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Simulations for the Learning of Decision Making in Educational Leadership in the Context of the Chilean School System[*]

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Abstract	Article Info
This article describes the process of designing and creating six computer-based simulations for school leadership training programmes, in the context of the Chilean school system. For the design and construction of the simulations, six scenarios were selected from case analysis of principals with formal training and experience in different contexts. These scenarios were turned into stories with decision branches, and scores were assigned to the decision-making events according to national and international leadership standards. Finally, the scenarios were coded and installed onto a platform, which was adapted to capture quantitative and qualitative data. *The simulations were applied to principals and candidates for school leadership positions. The process of creating and implementing the simulations demonstrated that it is possible to introduce a tool specifically designed to improve the decision-making abilities of school principals and leaders, replicating the Chilean educational context. This is a step forward in efforts to facilitate learning experiences based on decision-making situations contextualised and relevant to the training of school leaders. Finally, the use of computer-based simulations has great potential to scale the exchange of knowledge and make it universally accessible as a complement to other training opportunities in the careers of school leaders..*	

Introduction

In the current worldwide scenario, there is a great diversity of training programmes for educational leaders. However, it is possible to identify some trends and effective practices. Huber (2013) highlights the existence of courses, self-study, collegial exchange, feedback, reflection and planning and concrete experiences as main approaches to Professional Development. Within "concrete experiences", it is possible to recognise the use of simulations as a tool that presents situations or problems in the most realistic way possible. In a simulation, participants are required to solve a situation as they normally would in their contexts (Issenberg, McGaghie, Petrusa, Lee Gordon, & Scalese, 2005). In other fields, such as medicine and nursing, the use of simulations (face-to-face and computer-based) is well developed, but in the training of school leaders, the tool is still being explored.

In Chile, one of the main goals in the field of education is to improve the quality and equity of student achievement in all levels and types of schools. Educational policies of recent years have given more importance to the role of school principals, acknowledging their impact on school improvement and developing programmes for their training. However, current training programmes have some limitations: on the one hand, there is little information linking the professional training with its impact at the school level and finally, while programmes have a strong theoretical content, they give participants few opportunities to put the skills they develop into practice (OECD, 2017).

In this context where new training trends emerge, this article describes the process of creating six computer-based simulations for the training of educational leaders in the context of the Chilean school

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system. The simulations are based on cases of Chilean school principals with extensive experience, seeking to reflect different contexts and problems at a national level.

Literature Review

School Leaders' Training

The variety of training programmes around the world is broad. Practitioners and researchers have combined their efforts, presenting new approaches and models (Hallinger, Shaobing & Jiafang, 2017; Shaked & Schechter, 2017). Nevertheless, comparative assessments of training programmes report common foci and characteristics in those considered to be effective. After checking different effective training programmes for school leaders, Bush & Jackson (2002) concluded that most of them combine theory, research and practice. Huber (2013) remarks that programmes are moving from a theoretical and cognitive emphasis (e.g. courses and self-study) to structures that include cooperative work, facilitate reflection and reinforce concrete experiences through practical work and simulations. This implies a shift from imparting knowledge to the development of knowledge in a procedural and conditional manner. The notion of 'knowledge acquisition' will be replaced by the concept of 'knowledge development' or 'knowledge creation', by the means of managing information (Huber, 2010).

After studying the most effective practices when training school leaders and principals, researchers have noted that they must connect theory and practice, allowing participants to exercise key skills. Specifically, the programmes must provide opportunities for the participants to solve real practice problems, using exercises that simulate their daily tasks at school (Davis, Darling-Hammond,

LaPointe, Meyerson, 2005; Davis & Darlig-Hammond, 2012; Mitgang, 2012). For that reason, the use of simulations stands out as a concrete tool that reproduces key processes of principals' and school leaders' jobs.

Simulations are a technique to improve learning by (re)creating real experiences with an 'immersive approach', which 'evoke or replicate substantial aspects of the real world in a fully interactive fashion' (Lateef, 2010, p.328). Simulations are an effective way to develop and train decision-making abilities, while at the same time protecting participants from the real world consequences of their decisions and performance (Staub & Bravender, 2014). They seem to be the most appropriate way to develop experience in a safe learning environment. In order to accomplish that, the content of the simulations must be valid, reproducing the key challenges of the position that they represent, in this case, of school leaders (Maynes, McIntosh, & Mappin, 1996):

> *'The types of simulations discussed offer opportunities for participants to explore problems that they will 'predictably encounter in the world of practice" and thus "serve as the stimulus for acquiring new knowledge' as participants examine and define the problems and 'wrestle with how to apply [their]... knowledge to resolving the problem they face'. (Bridges & Hallinger, 1997, pp. 132-133, in Bernstein et al., 2016).*

Computer-based Simulations

Computer-based simulations are becoming more relevant in the educational field, due to the possibility of creating realistic and dynamic professional learning environments. The use of computer-based simulations makes it possible to represent real conflict situations, decision-making scenarios and experiences, all of them designed to foster and develop problem-solving abilities in a variety

of situations, providing immediate feedback. Also, based on the results of some works of research (Henneman, Cunningham, Roche, and Curnin 2007, in Bernstein, McMenamin, & Johanek, 2016), the use of simulations along with group discussion exercises is useful in improving the personal and professional development experience and can contribute to forming communities of professional practice among school leaders.

For participants to adequately acquire new skills, they must get completely involved and immersed in the world of the simulation (Bernstein et al., 2016). Therefore, the goal of the simulation is 'to recreate the essence of real situations in order to design authentic learning experiences for students' (Herrington, Oliver, & Reeves, 2003, p. 2115). This is what some authors call 'cognitive realism' (Smith, 1986, in Herrington et al., 2003), which means that 'the physical reality of the learning situation is of less importance than the characteristics of the task design, and the engagement of students in the learning environment' (Herrington et al., 2003, p. 2117). Simulations are a powerful tool because they are stories that engage emotions by providing a shared context. They can trigger memories through their context and language (Spero, 2012). They present contexts and scenarios that get the students involved through their emotions, which allows them to 'learn by failing', that is, 'to practice new skills and behaviours in a safe environment without fear of the repercussions of failing' (Spero, 2012, p.6). This type of training allows the students to acquire knowledge from the situation in a way that resembles the German expression "Ein Erlebnis", which means that one 'lives' through 'experience', thus acquiring the knowledge from that experience 'lived' through the simulation.

In order to design meaningful simulations adapted to the local context, research must focus on understanding what kinds of scenarios and problems of the everyday school environment must be included to fulfil the participants' needs. Seeking to design and develop simulations that fulfil the training requirements of a 21st century school leader, Poikela (2017) identifies fourteen characteristics of meaningful learning in computer-based simulations: experimental, experiential, emotional, socio-constructive, self-directed, collaborative, competency-based, goal-oriented, individual, reflective, contextual, critical, active, and responsible.

Simulations designed with criteria such as the 'full plot development and character representation' (Herrington et al., 2003, p. 2116), are effective tools to learn necessary competencies and skills for the 21st century school leaders, as well as a powerful tool to put theory into practice and to apply problem-solving techniques to real experiences in local contexts, encouraging participants to become experts in their field of action, that is, school leadership.

There have been successful experiences of adapting simulations for specific contexts (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2001; Hallinger et al., 2017) integrating research and formal knowledge into the design of the tool. An example of a computer-based simulation is Penn GSE's PELS (Penn Educational Leadership Simulation Program), which has the goal of 'drawing out leaders' own experiences tackling real-world challenges' (Penn Graduate School of Education, n.d.), to create online simulations that are sustainable in the training context, with a problem-based learning method that offers participants context-rich learning modules.

Simulations as Tools for Problem-based Learning

Problem-based learning (PBL) requires focusing on a task and finding solutions to a problem using available knowledge. The approach is essentially centred on 'doing' what is necessary to accomplish the task. The learning process is oriented towards action and active learning, which requires suitable learning methods, such as portfolios, role playing and simulations to allow participants to experience situations and problems that are common to what school principals face on a daily basis in their contexts. As Philip Hallinger (2007) remarks, 'we believe that PBL represents a potentially powerful approach to preparing 'managers for action'' (p.6).

Simulations foster critical thinking and judgement, thus promoting problem-based learning. They share some key characteristics with the PBL approach (Hallinger & Bridges, 2017): for example, the starting point is a problem, not a theory; learning is stimulated by challenges that participants might find at their workplace; participants must simulate a solution, receiving formative feedback. PBL aids in achieving four key learning results (Bridges & Hallinger, 1997):

• Acquiring new knowledge and learning how to apply it.

• Developing skills in self-directed learning.

• Developing skills in running meetings, resolving conflict and using group problem solving and decision tools.

• Acquiring insight into the emotional aspects of leadership. (p.135)

The study conducted by Copland (2000) concluded that higher exposure to PBL was 'associated with greater problem-framing ability among prospective principals' (p. 586). Additionally, the study

highlighted the incorporation of debriefing practices to help students to solidify a way of thinking to solve problems. Furthermore, different studies confirm students' positive attitude toward PBL (Hallinger & Bridges, 2017).

Simulations promote critical judgement in the decision-making process (Duke, 2018) by employing feedback and reflection on practice and performance. Following the Clinical Judgment Model (Tanner, 2006), simulations succeed in triggering the process of noticing, interpreting, responding, and reflecting. In other words, it is possible to improve leaders' judgment by accelerating their experience through training and practice of these abilities and competencies via computer-based simulations.

Decision-making and Improvisation in Organisational Management

In the world of organisations and leadership functions, not everything is planning and scheduling. Improvisation in decision-making is a commonplace, a subject of study and a learning challenge. Very often, the strategic plans of the organisations are not fully completed: 'Only 10-30% of intended strategy is actually realised, resulting in leaders improvising a solution' (Tabaee, 2013, p.4). Therefore, the exercise of improvisation in decision-making is an ability worth studying, especially in aspects such as how it expresses itself, what factors trigger it, and how to teach improvisation in organisational contexts, specifically in school environments:

> *'Studies show that improvisation in leadership decision making is on the rise, and it transpires in organisations 75-90% of the time, yet very little research has explored this skillset. No other leadership skillset that is applied two thirds of the time has ever been so underdeveloped' (Tabaee, 2013, p.xvii).*

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This ability can be learned, and can therefore be taught. Many authors have established an analogy between the teaching of musical improvisation in jazz and the teaching of improvisation abilities in decision making inside organisations by their leaders (Vendelø, 2009; Newton, 2004; Vieira Da Cunha, Kamoche, & Pina E Cunha, 2003). Learning the 'language of jazz' through hearing previous experiences (recordings) and identifying repetitive patterns in them, provides the musician with the basis of the language of jazz music with its signs, codes and rules. That experience allows the musician to improvise within that structure. This is analogous to learning the language of the school. Based on this knowledge, school leaders will be able to improvise their decisions as a response to unplanned events. Computer-based simulations could teach the language of the school with scenarios adapted to local contexts. Through the immersion approach, participants can experience the reactions and consequences of their decision making, and immerse themselves in a dynamic educational experience in a "safe environment" with instant feedback.

Chilean Context

In Chile, one of the main goals in the field of education is to improve the quality and equity of student achievement in all levels and types of schools. Although Chilean students in recent years have obtained better results in international education standardised tests than their Latin American counterparts, the gap is still significant with respect to OECD member countries or those with a similar GDP (OECD, 2017). In this scenario, since the decade of the 2000s educational policies highlight the role of school principals, acknowledging their impact on school improvement and fostering their training with initiatives such as the 'Plan de Formación de Directores' ('Principal Training Plan') promoted by the Ministry of

Education and in effect since 2011. The initiative has been implemented by different universities and organisations, supporting principals from all over the country at different stages of their professional careers (CPEIP, 2016).

In fact, the training rate of principals is high: data indicates that more than 9,000 principals lead and manage the teaching of more than 3.5 million students (MINEDUC, 2017a). Of those, 88% have a teaching degree and more than 80% have completed postgraduate studies (diploma, masters degree or a doctoral programme) (MINEDUC, 2017b). However, current training programmes have some limitations: on the one hand, there is little information linking the professional training of Chilean teachers with their impact at the school level (Muñoz & Marfán, 2011). Secondly, while the programmes have strong theoretical content, they give participants few opportunities to put the skills they learn into practice in a safe environment and which allows them to test possible solutions to a certain problem.

Problem and Goals

One of the central premises of the research project is that decision-making is an ability that requires training and practice to be improved. Professional judgment in the decision-making processes is usually the product of experience, and leaders with a long professional career possess a corpus of knowledge and wisdom they have acquired through practice, through collective professional judgement and years of experience. That is why this knowledge is difficult to achieve (Volante, Müller, Johanek, Jeldres, Lazcano & Llorente, 2017). It is composed, among other elements, of the ability to categorise and analyse underlying ideas when facing an

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unexpected problem or situation, and to act accordingly, redirecting the course of action based on different dimensions, analysing and reflecting this process in the results (Tanner, 2006).

