstrates that both rural and urban school committees do not operate in a vacuum. Their social contexts are complex, meaning that collaboration on school committees is not automatic. In this regard, gender inequality can potentially deter the provision of public goods within school committees if the social context of their members is not given due consideration. The following are recommendations for policymakers and education administrators:

The next round of school autonomy reforms should consider the criteria for SC membership to ensure that experience in civic



engagement and an appropriate occupational status are included on the list of the qualifications of parent representatives.

Primary school head teachers need to develop innovative, sustainable approaches using readily available resources (i.e., human, physical) to conduct planning, budgeting and monitoring skills-based capacity building training for newly elected parent representatives.

In addition, district education authorities should revisit the school committee training manual so that it includes social and behavioural change communication (SBCC) topics so that there is sensitivity to gender among both male and female members.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this paper is that it has analysed cross-sectional data. Therefore, the paper has not provided evidence of temporal relationships because the data on the model input and CASC were collected and assessed simultaneously. However, the paper provides evidence of the causal relationship between GI and CASC, controlling for socio-demographic and socio-economic factors using linear regression models.

Future Research

Although the present study has successfully linked GI to CASC, future research employing a public goods game (PGG) is needed to identify collaborative behaviours of school committee members when gender identity is salient. In the laboratory setting, it will be possible to understand the motives behind individual female and male members' decision to cooperate with other school committee members in provision of public goods. More importantly, the PGG may provide



information on appropriate collaboration incentives and free-riding disincentives for consideration in future school autonomy reforms.

Although school autonomy reforms tend to foster gender composition, this paper has shown that the increase in the number of female members of SMCs may not necessarily lead to collective action in school committees in all contexts. Hence, qualitative studies should be conducted to better understand how school-level actors adopt, interpret and use the managerial power devolved to them by SBM programmes relative to their gender norms. The knowledge of such social contexts is critical because the presence of gender inequality makes school management a complex process and there is no policy prescription that can be used to deal with such complexity without facing any challenges.

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About the author:

Kenny Manara is currently a Lecturer at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Dar es Salaam. He has an interest in the local governance, civil society and public policy analysis. He is currently drawing on variance-based sensitivity analysis to decompose local government performance in relation to political, economic and social factors in Tanzania.

E-mail: manara.kenny@udsm.ac.tz

Teachers' Silent Scream: Quiet Quitting

Tuğba Konal Memiş* 

Yıldız Technical University, İstanbul, Türkiye

Erkan Tabancalı 

Yıldız Technical University, İstanbul, Türkiye

Abstract

The aim of the study is first to discover if quiet quitting (QQ) act exists among teachers at schools, and then, if there are teachers who are a part of this movement, to disclose the indications of QQ act and the reasons that push them to quiet quit. The study was designed in accordance with the qualitative phenomenology pattern and carried out with 13 teachers selected by the snowball sampling method, which is one of the purposive sampling methods. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect data and the data was analyzed by content analysis technique. In the light of the analysis, "indications of QQ among teachers" and "reasons for QQ among teachers" themes emerged. The result of the study reveals that teachers are part of the QQ act. Teachers' ending their psychological contract, organizational commitment and belonging are internal indications, while holding back on duties that are outside the job description, not taking on new duties, and not taking responsibility for duties requiring them to spend overtime or outside working hours are external symptoms. As for the reasons, teachers quiet quit because the meaning they attach to their profession is deteriorated and their efforts are rendered worthless because of the financial challenges they experience. Also, due to the precarization they experience stemming from the paid teaching practice and the

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*Corresponding Author:

Email: tugbakonal@gmail.com

loss of prestige in the society, teachers quiet quit. Pandemic is among the other reasons that lead teachers to quiet quit. Furthermore, work-life imbalance pushes teachers to question their profession and they regard QQ as a way out of that imbalance. Lastly, low motivation and commitment are regarded as the reasons for QQ among teachers. Accordingly, it is recommended to make the precarization process of the teaching profession visible, to abolish the practice of paid teaching, to regulate teacher salaries below the poverty line, to revise excessive workload causing work-life imbalance, to limit the expectation of being available outside of work hours, and to eliminate the elements that undermine teachers' organizational motivation and commitment.

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Introduction

An up-to-date Wall Street Journal article reveals that 50% of employees have minimized their organizational commitment and gone through QQ process (Smith, 2022). Even though the statistics itself unearths how dramatic the issue is, the phenomenon has gained popularity only recently. A TikTok video raised public awareness of the phenomenon by going viral, however, it was originally come up with by Mark Boldger in 2009 (Hitt, 2022). The fact that QQ has been a burning issue does not necessarily imply it is a new act. It is a longstanding movement for employees to make just enough effort to ensure they are not fired, but not go above and beyond (Lord, 2022). Employees have been quiet quitting for so long, but the movement was not given a

specific term in the literature till 2009. QQ basically refers to a case when employees keep on carrying out the necessary duties, yet they refrain from doing the OCBs (Klotz & Bolino, 2022). It is defined as a restricted commitment to actualize the allocated duties at work and abdicate any duties other than the ones defined in job description (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). What is more, the work efficiency and commitment of quiet quitters are emphasized to decrease considerably (Yildiz & Ozmenekse, 2022). That is, quiet quitters fulfill only the tasks required by the job and refrain from making an extra effort other than the compulsory duties. "Quiet quitters, therefore, are disengaged at work and do not intend to go above and beyond their line of duty" (Formica & Sfodera, 2022, p.900). In other words, quiet quitters are the employees who display no effort to enrich the organization they work for and move it forward, and who have resigned from their commitment to the organization in mental sense even though they do not resign formally.

The phenomenon of QQ, on the other hand, should not be confused with counterproductive work behavior (CWB). Although these concepts may seem similar in various ways, they differ in some points. CWB refers to certain practices that employees intentionally carry out in order to harm the organization or its stakeholders (Spector & Fox, 2005). Accordingly, "abuse toward others, production deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal" are counted as the subscales of CWB (Spector et al., 2006, p.446). Within this scope, practices such as arriving late to school, ignoring a colleague or a student, and slowing down are regarded as CWBs. As is seen, CWB wrecks the organization and is carried out on purpose. Also, while there is a negative interaction with other stakeholders in CWB, the interaction pattern in QQ is minimum.



What is more, QQ and the concept of psychological contract are thought to be affined. The concept of psychological contract is characterized as “an individual’s beliefs regarding the terms of conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party” (Rousseau 1989, p.123). That is, there are unwritten expectations and obligations regarding the work, working conditions and the reciprocal relationship between employees and managers (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998, p.680). Such expectations and obligations fall into three dimensions which are transactional - mainly about monetary factors like salary-, relational -about socioemotional factors like security and adherence- and balance –the blend of the former two (Rousseau, 1995). The disappearance of such expectations and obligations for various reasons may cause employees to refrain from providing optimum benefit to the organization and they may choose to fulfill only the compulsory tasks in the end. To illustrate, an employee whose transactional psychological contract violated may choose to avoid going beyond the job specifications and become likely to quiet quit. Indeed, it is revealed psychological contract breach ends up with employees having limited contribution to the organization (Robinson & Morrison, 2000), which ultimately accord with the phenomenon of QQ. Furthermore, the breach causes employees to decline organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and commitment (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). According to Organ (1988) OCB refers to optional practices of the employees that are not enforced by the organization through legal regulations and that advances the efficiency in the organization. In that sense, it is obvious OCB has to do with voluntary practices of employees that are beyond legal obligations and that increase the overall efficiency of the organization, and that employees do not face any sanctions if they do not fulfill them. Therefore, regarding employees’ OCB will decrease in case of



psychological contract breach, it comes as no surprise that employees may naturally resort to the phenomenon of QQ. OCBs matter in that they encourage employees to go beyond their job descriptions, make sacrifices for the organization and do more than what is required. Yet, when withdrawal behaviors increase, employees refrain from providing added value to the organization and operate with minimum effort. Therefore, psychological contract breach might play a crucial role in triggering QQ act.

The act of QQ is believed to be closely associated with the pandemic and to be the outcome of Covid-19 pandemic (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). The pandemic has led to a remarkable transformation not only in people's way of socializing, their cultural and economic activities, and mindset, but also in their work processes, business manner, and perceptions of work. Employees who have gained awareness about the time they spare for themselves with shutdown and realized the importance of being at home with the implementation of the concepts such as flexible working and remote working, became aware of the fact that work is the sole focus in their lives and thus work started to mean less to them (Guler, 20223). For this reason, it is frequently stated that there is a close relationship between QQ and pandemic. However, attributing the source of this phenomenon solely to the pandemic may hide the main causes. Hare (2022) indicates that quiet quitters are mostly assumed to disengage at work so as to redress the balance between their private life and business life or to sustain their well-being under challenging workplace circumstances. Teachers, on the other hand, whose job descriptions are relatively more ambiguous than other occupational groups, are assumed to quiet quit due to not being able to sustain the balance between their work life and private life and probably for many other reasons. In accordance with the



Merrimack College Teacher Survey conducted by EdWeek Research Center 44% of teachers are on the verge of QQ (Heubeck, 2022). Considering the enormous impact of teachers' organizational commitment on teaching and learning processes, it is vital to address the phenomenon of QQ from teachers' perspective, in order to properly identify and resolve the problem.

QQ in educational settings is unique in that teachers are supposed to be emotionally and professionally dedicated to teach. Unlike other professions, teachers are to be engaged into their profession emotionally, physically and mentally since it has a profound impact on all other fields. When teachers quiet quit, they will only fulfill their basic obligations and refuse to do more, which will cause academic failure. Considering its extensive impacts on the society, it is of critical importance to address the phenomenon of QQ in education field and especially in teachers, who are the milestones of education. Based on this, revealing the signs of QQ and the factors that lead teachers to quiet quit is the foremost significant step to be taken to address the issue.

Since QQ is a current concept, there are few studies regarding the phenomenon in the literature. Formica and Sfodera (2022) examined the current case and future research directions of QQ on a large scale in their most cited studies on the phenomenon and concluded that work-life balance, flexibility, and the search for meaning at work play a role in QQ practices. Guler (2023) similarly, handled QQ in terms of causal factors, consequences, and methods of prevention and aimed to draw a conceptual framework for QQ phenomenon. Cimen and Yilmaz (2023) examined the causes and practices of QQ as well as the solutions to prevent it in their review article. In his descriptive study examining the sources related to the concept, Caliskan (2023)

addressed QQ from a broader perspective and focused on the consequences of QQ on employees and organizations. Arar et al., (2023), in their study, which framed QQ more specifically within the theories of Social Exchange, Conservation of Resources and Generations, categorized the antecedents of QQ as managerial/organizational factors and employee-based factors and revealed possible effects and solutions. Esen (2023), on the other hand, focused on QQ in the public sector within the framework of the pandemic and individual and organizational reasons affecting QQ, and examined the results of QQ. Mahand and Caldwell (2023) explored the causes of QQ in an organizational context and attributed it to managers' failure to successfully fulfill their basic leadership duties. Hamouche et al., (2023) examined QQ in terms of its effects on the tourism and accommodation sector by associating it with concepts such as burnout and job dissatisfaction.

Even if studies on QQ is limited in number, there are already some addressing teacher QQ. Tsemach and Barth (2023) studied the phenomenon of QQ among teachers. In their study they investigated the mediating role of teachers' organizational commitment in the relationship between authentic leadership and OCB and burnout (Tsemach & Barth, 2023). Yilmaz et al., (2024) also addressed the phenomenon specifically for teachers and developed a scale consisting of administrative and employee-based dimensions in their study, which aimed to develop a data collection tool to determine teachers' QQ behaviors. Likewise, in their study, Yucedaglar et al., (2024) developed a scale to reveal teachers' QQ levels.

This study, unlike the ones above, reveals the practices of QQ among teachers and the reasons that lead to it, beyond the scope of different variables and from a broader perspective. Therefore, the study is



supposed to form the basis for future QQ studies regarding teachers and education field.

Indications and Grounds of Quiet Quitting

QQ is embodied in employees in a variety of ways. Yildiz and Ozmenekse (2022) argue that quiet quitters do not employ their imagination in work processes and do not take into consideration the organizational targets. That is, using imagination points out to innovation and it requires additional effort. Similarly, once the entire demands of an organization are considered, it indicates that employees need to contribute to many work-related processes and most probably need to reduce the time they allocate to their private lives. According to Klotz and Bolino (2022), quiet quitters are the employees who do not go out of working hours, do not stay overtime or show up early and do not participate in non-compulsory meetings. That is, quiet quitters do not choose to make self-sacrifice their private time and imbalance their work and privacy. Nonetheless, it is actually more than the time sacrifice issue. QQ refers to a silent protest that is anticipated to be recognized by the authorities (Youthall, 2022). The intervention in the privacy of employees, the expectation of being available by call or e-mail at all times and the demand of participation in meetings even at the weekends (Youthall, 2022) are among the protested factors. Furthermore, excessive workload, low wage, inflation and despair of promotion also triggers QQ act (Guler, 2023). Then, it is concluded when employees are dissatisfied with their wages or when they do not attach credence to the hope they will get promotion no matter how hard they work, they tend to show low engagement in their work. According to Tong, on the other hand, quiet quitters display “lack of motivation, underdevelopment of skills, lack of flexibility and inability to work in a team setting” (Tong, 2022). Quiet quitters do not yearn for



making any effort to advance since they mostly assume that there is no gain in return. Moreover, quiet quitters refuse to subscribe to hustle culture and reject working under time pressure (Rosalsky & Selyukh, 2022).

Even if Formica and Sfodera (2022) allege that pandemic has been a catalyst for the movement of QQ, it is estimated that there are many other factors pushing employees to quiet quit. As specified by Mahand and Caldwell “lack of commitment to career development, the failure to value employees, increasing employee disconnection, importance of employee autonomy” and “decline in organizational trust” lead employees to quiet quit (2023, p.10-11). Falling behind the expected salary and not being appreciated for the success at work may be counted as some of the other reasons behind QQ (Inbusiness, 2022). “The most important reason why employees quiet quit is that they want to improve or protect their mental health. There is also a desire to prevent burnout and alleviate or combat stress and ensure or achieve a better work-life balance” (Guler, 2023, p.250). That is, putting in too much effort for work life, working overtime and worrying about excessive workload turns into a source of psychological unease and ultimately creates an imbalance between work life and private life, which ultimately brings on QQ.

QQ is considered as a phenomenon stemming from the deterioration of well-being of employees, and therefore some reasons such as stress and burnout that trigger ill-being are listed among the components that induce QQ. Cooper (2022), on the other hand, states that employees who are made to feel worthless and who think that they are exploited in the workplace enter into a sort of QQ process. The exploitation of labor may often manifest itself in the form of excessive workload, attributing the work or success of an employee to someone



else, and sometimes demanding more than necessary in return for the wage.

According to the article by Kobal and Bati (2022), common reasons for the act of QQ may be listed as follows:

- Sense of worthlessness at work
- Lack of transparent communication in superior-subordinate relationship
- Mismatch between individual talents and job description
- Insufficient support from the institution and administrator in terms of personal, professional and technical development
- Inability to use creativity and limitation of creativity
- Inadequate encouragement and support of administrators to realize employees' full potential
- The ambiguity of the concept of working hours in the new working order (Kobal & Bati, 2022).

QQ is a phenomenon that has various negative consequences for employers, employees and society (Guler, 2023). Therefore, determining the factors giving rise to the QQ movement is crucial to get to the bottom of the problem and eliminate it. In this regard, whether the act of QQ exists among teachers and if so, its grounds should be determined.

Possible Contextual Features Strengthening Quiet Quitting Among Teachers in Turkey

Turkey is quite unique in terms of contextual features that strengthen QQ. Factors such as economic contraction, precarization, reflections of

the pandemic, migration, and earthquake may be considered as factors that foster QQ among teachers.

The negative impact of the economic crisis in Turkey since 2018 on teachers' salaries should not be ignored. According to the results of the Hunger and Poverty Line Survey for July 2023 by the Turkish Trade Union Confederations (Turk-is), the poverty line for a family of 4 was determined as 39,975 TL. On the other hand, teacher salaries vary between 22,840 TL and 26,641 TL depending on seniority (Hurriyet, 2023). Apparently, teachers work for a salary below the poverty line assuming of being the only one who provides for the family. It is a known fact that falling behind the expected salary is one of the reasons for psychological contract breach, it reduces organizational commitment and OCB (Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000) and thus, may be one of the reasons for QQ. Therefore, the issue of teacher salaries, which has been exacerbated by the economic contraction, has been a potential significant reason for QQ among teachers in Turkey.

Teachers have been subject to many economic and political changes on a global scale, such as privatization and de-unionization, and have become precarious and insecure (Castro, 2022). Teachers in Turkey are struggling with the precarization of teaching profession in many aspects, such as their labor, their prestige in society, being hired in different forms of employment, and inadequate personal rights, as well. It is a matter of research to what extent teachers, who are alienated from the teaching profession as a result of precarization, continue their psychological contracts. To illustrate, paid teaching practice, which is one of the different forms of employment in Turkey, is a form of employment in which teachers, regardless of whether they are graduates of the faculty of education or not, work in return for a



fee paid per lesson, exempt from various sanctions and fringe benefits, and without even having their insurance fully paid. The government eliminates the teacher shortage by assigning paid teachers, and thus the number of paid teachers has been increasing in recent years. Indeed, based on official figures, it is clear that the government is closing teacher shortage to a large extent through the employment of paid and contract teachers. (Dag, 2020). As of January 2023, the number of paid teachers working within the Ministry is 76,485 (Turk Egitim Sen, 2023). Teaching Professional Law, which was expected to be a solution to such problems, created a complete disappointment among teachers and could not meet their expectations, which can be considered as a factor strengthening the QQ movement. Furthermore, precarization basically creates economic insecurity (Kalleberg, 2009) and insecure working conditions and employment patterns disrupt teachers' well-being (Gomez & Klautau, 2021). In that case, employees resort to disengagement so as to balance their well-being (Hare, 2022). Therefore, it is estimated that precarization experienced by teachers and many factors it brings along may increase QQ. Compared to many other professional groups, teachers who experience a clear loss of prestige and financial problems profoundly experience ill-being, lose their organizational commitment in time and thus become likely to end up with QQ.

On the other hand, the transition to distance education with the pandemic has led to a great inequality of opportunity due to income inequality in Turkey. While some students did not have any or had limited access to the internet, others lacked the technological equipment to participate in online classes. Teachers were left alone to fight against this inequality of opportunity and had to cope with a serious learning gap after the pandemic. Some of the teachers also did

not have enough skills and motivation to use technological tools, they had difficulty in motivating students to learn and getting parent support (Aytac, 2021). Teachers who faced such difficulties stemming from the pandemic began to question their profession and the labor and time they devoted to it. The teaching profession, which is already demanding in nature, has become even more questioned by teachers with the distance education process. In addition to professional challenges they had never experienced before, teachers, like all other professions, enjoyed being at home and saw how valuable and indispensable the time they devoted to themselves was. Furthermore, employees enjoyed flexible working conditions, which pushed them to question working hours and nature of working (Esen, 2023). Therefore, pandemic is regarded as a strengthening factor of QQ among teachers, both because of the negative outcomes they got with distance education and because the imbalance between work and private life has become more visible.

Moreover, Turkey has faced an incredibly large wave of immigration in recent years, resulting in too many refugee students in schools. The process of refugee students participating in education was not managed very well, and as a result, the process was mostly left to the initiative of the teachers. However, teachers did not have the pedagogical competence or special training to deal with this. Ultimately, teachers viewed refugee students in their classrooms as a demotivating factor. Teachers perceived those students who did not speak the language and were unfamiliar with the education system in their classes as a source of workload and stress. It is a known fact that language barriers and cultural differences significantly affect integration. (Eksi at al., 2016). In that regard, teachers who faced problems such as language barriers, discipline problems, and cultural

problems (Taskin & Erdemli, 2018) had difficulty in the adaptation and many other processes and did not receive much support from the authorities and felt alone in the face of refugee education. Considering the wave of immigration refers to millions and its effects on teachers, it is not surprising immigration is an element that might strengthen QQ among teachers.

When talking about the reflection of QQ on teachers in the Turkish context, it is necessary to mention the two devastating earthquakes that occurred 9 hours apart and affected millions of people. Teachers suffered from inadequacy of infrastructure, ill-being, insecurity and many other aspects after the earthquake (Arici et al., 2023). Many factors such as the post-trauma process experienced by teachers affected by the earthquake, educational activities ongoing in containers, teachers' housing problems, and difficulties in accessing basic necessities may be counted as these aspects. It is not considered as a realistic expectation for teachers to show dedication and commitment to their profession and, moreover, to go beyond just what the job requires, when they have not yet met their basic needs such as housing, and feeling safe. What is more, teachers experienced low motivation, social and psychological problems after these earthquakes (Polat & Saricam, 2024). Setting out all these negative impacts, teachers may feel helpless and working may turn into meaningless practice, which is likely to end up with QQ. Therefore, all these factors may further consolidate the QQ process among teachers.

Teaching, unlike other professions, requires absolute well-being, commitment and dedication. When teachers experience any problems that may affect their well-being, they tend to reflect this on their students, exhibit aggressive behaviors and have negative attitudes towards students (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Therefore, it is possible

that teachers may be affected more by the above factors. Considering that education provides resources to all other fields, it is inevitable that QQ of teaching profession will be more prominent than that of others. In addition, unlike other professions, teaching includes many tasks that are not included in the job description. Sticking only to the legal obligations is essentially against the nature of the profession. Considering the input and output of education are human, it is obvious that the QQ of teachers is quite crucial than other professional groups.

Method

Research Design

The study was conducted on the basis of phenomenological design, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Phenomenology intend to unearth people's perceptions, evaluations and interpretations of a phenomenon in depth, based on their daily experiences and practices (Patton, 2014). Phenomenological studies mean to disclose the circumstances which may not be simply noticed like perceptions, impressions, judgments, and feelings of people about a phenomenon (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016). To this end, the study was designed according to the phenomenological pattern in order to reveal the participants' experiences regarding the phenomenon of QQ and to provide an in-depth data flow regarding the phenomenon.

The study has some limitations and constraints. We carried out the study with 13 volunteer teachers working in different state schools. Because of the limited number of participants, the findings of the study should not be easily generalized throughout all teachers. Besides, 5 of the participants rejected to be voice recorded as they felt uncomfortable.



Research Participants

The participants of the study consist of 13 teachers working in diverse schools and selected by snowball sampling method, which is one of the nonprobability sampling methods. Nonprobability sampling methods enable the inclusion of participants who can express their thoughts on the research phenomenon from a broad perspective in clear and understandable language (Patton, 2014). Snowball sampling method is one of those methods and the researcher demands the participant to direct him to another participant (Etikan et al., 2016). It basically aims to find the participants who will ensure the enriched data flow to the study (Creswell, 2013). Since QQ is a more profound phenomenon than it sounds and can be confused with different concepts like OCB and CWB, snowball sampling method was employed in the study in order to include the participants who are thought to be informed of the phenomenon of QQ. In this context, the first participant who would provide in-depth data flow to the research was found, and interviews were held with the other participants from different schools who were found through successive guidance of the previous participant. The study contained 13 participants because the study reached the saturation point. The saturation point marks the point at which no further data flow is provided to the research (Creswell, 2013). Participants were coded as P1, P2, P3, ..., P12, P13 within the scope of the confidentiality of the study.

Data Collection

The data of the study were collected using semi-structured interview form. The most favorable methods of collecting data for a phenomenological study are semi-structured interview form and face-to-face interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Besides, semi-structured interview form offers researchers the opportunity to alter

the questions to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2013).

In this regard, interview questions were prepared after reviewing the relevant literature, and the questions were revised in line with the feedback received from an expert in the field and a language specialist in the field of social sciences, which contributed to the reliability and transferability of the research. Pilot interviews were then conducted and after the feedback received from the participant, it was understood that the questions were suitable for data collection and the interview questions were finalized.

The interview protocol declaring the research's compliance with ethical principles was sent to the participants, and they were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any phase. The interviews were held face to face in the settings specified by the participants and where they could express themselves comfortably. The interviews, which lasted approximately 30 minutes were then sent to the participants to check.

Data Analysis

The data of the study were analyzed using content analysis technique. As a requirement of content analysis technique, the data were categorized into themes. Creswell and Creswell's (2018) data analysis steps were followed. First, the data were transcribed. Second, the text and the audios were compared to ensure accuracy and then, the data set was coded. After that, the relevant codes were grouped to form themes. Finally, the themes were revised once again.