With the goal of accelerating the development of decision-making expertise, this study presents the question of how to replicate the contexts and experiences of school leaders with extensive professional experience, who make decisions in critical situations that require the use of professional judgement. This, in order to create computer-based simulations that allow novice and expert principals to exercise professional judgement in relevant contexts. In this sense, the question of this study aims to prove that it is possible to design, implement and run simulations that represent decision-making situations that may present themselves in the everyday experience of leaders in the school system, promoting decision making with differentiated criteria, thus producing varied courses of action.

The goal of the project is to design and implement simulations adapted to the local context and based on scenarios that represent real experiences and critical situations in the careers of experienced leaders, addressing the everyday and strategic challenges of the local and current context. This way, the tool could improve the development of school principals and leaders' critical judgement skills in decision making, in the context of educational leadership training programmes.

Materials and Methods

The hypothesis that guides the article is that it is possible to identify and reconstruct real-life experiences in school leadership decision making and to transfer them through virtual simulations,

thus contributing to school leaders' professional learning opportunities.

Therefore, the process assumes the search and selection of relevant cases of school principals, considering a wide spectrum of possibly interested individuals and a process for each principal to elaborate on their experience, producing a syntax that can be transferred to the project platform, and therefore be used as a basis to train the decision-making dynamic.

The methodological approach is a research and development design (R&D) (Hallinger et al., 2017), which proposes the search for solutions to a problem or need, based on successive and iterative steps of experimentation and reflection among researchers and users, thus producing prototypes that are tested and validated through different techniques of consultation and observation of the use, relevance and effectiveness of the solution. In this case, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected principals and individual work was carried out with each one of them, producing scripts of relevant situations, which were validated by a panel of experts. The goal was to create simulation designs to be tested with users with an equivalent profile to that of final recipients.

Case Selection

The first step to designing the tool was the selection of relevant cases, which allowed for the examination of decision-making processes in different contexts. Those cases were the basis of the simulations. In order to accomplish that, in 2016, the research team worked with a universe of more than 70 participants, teachers and school leaders, who were completing school leadership training programmes at a Chilean university. The research team asked them

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to write down complex decision-making situations that occurred in the last 5 years and that did not necessarily have evident or technical solutions. The team obtained 45 answers.

An expert panel formed by academics and experienced principals selected 6 relevant cases (Table 1), based on three criteria: they were principals with sustained experience, defined according to the the length of their professional career in years, and the number of years they held the position; it was also considered relevant to locate case selection in organisations with good learning results. Accordingly, a revision was made based on the results of each principal's school in the National System for the Measurement of Educational Quality (Sistema Nacional de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación, SIMCE), during at least six years. Only schools with results higher than the national average, and/or higher than the average achieved by schools with similar sociodemographic characteristics, were selected. Although, one of the cases did not have national measurements during the assessed period, and another case decreased their results in the last period. Finally, the cases were selected due to the variety and relevance of organisational realities, including public, private subsidised, and private non-subsidised schools, at primary, secondary and technical-professional levels, located in both urban and rural areas, and of different sizes, thus seeking to reflect the diversity of the national educational context. Also, the cases allowed alternative solutions, and the solutions required relational considerations. The third criterion reinforces the potential for the development of decision-making exercises in different organisational contexts, also including different types of issues, addressing mainly instructional, organisational and behavioural problems.

Volante et al. (2020). Decision-Making Simulations for Educational Leaders …

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Table 1.

Background information about participant principals

Case No.	Gender	School type	Profession	Years of professional experience	Years of experience in the position	Academic results (3 years)
1	Female	Public	Elementary School Teacher	25	15	n/a
2	Female	Private Subsidized	Art Teacher	5	1	1
3	Male	Private Non-subsidized	Physical Education Teacher	20	2	1
4	Female	Private Non-subsidized	Language Teacher	30	8	1
5	Female	Private subsidized	Natural Sciences and Biology Teacher	22	14	1
6	Male	Private subsidized	History and Geography Teacher	31	18	1

Iterative Process of Creation of Scenarios

Once the cases were selected, the six principals were interviewed in late 2016 to detect key decision-making experiences. Each principal was interviewed by a member of the research team, using an extensive and unstructured technique, with the goal of

obtaining narrative details of their experience. The process was called 'narrative edition of principals' decision making in real contexts'. The interview allowed us to capture key decision-making situations, their participants, place, specific events, possible causes and consequences and the final decision to be identified.

In a second instance, the research team - along with participants - designed an itinerary of consecutive decisions, including the ones that were actually made or could have been made in the moment, as well as other options that emerged in the process of reflection and in the retrospective analysis of the situations. Therefore, following the model that inspires this simulation development process, 'the simulation branches off based on the choice made. This then leads to another choice and the branching continues until an endpoint of the simulation is reached' (Bernstein et al., 2016, pp. 248-249).

In the third instance, the research team modelled the original contents according to frameworks that were structured in a common syntax, consisting in a description of the initial situation, alternative decisions, and possible consequences. Thus, when performing the simulations, participants must face different decision-making moments, having to choose between one or more alternatives within a certain amount of options. In addition, analysis and reflection sessions were carried out with the research team, with the goal of studying in depth the learning opportunities that each scenario could offer to the final users. In total, each simulation has between 6 and 16 decisions, and each decision has between 4 and 6 options. The simulations also include the possibility to complete written answers, where the participants must elaborate on why they chose one alternative over another, or respond freely about ideas on how to

implement a decision, for example. In both cases, the feedback is detailed in the Narrative Feedback section.

Figure 1 shows an example of a diagram of a decision tree that was created in this process, showing which kinds of decisions the participants have to face. In this case, it illustrates the "Turnaround Challenge" simulation, where a new principal (the participant) confronts a conflict of interests and leadership with the Inspector General (position in charge of disciplinary matters), who has assumed an informal role of leadership and greater responsibilities each time the school principal has changed.

Figure 1.

Decisional route exercise of the "Turnaround Challenge" simulation
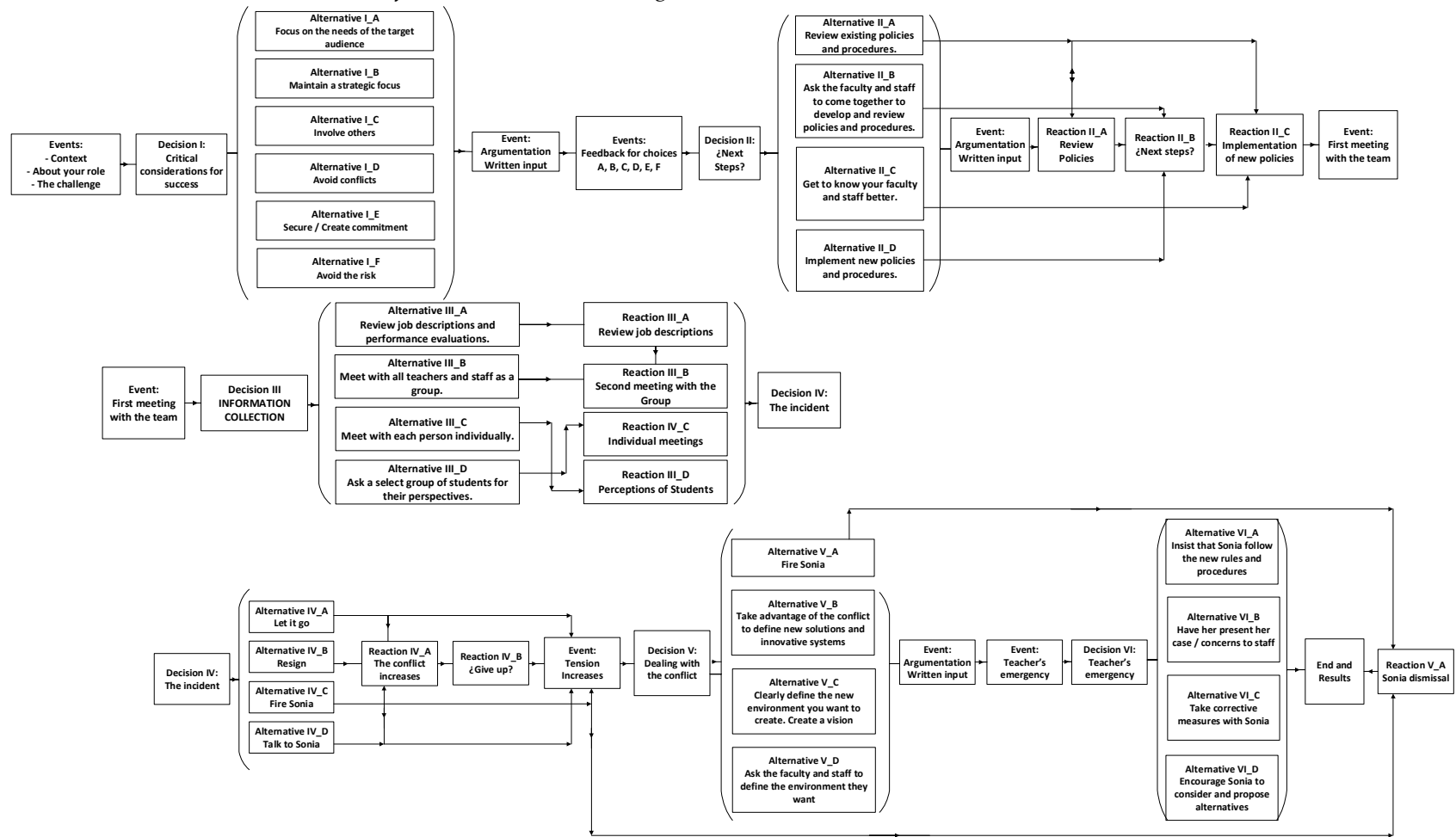
Adaptation of the Principals' Experiences and Creation of the Interface

In this stage, a creative process was carried out, adapting the principals' stories and narratives with the purpose of transforming them into scripts of the decision-making scenarios, programming sequences, and transforming the model of each case into prototypes that could be 'installed' on the project's platform.

After a preliminary trial of these prototypes, some of the decision alternatives and their consequences were reformulated, and the situations were aligned based on criteria that could orient the school principals' performance. In order to do so, the Framework for Good Management and School Leadership, (MINEDUC, 2015) and the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (National Policy Board for Education Administration, 2015) were utilised to incorporate a local and a global school leadership perspective. Then the scripts of the definitive scenarios were created, and audiovisual resources with local actors and contents were produced. Later, the IT team inserted each situation into the ELS's (Ed Leadership Sims) TrackBuilder© platform, with their respective multimedia resources. The platform was fully operational in April 2017.

Results

Recreating and Virtualising Leaders' Experience

In the context of the research and development approach utilised in this study, the first result (besides the creation process itself) is the production of six unprecedented school leadership simulations, based on local content from the Chilean school context, in Spanish, that represent the key scenarios of principals in different

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types of organisations. The six scenarios extracted from the principals' experiences, and transferred through the simulations platform to be used in professional training and exchange, are described below.

The simulations: different contexts and challenges

1. The Turnaround Challenge: This simulation is about a small private subsidised, vocational-technical secondary school founded six years ago, a period in which it had four principals. The school has an enrolment of 200 students and is located in a high-vulnerability area. You are facing a conflict of interests and leadership with the 'Inspector General' (position in charge of discipline affairs), who has taken an informal leadership role, gaining more responsibilities with each new principal.

2. The Consolidation Challenge: The fusion of two public primary schools, located in two 'rival' towns in a rural area, with students from pre-elementary to 8th grade and an approximate enrolment of 200 students, produces tension among everyone in both communities. While your school is obtaining good academic results, the neighbouring town's school is achieving poor results and having disciplinary problems. Municipal authorities have announced that they intend to merge both schools, as they are no longer sustainable due to low enrolment. You are now the principal of both schools and you will have to manage the information, make decisions, and deal with all the groups of interest involved.

3. Substance abuse at School: This simulation is about a private school with an enrolment of 1,066 students from preschool to secondary school. You have worked there throughout your entire career and are currently the principal. A group of students is using drugs, and you need to decide whether to expel them or provide them with support

and counselling. The situation triggers a series of decisions that will get students, parents, teachers, school leaders, and local authorities involved.

4. Improving school performance: It is about a private subsidised school, with students from preschool to secondary school. It was handed over by a religious congregation that managed it for many years to a secular non-profit organisation dedicated to youth and community education. In this context, the enrolment has decreased from 700 to 300 students in the past five years. Although some adjustments have been made, the district where the school is located has another seven schools with better organisational and academic results, and you must address the challenge of increasing enrolment by improving its standing.

5. Resolving conflicts among parents and students: In a private subsidised school belonging to a Christian congregation, with an enrolment of 1,050 students, the absence of a beloved teacher produces tension between students and the substitute teacher. An escalating tension mounts within the school and against the principal, reaching a point where a group of students takes over a classroom as a form of protest.

6. Growing Pains: You are the principal of a private school with an enrolment of 1,305 students. The school has three per level from first to sixth grade, but decreases to only two per level from seventh grade on. You do not like the idea of leaving 30 students unenrolled and will attempt to add a third class, assuming the multiple challenges implied.

Moreover, decision-making opportunities within the simulations vary in number, content, and conflict intensity. The topics emphasise relational tensions and organisational dilemmas in which people with different criteria and roles are involved.