Findings

This part covers the themes of “Indications of QQ among Teachers” and “Reasons for QQ among Teachers”, which were formed based on the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews.

Theme 1: Indications of Quiet Quitting among Teachers

All participants in the study agreed that QQ act exists among teachers. Accordingly, teachers listed the indications of QQ under 2 categories that are internal indications and external indications.

Intrinsic Indications

In most cases, quiet quitters are manifested externally by the actions they do or do not take, but sometimes it is expressed through internal feelings. Intrinsic symptoms essentially point to the emotional dimension, which is included within the scope of situations that can be expressed as the end of the psychological contract or the damage to organizational belonging and organizational commitment. Teachers’ loss of enthusiasm for their job, decreased motivation, and boredom while going to class are among the symptoms of QQ stated by the participants. To illustrate, P5 described QQ as “*losing the sense of belonging and commitment to the organization*”. P2, on the other hand, sees “*not having any desire to strive to be the best he can to be useful to people in the organization he works for*” as a sign of QQ. Another participant, P4, points out “*losing motivation and enthusiasm for work*” as the biggest symptom of QQ among teachers.

Extrinsic Indications

The observable symptoms of QQ stated by the participants were holding back on tasks that were outside the job description, not taking on new tasks, and not taking responsibility for tasks that required them to spend overtime or outside working hours. P2 stated that teachers want to leave the school after completing their lesson hours and do not want to take part in an extra project or task as follows:

Teachers do not want to attend meetings at the end of classes or they grumble about parent-teacher meetings on weekends. Most of the time, they perceive communicating with parents as too much workload. Especially, they do not want to carry out projects that are voluntary and of course take time. Because they always regard these jobs as waste of time.

What is more, P9 argued that teachers are not willing to carry out extracurricular activities such as producing projects and taking part in competitions since it is a voluntary act as follows:

Most teachers see extracurricular activities as a joe job. They do not want to participate in a competition or produce their own project and so on. These types of activities are actually very beneficial for students. But unfortunately, teachers do not tire themselves because there is no sanction for not doing them.

Another participant, P12, emphasized that some teachers set limits on communication with parents and shared that they do not answer calls, especially after school. His opinions on work-life imbalance is as below:

Not answering parent calls in the evening or not sharing a phone number with parents at all may be included in this. In fact, there is a

very valid reason for that because teachers also have a private life and they do not have to spend their own time after school on these.

Theme 2: Reasons for Quiet Quitting Among Teachers

What participants listed as the reasons for QQ are grouped under 5 categories that are financial incapability, precarization process, pandemic, work-life imbalance, and low motivation and commitment.

Financial Incapability

Almost all of the participants point to financial incapability as the biggest reason that caused teachers' psychological contract breach and triggered QQ process over time. They shared that teachers who struggle with financial difficulties do not try to work heartily. Therefore, the expectation of high performance from teachers who are concerned about meeting their primary needs is considered unrealistic. In this regard, P5 stated her view as follows:

Considering the economic conditions of the country, the teaching profession does not satisfy almost many of its employees. It must be a dream to expect productivity from a teacher who worries about the rent of his house or the education expenses of his own children. As we all know, it is not possible for individuals who cannot meet their basic needs to move up to higher levels. It may be an exaggeration to say that teachers cannot meet their physiological needs, but it is a well-known fact that their welfare level is not very high. For this reason, as in many examples around me, economic reasons push many of my colleagues away from their profession. There are teachers who say this much work for this much salary and unfortunately I cannot say that I find this statement unfair.

Moreover, teachers emphasized that they labor in line with the low salary they receive, and such low salary make their profession meaningless and worthless. As a result of this, they believe that QQ is an unavoidable process for teachers. P8's opinion on this matter is as follows:

Not receiving the deserved salary in return for the labor is the main reason for QQ. Teaching is already a challenging profession by nature, and in order to make it bearable, it is necessary to offer at least financial satisfaction. After all, we work for money like everyone else, but when the salary is lower than almost all professional groups, the labor we put in becomes worthless and meaningless. We become alienated from our profession and then we enter a process of QQ.

Similarly, teachers emphasized that the unhappiness caused by financial difficulties played a key role in their receding from their profession. P3 shares her opinion about it as follows:

If your salary runs out just as you receive it, if you think twice about everything you buy, you question what you are doing. Therefore, you get unhappy. Unhappiness pulls you away from your profession and you can no longer continue it from the heart. If you are so desperate that you cannot resign, you resign from your heart.

Precarization

Besides the financial challenges, teachers expressed that they entered into a sort of silent protest due to the fact that their professions got precarious. They claimed that reasons such as loss of prestige, deterioration of their labor, and inadequate personal rights caused precarization on the teacher's, which was associated with QQ. They put forward several views that the prestige withdrawal of the teaching profession in society day by day caused great disappointment among



teachers. The manifestation of such process appeared in the form of low engagement in their work at school. To illustrate, P5 stated that the respect she did not get from society in return for the sacrifices she made towards her profession led her to question the teaching profession and the sacrifices she devoted to it over time.

As teachers, we knew what awaited us when we started this profession and that the main thing was to make sacrifices where necessary. However, while constantly striving unilaterally and losing prestige in return, this pushes many teachers, including me, to question, "Who am I doing this for?" This causes significant reduce in the level of professional dedication. Apart from that, another issue that wears us out is that the teaching profession is seen as an ordinary civil servant profession.

What is more, the fact that teachers have limited personal rights brings about many QQ practices. Participants state that the uncertainty they face, especially due to the working conditions of private school teachers and the fact that private schools do not act in accordance with legal regulations, results in QQ. For instance, P3, as a private school teacher, explained that her commitment to her job was shaken with the following striking expressions:

Teachers think that their personal rights are not implemented in accordance with the regulations. Especially teachers in private schools do not even have insurance, they earn minimum wage, they try to survive in the minimum way possible, and it is not clear how long they will have even these minimum conditions. It is not clear whether they will be fired tomorrow or how long they will work. A teacher who does not have sufficient personal rights, does not have sufficient financial income, and is worried about the future cannot even sleep comfortably at night, let alone fulfill his profession. It is quite unfair

and cruel to give teacher forty minutes of hell and expect them to offer heaven.

Another reason for QQ among teachers turned out to be the paid teaching practice. Three of the teachers highlighted the practice as a source of loss of prestige and regarded that it caused the teaching profession to seem simple in the eyes of the society. To illustrate, P1 stated that *"The paid teaching practice creates the perception that teaching is simple and can be performed by anyone. Sometimes people who are not even graduates of faculty of education are put into classrooms. Teaching is not such a simple profession"*. Similarly, P4 stated that paid teaching practice creates a feeling of disrespect in teachers and that such a feeling prevents teachers from performing their jobs to their full potential. *"Can the prestige of teachers be questioned in a system where teacher shortage is catered with paid teachers? Can teachers who feel disrespected be expected to make sacrifices for their profession and want to do their best?"*

Pandemic

The pandemic has caused radical changes in business life, both because of the change in working order due to the lockdown and the emergence of the reality of remote working, and because people can spare time to think about work. Teachers, like other professional groups, have found time to think about issues such as the time and sacrifice they devote to their profession. Teachers who have switched to remote working and taught through distance education for a while have gained awareness of the realities of school and education, and some have now realized that the time they spare for themselves is more valuable than business life. Two of the participants stated that teachers alienated from their profession with the pandemic and students had an adaptation problem. For example, P4 stated that returning to school



was difficult after the pandemic, and that both teachers and students had an adaptation problem:

“After the pandemic it was hard for students to adapt to school. Of course, teachers as well, gradually moved away from work and became reluctant. Then, teachers also had to motivate the reluctant students while they themselves were demotivated.” P7, on the other hand, evaluated that the economic contraction experienced with the pandemic and parents’ increasing authority over teachers with distance education are among the factors that increase the dose of QQ: *“As economic difficulties and inflation increased with the pandemic, it became challenging to survive with low salary. The pressure of parents within the school and on teachers has increased. This increased the dose of QQ experienced by teachers.”* Another participant, P6, stated that the responsibility of teachers increased even more in distance education and that closing the authority gap caused by the low interest of parents tired teachers and caused them to get bored with their profession. *“That some parents put all the responsibility on teachers and did not pay enough attention to their kids caused teachers to get tired and dissatisfied with teaching.”*

Moreover, teachers had time to reflect with the lockdown and made some evaluations about their lifestyles and professions due to the emotions caused by losing loved ones. P10 marked that people’s loved ones died in the pandemic and they realized that there were more important things than work and that work was actually meaningless: *“The fact that people were struggling with their health and even lost their loved ones during the pandemic showed that life was hanging by a thread and that things outside of that were not very important.”*

Teachers also, got used to the comfortable working environment at home thanks to distance education that started with the lockdown. The absence of distractors at home that were quite abundant in school



setting become more prominent to teachers when they switched to face-to-face education. For this reason, when teachers returned to school, they resorted to QQ due to both the more uncomfortable working conditions and the extra time they spent on preparation and the distractors that demotivated them. To exemplify, P7 shared that:

Being in a comfortable environment during the pandemic was perfect. Home was relaxing for us, we didn't have to get up very early, we were away from the noise in the classroom. Yet, when we were back to the school, these all were even harder for us than before.

Work-Life Imbalance

QQ is seen as a way out of the imbalance between private life and work life. Factors such as overtime and excessive workload may require employees to sacrifice the time they spend on their private lives, followed by work-life imbalance. In addition, factors causing such imbalances result in stress, and this stress also reflects in employees' private lives. When employees realize that these factors affect their private lives, their motivation and dedication to work decreases. To illustrate, P9 states that making sacrifices for work will disrupt the work-life balance and therefore teachers will avoid making such sacrifice: *"The teacher who self-sacrifices for his job knows that he will compromise his private life, so he never attempts and gives up immediately."*

Excessive workload is also considered among the reasons for QQ. Teachers are busy with many other tasks besides teaching. P12 states that most of the paperwork that teachers do is spread over the time that teachers spend on their private lives. For this reason, he says that teachers are disengaged in their work and only do the tasks that they have to do, as follows:



We, teachers, have a lot of work to do outside of the classroom and even school, such as assessment and evaluation activities, club reports, collaboration with parents, and feedback. In other words, we already take work home. Excessive workload weighs down teachers. As a result, teachers just want to do the job and leave school. No one wants to overshadow the time they spend with their family and themselves or their mental peace with work and work stress.

Similarly, P11 claims that being a teacher is a means to earn to sustain life and any extra effort causes teachers to spare less time on themselves. P11's thoughts on how establishing balance is also important to avoid stress are as follows:

If we put in extra effort for work in our private lives or keep thinking about work, this will stress us out. After all, we were not born to work and be teachers. It is important not to lose balance. After all, teaching is a means to earn money, not an end.

Low motivation and commitment

When employees have low motivation and commitment, they choose to overcome them by resorting to QQ (Scheyett, 2022). Teachers stated in their interviews that their motivation decreased and that they had difficulty doing extracurricular activities at school. To illustrate, P13 shares that teachers have no professional motivation and the administrators do not appreciate them enough, and they do not receive sufficient financial support. Due to all these, to him, teachers choose to do whatever the regulations require as follows:

As teachers, there is nothing left to motivate us anymore. Neither salary nor fringe benefits are adequate, nor do our school administrators appreciate the extra work we do. In that case, we do what we have to do. Doing projects and participating in competitions

feels like a burden. There is no reason to do more because we don't feel like it.

P10 uttered that teachers have limited organizational commitment and have difficulty in developing a sense of commitment towards the school and their profession. For this reason, they only fulfill the primary tasks required by legal texts as follows:

I think teachers do not embrace school, they do not embrace their job. However, school should feel like home. Teachers are emotionally disconnected from school. We find it difficult to work hard for our students. That is why, teachers, unfortunately, only fulfill their basic obligations.

Similarly, P4 pointed out that teachers lack unity of purpose and it deteriorates organizational commitment. P4's opinion on low motivation leading to several problems including QQ is as below:

I believe there is no unity of purpose among teachers. Some are concerned with finishing the curriculum, some are concerned with just filling the hours. For this reason, the sense of belonging to their profession and commitment is weak. Of course, this brings along many problems. Schools are not advancing, teachers lack of enthusiasm and are displeased, student success is not increasing, etc.