Narrative Feedback

A scoreboard was developed, based on three main criteria: (1) the experience of the six principals that were the protagonists of the cases. The research team worked with them, analysing their experience and their decisions and establishing which could have been the best options for each decision. (2) The instructional component. At the moment of creating the decisions and their alternative answers, the research team designed viable and competitive situations. Some situations were "better" than others in terms of their instructional component – in other words, they had a more direct effect on leadership and learning. (3) Proximity to professional frameworks. The model favoured answers that were more aligned to local and global frameworks: the Framework for Good Management and School Leadership (MINEDUC, 2015) and the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (National Policy Board for Education Administration, 2015). Therefore, during the process of completing a simulation, each decision made by the participants has a specific punctuation. After completing each simulation, the participant receives a feedback report, showing fit percentages between observed and expected responses.

In addition to the fit percentages, participants receive narrative comments on each one of the choices they made, explaining why the selected option was appropriate or not, followed by a description of the decision's effects and consequences. In this sense, this feedback 'models' the choices to be made in a similar future scenario.

Users' Perception of the Simulations

The interface presents multimode information through text, video, audio, and images referring to varied school contexts. The platform's images (Images 1 and 2) reinforce the virtual immersion environment, which seeks to approach schools' everyday agents, attributes, and languages.

Image 1.

Simulation platform interface
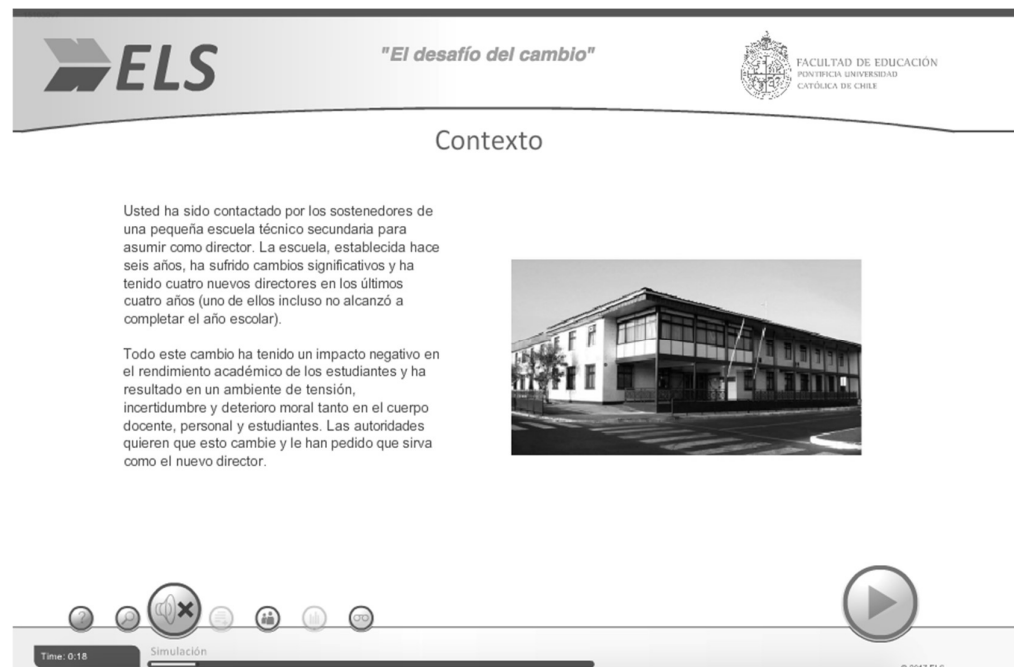
Image 2.

Simulation platform interface

In 2017, a testing phase was carried out, in which 30 principals, school leaders and educational professionals participated. To make up the sample, open calls were held allowing the formation of five groups, each one composed of five to eight participants. Table 2 summarises the main characteristics of the sample.

Table 2.

Characteristics of the test sample

		Frecuency	Percentage
Gender	Female	17	56,7%
	Male	13	43,3%
Position	Principal	16	53,3%
	School leader	11	36,7%
	Other position in the education area	3	10,0%
Type of school	Public	17	56,7%
	Private Subsidised	6	20,0%
	Private Non-Subsidised	5	16,7%
	Other	2	7%
Zone	Santiago	23	76,7%
	Other	7	23,3%

All the participants in the sample were principals, school leaders, consultants, or district officials. Most of them were working in the public system, although some of them worked in private schools (subsidised and non-subsidised). Since the sessions were held in Santiago, Chile, most of the participants were local, although some of them came from other regions of the country.

Five face-to-face work sessions (one for each group) were held in Santiago, where the participants had to complete the "Turnaround Challenge" simulation and then do a critical thinking exercise in which they assessed the alternatives and decisions proposed in the scenario and their validity, as well as aspects such as platform usability, interface and the scenario's choices and relation to professional leadership standards, both national and international. After the exercises, a focus group was conducted by the research team in which participants had the chance to discuss the scenario,

their choices and consequences, as well as aspects of the leadership practice within an educational organisation.

In this stage of the project, the perception of the participants was collected and processed, examining the criteria of usability, relevance, and expectations regarding the professional learning that can be achieved through the simulation experiences. In this sense, some of the participants' opinions, collected during the sessions highlight the potential to exchange and reflect that these types of tools offer.

> • *'It seems to me this is a bid by the school to manage change, conflicts, personnel, environment, and organisational culture'. (Language and communication teacher).*
> • *'It allows for the application of theoretical elements and a more in-depth study of the possible consequences of the models used to make better decisions'. (Public secondary school Principal, 5 years in this position).*
> • *'I can take away that there are different perspectives on each situation, and that advice from successful practices is good'. (Academic Coordinator at a public secondary school, 4 years in this position).*
> • *'It is interesting to listen to the interpretations that other people make of the situations, whether or not they have more experience than oneself'. (Teacher in a leadership position, 7 years in this position).*

Source: Testimonials from users in pilot tests.

Usability

The self-explanatory and intuitive design of the simulations allowed the participants to complete the computer-based exercises with minimal instruction. However, it was evident that the presence of a facilitator is necessary to offer technical assistance to some participants who are less familiar with interactive tools and therefore require more support. Additionally, a usability test was run,

assessing four aspects related to the platform's potential to motivate participants and the ease with which its resources and sections could be used. The following chart (Figure 2) presents the data obtained from a sample of 30 participants.

The data shows that the four assessed aspects were highly accepted (all of the medians are over 6 on a scale of 1 to 7), and the evaluations also have a low degree of dispersion. The variables with greater dispersion are the logical sequence and structure of the decision tree, and the quality and appeal of the audiovisual resources.

Figure 2.

Trends and Dispersion in user assessment
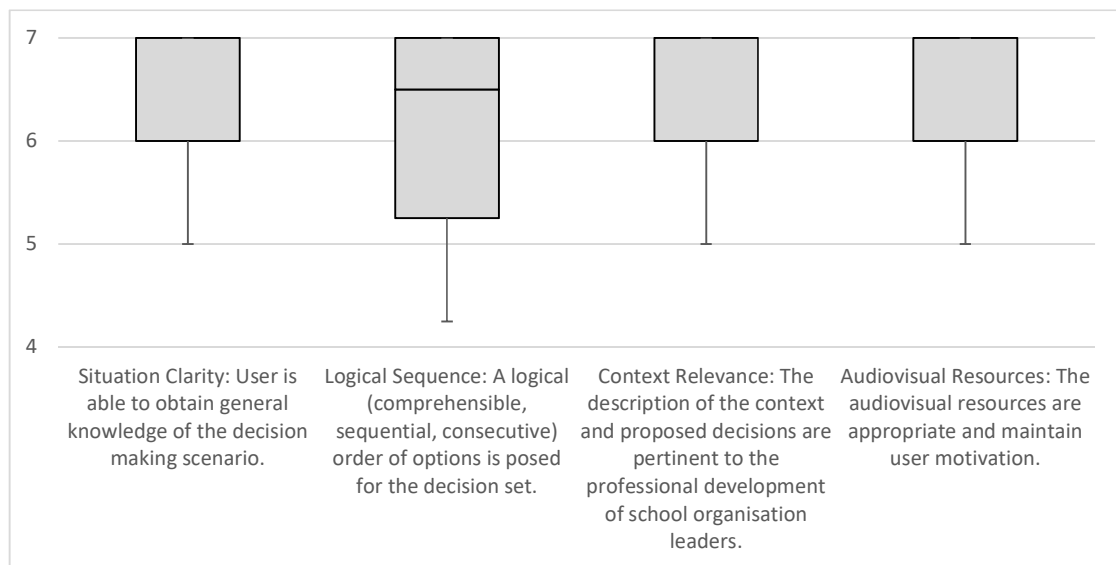
Relevance

In general, the participants declared the scenarios relevant to decision making in the context of the Chilean school system, and this perception is shared by principals and teachers in middle leadership positions, such as Department Head or Cycle Coordinator. Some of their impressions are:

- *'I think that the modelling of better decisions allowed me to see how close or far I was from those decisions. When I was close to them, I felt reassured in my own judgement; when I was far, it allowed me to analyse my own beliefs and mechanisms of reflection'. (Language and communication teacher, director of content in online education).*
- *'Leadership is a process that one has to learn; the responsibility in the decisions that one makes is huge, therefore it is necessary to manage relevant elements and contents such as culture, environment, strategic planning, processes, teamwork techniques, etc.'. (Academic Coordinator at a private subsidised school, 3 years in this position).*
- *'It is very important to learn to manage the different types of leadership, depending on the context in which one works'. (Counselor at a private subsidised school, 2 years in this position).*

Source: User testimonials in pilot tests

The usability assessment examined the level of connection between the simulations and their relation to leadership standards, both national (MINEDUC, 2015) and international (National Policy Board for Education Administration, 2015). Results from the first case of the simulations platform, 'The Turnaround Challenge', are presented below as an indicator of the relationship perceived by participants between the cases and national and international frameworks.

Framework for Good Management and School Leadership (MINEDUC, 2015):

In the testing phase of the platform, the users perceived the areas of Leadership, Resources Management and Organisational Environment Management as the most closely related to the case, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Areas from the Framework for Good Management and School Leadership, and their relation and relevance to the case

Area	Indicator
A. Leadership (F=96; f=64%; N=30)	A1. The principal and the leadership team exert leadership and manage change within the school. (F=22; f=73%)
	A2. The principal and the leadership team communicate their points of view with clarity and understand the perspectives of other agents. (F=21; f=70%)
	A4. El The principal and the leadership team are able to manage conflicts and solve problems. (F=27; f=90%)
B. Curriculum Management (F=24; f=20%; N=30)	B2. The principal and the leadership team organise the time schedule in an efficient way to implement the curriculum in the classroom. (F=6; f=20%)
	B3. The principal and the leadership team establish mechanisms to secure the quality of teaching strategies in the classroom. (F=6; f=20%)
	B4. The principal and the leadership team secure the existence of mechanisms to monitor and assess curriculum implementation and learning results, consistent with the Institutional Educational Project. (F=8; f =27%)

C. Resources Management (F=46; f=38%; N=30)	C1. The principal and the leadership team manage and organise the institution's resources based on their institutional educational project and the students' learning results. (F=9; f=30%)
	C3. The principal and the leadership team motivate, support and manage the personnel in order to increase the effectiveness of the educational institution. (F=25; f=83%)
	C4. The principal and the leadership team create the proper institutional conditions for the recruitment, selection, assessment and development of the institution's personnel. (F=10; f=33%)
D. Management of the Organisational Environment and Coexistence (F=56; f=37%; N=30)	D1. The principal and the leadership team foster institutional values and an environment of trust and collaboration in the institution in order to achieve its goals. (F=26; f=87%)
	D2. The principal and the leadership team promote a collaborative environment among the educational institution, students, and parents or guardians. (F=14; f=47%)
	D5. The principal and the leadership team inform the community and the owners the achievements and needs of the institution. (F=6; f=20%)

In summary, the dimension with the greatest perceived relation to the analysed case is 'Leadership' (MBD_A, using the acronym for Marco para la Buena Dirección, Spanish name of the Chilean framework), and especially the practices associated with managing conflicts and solving problems (MBD_A_4). Also, the dimension 'Management of the Organisational Environment and Coexistence' (MBD_D) is perceived as outstanding, and in particular the practices wherein 'the principal and the leadership team foster the institutional values, and an environment of trust and collaboration in the institution' (MBD_D_1) stand out.

Professional standards for educational leaders 2015 (National Policy Board for Education Administration, 2015):

In order to make a comparative synthesis of the most highlighted elements by participants (N=30), they were asked: Which standards do you consider most representative of the situation presented in the simulations?

As observed in higher frequencies, the standards most commonly associated with the situation, decisions, and alternatives presented on the platform are the following:

Standard 1: Mission, Vision and Fundamental Values (indicate Absolute and Relative Frequency) [F=17 f=56% N=30]. This implies that 'Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education, academic success and well-being of each student'

Standard 2: Ethics and professional norms (indicate Absolute and Relative Frequency) [F=17 f=56% N=30]. This would allow for the observation of how 'Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being'.

Standard 10: School Improvement (indicate Absolute and Relative Frequency) [F=18; f=6% N=30]. This standard assesses how 'Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being'.