Discussion

According to the research results, there is a phenomenon of QQ among teachers. Although QQ practices are mostly made visible through the way teachers fulfill their duties or the duties and responsibilities they refrain from fulfilling, they are sometimes processed internally. It has been revealed that the internal processes experienced by teachers due to the termination of the psychological contract and the damage to



organizational belonging and commitment are among the invisible symptoms of QQ. As a matter of fact, when the psychological contract is eliminated on the employee side, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and performance decrease (Salin & Notelaers, 2018; Knights & Kennedy, 2005). In this case, teachers who unilaterally terminate their psychological contract also experience a QQ process, as revealed by internal symptoms such as losing motivation for their profession and decreasing commitment and belonging to the school.

The study reveals that the extrinsic indications of QQ stated by the teachers are holding back on duties that are outside the job description, not taking on new duties, and not taking responsibility for duties requiring them to spend overtime or outside working hours. As stated by Klotz and Bolino (2022), QQ may emerge as not going beyond working hours, not staying overtime, not coming to job early, or not taking part in optional tasks. In that case, the fact that teachers want to leave the school directly after completing their lesson hours, do not run non-compulsory projects or participate in any of them, avoid attending parent-teacher meetings and any work included in the duties of other teachers reveals that teachers may be regarded as quiet quitters. QQ is a state of limited commitment of employees to the job and refers to the cases of not going beyond the job description (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). However, that even the act of teaching, which is the primary duty of teachers, is sometimes not carried out with sufficient care is also a very observable symptom of QQ among teachers.

As for the reasons pushing teachers to quiet quit, financial incapability, precarization process, pandemic, work-life imbalance, and low motivation and commitment come to the fore. To begin with, according to the results of the research, financial difficulties reduce the motivation of teachers and cause them to lose their commitment and

dedication to their profession. The fact that teachers work for a salary below the poverty line makes their profession worthless and meaningless in their eyes. As Guler (2023) indicates, low wage and inflation triggers QQ. Then, it is obvious that teachers who are dissatisfied with their wages tend to show low engagement in their work. What is more, teacher's not receiving the salary they deserve is a form of exploitation, and according to Cooper (2022), employees who are made to feel worthless and who think that they are exploited in the workplace enter into a sort of QQ process. In their study Ozen et al., (2024), comes up with a parallel results and they find out that economic sufficiency teachers face with contributes to teacher QQ.

In addition to the financial difficulties, teachers enter in the process of QQ due to the fact that their professions got precarious. Loss of prestige, deterioration of their labor, and inadequate personal rights causes precarization of teaching profession, which is associated with QQ. The prestige withdrawal of the teaching profession in society gives rise to great disappointment among teachers and such process results in the form of low engagement in their work at school.

In parallel with the result of this study, Ozen et al., (2024) concluded that when society's perception of teachers deteriorates, teachers feel devalued, which contributes to the QQ level of teachers. Another reason for QQ among teachers turns out to be the paid teaching practice which is regarded as a source of loss of prestige in the eyes of the society. This type of employment and precarization process also affect the well-being of teachers (Gomez & Klautau, 2021). Under these conditions, it is unrealistic to expect teachers to demonstrate their full potential in their profession. According to the results of the research, reasons such as precarious working conditions that teachers are



exposed to and the lack of implementation of legal regulations in private schools also cause teachers to quiet quit.

The pandemic, on the other hand, provided teachers, like other professional groups, with the opportunity to find enough time to contemplate on their profession, the time they devote to work, and their dedication. Also, the adaptation problem of both teachers and students experienced in returning to school, which is one of the consequences of the pandemic, also caused teachers to experience difficulties and ultimately to move away from their jobs as it gave rise to a great motivation loss among teachers. Furthermore, with pandemic people lost their relatives, felt lonely and restricted and thus, they pursued things that would give meaning to their lives (Aydin & Azizoglu; Li & Wang, 2020). Therefore, the meaning they attached to their profession faded in time. What is more, the pandemic enabled people to enjoy being home and working comfortably. Esen's (2023) study also reveals that employees enjoyed flexible working setting during the pandemic and being back to workplace gave rise to QQ.

Another result of the study is that among the reasons why teachers are counted as quiet quitters is they aspire to readjust the imbalance between the work and life. Aydin and Azizoglu (2022), similarly found out employees choose to quiet quit to eliminate the imbalance and sustain their state of well-being. Likewise, in their study, Ogan and Cetiner (2024) mark that employees develop QQ in the face of excessive workload, taking work home, the expectation of being available outside of work hours, which refers to work-life imbalance. As a matter of fact, many teachers have noticed that the balance between work and private life has increased in favor of work and this has become a big problem. Indeed, quiet quitters do not choose to make self-sacrifice their private time and imbalance their work and

privacy. Thus, teachers chose to quiet quit on realizing such imbalance. As pointed out by Hare (2022), quiet quitters mostly disengage at work in order to avoid the imbalance between their private life and business life.

Lastly, teachers also quiet quit as a result of low motivation and commitment. Detert's (2023) study supports that declined commitment and motivation manifest as QQ in employees. Excessive workload, conflicts in the organization, and inflexibility results in motivation loss (Tong, 2022) and it is followed by QQ because it is defined as low motivation stemming from enormous workload, financial challenges and setting a boundary for that reason (Ogan & Çetiner, 2024). Furthermore, restricted commitment leads employees to lose their enthusiasm to further work (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). Indeed, this is thought to be a reciprocal relation. QQ also brings on low organizational commitment (Harter, 2022). Thus, low motivation and commitment play a key role in QQ act of teachers.

In conclusion, the study reveals that teachers are part of the QQ act. Teachers' QQ practices exist in both their internal processes and external practices. Teachers' ending their psychological contract, organizational commitment and belonging are internal symptoms, while holding back on duties that are outside the job description, not taking on new duties, and not taking responsibility for duties requiring them to spend overtime or outside working hours are external symptoms. Moreover, there are various factors that cause teachers to quiet quit. Teachers tend to quiet quit because the meaning they attach to their profession is deteriorated and their efforts are rendered worthless due to the financial challenges they experience. Moreover, over time, they tend to quiet quit due to such challenges and the precarization they experience due to the paid teaching practice and the



loss of prestige in the society. Pandemic is also among the reasons that lead teachers to quiet quit due to the loss of motivation, visibility of work-life imbalance and inflexible working conditions. Finally, work-life imbalance as well as low motivation and commitment give rise to QQ among teachers.

In this context, the suggestions made regarding the study results are as follows:

- Efforts to make the precarization process of the teaching profession visible in the eyes of society can play a role in reducing the QQ movement by disrupting precarization and increasing teachers' professional commitment.
- The practice of paid teaching causes the teaching profession to become worthless and leads to QQ, so the practice should be abolished.
- Teachers' salaries, which are below the poverty line, should be regulated and teachers should be motivated to pursue a profession in which they believe they can get financially rewarded with what they deserve.
- Excessive workload causing work-life imbalance should be revised and the expectation of being available outside of work hours should be legally limited
- Elements that undermine teachers' organizational motivation and commitment should be eliminated from the organization culture.

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About the authors:

Tugba Konal-Memis is a PhD candidate in the Department of Educational Administration at Yildiz Technical University, Türkiye and has been working as an English teacher for ten years. She completed her master's degree with the thesis titled "Analyzing Symbolic Violence Phenomenon in Schools". Her research interests relate to social theory and educational sociology.



E-mail: tugbakonal@gmail.com

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization/Administration formulated research goals and aims and administered the research, Methodology- designed the methodology, Writing, review and editing- prepared and/or presented the published work.

Erkan Tabanlı is an associate professor at Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul. He completed his master's degree at Hacettepe University and his doctorate at Ankara University in the Department of Educational Administration. His doctoral thesis is on human resource management in education. Dr. Tabanlı teaches classroom management, school management and human resource management at undergraduate and graduate level.

E-mail: tabanca@yildiz.edu.tr

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization/Administration formulated research goals and aims and administered the research, Methodology- designed the methodology, Writing, review and editing- prepared and/or presented the published work.

The Relationship Between Inclusive Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Inclusive Climate and Emotional Commitment

Çağlar Çelik 

Kocaeli University, Türkiye

Soner Polat* 

Kocaeli University, Türkiye

Emre Esen 

Ministry of National Education, Türkiye

Abstract

This study explores how inclusive leadership shapes innovative work behavior, focusing on the intermediary effects of emotional commitment and an inclusive climate in Turkish public schools. Drawing on data from 364 teachers in Kocaeli, the research utilized a range of scales to assess aspects like inclusive leadership, emotional commitment, inclusive climate, and innovative work behavior. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Results show a positive impact of inclusive leadership on innovative work behavior. However, the impact is mediated through the presence of an inclusive climate and high levels of emotional commitment. The findings suggest that while inclusive leadership is necessary for fostering innovation, it is the combination of an emotionally supportive and inclusively diverse environment that truly enhances innovative behaviors among teachers. This comprehensive approach not only supports the innovative capacity of individuals but also

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*Corresponding Author:

Email: spolat@kocaeli.edu.tr

contributes to a more dynamic and creative educational atmosphere. This study highlights the importance of adopting a holistic leadership strategy in educational institutions. It underscores the need for school administrators to not only practice inclusive leadership but also actively cultivate an environment that values diversity and fosters emotional commitment. By doing so, schools can become fertile grounds for innovation, benefiting educators and students alike. The research provides valuable insights into the mechanisms through which leadership can influence organizational behavior and offers a framework for fostering innovation in educational settings.

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Introduction

In the modern organizational landscape, entities are frequently navigating through swift technological advancements, the fleeting lifespan of products, and the extensive impact of globalization (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009). In such a competitive scene, being innovative is key for any organization looking to grow, perform better, and stand out from the rest (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003). Essentially, innovation happens when employees get creative, support new ideas, and bring them to life, all of which are crucial parts of what's called innovative work behavior (IWB) (Janssen, 2000). This kind of behavior is especially valuable in today's ever-changing work environments, helping organizations tackle new challenges (Scott & Bruce, 1998). As



employees are central to driving innovation in any organization, understanding what inspires them to think creatively and outside the norm is crucial for these organizations. As workplaces become more diverse, creating an inclusive environment is becoming a key strategy to encourage everyone to chip in with their innovative ideas and help the organization stay ahead (Brimhall & Mor Barak, 2018). In a workplace, being inclusive means that everyone feels valued and like they truly belong, balancing their need to fit in with their desire to stand out as unique individuals (Shore et al., 2011). The essence lies in leaders ensuring that every member feels integrated into the team. Leaders play a pivotal role in facilitating this inclusion. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) define inclusive leadership (IL) as the actions and words of leaders that encourage employees to feel welcomed and appreciated for their unique contributions. Basically, inclusive leaders are there to provide the right kind of encouragement, business insight, and social support to spur everyone's creative and innovative side (Mumford et al., 2002).

Leaders are key in setting the right atmosphere at work. They directly shape the team vibes and decide on policies, while also setting the standard for what's considered good behavior and teamwork (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Randel et al., 2016). When leaders focus on creating and maintaining a work environment that values diversity, everyone benefits. Employees feel more positive, work better together, and the overall performance goes up. This creates a friendly and inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels their differences are not just tolerated, but actually celebrated (Alay & Can, 2019). Ultimately, this leads to what's known as an inclusive climate (IC), a shared feeling among employees about the company's approach, rules, and practices that actively work against discrimination and support



diversity (Pugh et al., 2008). Inclusive leaders play a critical role in nurturing an IC, as they consistently promote teamwork, coordination, and equality, creating a setting where diversity is not just acknowledged but also effectively utilized (Najmaei & Sadeghinejad, 2019). Furthermore, these leaders demonstrate a commitment to diversity through both their actions and communication, effectively welcoming and valuing different perspectives and contributions (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). This leadership style not only acknowledges but also nurtures the varied strengths within the organization, enhancing employee engagement. When employees perceive their leaders as supportive and appreciative, it heightens their commitment to the organization (Giray & Şahin, 2014).

Exploring the relationship between IL and IWB with the mediating roles of EC and IC in the Turkish context addresses several critical gaps in the existing literature and offers valuable insights for educational leadership. First, IL has been demonstrated to foster an organizational environment that supports innovation and creativity, which is particularly vital for educational institutions aiming for continuous improvement (Javed et al., 2019). The inclusion of EC and IC as mediators is crucial because these factors provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which IL influences IWB. EC is a powerful predictor of various positive organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, lower turnover intentions, and increased willingness to engage in innovative activities (Hakimian et al., 2016; Çetin, 2021). By integrating EC into the model, this study can elucidate how fostering strong emotional bonds between teachers and their schools can enhance their commitment to innovation. Similarly, an IC fosters a sense of belonging and value among employees, which enhances their engagement and willingness to contribute innovative

ideas (Ashikali et al., 2020). Understanding the role of IC can help develop strategies to create supportive and inclusive environments that are conducive to innovation. Investigating the roles of EC and IC in the Turkish educational context adds significant value to the literature by providing empirical evidence on how these mediators enhance the effectiveness of IL in promoting IWB.

In Turkish literature, there are some studies relating IL with IWB (Aslan, 2019a; Aslan, 2019b; Erkal, 2023; Mavi, 2022). However, these studies mainly focus on business and management sectors and there is a gap in the literature for the studies that examine these variables in educational context. An examination of existing literature reveals that most studies primarily focus on a single intermediary variable to elucidate the link between IL and IWB (Aslan, 2019a; Bannay et al., 2020; Fang et al., 2019; Javed et al., 2019; Qi et al., 2019; Shakil et al., 2021). This research aims to expand on current knowledge by introducing a model that integrates multiple mediating factors. It specifically investigates the roles of both the climate of inclusion and emotional commitment (EC) in the IL-IWB relationship. The proposed model is illustrated in Figure 1. While global research on IL is relatively recent, Turkish studies primarily focus on adapting scales related to IL, and the body of work specifically examining the nuances of IL remains limited (Okçu & Deviren, 2020; Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2021; Gül & Çakıcı, 2021; Şentürk, 2019; Baş, 2022; Müceldili et al., 2018; Yıldırım, 2021). This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by providing a comprehensive model that explains the interplay between leadership, emotional commitment, and inclusive climate in fostering innovation. By doing so, it offers a nuanced perspective on how educational institutions in Turkey can leverage these factors to create more dynamic and effective learning environments (Nguyen et al., 2019; Ma

Prieto & Pilar Pérez-Santana, 2014). This research not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of these relationships but also offers practical implications for educational leaders seeking to enhance innovation through inclusive practices.

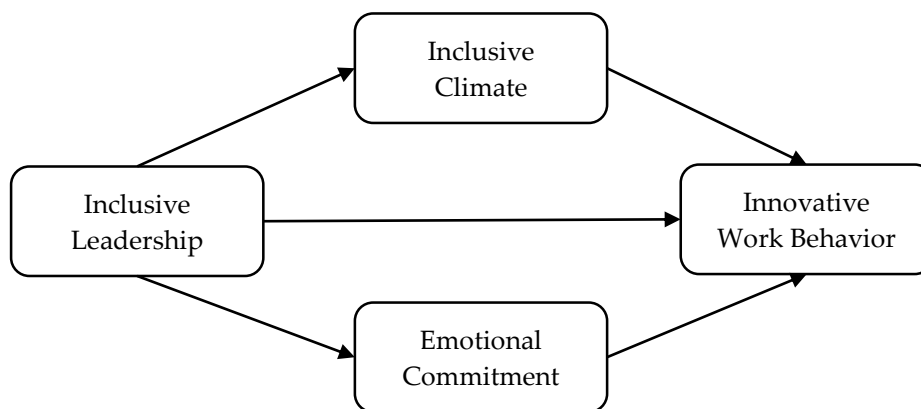


Figure 1. Research Model

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Formulation

IL is deeply rooted in Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Patterson & Byrd, 2022). SIT is developed by Tajfel and Turner, which explains how individuals identify themselves not just as isolated entities but as members of social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). SIT outlines that social categorization leads individuals to see others as "us" or "them," influencing their behavior within organizational settings (Turner & Oakes, 1986). Inclusive leaders mitigate the negative effects of this categorization by fostering an environment where all employees feel valued, enhancing social identification and creating a positive organizational climate (Randel et al., 2016). This positive climate is essential as it makes employees feel psychologically safe to express

their ideas and engage in innovative behaviors (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Furthermore, SIT highlights that inclusive leadership strengthens employees' identification with their organization by ensuring they feel seen, heard, and valued (Ashikali et al., 2020). This enhanced identification boosts morale and encourages active participation in innovative processes. Inclusive leadership also reduces intergroup biases by emphasizing common goals and fostering a culture of equality and respect (Randel et al., 2016). By promoting shared values and reducing biases, inclusive leaders create a cohesive and collaborative work environment that motivates employees to innovate (Ashikali et al., 2020). Thus, SIT provides a valuable framework for understanding how inclusive leadership drives innovative work behavior by enhancing employees' sense of belonging and identification with their organization.

Innovative Work Behavior

Innovation is the process of introducing something novel or unique, closely associated with change and manifested through new products, services, ideas, procedures, or processes (Spreitzer, 1995). Janssen (2000) specifically describes IWB as the deliberate creation and implementation of new ideas within an individual's role, a team, or the organization itself, aiming to benefit these groups. Moreover, innovative behavior is characterized by the development and implementation of new and beneficial ideas, processes, products, or methods (Farr & Ford, 1990). As such, it is an inclusive concept that captures the diverse ways in which employees can contribute to innovation (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). This concept extends beyond simply generating ideas; it includes the essential actions to bring these ideas to fruition and enhance individual or organizational performance (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2008). Past studies have



identified connections between IWB and several factors, including trust (Sezgin et al., 2015), knowledge sharing (Işık & Aydın, 2016), empowering leadership (Erdem, 2021), authentic leadership (Mahmod, 2022), employee empowerment (Özcan, 2020), and transformational and sustainable leadership (Pieterse et al., 2010).

IWB is very important for the success and competitiveness of schools. It is positively influenced by IL, which makes employees feel empowered to create and use new ideas (Afsar & Umrani, 2020). Also, having a safe and supportive work environment helps employees to be more innovative (Javed et al., 2019). This study looks at how IL and an IC together improve IWB.

Inclusive Leadership

Carmeli et al. (2010) characterize IL using three key elements: openness, approachability, and leaders' accessibility in their interactions with team members. Leaders who embody these qualities cultivate an atmosphere where employees are motivated to share their thoughts and views, thereby promoting a culture of appreciation and trust within the team (Mughtar et al., 2021). IL is characterized by acknowledging and respecting team members, being responsive, and taking responsibility that supports and validates employees' efforts (Hollander, 2012). This involves integrating team members into the decision-making process and being consistently supportive. As a result, employees get the opportunity to become more engaged and enhance their creative capabilities (Carmeli et al., 2010). Furthermore, this leadership style is particularly attentive to individuals who may feel excluded, ensuring their needs, ambitions, and potential are addressed and encouraging their full participation in the workplace (Bortini et al., 2018).

Randel et al. (2018) offer a detailed view of IL, defining it as a complex construct that includes a variety of positive behaviors. These behaviors play a crucial role in creating an environment where team members experience both a sense of belonging and recognition of their unique contributions. A key aspect of IL involves leaders attending to the emotional needs of their team, showing genuine care for their well-being and satisfaction. Such empathetic leadership helps team members feel respected and integral to the group (Randel et al., 2018). This approach is essential in fostering a deep sense of belonging within the team (Rhoades et al., 2001).

Another critical dimension of IL is the promotion of justice and equity within the team. Leaders who exhibit behaviors that signal impartial treatment, devoid of personal biases, instill a perception of fairness among group members (Arnold et al., 2000). This equitable approach contributes significantly to reinforcing the team's collective sense of belonging. Furthermore, inclusive leaders are characterized by their commitment to collaborative decision-making, ensuring that every team member has the chance to contribute their viewpoints (Arnold et al., 2000). They empower team members to participate in constructive discussions, thereby enhancing the decision-making process (Nishii, 2013). Through the facilitation of open dialogues, inclusive leaders enable team members to explore various viewpoints, ultimately strengthening the team's bond and sense of belonging (Randel et al., 2018).

Moreover, IL not only fosters belongingness but also encourages team members to perceive their uniqueness positively. This is achieved by promoting diverse contributions within the group. Inclusive leaders proactively listen to novel ideas and recognize the distinctive attributes that each group member brings to the team (Carmeli et al.,



2010). By valuing individual distinctiveness and proactively soliciting a range of inputs (Randel et al., 2018), leaders are able to amplify the sense of uniqueness among team members.

Lastly, inclusive leaders facilitate group members' full contributions by valuing their distinctiveness. They offer constructive feedback on ideas and provide support to those employing unconventional methods to accomplish tasks (Randel et al., 2018). Inclusive leaders also offer the necessary support and motivation for team members to keep generating new ideas, thus nurturing a feeling of individual uniqueness within the group.

IL means leaders are open, accessible, and value different ideas, which helps teams perform better and be more innovative. This type of leadership increases employee engagement and creativity (Javed et al., 2019). IL directly impacts IWB by making employees feel valued and supported (Rahmi & Desiana, 2023). This study aims to understand how IL influences the work environment and innovation. In reviewing literature related to IL, it's often linked with increased commitment to work, IWB, strategic flexibility, diversity climate, organizational citizenship behavior, and team innovation (Aslan, 2019a; Choi et al. 2015; Obaid & Al-Abachee, 2020; Randel et al., 2016; Ye et al., 2019). These connections show that IL not only enhances individual employee outcomes but also fosters a more adaptable and innovative organizational environment. This study aims to build on these findings by specifically exploring how IL influences the creation of an IC and the impact on IWB and OC.

Emotional Attachment

The understanding of organizational commitment (OC) has evolved significantly over time. Initially perceived as being primarily driven by

material rewards, it is now recognized that relational and normative factors play a crucial role in shaping an employee's dedication and willingness to remain with an organization (Meyer et al., 1993). Meyer and Allen (1997) describe OC as a psychological state that defines an employee's relationship with their organization, impacting their intention to stay. This commitment involves aligning with the organization's goals and values, along with a sustained interest in being a part of it (Solinger et al., 2008).

Allen and Meyer (1990) categorized OC into three distinct components: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. This research particularly focuses on affective commitment, which refers to the emotional bond an employee has with the organization. It involves aligning with the organization's vision and mission, valuing its objectives, and harboring feelings of loyalty and respect towards the management (Meyer et al., 1993). Employees with a strong emotional attachment to their organization are often more motivated to exert extra effort and work diligently towards the organization's success (Çetin, 2021).

Various studies have shown that EC is linked to numerous factors that affect organizational effectiveness and efficiency. These factors include turnover intention and productivity (Jaros, 2007), procedural justice and job satisfaction (Meyer et al., 1993), the appeal of the employer brand (Morley et al., 2016), organizational trust (Zhang et al., 2015), emotional and cultural intelligence (Moon & Hur, 2018), participative leadership (Afsar et al., 2019), organizational support (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009), organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000), and overall job satisfaction (Huang et al., 2016). These elements not only highlight the breadth of factors associated with EC but also underscore its importance in fostering a productive and



positive organizational environment. OC is crucial for making employees feel loyal and willing to work on new ideas (Jain, 2015). Inclusive leadership (IL) strengthens this attachment by ensuring employees feel they belong and are appreciated (Carmeli et al., 2010). This study will explore how IL, OC, and IWB are connected.

Inclusive Climate

An IC is described by Kossek and Zonia (1993) as the perception employees have of the significance their employer places on promoting diversity. It's about understanding how an organization's atmosphere reflects collective views on the outcomes of various types of discrimination in the workplace (Chin, 2009). More precisely, it pertains to employees' perceptions regarding the degree to which organizational policies encourage and recognize the acceptance and appreciation of demographic diversity (Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2011; Mor Barak, 2005). In environments that support and value diversity, like an IC, these differences can lead to more positive and constructive outcomes for the organization, enhancing its overall functioning (Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; Mor Barak et al., 2016). An IC means that employees feel the work environment is welcoming and values diversity. This climate is important for supporting different ideas and increasing team innovation (Nishii, 2013). Research shows that an IC, created by IL, leads to higher employee engagement and IWB (Mor Barak et al., 2022). This study will look at how these elements work together to create a supportive environment for innovation.