The evaluation allowed the research team to obtain evidence to affirm that it is possible to model decision-making experiences and situations, and that they are perceived as relevant to the context of school direction and leadership. One feature that was especially valued by users is the opportunity to visualise possible scenarios,

situations, realities and complex contexts to which they could be exposed in current or future positions.

Discussion

It is possible to say that the use of simulations as part of a professional development programme is a useful complement for school leaders who wish to develop critical judgement and decision-making abilities. Nowadays, those two abilities are not explicitly trained in the context of principal training programmes (Duke, 2018). In that sense, the use of simulations such as those developed in this research project has a practical implication: it allows for the deliberate training and improvement of abilities that are currently developed only through practice in educational organisations, receiving immediate feedback, and based on national and international standards. It is even possible to propose a broader scope for the simulations, as part of pre-service or induction programmes for school leaders, allowing for their use on a large scale.

It is also possible to say that the simulations designed by the research team innovate by introducing a tool specifically designed for the decision making of school principals and leaders, replicating the Chilean educational context and addressing issues that are specific to educational organisations in the country. In addition, the simulations presented in this article offer the possibility of recording the responses of participants, offering significant potential to increase and improve what is currently known about the decision-making patterns of school leaders. Moreover, they could improve the understanding of the reasoning and judgement patterns that explain decisions in different problem-solving situations.

By creating the simulations, it was possible to confirm that the experiences of school leaders can be integrated into a replicable and scalable instrument with applications in training and research (Volante et al, 2017). Also, consistent with previous evidence, users found simulations to be relevant for their practice (Hallinger et al, 2001; Hallinger et al, 2017). An important step will be to expand the number of cases and scenarios, in order to address a greater number of issues, contexts and situations pertaining to different moments in the leaders' career. Thus, it will be possible to disseminate the use of computer-based simulations, developing a professional learning approach based on real experiences and adapted to different contexts. Simulations are a powerful tool that contributes to the processes of professional development and innovation in continued training because they emphasise the exchange among agents within a professional community, systematising "stories" that are not currently available due to the lack of techniques and records about the operation of decision making and everyday actions of school leaders. The results will be a new source of qualitative and quantitative research, which can provide new evidence about practices and experiences that are key in the professional field.

Limitations

Some limitations of the study are related to the size of the sample participating in the validation, which is small both in number and context of individuals (principals and school leaders mostly from the Metropolitan Region). In that sense, it would be interesting to have a more diverse sample, which may reflect a greater variety of contexts and experiences. In addition, only principals and school leaders currently in the position were included in the sample, a decision which on the one hand was useful because they can properly

evaluate the relevance of the exercise but, on the other hand, their report of the simulations as a learning tool could be biased. For that reason, it would be very important to conduct evaluations among candidates for leadership positions or leaders in training.

Regarding the validation process, more simulations must be assessed to understand the usability and relevance of the tool as a whole. Regarding the simulations, they are still limited in quantity, so in the next stage of the project, it would be desirable to look for more scenarios, reflecting the particularities of different contexts and situations. Therefore, it will be possible to enrich the instrument, making it suitable for leaders and principals with different backgrounds, both professional and personal. Finally, it is important to analyse and put the scoring system of the simulations into perspective: while it is based on Chilean and global standards, it is important to leave room for the singularities present in each case and to consider how personal knowledge or experiences could shape participants' decision-making processes. Eventually, more than one decision path could be correct or acceptable, thus changing the way feedback is delivered to participants. This issue highlights the tension between the development of participants' autonomy and the use of standards as the basis for the scoreboard. Consequently, that leads to the question of how to truly stimulate professional reflection on the frame of decision-making processes. A possible way to address this issue is by fostering the development of workshops or discussion groups where participants could reflect on their decisions and consider the different factors influencing them and which other courses of actions could have been adequate in their contexts.

The next step of the project will be to analyse the evidence collected in the testing stage, with the goal of backing up the

hypothesis that professionals who use simulations in the context of educational leadership training programmes experience greater learning in decision-making skills than professionals who receive formal training without simulations. Likewise, we expect to test whether the participants who completed the simulations in addition to receiving mediation in the form of decision-making workshops achieve a higher level of development in their critical judgment and decision-making abilities compared to those who were only exposed to simulations. Another line of research is related to expanding the number of simulations, seeking to address some of the most frequent situations that school leaders and principals face at different moments of their professional careers.

Conclusions

The use of computer-based simulations has become a training trend in different areas, especially in health and management. There have been few experiences in education, and even fewer with a specific focus on the training of school leaders on decision-making abilities. In this case, it has been possible to produce an innovative tool for specific users – school leaders – created in Spanish. Six simulations were designed and implemented by the research team, reproducing real-life scenarios and decisions made by experienced principals in the Chilean context. Pilot results show that users of the simulations declared that the scenarios are relevant for decision making in the context of the Chilean school system and they visualise the relationship with national and international standards. They also highlight the potential to reflect on their decisions after completing the tool.

It is possible to say that simulations described in this article have the potential to facilitate the development of new problem-based learning research, thus promoting a better understanding of the principles of judgement for decision making of school leaders in different contexts, both at national and regional levels.

In summary, the research project described in this article made it possible to recognise and reproduce decision-making experiences made by experienced principals, in order to create simulations for the development of school leaders, within the frame of a problem-based learning approach.

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Supporting the Post-School Goals of Youth with Disabilities through Use of a Transition Coordinator

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Abstract	Article Info
Principals in the United States are responsible for creating educational environments that enable students, including those with disabilities, to achieve both academic and post-school goals. Unfortunately, many principals lack the preparation necessary to effectively lead special education programs. To support principals and ensure that students with disabilities are prepared for life after high school, school districts may employ transition coordinators. These special education teachers support students with disabilities in identifying and achieving their post-school goals. In this paper, we describe the transition coordinator role and essential job components in detail.	

Introduction

Students with disabilities are more likely to experience unemployment, lower pay, and job dissatisfaction relative to their non-disabled peers (Sundar et al., 2018). This may be attributable to the low graduation rates; for example, in the US, when compared to the national average graduation rate of 84.6%, only 67.1% of students with disabilities graduate from high school (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). As high school graduation is a predictor of positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Mazzotti et al., 2016; Test et al., 2009), providing services to support students with disabilities at the secondary level may be especially important.

To help address this problem, many nations have legislation that holds schools responsible for identifying and providing special education services to students with disabilities in preparation for workforce (e.g. Cameron & Thygesen, 2015; Lehtomaki, Tuomi, & Mantoya, 2014; Rotatori, Bakken, Obiakor, Burkhardt, & Sharma, 2014). In the United States, legislation, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), emphasize workforce preparation for students with disabilities in the United States. School administrators are responsible for ensuring that educational programs in their buildings meet these legislative requirements. Specifically, principals must supervise special education teachers to ensure that they help identify students' strengths and interests, receive proper training to succeed in the workplace, and are provided with access to sufficient resources, including support personnel, throughout this process. Overall, students with disabilities who receive education and guidance that includes emphasis on transition from high school to the workforce

are more likely to experience positive post-school outcomes (Test et al, 2009). The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018) reviewed relevant literature to make recommendations to schools to improve transition services for students with disabilities. The agency found that high-quality transition programs increased the likelihood that an individual with was employed after completing school.

In order to support the post-school needs of students with disabilities, schools may hire a transition coordinator. These practitioners are certified special education teachers who work with students with disabilities to support their post-school goals (Asselin, Todd-Allen, & deFur, 1998). While a special education teacher may be focused on supporting the academic and social needs of students with disabilities, a transition coordinator has a role outside of supporting academic skills.

In this article, we draw on relevant literature and best practices from the field to highlight the significance of transition coordinators in helping ensure that students with disabilities stay in school and receive the training they need to be successful in the workplace. Our belief in the importance of transition coordinators comes from our previous practitioner experiences in the capacity of (a) a special education teacher who served as a transition coordinator and (b) a school administrator who understands strategies to support all students, including those with disabilities. First, we provide a general overview of the history of special education in the United States, highlighting the challenges faced by schools. Then, we describe the role played by school administrators in supporting students with disabilities and how transition coordinators can increase the effectiveness of special education. After describing the transition

coordinator role, we outline a step-by-step process for hiring someone to provide critical support for students with disabilities to ensure they are adequately prepared to enter the workforce.

History of Special Education in the United States

For nearly three decades, school administrators in the United States have been required to comply with federal laws regarding the education of students with disabilities (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Special education used to be segregated from regular instruction, resulting in social isolation for students with disabilities; moreover, standards for special education curricula tended to be low and special education teachers typically had low academic expectations of their students (Turnbull & Cilley, 1999). Today, however, special education is no longer a place in a school building; rather, it has evolved to become an integrated academic and social support system. This system, supported by the least restrictive environment (LRE) provision in IDEA (2004), is designed, implemented, and monitored to ensure that students with disabilities receive the education and training necessary to successfully participate in the workforce (National Association of Elementary School Principals & ILIAD Project, 2001). However, IDEA set minimum baselines for service types of quality and leave room for states, districts, and schools to implement education policies, programs, and practice (DeMatthews, Edwards, & Nelson, 2014).

During the same time period, multiple school reform initiatives aimed at increasing academic rigor in public schools have been implemented in the United States. During the last decade in particular, nearly all 50 states have adopted comprehensive academic standards, with many implementing corresponding accountability

systems to measure the performance of students, teachers, and administrators (Ryndak, Jackson, & White, 2013). These test results are being used throughout the country to determine critical school milestones such as grade promotion and high school graduation, as well as tenure for educators and accreditation for schools (DiPaola, Tschannen-Moran, & Walther-Thomas, 2004). Due to the performance accountability metrics associated with reforms and the freedom to select types of services for students in special education that fits their needs, school principals are left struggling on their own to find operating procedures they could implement at their schools to meet the standards and attend to the needs of their students.

School Administrators and Special Education

School administrators have multiple roles to play within the school. As instructional leaders, principals must develop school cultures that set high academic standards for all students (Harper & Andrews, 2010) by fostering effective working relationships based on trust, shared responsibility, collaboration, and teamwork (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000). Effective principals ensure that teachers use proven, research-based practices to improve student performance and that students receive comprehensive, high quality instruction (Benson, 2019; Hall, 2019; Wilcox & Zuckerman, 2019). When school leaders focus on fundamental instructional issues, demonstrate strong support for special education, and provide ongoing professional development, academic outcomes improve for students with disabilities and others at risk (Brownell, Ross, Colon, & McCallum, 2003; Klingner, Arguelles, Hughes, & Vaughn, 2001).

In addition to student outcomes, administrative leadership practices strongly affect teachers' attitudes; in special education contexts, teachers' working conditions are strongly affected by inclusive education practices for students with disabilities (Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001). Moreover, special educators' sense of administrative support and confidence in their abilities to help their students reach their academic goals are strongly influenced by the principal's values and supportive actions, as mediated by overall school culture (Dash & Vohra, 2019). Principal support also significantly affects teacher attitudes (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Dash & Vohra, 2019) and attrition rates (e.g., Whitaker, 2000).

Despite district-level variations in specific duties, generally speaking, principals are responsible for school-level compliance with special education requirements (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003). School principals who are well prepared for special education leadership have a strong working knowledge of IDEA policies and procedures, as well as prevalent disabilities and some of the unique learning and behavioral challenges associated with various conditions. Prepared principals also have comprehensive knowledge of research-based special education practices (e.g., positive behavior support, direct instruction, learning strategies, content enhancement; Crockett, 2002).

Unfortunately, many principals lack the coursework and field experience necessary to effectively fulfill the role of special education leader in their buildings (Bateman & Bateman, 2014; Dipaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). In fact, DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) found that principals' greatest need is for knowledge and support related to implementing special education programs. This knowledge gap is critically important, because when administrators are

inadequately prepared, the effectiveness of special education services suffers.

To help address these challenges, district and community resources can be harnessed to ensure students with unique learning needs receive the best possible educational programming (Hughes, 1999; Pankake & Fullwood, 1999). Utilizing available resources to the fullest extent is especially important for principals who are less prepared to lead special education programs. Transition coordinators are one such resource that can help address many of the challenges associated with meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

What is a Transition Coordinator?

In the field of special education, transition generally refers to the years in which a student with a disability moves from being in compulsory schooling to their post-school life. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2014) describes the existence a national-level legal framework as a key factor in the development of vocational training opportunities for youth with disabilities. In the U.S., IDEA (2004) requires that post-school planning begin before a student turns 16-years old. This involves a coordinated set of services designed to support individualized student post-school goals related to continued education or training, employment, community participation, and independent living. Following the language used by Asselin et al. (1998), this article will use the term transition coordinator to refer to a certificated special education teacher whose primary purpose is to address the transition needs of secondary students with disabilities. In order to effectively carry out these responsibilities, many of which involve developing and maintaining community connections, a key feature of this role

involves a flexible daily schedule (Noonan, Morningstar, & Gaumer Erickson, 2008). Although the IDEA (2004) does not specifically describe a transition coordinator as a related service provider, this individual may play a similar role in that this practitioner provides a service that allows an adolescent to receive a free and appropriate education. It is important to recognize that a transition coordinator does not become the sole school-based practitioner who facilitates post-school transition; every teacher should be involved so that their knowledge and expertise can contribute to positive outcomes for the student. However, due to the specialized nature of many transition-related program components, the addition of a dedicated transition coordinator may lead to improved transition services (Morningstar & Benitez, 2013). The recently-updated transition specialist training standards (Council for Exceptional Children, 2013) represent the vast amount of knowledge necessary to provide appropriate transition services to students. Motivated and highly-qualified leaders available to provide students with support postschool transition are key components to successful programs (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2014).