The Relationship Between IL and IWB

Social exchange theory offers a lens through which the influence of IL on IWB can be understood. According to this theory, employees view inclusive leaders positively when these leaders are approachable and

open, resulting in favorable outcomes in the workplace. Such leaders, by being caring, open, and accessible, also boost employee motivation (Choi et al. 2015). A critical component of IL involves leaders taking responsibility, particularly when new ideas do not yield the anticipated results. This approach fosters a safe environment for risk-taking among employees, thereby encouraging them to engage in innovative behaviors (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Hollander, 2012). IL thus fosters innovation both by nurturing intrinsic motivation and creating a supportive environment for innovation (Zhong et al. 2021).

Numerous studies have established a positive association between IL and IWB. It has been consistently observed that IL correlates positively with innovative actions in both individuals and teams (Aslan, 2019a; Choi et al., 2017; Javed et al., 2019). Nguyen et al. (2019) discovered that IL positively influences employee well-being and person-job fit, which in turn, positively affects IWB. Ye et al. (2019) noted a positive link between IL and team innovation. Additionally, Xiang et al. (2017) found that IL can indirectly boost IWB by enhancing employees' psychological capital. Drawing from these findings, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H1: There is a positive relationship between IL and IWB.

The hypothesis suggests that an increase in the level of IL within an organization leads to a higher likelihood of IWB among its employees. It proposes that IL, defined by qualities such as openness, accessibility, and supportiveness, is key in inspiring and empowering employees to participate in and contribute to innovative activities.



The Relationship Between IL and IC

IL and IC are related but different ideas. IL means leaders act in ways that include all members and make sure everyone's voice is heard and valued (Randel et al., 2018). However, IC is how employees feel about inclusivity in their workplace, and this may not always be directly influenced by leaders' actions (Ashikali et al., 2020). Inclusive leaders work to make fair decisions, create a sense of belonging and encourage different perspectives (Mor Barak et al., 2022). However, just having inclusive leaders does not mean there will be an IC. IC depends on how all members of an organization feel and experience inclusivity (Nishii, 2013). Also, IC can be shaped by company practices and policies, not just by leaders. For example, efforts to promote fairness and reduce bias are important to create an IC (Boekhorst, 2015). Therefore, while inclusive leaders are important, achieving an IC needs organisation-wide strategies and changes (Cunningham, 2023).

The impact of employee diversity on an IC can be both beneficial and challenging (Randel et al., 2018; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). This underscores the importance of IL in managing these dynamics, minimizing negative aspects while amplifying positive ones. IL plays a crucial role in fostering a positive IC by effectively utilizing diversity (Ashikali et al., 2020; Randel et al., 2018). Creating a sense of belonging in employees involves cultivating an environment where individuals from varied backgrounds feel they can be themselves, are regarded as vital team members, and can leverage insights from diverse team experiences (Boekhorst, 2015; Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016; Dwertmann et al., 2016; Ellemers et al., 2013; Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2011).

Understanding how to create inclusive environments is a crucial part of IL capacity (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). An IC is more likely to emerge

in environments where employees perceive fair treatment, feel valued, and are included in decision-making processes, particularly in organizations with diverse workforces (Nishii, 2013). For these reasons, inclusive leaders strive to cultivate an IC by fostering employee participation, ensuring that various groups are involved in power and decision-making processes, and creating an environment for genuine and reliable dialogue (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2014). They aim to foster a sense of unity, which in turn influences how employees perceive the inclusivity of their workplace (Boekhorst, 2015). Part of this effort involves valuing and acknowledging the diverse perspectives of all employees, demonstrating the significance of these viewpoints (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2014). By promoting diversity through IL, negative sentiments and biases among different groups can be mitigated (Randel et al., 2018). As a result, this strategy contributes to making individuals from diverse backgrounds feel more integrated within the organization, thereby boosting their sense of belonging (Ashikali et al., 2020).

H2: There is a positive relationship between IL and IC.

This hypothesis posits that an increase in the level of IL within an organization will correspondingly enhance the IC. Essentially, it posits that leaders who are open, accessible, and encourage diverse participation and viewpoints contribute to creating a more welcoming and accepting environment for all employees.

The Relationship Between IL and EC

Studies have consistently shown a positive relationship between IL and employee EC. For example, Choi et al. (2015) discovered in their research, which examined the mediating effect of employee creativity on the relationship between IL and OC, that IL has a positive influence



on OC. In a similar vein, Aslan (2019a) investigated the mediating influence of IL on the relationship between work engagement and IWB, finding a positive and significant link between IL and OC. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: There is a positive relationship between IL and EC.

The hypothesis infers that with the rise of IL, there is a corresponding increase in the EC of employees. It implies that when leaders demonstrate inclusiveness, characterized by openness, accessibility, and a recognition of diverse employee contributions, employees, in response, develop a stronger emotional attachment and commitment to the organization.

The Relationship Between IC and IWB

Factors at both the individual and organizational level are known to impact the drive for IWB (de Jong & Wennekers, 2008; Yuan & Woodman, 2010). One of the organizational strategies to enhance employee creativity and innovation is fostering diversity within the workforce (Luu, 2019). The organizational climate is especially influential in determining the innovative behaviors of employees within an organization (Janssen, 2004). A substantial body of research has established a connection between organizational climate and IWB, suggesting that a supportive and IC is favorable for fostering innovation (Ma Prieto & Pilar Pérez-Santana, 2014; Pukienė, 2016; Shanker et al., 2017). Integrating a diverse workforce into the organization is essential for encouraging innovative behaviors across individual and team dynamics (Lambert, 2016; Shin et al., 2017). This is further supported by Luu's (2019) findings, which suggest that an IC fosters greater innovation. The role of IL is paramount in nurturing this climate and, in turn, promoting creativity and innovation (Ashikali et

al., 2020). Based on this understanding, the subsequent hypothesis is formulated:

H4: There is a positive relationship between the IC and IWB.

The hypothesis posits that an organizational atmosphere marked by inclusivity, acceptance, and support positively affects and boosts the innovative behaviors of its employees. It suggests that when employees perceive themselves as valued and included, they are more inclined to participate in activities fostering innovation and creativity.

The Relationship Between EC and IWB

EC is considered a vital precursor to individual behavior, especially within the organizational context (Solinger et al., 2008). Highly committed employees often exhibit greater passion and curiosity, which increases their probability of generating innovative solutions to challenges (Jafri, 2010). Commitment is seen as a key motivator behind organizational success, driving employee productivity and innovation (Strom et al., 2014). Some researchers argue that fostering EC should be a strategic priority for organizations aiming to enhance employee creativity and innovation (Hakimian et al., 2016; Schaijk, 2018). According to Chughtai (2013), employees' dedication to their managers plays a pivotal role in shaping their inclination to acquire knowledge, actively participate, and contribute to innovation. Similarly, Hakimian et al. (2016) observed that individuals who possess elevated levels of EC often demonstrate a greater propensity for innovative behavior. Numerous research studies substantiate the favorable association between EC and IWB (Jafri, 2010; Aslan, 2019a; Hakimian et al., 2016; Choi et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2019).

Based on these insights, the following hypotheses can be proposed:



H5: There is a positive relationship between EC and IWB.

This hypothesis suggests that as employees' EC to their organization increases, they are more likely to participate in IWB, potentially resulting in the emergence of fresh and valuable innovations.

H6: IC and EC positively mediate the relationship between IL and IWB.

This hypothesis implies that IC and EC act as channels through which IL exerts its positive influence on IWB. It suggests that IL promotes an environment and emotional state that are conducive to innovation.

Methods

Research Model

The study employs a relational research model, which is suitable for identifying and quantifying the connections among IL, IWB, IC, and EC. The aim of this research is to construct and present a model that investigates the influence of IL on IWB. Within this model, IC and EC are considered key variables that potentially mediate this relationship. This type of model is adept at measuring the degrees of association among several variables and determining their interrelations (Creswell, 2005). It's important to note, however, that relational studies do not allow for the establishment of cause-effect relationships among variables, nor do they permit manipulation of variables by researchers (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

Sample

The target population for this research includes 29,772 teachers employed in public schools in Kocaeli. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) posited that as the population size increases, the sample size exhibits

diminishing growth, stabilizing at approximately 380 cases. Consequently, the study's sample size was established at 379, ensuring a 95% confidence level and a 5% error rate. The researchers developed online questionnaires, implementing random sampling for both schools and teachers. They contacted 395 teachers online, distributing the questionnaires accordingly. Out of these, 364 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 92.2%.

Table 1 reveals a higher proportion of female teachers (58.8%) in the study compared to male teachers (41.2%). Primary schools (48.1%) were more prevalently involved than other educational institutions. The predominant age group encompasses educators aged 30-35 (26.1%), with 22.3% of the sample possessing 6-10 years of teaching experience.

Table 1.

Sample Demographic Characteristics

Variables		f	%
Gender	Female	214	58.8
	Male	150	41.2
	Total	364	100
School Type	Pre-school	11	3.0
	Primary school	175	48.1
	Secondary school	66	18.1
	High school	86	23.6
	Other	26	7.1
Age	Total	364	100
	20-25	12	3.3
	26-29	36	9.9
	30-35	95	26.1
	36-39	69	19.0
	40-45	59	16.2

	46-49	39	10.7
	50-55	44	12.1
	56-59	5	1.4
	60-65	5	1.4
	Total	364	100
Professional Seniority	1-5 years	53	14.6
	6-10 years	81	22.3
	11-15 years	70	19.2
	16-20 years	49	13.5
	21-25 years	59	16.2
	26-30 years	35	9.6
	31-35 years	14	3.8
	36-40 years	2	0.5
	41-45 years	1	0.3
	Total	364	100

Data Collection

To collect data, four scales were used: Inclusive Leadership Scale, Organizational Commitment Scale, Diversity Climate Scale and Innovative Behavior Scale. All scales have previously translated into Turkish in other studies. The "Diversity Climate Scale" was employed to assess IC. It's worth noting that diversity climate and IC are closely related concepts frequently used interchangeably in academic literature. Both terms pertain to how individuals perceive an organization's environment with regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The body of literature on diversity, equity, and inclusion highlights the close relationship between the concepts of diversity climate and IC. These concepts share overlapping themes and objectives, including principles of fairness, a sense of belonging, and the appreciation of individual differences (Ashikali et al., 2020; Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Hofhuis et al., 2016; Mor Barak et

al., 1998; Nelissen et al., 2017). The absence of distinct, consistent definitional parameters for the two constructs, as highlighted by Nishii (2013), reinforces the idea that they might be viewed as interchangeable.

Inclusive Leadership Scale. This scale was originally developed by Al-Atwi and Al-Hassani (2021) and subsequently adapted into Turkish by Polat and Çelik (2023). It consists of 5 sub-dimensions and 25 items. These sub-dimensions include "Supporting Team Members" with 6 items, "Ensuring Justice and Equity" with 5 items, "Shared Decision-making" with 5 items, "Encouraging Diverse Contributions" with 6 items, and "Helping Group Members Fully Contribute" with 3 items. Responses on the scale are measured using a 5-point Likert-type format, ranging from "(5) I totally agree" to "(1) I totally disagree". The scale showed strong reliability, evidenced by a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.95. An illustrative item from this scale is: "He treats me equally as he treats others, without discrimination."

Organizational Commitment Scale. Originally formulated by Meyer et al. (1993) and subsequently adapted into Turkish by Dağlı et al. (2018), this scale comprises three sub-dimensions and a total of 18 items. This scale also utilizes a 5-point Likert format, with options ranging from "(5) I totally agree" to "(1) I strongly disagree". For this particular study, only the "Emotional Commitment" sub-dimension was employed, comprising the first 6 items of the scale. The total Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.884, with the "Emotional Commitment" sub-dimension specifically yielding a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.80. A sample item from this sub-dimension is: "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my professional life in this school."

Diversity Climate Scale. Developed by Buttner et al. (2012) and adapted into Turkish by Kurkan and Polat (2021), this scale includes 3 sub-



dimensions and 15 items. The sub-dimensions are "Organizational Justice Climate" with 6 items, "Organizational Inclusion" with 4 items, and "Diversity Promises Fulfillment" with 5 items. The scale employs a 7-point Likert scale for measurement, with choices extending from "(7) I strongly agree" to "(1) I strongly disagree". It demonstrates high reliability with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.95. An example item is: "Different ideas, preferences and perspectives are valued at my school."