When looking at data describing post-school outcomes, it is clear that more work is necessary to support students with disabilities. Even with training from schools, students with disabilities struggle to find opportunity and success in post-secondary education attendance, employment, independent living, and community participation (Newman et al., 2011). Although secondary special education teachers may feel comfortable developing transition components of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), they may lack the expertise to provide specialized services necessary to bolster positive post-school outcomes (Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009). The addition of an assigned transition

coordinator with a flexible daily schedule provides students with more intensive supports to help them achieve post-school goals (Noonan, Morningstar, & Gaumer Erickson, 2008).

What Does a Transition Coordinator Do?

Schools that do not currently have a transition coordinator may require assistance in developing a list of responsibilities with which this individual may be tasked. In order to help define the role of transition coordinator, Asselin et al. (1998) surveyed practitioners and developed and validated a list of nine responsibility categories, including: "intraschool/interagency linkages, interagency linkages, assessment and career counseling, transition planning, education and community training, family support, public relations, program development, and program evaluation" (p. 13). It may also be appropriate to consider the role of transition coordinator as supporting the domains described by Kohler, Gothbery, Fowler, and Coyle (2016). The Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 includes Student-Focused Planning, Family Engagement, Program Structures, Interagency Collaboration, and Student Development. Based on our experiences and relevant literature (Asselin et al., 1998; Kohler et al., 2016; Noonan et al., 2008; Rowe et al., 2015; Test et al., 2009), we have compiled and described a list of responsibilities schools may consider when implementing a transition coordinator.

Be a Resource Expert

The large amount of transition-specific materials can be overwhelming. Because special education teachers may not have the time to become familiar with many of these valuable resources, they would benefit from the support of a transition coordinator who has dedicated time to have these resources in-hand. Although each

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member of the IEP team brings his or her expertise to contribute to the process, the focus of transition may get lost in the process. When identifying goals and services with transition-age students, it is necessary for post-school goals to be considered (Johnson, 2004). When one individual specializes in helping students and families prepare for post-school life, this individual is naturally going to be familiar with a wide variety of resources to support student goals. Having a practitioner who is focused on transition may help secondary schools develop more IEPs that contain effective and appropriate transition content. Table 1 contains a description of web-based transition resources.

Table 1.

Transition Resources

Publisher	URL	Description
National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)	https://www.transitionta.org	The NTACT website includes materials that detail and describe effective practices and predictors associated with multiple areas of transition. In addition, they provide supports to practitioners by including hand-on Toolkits and transition-focused webinars.
Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT)	http://community.cec.sped.org/dcdt/publications/fast-facts	This link connects to the Fact Fact papers published by DCDT. Each of these papers relates to a predictor of positive post-school outcomes and provides guidance for practitioners.
Transition Coalition	https://transitioncoalition.org	The Transition Coalition website includes a large number of resources. Key features include training tools (webinars and self-study training modules), a transition assessment guide, and program evaluation tool. There are many more resources as well.

| The IRIS Center (Peabody College at Vanderbilt University) | https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/iris-resource-locator/?term=transition | The IRIS Center provides resources related to many areas of special education. Their transition materials feature training modules, information briefs, and video vignettes |
| Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment (University of Oklahoma) | http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow.html | The Zarrow Center has a collection of resources that cover a variety of transition topics, including, but not limited to self-determination. The website includes free curricula that can be used directly with students as well as training materials on many topics. |

Lead Program Development and Evaluation

With this area-specific knowledge, transition coordinators should be leaders in program development and evaluation to improve services. Transition coordinators work with IEP case managers to write and develop student transition plans and ensure that the entire IEP is focused on post-school goals. This might include identifying and delivering appropriate individualized transition services. When looking at more comprehensive program development, transition coordinators should review relevant research to identify specific evidence-based practices that support post-school goals (e.g., Mazzotti et al., 2016; McConnell et al., 2013; Test et al., 2009). Rowe et al. (2015) translated research-to-practice by defining predictors of positive post-school outcomes and provided examples of how these predictors can be addressed by schools.

In order to evaluate existing services, transition coordinators may consider using the Quality Indicators of Exemplary Transition Program Needs Assessment, created by Transition Coalition (n.d). In addition, it is appropriate to review data related to IDEA Indicators 1,

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2, 13, and 14, each of which has a connection to post-school transition (IDEA, 2004). In addition to using existing district data, transition coordinators may consider conducting an Indicator 13 self-evaluation (e.g. the tool developed and made available by NSTTAC, 2012) in order to ensure that transition documentation is compliant.

Develop Community Relations and Facilitate Community Experiences

The opportunities transition coordinators have to develop relationships with community members may be the greatest asset to support students with disabilities achieve post-school goals. Rowe at al. (2015) expanded on the work of Test et al. (2009) by developing operational definitions and identifying program characteristics for predictors of positive post-school outcomes. Of the 16 predictors described in the study, 12 include recommendations for practice that directly benefit from the development of relationships in the community (Career Awareness, Occupational Courses, Paid Employment/Work Experience, Vocational Education, Work Study, Community Experiences, Program of Study, Self-Care/Independent Living Skills, Interagency Collaboration, Parental Involvement, Student Support, and Transition Program).

Although the ability to develop community relationships can have a significant impact on the extent to which students with disabilities find success after high school, special education teachers with regular classroom responsibilities may not have the flexibility with their schedule to make a reality (Noonan et al., 2008). In addition to supporting the development of student transition skills (e.g., employment, independent living), transition personnel may be also charged with leading a classroom that is focused on academic-related tasks. However, practitioners may struggle to fill both the role

of a transition specialist and a classroom teacher. One interviewee from Noonan et al., (2008) explained, "There is no way you can sit in a classroom and teach and coordinate and network in the community. You can't do both…" (p. 136). As such, transition coordinators should be given a schedule that allows for flexibility. Practices that may be utilized by a transition coordinator with a flexible schedule to increase community engagement include: (a) training employers and co-workers (Luecking, 2009), (b) promoting opportunities with community organizations (Carter et al., 2009), (c) developing community conversations (Trainor, Carter, Swedeen, & Pickett, 2012), and (d) arranging job shadow opportunities (Kellems & Morningstar, 2010).

Interagency Linkage

In order to prepare students and families for post-school transition, it is necessary to ensure they are connected with resources outside of the school. With the increased involvement with school-age students mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA, 2014), working with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors has become increasingly important. A school-based transition coordinator can align activities so that school and VR services work in conjunction. In addition, transition coordinators can develop relationships with other community-based services, such as local Centers for Independent Living. Doing so ensures that students have first-hand knowledge of outside services that can support personal goals when school-based services have ceased.

Foster Student Self-Determination

With the current emphasis of self-determination in transition service and literature, it would be appropriate to include this in a job description for a transition coordinator. Although all teachers can implement practices to increase student self-determination, a transition coordinator, who has expertise in this area, support increased usage of these strategies. For example, although engaging in student-led IEPs may increase student self-determination (Martin et al., 2006), it is perhaps often not implemented due to a lack of time (Danneker & Bottge, 2009). Transition coordinators may be able to assist in the training of students to lead their own IEP meeting, by using pre-existing materials (e.g. Zarrow Center, n.d.) or by other means. In addition, a transition coordinator may be able to better target the self-determination needs of individuals or small groups of students by delivering a self-determination curriculum.

Conduct Transition Assessments

Transition assessment is considered the foundation of transition planning; the process allows practitioners to understand student strengths, preferences, interests, and needs that should be reflected in transition planning (Johnson, 2004). Although the federal requirements regarding transition assessment outlined by IDEA are quite broad (Neubert & Leconte, 2013), simply administering the minimal assessments to meet compliance may not provide the team with adequate information for appropriate transition planning. In order to get a more complete picture of the student, transition assessment may involve collecting relevant information related to academics, self-determination, adaptive behavior, independent living, and career and vocational data (NTACT, 2016). When a school employs a transition coordinator, the team benefits from having a

member with vast knowledge of types of assessment and can administer these tools. Transition assessment options are vast, making it more difficult for special education case managers to stay current with current trends and tools (i.e., using cloud-based assessment tools; Author, 2017).

Support Post-Secondary Education

Today's increased emphasis on post-secondary education (i.e., continued learning at a trade school or institution of higher education) for students with disabilities has been fueled by legislative initiatives (e.g., focus on college and career readiness from ESSA, 2015). As such, a list of transition coordinator roles and responsibilities must reflect this climate. Transition plans for secondary students with disabilities are required to contain a post-school goal involving training (IDEA, 2004). School counselors may be able to support students who are attending typical post-secondary education options; however, they may not be aware of opportunities for students who have disabilities. For example, certain regional colleges and universities may have programs to support students with autism spectrum disorder seeking traditional degrees (Barnhill, 2016). In addition, transition coordinators can have expertise in supporting students with disabilities who are attending post-secondary education by familiarizing them with their rights and responsibilities relating to disability support services.

Steps to Develop Transition Coordinator Position

In situations where school-based teams recognize the need for additional supports to meet the post-school needs of their students with disabilities, they may lobby for the addition of a transition coordinator to their staff. Based on our experiences in schools in the

U.S., following lists a series of steps teams may follow in order to advocate for the new position.

Step 1: Collect Relevant Data

In our current data-focused education culture, collecting information to support the need for additional transition services is an essential first step. When teams are able to use data to show a need, school administrators may be more likely to respond. For example, IDEA in the U.S. requires schools to evaluate the quality of their special education services by reporting certain data to the state (e.g., graduation rate, student drop-out rates, quality of transition components in the IEP, student post-school outcomes). These indicator data may be valuable tools in building a justification for the need for a transition coordinator. In addition to using data that has been reported to the state for review, schools may consider conducting IDEA indicator data self-evaluations to better demonstrate program needs (e.g. the tool developed and made available by NSTTAC, 2012). This information may provide insight into the extent to which schools are successful in preparing their students with disabilities for post-school transition. These may be collected and available at both the local and regional levels; having state-wide results may help to provide comparison data. Teams can use these data results to support the need for a staff member who specializes in transition to improve district performance in these areas.

Step 2: Identify Specific Needs

When a team believes the transition-related needs of their students with disabilities are not being met by a school, it is necessary to identify the specific areas in which their services are inadequate.

Teams should review relevant research to identify specific evidence-based practices that support post-school goals (e.g., Mazzotti et al., 2016; McConnell et al., 2013; Rowe et al., 2015; Test et al., 2009). Teams may also consider using a self-evaluation tool to identify gaps in service delivery. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (n.d.) has developed an evaluation toolkit, containing a large number of evaluation tools. The Quality Indicators of Exemplary Transition Program Needs Assessment, created by Transition Coalition (n.d.) may also be a good choice for teams that may be overwhelmed by too many options. In addition to detailing the need using a special education context, teams may consider framing this need using general education legislation. For example, using language from legislation (e.g., college and career readiness) may have further resonance.

Step 3: Write a Job Description

Having a clear vision of the roles this individual will fill will support the need for the position. Information gleaned from the program evaluation process completed in the previous step can be used to help identify this list. Teams developing a job description may consider also consider the specific tasks described by Asselin et al. (1998) and the aforementioned items presented in this paper. It may also be help to review Rowe et al. (2015), who translated research-to-practice by defining predictors of positive post-school outcomes and providing examples of how this may impact service delivery. This information can be compiled to begin the development of a job description for a transition coordinator. For those who are unfamiliar with the role of a transition coordinator, this job description will help support the team's vision by providing specificity as to the responsibilities associated with the position.

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Step 4: Understand the Local Landscape

Although employing a transition coordinator may be common in some geographical areas, this role may be uncommon in other regions. Teams interested in providing support for the development of a transition coordinator should reach out to other schools in the region to see if they have an individual whose primary role involves transition-related responsibilities. If regional schools have employed a transition coordinator, this may help legitimize the team's need for one as well. If schools in the region do not have transition coordinators, teams may want to expand their search to find others schools in the state that support the post-school goals of their secondary students in this manner. In addition, other schools may be will to share their job descriptions, which can help inform the team's draft document created in Step 3.

Step 5: Pitch the Idea

Ultimately, support from upper school administrators is going to be essential; without their support, the creation of a transition coordinator position is impossible. The previous four steps will have been conducted to help a team develop a clear need justification and a plan to move forward. Having these in-hand may increase the likelihood of upper administrator buy-in. As funding will likely be a primary concern for administration, teams may want to enter these discussions with a back-up plan. Consider presenting ways to rearrange current staffing so that one individual is able to focus specifically on transition. Although this would be less ideal than the creation of a transition coordinator position, teams should consider this possibility if they are unsuccessful in gaining administrative support for a new position

Conclusion

For most people, work is essential to a livelihood, a sense of worth and accomplishment, and overall life satisfaction. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number of student with disabilities or low academic performance do not go on to experience steady, satisfying, or gainful employment. Schools must give more focus, in both time and resources, to preparing students for after school life. Because it is the culmination of many years of school, transition services may be a key factor in the long-term success or failure for students with disabilities. In order to ensure that students are receiving appropriate transition services, school administrators may consider employing a transition coordinator to oversee this process. Having an individual whose role is focused on providing transition-related supports has the potential to have a substantial impact on a student's ability to achieve post-school goals.

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An Analysis on Mission Statements of Turkish Primary Schools: Similarities and Differences

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Abstract	Article Info
Mission statements are increasingly becoming an inevitable component of educational institutions. The main reason behind this can be attributed to the fact that they are determinants for the accreditation of schools in today's competitive educational arena. Thus, gaining an insight into the emphasized concepts in mission statements of primary schools is essential since primary schools are the places where the education starts for every single individual. In this regard, the aim of this study is to provide a document analysis of mission statements of Turkish public primary schools which are governed by the Ministry of National Education. To achieve this, mission statements of 500 primary schools across Turkey were compiled; particularly schools from the Western and the Eastern parts of the country were randomly selected and included in the analysis. As well as the comparison between mission statements of schools located in two opposite sides of the country, a special attention was paid to whether any reference to language teaching and learning was available in the mission statements. The whole data were analysed via content analysis. The results give in-depth information about common and differing points among mission statements. The most common mission was found to be educating individuals who valued Atatürk's principles and reforms underpinning the Turkish education system. Besides, a number of distinct missions	

were detected with regard to some targeted personality traits between the most cited points in missions of the Eastern and the Western schools. In terms of foreign language education, only a few references were revealed in mission statements of primary schools in Turkey.

Introduction

"Wherever society exists, leadership exists" (Hackman & Johnson, 2004: 5), which means we are either the leaders or the followers in the society where we exist. For this reason, leadership is of great importance; and, as an essential issue in various fields, it can be defined as a purposeful act of leaders who are aiming to construct the social world of their followers (Greenfield, 1986). That is to say, leaders should be able to unify their followers around the shared values and make followers to commit themselves to what is good and correct. Different from this, a more recent definition shows us that leadership requires guiding the members of an organization to initiate and institutionalize innovation in an organization (Waters, 2014). As is clear from this definition, it is crucial for leaders to unify members around key missions and visions. Contrary to this, management is mostly related to the implementation of some agreed policies by aiming at using resources more effectively (Bush, 2008; Nahavandi, 2008). What is implied in the definition of management is that it is sufficient for a manager to accomplish pre-determined intentions with an ultimate aim to use resources wisely. However, it can also be concluded that the responsibilities of a leader can be

categorized under two primary headings which are creating an innovative organization and executing managerial tasks. In other words, leading and managing are different concepts but both are essential to create successful organizations which achieve their ultimate objectives.

In terms of educational management, the core activity is to determine the aims of the organization as a first step. In most schools, school principals are the ones who decide the aims, most probably in cooperation with the school governing body. It is obvious that school aims are under the influence of both external environment and government policies (Bush, 2007). The question is to what extent school principals have a right to modify government policies based on school-level missions or visions. To accomplish such a school-level modification, one should consider different leadership models and decide on the most appropriate model for the requirements of the particular school contexts. Based on the typology of leadership models proposed by Bush (2003), there are eight models including managerial, transformational, participative, transactional, post-modern, moral, instructional and contingent leadership models.

Managerial model is associated with leaders carrying out the functions, tasks and behaviours competently, which means it does not include the concept of vision. That is, the focus is on managing existing activities rather than planning or implementing a vision which can provide a better future for schools. Transformational model assumes each member of the organization to make commitments such as building vision or goals, modelling organizational values and fostering participation in decision making process (Leithwood, 1994). Similarly, participative leadership encourages one to be involved in the decision-making process on the

way to improve the school effectiveness (Leithwood, 1999: 12). In addition, Bush (2003) makes a connection between political and transactional leadership and claims that disagreements are resolved in favour of the most powerful protagonists. This only creates short-lived solutions and there is no long-term commitment to values or visions of the school. Bush (2003) also mentions post-modern leadership which is about diverse and individual perspectives of stakeholders are focused. That is, hierarchy is minimized so as to provide a quality democracy and a more consultative stance toward leadership. As for moral leadership, the key factor in effective leadership is the values, beliefs and ethics of leaders themselves. Different from those, instructional leadership supports the importance of developing teaching and learning since the core tenet is that professional learning of teachers and student growth go hand in hand. Last but not least, contingent leadership challenges the idea of one-size-fits-all; and claims that a good leader can diagnose the problems effectively and produce the most suitable solution considering the contextual variations. All these models may have naturally impact on the determination of school missions by all stakeholders under the guidance of school leaders.

Leadership practice involves actions taken by leaders while performing their leadership duties and responsibilities (Rathert & Kırkgöz, 2017). Needless to say those duties and responsibilities are vital in terms of the effectiveness of the organization. In parallel with this notion, Chemers (2003) identified three essential components of an effective leadership. The first component is the image that management refers to establishing credibility and legitimacy. The second component is the relationship development which means building motivation on the way to achieving group tasks by fair

coaching and guidance. The third one is the resource deployment associated with making efficient use of sources and materials for the sake of goal attainment. Besides those components, the relationship between leadership and organizational culture should be emphasized because these concepts are quite intertwined. Regarding this, there can be resistance to change in schools contexts when leaders feel a need to make alterations in an organizational culture. When this is the case, administrators generally prefer to overcome this problem through persuasion (Hoşgörür, 2016). Namely, if there should be a change in school culture, effectiveness of leadership practices gains greater importance.

According to Hackman and Johnson (2004), each organization has a unique way of seeing the world and this depends on the organization's particular assumptions, symbols and values. In relation to this, Turan and Bektaş (2013) point out that an organizational culture includes so many variables such as socialization, rituals, language, authority, economy, technology, and influence. They also assert that forming an organizational culture is a complex process, most probably because of so many variables interacting together even though some variables might be more dominant than the others. More important than that, Şişman (2002) posits that a culture comes into existence when a group of people come into interaction. Concerning educational organizations, humans play a central role in the formation of school culture (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Organizational culture is a complex phenomenon (Schein, 1990) and understanding inter-organizational relationships is the key to organizational excellence (Schein, 1984), most probably because of the fact that human factor is influential in such organizations.

This so-called school culture can be seen as a sub-culture of the society because the focal assumptions, ideas or values reflected in the school culture also reflect the culture of the whole society. Considering the fact that each organization has its own special culture which differentiates it from other organizations (Morey & Luthans, 1985; Dimmock & Walker, 2005), school cultures are also built by different stakeholders including school principals. In Şişman's (2002) views, school principals have some basic responsibilities such as setting and implementing goals, guiding the school members, sustaining mutual trust among members; and creating and maintaining school culture. In this regard, Bolman and Deal's (1991) four frames can be mentioned to understand what is included in the concept of leadership. Those frames are structural, human resource, political and symbolic frames. The structural frame is associated with the belief that any organization should be designed for maximum efficiency. That is, organizational structures are created to align with the requirements of the environment and to reach the desired outcomes. The human resource frame emphasizes the importance of relationships within the organization; namely it views the organization from the eyes of its members. In this frame, human needs, energy, talent, career, salaries, opportunities and so on are focused. The political frame is more related to the process of decision-making in an environment including divergent interests-ideas and limited resources. Put it differently, stakeholders in any organization have differences in interests, values, beliefs and perceptions of reality. Moreover, the most important decision is to allocate scarce resources, which results from negotiation among stakeholders. The symbolic frame involves the use of meanings, beliefs and faith based on our previous experiences in order to explore how sense is constructed. More specifically; visions, missions or values of organizations convey

a sense of identity and people feel themselves special about what they accomplish.

Among those frames, effectiveness of a leader can be more associated with political and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 1992). Further, Bolman and Deal (2008) assert that the leadership frame provides one to be able to position herself/himself as leaders who can interpret and make appropriate decisions for various situations. More clearly, Bolman and Deal (1991) in their multi-frame view note that leaders own at least one preferred or dominant frame to interpret what occurs in their organization; yet, the more frames a leader use in her/his leadership practices, the more effective she/he will be as a leader. That is to say, contextualizing particular situations using multiple frames helps a leader base her/his decisions on a sound ground with many cues and experiences. Apart from those, Boggs (2003) claims that a leader should be capable of building effective relationships, understanding accountability, being adaptable to differing conditions and possessing communication and transformation skills. In parallel with this, interactions amongst school members are evidently vital to create a collaborative vision and to be involved in leadership functions. The key factor at this point is the distributed leadership framed around specialization and expertise which is solely possible in a mutual trust and open door communication climate (Sivri & Beycioğlu, 2017).

One of the main contributions to the formation of a school culture can be to create a positive atmosphere provided by the school leaders. In fact, while doing this, not only school leaders but also teachers, students and parents should cooperate. If this is the case, then cohesion and convergence might emerge among those stakeholders (Özdemir, 2006). To accomplish this, focusing on

common goals and learning outcomes is important (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) so as to create uniformity because shared vision in culture makes the vision more achievable (Durukan, 2006). Similarly, leadership is a reciprocal learning process that enables stakeholders to negotiate meaning linked to shared purpose of schooling (Harris & Lambert, 2003). Likewise, Kılıç (2013) mentions that effective communication among colleagues learning from each other can be regarded as a primary factor that affect leadership practices in schools. In that sense, school leaders can revise the values and standards of the school with their specific discourse and can make others to be aware of such values and standards (Çelikten, 2003). To put it differently, leadership is not a function only performed by the school leaders. Rather, reaching a shared goal with the contribution of all stakeholders is vital in the process of the renewal of school culture. Here, school leaders' role is to renovate the school culture in a positive way regarding the connection between the school culture and leadership (Deal & Peterson, 2009). The essential point is that leadership is somehow connected to learning. To elaborate on this, Lambert (2003) posits that leadership is reciprocal, purposeful learning in community. Another crucial point for Lambert (2003) is that the ultimate goal is to develop all adults in the school community as reflective and skilful leaders. On this issue, Barth (1990) proposes that everyone within a school is capable of leading and becoming an active member in a community of leaders, and collegiality poses importance in promoting learning and improving schools. By doing so, the outcome will be steady and lasting improvement in student performance, which leads to the construction of sustainable schools.

In the light of these, the focal point of the study is to explore the mission statements and their implications for educational leadership.

As a concept, leadership can be in different forms such as authoritarian, charismatic, transformational, traditional, ethical, cultural, situational, and visionary (O'Brien, Draper & Murphy, 2008). Among these different forms, the adopted leadership model inevitably influences the missions of educational institutions. Furthermore, the vision of school leaders along with the culture of the society can also be the determinants of the content of the mission statements.

Aims of the Study

Mission statements refer to what the organization wants to be and whom it serves; hence, they express the raison d'être of an organization with an aim to unify various components of the organization around a common purpose (Özdem, 2011). In other words, it can be asserted that mission statements make the reasons linked to the presence of an organization obvious. A well-designed mission statement entails the clarification of the fundamental purposes of the organization, and therefore makes the organization unique and different from other organizations (Ülgen & Mirze, 2004). From another perspective, Dinçer (2004) defines a mission as a long-term goal, a shared value and belief; one that is concerned with quality not quantity. For all these reasons, a mission statement should be clear, concise and intense (Özdem, 2011); it should involve the legal requirements expected from the organization (Erçetin, 2000). It can also be claimed that the relevant literature is mainly based on the analysis of mission and vision statements of business. (e.g. Doğan, 2002; Yurtseven, 2003; Coşkun & Geyik, 2004; Peyrefitte & David, 2006; Karabulut, 2007; Köseoğlu & Temel, 2008; Doğan & Hatipoğlu, 2009). Herewith, the shift should be directed to the educational arena,

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namely the content of mission statements of educational institutions at different levels. Schools at different levels such as primary, secondary and high schools or even universities should be scrutinized separately in terms of their self-determined missions. This will lead us to the strengths and weaknesses in a great deal of mission statements from a comparative perspective. This comparison can also be made between private and state educational institutions so as to see whether missions show a change or not. Such attempts to explore similarities and differences with an aim to unravel shortcomings in various mission statements will provide us to better reshape missions of schools, which will help school leaders revise and implement their schools' missions more critically and effectively.

Based on these notions, the present study attempts to detect the common points in the mission statements of state primary schools in Turkey. Additionally, whether there are any differences between mission statements of schools located in the Western and the Eastern parts of the country is also within the scope of the study. The reason why opposite locations are under scrutiny is because people living in these two locations have socially, economically and culturally differing lifestyles. Thus, this disparity may be assumed to influence school cultures and educational aims. Lastly, references to foreign language teaching and learning in mission statements of Turkish state primary schools are also investigated. This study is assumed to provide researchers and policy makers who are interested in educational leadership to realize how important it is to enhance missions that educational institutions undertake. Further, considering the fact that missions are changeable based on the transforming requirements of the school contexts and roles of school leaders, examining mission statements to make them more appropriate for the

current educational necessities is crucial. Such a research will inevitably contribute to national literature of educational administration as well as the related international literature sharing an identical educational context with Turkish schools.