Innovative Behavior Scale. The scale was initially created by De Jong and den Hartog (2010) and subsequently adapted into Turkish by Çimen and Yücel (2017). It comprises 4 sub-dimensions and 10 items: "Opportunity Exploration" with 3 items, "Idea Generation" with 2 items, "Championing" with 2 items, and "Application" with 3 items. The scale utilizes a 5-point Likert format, with options ranging from "(5) Always" to "(1) Never". The scale boasts a robust Cronbach Alpha value of 0.93, signifying a high level of reliability. An illustrative item from this scale is: "The people working in this organization encourage the people who are influential in the organization to develop innovative ideas."

Analysis

To analyze the data, a comprehensive approach was taken, involving the use of descriptive statistics, reliability measures, and correlation analyses. These analyses were conducted using SPSS 26 and SmartPLS software. The study used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the research hypotheses, adhering to the methodology outlined by Hair et al. (2016). PLS-SEM is recognized for its capability in handling sequential measurements and dealing with related measurement errors, as noted by Rademaker et al. (2019) and Schuberth et al. (2018). It is also adept at computing path

coefficients in a manner akin to ordinary least squares, as described by Rigdon (2012). This technique is particularly advantageous for managing multiple outcomes, smaller sample sizes (Hair et al., 2012), and providing prediction accuracy in cases of non-normal data distribution. For this study, the bootstrapping technique with 5000 samples and bias correction was utilized with a 95% confidence interval to verify mediation effects.

Results

Preliminary analysis

The correlations and descriptive statistics of the analyzed variables are detailed in Table 2. The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) values for the variables are as follows: inclusive leadership (IL) had a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 0.955, indicating a moderate level of IL perceptions among participants. Emotional commitment (EC) had a mean of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 0.923, suggesting that participants generally felt a strong emotional attachment to their organization. Inclusive climate (IC) had a mean of 4.99 and a standard deviation of 1.419, reflecting a relatively high perception of inclusiveness within the schools. Innovative work behavior (IWB) had a mean of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 0.941, showing that participants often engaged in behaviors that promote innovation.

The correlation results revealed significant relationships between the variables, providing insight into how these constructs interact with one another. For example, the positive correlation between IL and EC ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that when leaders are perceived as inclusive, employees tend to feel more emotionally committed to their organization. This suggests that IL plays a crucial role in fostering a



sense of belonging and loyalty among staff. Similarly, the strong correlation between IL and IC ($r = 0.84, p < 0.001$) highlights that inclusive leadership is highly effective in creating an inclusive climate. This means that leaders who actively promote inclusivity and fairness contribute significantly to an environment where diversity is valued and all employees feel included. The relationship between IL and IWB ($r = 0.64, p < 0.001$) suggests that inclusive leadership positively influences innovative work behavior. This finding underscores the importance of IL in encouraging employees to engage in creative and innovative activities, which are essential for organizational growth and adaptability. The positive correlation between EC and IC ($r = 0.62, p < 0.001$) indicates that employees who feel emotionally committed to their organization are more likely to perceive the climate as inclusive. This relationship suggests a reinforcing cycle where emotional attachment to the organization and perceptions of inclusiveness mutually enhance each other. The correlation between EC and IWB ($r = 0.62, p < 0.001$) shows that emotionally committed employees are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors. This finding highlights the importance of fostering emotional commitment to drive innovation within the organization. Lastly, the strong positive correlation between IC and IWB ($r = 0.70, p < 0.001$) suggests that an inclusive climate significantly contributes to innovative work behavior. This implies that creating a supportive and inclusive work environment is key to promoting innovation among employees. Overall, these findings suggest that IL not only directly enhances IWB but also does so indirectly by fostering an IC and EC. This interconnectedness highlights the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to leadership that values inclusivity and emotional engagement to drive innovation.

Table 2.

Descriptive statistics and correlation

	Mean	SD	IL	EC	IC	IB
IL	3.67	0.96	(0.84)			
EC	3.62	0.92	0.58**	(0.77)		
IC	4.99	1.42	0.84**	0.62**	(0.79)	
IB	3.51	0.94	0.64**	0.62**	0.70**	(0.88)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Assessment of measurement model (first-order constructs)

To evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement model, several tests and criteria were utilized:

Factor Loadings. The internal consistency of the items in each scale was assessed by examining their factor loadings. According to Büyüköztürk (2002), factor loadings of 0.60 and above are considered high, indicating strong item reliability, while loadings between 0.30 and 0.59 are deemed medium. The results, detailed in Table 3, show that most items have high factor loadings, with only three items falling into the moderate range.

Reliability Coefficients. The research assessed the internal consistency reliability by examining Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients. To establish convergent validity, the study relied on average variance (AVE = Average Variance Extracted) values, which are explained by factor loadings. Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest that to achieve satisfactory convergent validity, the AVE should be higher than 0.5, and the CR value should exceed 0.7. The results demonstrated that the first-order construct's convergent validity had been established.

Table 3.

Assessment of measurement assessment (first-order constructs)

	Item No	Factor loading	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	CR	AVE
Inclusive Leadership	STM1	0.836	34.279	0,925	0,674
	STM2	0.806	28.856		
	STM3	0.818	39.225		
	STM4	0.862	45.745		
	STM5	0.866	54.134		
	STM6	0.763	23.347		
	EJE1	0.845	44.498	0,921	0,701
	EJE2	0.863	53.781		
	EJE3	0.822	41.112		
	EJE4	0.888	71.233		
	EJE5	0.810	33.603		
	SD1	0.801	30.187	0,932	0,732
	SD2	0.848	47.163		
	SD3	0.866	53.157		
	SD4	0.886	67.201		
	SD5	0.888	76.851		
	EDC1	0.869	63.213	0,938	0,718
	EDC2	0.763	24.496		
EDC3	0.846	44.160			
EDC4	0.831	42.683			
EDC5	0.879	65.064			
EDC6	0.876	55.127			
HGM1	0.849	47.038	0,879	0,709	
HGM2	0.788	33.019			
HGM3	0.880	63.448			
	EC1	0.826	54.471	0.895	0.590

Emotional Commitment	EC2	0.699	19.596		
	EC3	0.618	12.357		
	EC4	0.818	31.306		
	EC5	0.831	34.112		
	EC6	0.793	23.773		
	Inclusive Climate	OF1	0.423	7.476	
OF2		0.529	10.885		
OF3		0.852	39.615	0,884	0,574
OF4		0.887	64.479		
OF5		0.884	59.498		
OF6		0.873	54.215		
OI1		0.836	40.827		
OI2		0.849	50.566	0,811	0,527
OI3		0.560	11.820		
OI4		0.770	29.027		
DPF1		0.854	37.724		
DPF2		0.863	41.326		
DPF3		0.874	49.164	0,921	0,701
DPF4		0.841	35.225		
DPF5	0.761	18.465			
Innovative Behavior	OE1	0.733	24.236	0,757	0,61
	OE2	0.837	45.432		
	IG1	0.878	59.097		
	IG2	0.904	82.646	0,923	0,799
	IG3	0.894	66.122		
	CH1	0.899	77.795		
	CH2	0.900	78.990	0,887	0,797
	IM1	0.910	86.025		
	IM2	0.911	81.982	0,932	0,821
	IM3	0.900	62.276		



Discriminant Validity. Discriminant validity was evaluated by employing the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The HTMT values are below the 1.0 threshold, as shown in Table 4 (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). All of the first-order constructs were confirmed to be empirically distinct by the results. The first-order constructs' discriminant validity was established as a result.

Table 4.
 Discriminant validity (HTMT)

	CH	DPF	EC	EDC	EJE	HGM	IG	IM	OE	OF	OI	SD	STM
CH													
DPF	0.666												
EC	0.656	0.671											
EDC	0.587	0.812	0.594										
EJE	0.578	0.796	0.593	0.910									
HGM	0.623	0.784	0.623	0.966	0.861								
IG	0.895	0.644	0.643	0.573	0.591	0.600							
IM	0.930	0.658	0.671	0.595	0.597	0.623	0.947						
OE	0.797	0.656	0.620	0.575	0.583	0.567	0.889	0.860					
OF	0.634	0.897	0.614	0.801	0.834	0.745	0.635	0.636	0.641				
OI	0.814	0.955	0.750	0.854	0.854	0.823	0.760	0.800	0.753	0.944			
SD	0.672	0.806	0.628	0.927	0.917	0.919	0.640	0.668	0.606	0.772	0.882		
STM	0.630	0.801	0.634	0.921	0.909	0.883	0.593	0.620	0.596	0.792	0.873	0.938	

Assessment of measurement model (second-order constructs). Table 5 illustrates that the loadings of each first-order construct, which corresponds to the second-order construct, surpass the threshold of 0.70. The AVE and CR values for the second-order constructs surpass the thresholds of 0.50 and 0.80, respectively. These findings indicate that convergent validity has been successfully established for the second-order constructs under examination. Table 6 further

demonstrates that the HTMT values are below 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015), confirming the discriminant validity of the second-order constructs.

Table 5.

Assessment of measurement model (second-order construct)

Second-order construct	First-order construct	Loading	AVE	CR
Inclusive Leadership (IL)			0,710	0,984
	STM	0,941		
	EJE	0,931		
	SD	0,951		
	EDC	0,955		
	HGM	0,926		
Inclusive Climate (IC)			0,624	0,96
	OF	0,926		
	OI	0,942		
	DPF	0,942		
Emotional Commitment (EC)			0,59	0,895
Innovative Behavior (IB)			0,771	0,971
	OE	0,87		
	IG	0,947		
	CG	0,927		
	IM	0,953		

Table 6.

Discriminant analysis (HTMT)

	EC	IC	IL	IB
EC				
IC	0.687			
IL	0.636	0.865		
IB	0.680	0.730	0.657	

Multicollinearity. To prevent excessive correlations among the predictive variables in the model, which can lead to result distortions, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was computed. Ideally, VIF values should be less than 5 to eliminate concerns of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2011). The VIF values presented in Table 7 were all found to be less than 5, indicating no collinearity issues within the model. This confirms that the independent variables are not significantly correlated, ensuring the variance in the model isn't artificially inflated. Based on these tests and criteria, the research model was determined to be reliable and consistent, with the scales and items effectively representing the constructs of interest.

Table 7.

VIF Values

	EC	IC	IL	IB
EC				1.739
IC				3.841
IL	1.000	1.000		3.569
IB				

Assessment of structural model. Table 8 and Figure 2 illustrate the outcomes of both direct and indirect influences. Based on these findings, it has been established that IL exerts a positive influence on IWB. IL also has a positive effect on EC and climate of difference. These results show that the hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 were confirmed.

To test the mediator effect, mediator effects were calculated using the 5000 bootstrapping (resampling) method. According to the results obtained, EC and IC positively mediate the relationship between IL and IWB. These results indicate that the H6 hypothesis is confirmed.

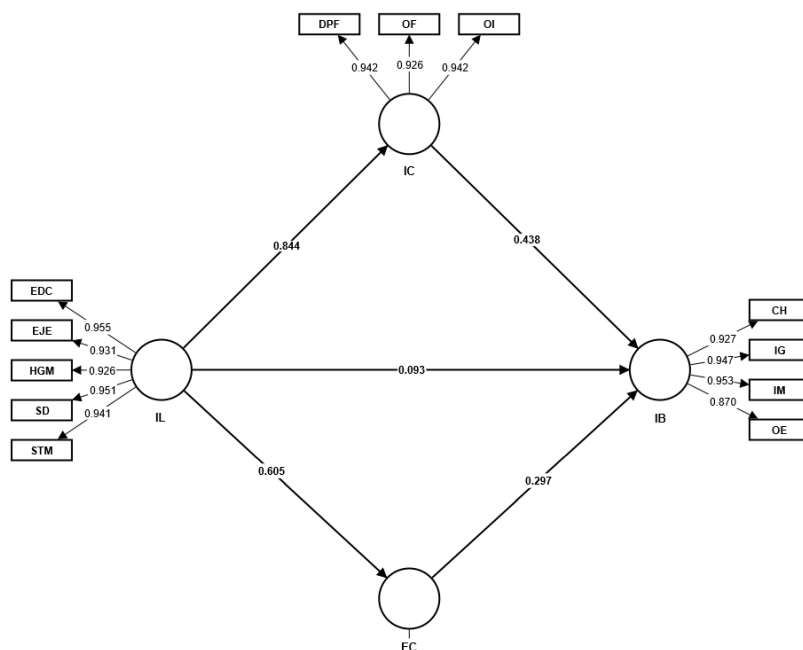


Figure 2. Structural model

Table 8.