In parallel with the aims, three research questions were formulated:

- What common points are frequently emphasized in mission statements of Turkish state primary schools across the Western and Eastern parts of the country?
- Are there any differences between the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools located in the Western and Eastern parts of the country? If yes, what are the differences?
- Are there any references to foreign language teaching and learning in the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools? If yes, what references are there?

Methodology

Research Design

The design of the present study is based on document analysis which is related to the analysis of written materials about the target phenomena; and the purpose is to give voice and meaning around the topic (Bowen, 2009). In the present study, the target phenomena are mission statements of Turkish primary schools. It is mainly based on the content analysis of mission statements of randomly selected Turkish primary schools. With content analysis, the aim is to describe the existing situation associated with what sort of missions Turkish primary schools undertake. To do so, cities from the Eastern and Western parts of Turkey were listed and classified randomly. Following this, a certain number of primary schools in the selected

cities were chosen randomly again. Websites of the selected primary schools were scanned so that we could have an access to an up-to-date mission statement. If we encountered an appropriate mission statement, we added the mission statement in either the Eastern or the Western document analysis file. Afterwards, an eight-step process of O'Leary (2014) in relation to document analysis was followed: (1) Gather relevant texts. (2) Develop an organization and management scheme. (3) Make copies of the originals for annotation. (4) Assess authenticity of documents. (5) Explore documents' agenda, biases. (6) Explore background information (e.g., tone, style, purpose). (7) Ask questions about document (e.g., who produced it? Why? When? Type of data?). (8) Explore content.

Based on the analysis process above, the first step was to gather relevant updated mission statements in computer files, which was followed by the organization of the whole data. Namely, the data were divided into two files so as to examine the mission statements of schools in the Western and Eastern parts of Turkey separately. Various copies of the data in different files were prepared to make it possible for the researchers to analyse the data by taking notes. Afterwards, authenticity of data along with possible biases were checked and controlled. This step led us to the next two steps including the exploration of purposes of mission statements and questioning how and why they have been produced. As the last step, the content of mission statements was examined.

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 500 primary state schools in Turkey. Mission statements were accessed through the official internet websites of those schools. The schools included in the study were randomly chosen from the city centres, not from the counties of

the defined cities. First, the cities were determined randomly; however; the only criterion was that cities would be located either in the Western or in the Eastern part of the country. In parallel with this, 26 different cities were included in the study; 13 from the Western part and 13 from the Eastern part of the country. In total, mission statements available on the website of 500 primary schools across the country were compiled in two different files. Mission statements of 250 schools from the Western part compromised the first file; and similarly, another file was constituted with the mission statements of 250 schools from the Eastern part of the country. Overall, these two files were 72 pages long and contained 20,567 words.

Data Analysis

The whole data were exposed to content analysis with the aim of discovering the differing and common points in the mission statements. The ultimate goal was to see whether there was any difference between mission statements of Turkish primary schools in the Eastern and the Western part of the country. In other words, it was aimed to find out whether the location was an influential factor in defining missions of the schools. To achieve this, the two files were combined and analysed so as to reach commonalities in the first phase of the analysis. Afterwards, files were separated and the analysis was based on the comparison between the mission statements of primary schools in different locations in the second phase. Another goal in employing content analysis was to explore references to foreign language teaching and learning in mission statements if there was any. To do so, all data were examined with a very specific aim to unravel concepts in relation to foreign language education. After this third phase of the analysis, frequencies were calculated, and mission statements cited more than 40 times were

regarded as the significant ones. However, all references to foreign language education were included in the findings. To ensure trustworthiness, Guba's (1981) four criteria which are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were considered. To be credible, the intra- and inter-rater reliability was ensured by analysing the obtained data at different times and by both authors of the paper. To accomplish transferability, our specific sample was described in terms of educational leadership. For the sake of dependability, a detailed methodological description was presented. Lastly for confirmability, we guarantee that all of the findings were induced from the data.

Results

Common points in the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools

Regarding the first research question dealing with the common points in the mission statements of Turkish state primary school located either in the Eastern or the Western parts of Turkey, Table 1 summarizes the common points emerged as a result of content analysis:

Table 1.

Common points in mission statements irrespective of the location of schools

Common statements	f
Educating individuals who value Atatürk's principles and reforms	137
Educating individuals who can keep up with the contemporary developments in the world	114
Educating individuals depending on the Basic Law of National Education	97
Educating good and well-behaved individuals	90
Educating individuals sensitive to national and moral values	82

Table 1 illustrates the common and highly-referred points in mission statements. As understood, the most important mission statement is associated with Atatürk's principles and reforms (f: 137), which underpins the Turkish education system. Following this, the second most emphasized mission is related to the integration of contemporary developments (f: 114) in education system. In this way, individuals could keep up with the recent technological or scientific improvements across the world. Another frequently-cited point in mission statements is that the education system should adhere to the Basic Law of National Education (f: 97), determined by the Ministry. This might be a way to provide uniformity in the educational principles all over the country. Moreover, educating good and well-behaved individuals (f: 90) and educating individuals sensitive to national and moral values (f: 82) are among the other common points in mission statements of the Turkish primary schools. That is to say, sensitivity to national and moral values may be assumed to be essential for educating good and well-behaved citizens.

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Differences between the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools located in the Western and the Eastern part of the country

In accordance with the second research question, differences in the missions statements of schools located in different regions are examined and results are shown in Table 2:

Table 2.

Differences in missions statements of schools located in different regions

Eastern Cities		Western cities	
Statements	*f*	*Statements*	*f*
Educating respectful individuals	47	Educating open-minded individuals	50
Educating knowledgeable and skilful individuals	43	Educating self-confident individuals	42
Educating individuals sensitive to universal values	42	Educating happy citizens	40
Educating individuals sensitive to social and cultural values	41		

Table 2 presents the discrepancies between the mission statements of primary schools located in the two opposite sides of Turkey. Accordingly, in the schools located in the Eastern part, the highlighted missions are respectful (f: 47), knowledgeable and skilful (f: 43) individuals who are sensitive to universal (f: 42), social and cultural values (f: 41). All these seem to point to the fact that Eastern schools attach greater importance to such personality traits as respect, having knowledge and being talented. Furthermore, it is also vital for those schools to educate individuals who are aware of both universal and cultural values. That is, familiarity with the universal values is as important as familiarity with one's own cultural or social values. Contrary to these, the emphasized missions in the Western schools

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are quite distinct even though the frequencies seem close. It is seen that some other personality traits are stressed in the missions of the Western schools. To specify, being open-minded (f: 50), self-confident (f: 42) and happy (f: 40) individuals come to the fore. Namely, being open to new and different viewpoints, having confidence in one's own capabilities and feeling happy with what one has are the major targeted missions.

References to foreign language teaching and learning in the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools

The third research question requires having a look at whether there are any references to foreign language teaching and learning in the mission statements. Accordingly, Table 3 presents what kind of references is made as well as the cities and locations of schools which make those references:

Table 3.

References to foreign language teaching and learning in mission statements

References	Cities	Locations
Being capable of using foreign languages	Malatya	Eastern
Learning foreign languages is a need	Elazığ	Eastern
Speaking at least a foreign language	Hakkari	Eastern
Learning at an advanced level via foreign languages	Antalya	Western
Using a foreign language efficiently	Mersin	Western

Table 3 demonstrates the references to foreign language teaching and learning in mission statements. As understood, there are only five references to foreign language teaching and learning regardless of the locations of schools. The eye-catching point is that the references to foreign language teaching and learning can be said to be

limited with today's world which is becoming more and more global. Moreover, the essential point in each reference is different. For example, in the Eastern part, the schools give importance to being skilful at speaking at least one foreign language or to the realization of the fact that learning foreign languages is a need. The reason for those references in the Eastern part may be related to the fact that there are bilingual people living in the region. Further, in the Western part, using a foreign language efficiently and learning more through foreign languages is crucial. At this point, it should be noted that schools having such missions are located in the Southern region of the country where foreign people usually pay a visit for holiday. This could be a reason for foreign language references in the mission statements.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study has investigated what concepts are emphasized in the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools. Similarities and differences between the mission statements of schools located in the Eastern and the Western parts of the country are another concern of the study. Furthermore, exploring references to foreign language learning and teaching in mission statements, if there is any, is also within the scope of the study. In parallel with these aims, mission statements of 500 Turkish state primary schools have been examined using the content analysis technique.

The most common concepts in the mission statement of schools are all associated with educating individuals in the light of Atatürk's principles and reforms, educating individuals depending on the Basic Law of National Education, educating good and well-behaved individuals, and educating individuals sensitive to national and

moral values. These results appear to be consistent with the results of Altınkurt and Yılmaz (2011) who state that all those concepts represent a positive situation for mission statements. This is because it is possible to say that schools clearly determine their missions in the framework of legal regulations. To exemplify, Altınkurt and Yılmaz (2011) propose that Atatürk's principles and reforms, national and moral values and also adherence to the Basic Law of National Education are all signs for legal regulations. Considering common legal regulations to specify missions of state schools may seem appropriate for the sake of standardization in Turkish context; however, context bound factors resulting from cultural, social, financial or moral variables should not be ignored since each educational organization is unique particularly in terms of its assumptions, symbols and values (Hackman & Johnson, 2004).

Concerning differences between the mission statements of schools located in the Eastern and the Western parts of the country, seven significant differing points were detected. Eastern schools give priority to respect, knowledge, talent as well as sensitivity to universal, social and cultural values. Yet, Western schools draw special attention to educating open-minded, self-confident and happy individuals. It is obvious that "location" creating differences in cultural, social, financial, ethnical, moral issues might be a factor influencing what is prioritized in the mission statements of Turkish primary schools. This fact can also be in a strict relation with school culture considering that each organization has its own special culture which differentiates it from other organizations (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Morey & Luthans, 1985), and mission statements are one of the indicatives of the so-called school culture. In this sense, Marzano et al. (2005) claim that humans play an important role with regard to the formation of school culture. For our own context, it could pose an

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obstacle to determining sensible missions if we do not take human factor and context-related elements into account. Based on the results, it is obvious that there are location-based differences in mission statements of Turkish primary schools; yet, there is a need to compare missions of our schools with other nations' mission statements of counterpart schools with an aim to educating international citizens who are able to accommodate themselves to differing conditions of diverse contexts.

With regard to foreign languages, merely five schools from different cities and locations give priority to foreign language learning and teaching. For instance, being capable of using a foreign language, speaking foreign language/s efficiently or realizing that knowing a foreign language is a need are the targeted missions of some eastern schools. The interesting reference is related to the fact that the mission is to educate people who can learn at an advanced level via foreign languages. Concerning schools in the Southern parts of the country, it is normal to encounter such references because those cities are visited by foreign people especially in summer time; therefore, relations with tourists or foreign people are inevitable in those locations. As to the schools located in the Eastern part, it can be claimed that those places are locations where people can be bilingual or multilingual depending on their social environment. These can be the reasons for giving references to foreign language learning in the mission statements. To exemplify, the highlighted points are being capable of using foreign languages, the need to learn foreign languages and being able to speak at least a foreign language. As is clear, references to foreign languages are quite limited, but Boggs (2003) underlines the fact that a school leader should be capable of building effective relationships and possessing communication skills.

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This indicates that Turkish primary schools should put emphasis on communication and interpersonal relationships particularly via foreign languages because establishing interconnections among people from various nationalities is vital to survive in today's world.

In terms of the strengths and weaknesses, main conclusions show that the focal point for Turkish primary schools is the national and moral values unique to Turkish culture. This is understood from the references to Atatürk's reforms and principles and the Basic Law of National Education. Further, the emphasis on educating good and well-behaved individuals indicates that the Turkish education system does not only give importance to develop academic skills but also to modify behavioural tendencies of its citizens. As for the weaknesses in mission statements, a very limited number of references to foreign language education, necessity to highlight the vitality of universal values and the 21st century skills, and taking into account contextual factors that can have an impact upon the whole education system can be listed. Analysis of the mission statements suggests that there is a need to revise the mission statements in the light of those aforementioned points because all these are crucial for students to survive in today's increasingly globalized world. Most particularly, the ultimate goal of leadership in education should be to develop adults in the school community as reflective and skilful leaders as Lambert (2003) proposes. Such a procedure will possibly lead Turkish school leaders and other stakeholders to orient themselves to 21st century skills.

Based on the above conclusions, it can be suggested that mission statements should cover the unique characteristics of organizations because for educational contexts, schools should define their own characteristics and accordingly revise their mission statements. The

reason behind this is related to the fact that schools in different regions are under the influence of different social, cultural, emotional and even financial circumstances. For this reason, each school should determine its own mission by taking contextual factors into consideration. Additionally, while formulating mission statements, school leaders should consider how to improve the effectiveness of their schools by paying attention to the environment where the school is located, the school's sources, goals, target population, services and needs. Moreover, as Özdem (2011) argued, missions should not only be used as decorations for the websites of the educational institutions but they should also be put into action. To achieve this, school leaders should organize meetings or activities in order to make all stakeholders be familiar with missions and how they can put the missions into actions. In other words, all stakeholders including principals, teachers, students or parents should be the actors who formulate missions and put them into practice in a collaborative way. Principals as the leaders of schools play a crucial role to initiate such a procedure of mission development; thus, they should be liable to the local issues that they can face in their region. This is because school principals in different regions may have different problems and need different solutions in our country (Özer Ölmez & Kırkgöz, 2018).