Direct, indirect and total effects

	Standardized coefficient	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	P Values
<i>Direct effects</i>					
IL -> EC	0.605	18.875	0.542	0.669	0.000
IL -> IC	0.844	31.752	0.784	0.888	0.000
IL -> IB	0.093	1.061	-0.070	0.272	0.289
EC -> IB	0.297	6.029	0.200	0.393	0.000
IC -> IB	0.438	5.067	0.255	0.592	0.000
<i>Indirect effects</i>					
IL -> EC -> IB	0.179	5.743	0.121	0.244	0.000
IL -> IC -> IB	0.370	5.217	0.218	0.498	0.000
<i>Total effects</i>					
IL -> IB	0.642	15.509	0.555	0.717	0.000

When the structural model of the research is examined, it is seen that IL has a low effect on IWB (0.09) and a high effect on IC (0.84) and EC (0.61). Also, IC (0.44) and EC (0.30) have a low effect on IWB. Based on these findings, it can be said that IC and EC have an important role in enabling the emergence of IWB by using IL.

Hypothesis Testing

The research utilized hypothesis testing to explore the relationships and effects posited in the study. Here are the details of the findings:

Direct and Mediating Effects

IL's Effect on IWB. It was found that IL has a positive direct effect on IWB, confirming Hypothesis H1. This indicates that inclusive leadership, characterized by openness, accessibility, and valuing diverse contributions, directly fosters innovative work behaviors among employees. However, the effect size was relatively low (0.09),

suggesting that while IL is important, its direct influence on IWB might not be the primary driver of innovation and shows that other factors may strengthen the impact of IL on IWB.

IL's Effect on EC and IC. The results indicate that IL positively influences both EC and IC, supporting Hypotheses H2 and H3. Specifically, IL had a significant high effect on IC (0.84) and EC (0.61). This demonstrates that inclusive leaders play a crucial role in creating a work environment where employees feel emotionally connected to the organization and perceive the climate as inclusive. Such an environment is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and commitment, which are pivotal for enhancing employee morale and participation.

IC and EC's Effect on IWB. Both IC and EC were found to positively affect IWB, confirming Hypotheses H4 and H5. The effect sizes of IC (0.44) and EC (0.30) on IWB indicate that these factors significantly contribute to fostering innovative behaviors. An inclusive climate ensures that diverse ideas are welcomed and valued, leading to a more collaborative and creative workplace. Similarly, EC shows employees' attachment and loyalty to the organization, motivating them to engage in innovative activities. These findings underscore the importance of creating supportive and inclusive environments to maximize innovative potentials.

Mediator Effect Testing

Mediator Effects Calculation. Using the 5000-bootstrapping method, the study calculated the mediator effects. The results demonstrated that both EC and IC positively mediate the relationship between IL and IWB, thereby confirming Hypothesis H6. This implies that the positive impact of IL on IWB is significantly enhanced when mediated by EC



and IC. Inclusive leadership creates an emotionally supportive and inclusive environment, which in turn fosters innovative behaviors. This mediation effect highlights the intricate pathways through which IL influences innovation and emphasize the need for a holistic approach in leadership practices.

Structural Model Findings

The structural model provided detailed insights into the magnitude of effects:

Low Effect of IL on IWB. The effect of IL on IWB was relatively low (0.09), indicating that while positive, IL directly contributes modestly to IWB. This finding suggests that other factors, such as the IC and EC, play a more substantial role in driving innovation.

High Effect of IL on IC and EC. A significant high effect was observed of IL on IC (0.84) and EC (0.61), suggesting that IL is a strong driver of both an inclusive environment and emotional attachment within the organization. This emphasizes the importance of leaders fostering an inclusive climate and building strong emotional connections with employees to enhance organizational outcomes.

Effects of IC and EC on IWB. Both IC (0.44) and EC (0.30) were found to have a modest effect on IWB. Despite being lower than the effect of IL on these variables, their impact on innovation is still considerable and noteworthy. This highlights the critical role of an inclusive climate and emotional commitment in fostering innovative work behaviors, suggesting that organizations should prioritize these elements to drive innovation.

The findings illustrate the interconnectedness of IL, EC, IC and IWB. Inclusive leadership, while directly influencing innovative behavior to

a limited extent, significantly enhances innovation through the mediating effects of an inclusive climate and emotional commitment. These results underscore the importance of fostering inclusive and supportive environments to fully realize the innovative potential of employees.

Discussion and Suggestions

In this research, we checked the direct and mediated influences of IL on IWB, considering the roles of IC and EC as mediators. The findings revealed that IL significantly impacts IWB both directly and through these mediating variables. Furthermore, a robust positive correlation was identified among the variables, affirming the validation of all hypotheses.

By testing the hypotheses derived from the research model, the first hypothesis showed the connection between IL and IWB. The research findings demonstrated that IL positively and significantly influences IWB, aligning with the conclusions of prior studies (Javed et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2017; Aslan, 2019a). This hypothesis can be linked to cognitive evaluation theory. This theory says that IL makes employees feel motivated and supported to be creative and try new things (Deci, 1975). This creates a positive work environment where innovation can thrive, which aligns with our study's findings (Javed et al., 2019). Regarding the second hypothesis, the study investigated the connection between IL and IC. The idea that inclusive leaders act in ways that make everyone feel included and treated fairly is based on social exchange theory, which says that when leaders are fair and supportive, employees will trust them more and act positively (Blau, 1964). This matches other studies showing that good leadership helps create an inclusive climate (Nishii, 2013). The analyses revealed a significant and positive impact of IL on fostering IC, which aligns with



comparable findings in studies that focus on diverse groups (Ashikali et al., 2020; Randel et al., 2018).

In examining the third hypothesis, an association between IL and EC was checked. For this hypothesis, we can look at self-determination theory. This theory says that inclusive leaders meet employees' needs for feeling capable, connected, and in control of their work (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When these needs are met, employees feel more attached and committed to their organization. The analyses confirmed that IL positively and significantly boosts EC. This outcome aligns with findings from other research investigating the same relationship (Choi et al., 2015; Buskirk, 2020), emphasizing the consistent role of IL in enhancing emotional attachment and commitment among employees. The fourth hypothesis focused on the relationship between IC and IWB. This hypothesis is based on the broaden-and-build theory. This theory explains that positive feelings, like feeling included, help people think more creatively and build more skills (Fredrickson, 2001). An inclusive climate makes employees feel good and boosts their innovative work behavior. The research identified a positive and significant correlation between an IC and IWB, mirroring findings from other scholarly works (Ma Prieto & Pilar Pérez-Santana, 2014; Pukienė, 2016; Shanker et al., 2017).

In the fifth hypothesis, the study examined the link between EC and IWB. This hypothesis can be explained by the conservation of resources theory. This theory says that people try to protect and build their resources, like emotional commitment (Hobfoll, 1989). When employees are emotionally committed, they are more willing to put effort into innovative tasks, supporting our study's findings (Jafri, 2010). The analysis revealed a positive and significant association between EC and IWB, consistent with other research outcomes (Jafri,

2010; Aslan, 2019a; Hakimian et al., 2016; Choi et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2019). The sixth hypothesis investigated the potential mediating role of IC and EC in the relationship between IL and IWB. This hypothesis is based on the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. LMX theory focuses on the relationship quality between leaders and employees. Good relationships built on trust and respect help create an inclusive climate and strong emotional commitment, which boosts innovative work behavior (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). This matches our finding that IC and EC make the positive effect of IL on IWB even stronger. The findings affirmed that both IC and EC act as mediating factors, positively linking IL with IWB. While the direct impact of IL on IWB was observed to be moderate, the inclusion of these mediator variables substantially strengthened its effect, resulting in a significant indirect influence.

The findings of this study provide detailed insights into the relationship between IL, EC, IC, and IWB, particularly in the context of educational institutions. While IL is foundational for fostering innovation, its impact is significantly amplified when coupled with an IC and high EC among teachers. This suggests that school leaders should adopt a multifaceted approach to encouraging innovation. In implementing IL, school administrators should recognize that it is a starting point rather than a complete solution for enhancing IWB. Teachers are more inclined towards innovation when they feel part of a leadership style that respects and includes their diverse perspectives. However, this study's findings imply that the environment and emotional ties of teachers to their institution play a pivotal role in maximizing innovative potential.

For school administrators aiming to cultivate a more innovative environment, the creation of an IC is crucial. This involves more than



just policy changes or occasional meetings; it requires a cultural shift towards valuing and respecting diversity in all forms—age, gender, cultural background, etc. Addressing these differences proactively can prevent issues and make every teacher feel included and respected. As the IC strengthens, so does the EC of teachers to their institution. When teachers experience authentic respect and recognition for their distinct contributions and individual identities, they tend to develop a stronger emotional attachment to their workplace. This EC is a powerful driver of productivity and can lead to a more engaged and innovative approach to teaching.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significance of adopting a comprehensive approach to leadership and creating an IC within educational environments. It's not just about adopting IL but about embedding inclusivity into the very fabric of the institution. By doing so, school administrators can create an environment where innovation is not just encouraged but is a natural outcome of the school's culture. This shift can lead to more dynamic, creative, and effective educational practices, benefiting teachers and students alike.

Limitations and Future Research

To pave the way for future investigations, it's crucial to recognize the limitations of this study. Firstly, the data for this research was sourced exclusively from public schools in Turkey. Future studies might expand the data collection to various educational settings such as private schools and different regions within Turkey. This broader approach could provide more comprehensive insights and enhance the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, this study focused on the impact of IL on IWB through the lenses of EC and IC. Future research could explore alternative mediating variables further enhance our comprehension of the underlying dynamics in this context. Identifying

other potential mediators could offer a more nuanced view of how IL influences IWB. Thirdly, our research was limited to teachers from public schools in Kocaeli. Expanding future samples to include teachers from different regions and educational levels across Turkey could provide more diverse perspectives and richer data. This would help in understanding the varying impacts of IL across different educational contexts. Extending the research beyond Turkey to include diverse countries and cultures could significantly enrich the literature and provide a more global understanding of these phenomena. Lastly, comparative studies could highlight cultural differences and similarities in the relationship between IL, EC, IC, and IWB. Such studies would be valuable, given the variations in leadership styles and organizational behavior across different cultural contexts. For example, Hofhuis et al. (2016) suggest that the perception of diversity climate varies significantly across cultures, affecting employee behavior differently. Similarly, Mor Barak et al. (2016) emphasize that inclusive practices and their outcomes can differ based on cultural norms and values. By addressing these gaps, future research can contribute to a more holistic understanding of the dynamics between IL, EC, IC, and IWB.

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About the authors:

Çağlar Çelik graduated with a bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching from Gazi University in 2008 and has been working as an English teacher since then. He earned his master's degree in Lifelong Learning and Adult Education from Kocaeli University in 2019 and is currently a PhD candidate in Educational Administration at the same university. He teaches at the Gebze Public Education Center in Kocaeli, Türkiye.

E-mail: calki@hotmail.com

Authorship credit details: Writing – original draft preparation, Formal analysis.



Soner Polat received his master's degree in Educational Management from İnönü University in 2000 and completed his PhD in Educational Management at Kocaeli University in 2007. With 25 years of experience in various academic roles, he has also worked as a teacher at multiple educational levels. His research interests include organizational justice, trust, diversity management, peace education, organizational image, and intergenerational learning. He is currently a faculty member at Kocaeli University in Kocaeli, Türkiye.

E-mail: spolat@kocaeli.edu.tr

Authorship credit details: Conceptualization/Administration - formulated research goals and aims, Writing, review and editing, Supervision.

Emre Esen earned his undergraduate degree in Classroom Teaching from Erzincan University in 2012. Since 2013, he has worked as a classroom teacher at the Ministry of National Education. He completed his master's in Educational Administration at Atatürk University in 2021 and is currently pursuing his PhD in Educational Administration at Kocaeli University. His research interests include supervision, education financing, learning organizations, intergenerational learning, and leadership.

E-mail: emreesen24@hotmail.com

Authorship credit details: Writing – original draft preparation, Resources.