As for limitations, this study is limited to the analysis of mission statements of state primary schools; thus, further studies can be carried out to reveal mission statements of private schools including primary, secondary and high schools, even universities in a comparative manner. Another further study can be focused on whether schools are really implementing what is expressed in their mission statements or not. Our last suggestion is to conduct a

comparative study on the examination of mission statements of schools in other countries so as to reveal weaknesses and strengths of schools' missions in Turkish context.

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Decision-Making Processes Using WhatsApp

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Abstract	Article Info
Smartphone applications have become increasingly popular, influencing functioning in all life domains. This study investigated the influence of the WhatsApp application on decision-making processes among kindergarten-managers. The research aimed to investigate the types of decisions made using WhatsApp. To examine this, a 3-phase mixed-method research was applied: (1) 23 semi-structured interviews with kindergarten managers. (2) Analysis of 74 WhatsApp managers-parents conversations. (3) A questionnaire administered to 324 kindergarten-managers. The managers reported a constant pressure for an immediate reaction and rapid decision making. Despite the pressure, managers claim they can limit the decision making to simple decisions and postpone complex decision making to off-line procedures. Yet, analysis of the questionnaire results indicate that this claimed ability to differentiate and limit the decision making to simple ones, is not the general case: managers who benefitted more from WhatsApp tended to broaden the decision-making scope to all types of decisions. *The expectation is that, as WhatsApp benefits to managers*	

become more and more evident and the pressure to respond quickly increases, the barriers will tend to fall down, and more complex decision will be made on-line with the evident implications.

Introduction

When the so-called 'Millennials' became parents to kindergarten students, they applied their communication skills and habits to the communication with the kindergarten-managers (Kiyici, Akyeampong, & Kiyici, 2013; Alazemi, 2017). This caused little researched influence on the administration work and decision making of those managers (Thompson, 2008; Flowers, 2015).

New communication channels have opened up between educators and parents (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005; Andone, Dron, & Pemberton, 2009; Blau & Shamir-Inbal, 2016; Gikas & Grant, 2013; Heflin, Shewmaker, & Nguyen, 2017; Patrikakou, 2016; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005). Knowledge concerning Smartphone-assisted educational management is still in its infancy and almost absent from literature on educational administration. There is especially a dearth of knowledge regarding the fast decision-making that takes place due to information that is uploaded by Smartphones.

There are many insights concerning decision-making processes (Head & Alford, 2015 ; Kahneman, 2011; Yang, Zhang, & Yang, 2017), (Yang, Zhang, & Yang, 2017) and the understanding of decision making of school principals and their considerations is well-established (Torres Jr & Chen, 2006; Frick, 2009; Shaked & Schechter,

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2018; Findlay, 2015). However, literature has little to say about technology-assisted decision-making and its implications. The modern society, that offers always-on, always-available communication services (Lim, 2016) has impact on managerial processes. One of the most commonly adopted channels of communications is the WhatsApp application (Bouhnik & Deshen , 2014). This application is always on (Aburezeq & Ishtaiwa, 2013) and compels immediate response. WhatsApp provides status information unavailable by other means of communications such as text messages (Church & de Oliveira, 2013).

The research investigates decision-making processes performed by kindergarten-managers through WhatsApp. Through the help of 324 managers, a ground breaking qualitative and quantitative research was held, to shed light on the characters of the decisions and principals' considerations. As more and more of the communication is conducted through immediate messaging apps like WhatsApp, the importance of understanding the relevant decision- making processes and the characteristics of the decision makers increases.

Literature Review

WhatsApp in the Educational Management

Nearly all Smartphones owners take their devices with them wherever they go and treat them as an essential part of their lives (Anglano, 2014). The instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp have penetrated practically all smartphone user communities. WhatsApp appears to make the development of social presence easier than other forms of computer-mediated communications (Tang & Hew, 2017). WhatsApp, which is an instant messaging application that can be run on most mobile platforms, is

one of the most popular applications worldwide (Priyono, 2016). WhatsApp messages have become ubiquitous in everyday life. In December 2017, there were 1.5 billion monthly WhatsApp users worldwide (Statista, 2018).

The advantage of WhatsApp is being a reliable and fast communication method (Cetinkaya, 2017). WhatsApp enables full-time-working parents to constantly participate, as is encouraged by governments and education systems (Schilder, Broadstone, & Curenton, 2017). Parent-teacher relationships in kindergarten are multifaceted and included few dimensions support, undermining, endorsement, and agreement between staff and the families (Lang, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Jeon, 2017).

For quite a long time, mobile devices and collaborative learning environments have been used as common tools in education systems (Heflin, Shewmaker, & Nguyen, 2017). The education system increasingly uses social networks (Lim, 2016; Pachler, Ranieri, Manca, & Cook, 2012; Pimmer & Tulenko, 2015; Heath, Maghrabi, & Carr, 2015). (Pachler, Ranieri, Manca, & Cook, 2012) Kindergarten students' parents mostly belong to generations born after 1980 and are often referred to as "digital natives", "Millennials", or "the Net Generation" (Kiyici, Akyeampong, & Kiyici, 2013) and therefore expect kindergarten teachers to connect with them using the same technique. The use of cellular phones has begun to replace traditional means of communication between educators and parents (Lim, 2016), and enable parents' involvement (Fiorvanti, 2015). While social media allow users to share their thoughts and feelings with others (Waterloo, Baumgartner, Peter, & Valkenburg, 2017), the norms of social behavior are not yet well-established (Erreygers, Vandebosch,

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Vranjes, Baillien, & De Witte, 2018), so that kindergarten teachers do not have any norms to rely on.

Yet, there is scant research on the influence of WhatsApp on the educational environment and it focuses mostly on the advantages of WhatsApp for educational process and less on managerial processes (e.g. (Alazemi, 2017; Allagui, 2014; Güler, 2017; Ngaleka & Uys, 2013; Robinson, et al., 2015; So, 2016). Use of Smartphones allows educators to provide emotional, cognitive and social support in synchronized simultaneous conversation between participants (Flowers, 2015; Ule, Živoder, & Du Bois-Reymond, 2015). The easy thought sharing of social media encourages use (Waterloo, Baumgartner, Peter, & Valkenburg, 2017).

The education system increasingly uses social networks (Gikas & Grant, 2013; Heath, Maghrabi, & Carr, 2015; Lim, 2016; Pimmer & Tulenko, 2015; Pachler, Ranieri, Manca, & Cook, 2012).Parents of kindergarten children also initiate contact through cellular phones to form message groups, and see Smartphone contact as an accessible and comfortable means to advance their children's education (Gong & Wallace, 2012; Hall & Bierman, 2015; Lim, 2016). Use of WhatsApp is very advantageous for those working in the education system. WhatsApp communication between teachers and parents can help to solve problems, with shared thinking and consultation and easy access to educational resources, despite physical distance between communicators and knowledge sources (Chipunza & Bere, 2013). The main disadvantage is the flood of unwanted information (Bouhnik & Deshen , 2014) and the mental effort that such dialog requires (Francisco, 2017).

Managerial Decision Making in Educational Systems

School principals' decision-making is not only influenced by their wish to leave a mark, but also by their preconceptions that influence their use of data (Buske & Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, 2018), the individual interests and alliance partners (Walter, Kellermanns, & Lechner, 2012). Even though, the principals are not automatically comply to given policy and have their discretion (Torres Jr & Chen, 2006; Tamir & Grabarski, 2018) and can find themselves in a clash between personal beliefs and values and organizational or professional demands which lead them to variate decisions (Frick, 2009; Tamir & Grabarski, 2018).

Principals who are considered good at problem-solving and decision-making use advanced technology and insist on repeatedly examining the different possibilities on offer (Marke, 2016; McLeod & Richardson, 2013). Technology allows principals to share decision-making processes with their staffs (Sellers, 2005).

Complex Decisions

Problems in public organization might be considered "wicked" and therefore complex to resolve (Head & Alford, 2015) . In complex decision-making tasks, participants lack the requisite knowledge to make quality decisions because task elements are highly interrelated, and the consequence of possible actions is often ambiguous. Those decisions usually based on "design problems and always ill-structured" (Grünig & Kuhn, 2017)p.10). The goals of complex decisions are unclear and too many (Morieux, 2011) and lead the decision-maker to concentrate on the end result rather than on the process (Yang, Zhang, & Yang, 2017). Education systems have

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problems like these that include dilemmas, require comparison of many options (Klein, 2005).

The concept of problem complexity is subjective. Contrary to complex decisions, simple decisions are cognitively easy, and cause less cognitive strain so the decision-maker uses less effort to reach a decision (Kahneman, 2011). Problems may be less complex for the decider that quickly finds a solution because of the familiarity associated with repeated exposure, habituation and processing fluency that occurs when previously perceived stimuli are encoded (Montoya, Horton, Vevea, Citkowicz, & Lauber, 2017). When the decision-maker applies less effort in finding the solution, it is easier to find the right solution (Vergauwe, Dewaele, Langerock, & Barrouillet, 2012), and the same problems need less attention and less energy when the decider is skilled (Waskom, Frank, & Wagner, 2017).

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research was to investigate the types of decisions made by the kindergarten managers using WhatsApp. Specifically, the aim was to see whether the pressure caused by the immediate messages tool affects the type of decisions.

Research Context

The kindergarten-managers propose an excellent environment for the purposes of this research as they deal with a broad range of activities including setting curriculum and deciding on pedagogical issues (Mihai, Butera, & Friesen, 2017). In Israel, the kindergarten-managers independently run their organization (not part of a larger school) and therefore have managerial duties and need to perform managerial decision-making. The managers have pedagogical

autonomy to choose content and methods of teaching and their work is supervised by regional supervisors (Sverdlov & Aram , 2016). They also have continuous contacts with the children's parents (Geiger, 2013; Harris & Barnes, 2009; Oplatka & Stundi, 2011). We assumed that the heavy burden and sparse resources in the kindergartens would constitute a motivational factor for the adoption of time-saving technology. Additionally, we knew that contact with parents was a significant part of these managers' work (Choy & Karuppiah, 2016). There was also another clear advantage – this is a relatively homogenous population in terms of their role definition and its incumbent tasks, a fact that reduced complications such as variations in the span of control, the number of entities with whom they maintain contact etc.

Methodology

The research is based on mixed method that involves interviews, transcript analyses and questionnaire. The triangulation of data from these different tools provided various viewpoints on the research theme (Miles & Huberman, 2014; Spillane, et al., 2010), (Spillane, et al., 2010). To optimize the benefits of each method, the research was performed sequentially, enabling better planning of each step. The structure of the research phases is depicted in figure 1 and is elaborated in the 'procedure' section below.

Figure 1.

Research structure
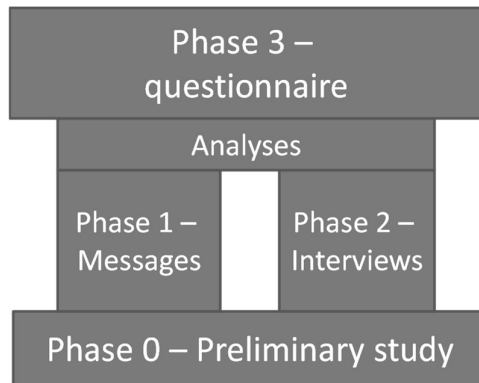
The preliminary study provided initial but rudimentary understanding of the problem. Because of the rudimentary nature of this phase, the researchers felt that the process was not yet sufficiently mature to begin a quantitative study. Therefore, a two-headed approach commenced. This approach provided information to form a comprehensive picture of the studied phenomenon. Initial data-collection from qualitative research allowed aspects and nuances to surface while reducing preconceptions concerning the research subject (Merriam, 2009). This also enabled attention to be given to the contextual richness of the data that emerged from this tool (Hallinger, 2011).

Following selection of the sample population, a preliminary learning stage was conducted, collecting information from a focus group. At the second stage interviews were held with a larger group of 21 kindergarten-managers. Given the data from these two stages, the next stage was documentary analysis of 74 WhatsApp transcripts, extracting raw data without the intervention of interviewees. The last

stage involved quantitative analysis of responses to a questionnaire from 324 managers.

The qualitative stages of the study (the qualitative analyses) left several questions unanswered. The limited sample, though providing valuable insights, helped to consolidate the questions for the quantitative part, crystallize the research hypotheses and to create an extensive questionnaire that could be sent to 324 managers for further analyses.

The Qualitative Research Procedure

Stage-1 – Preliminary Study

Two experienced kindergarten-managers (18 years' and 20 years' experience) participated in a focus group to clarify the research subject. They were asked about the characteristics of the managerial decisions reflected in their own WhatsApp communications. Following, they returned to the field and further discussed the subject with other managers, examining transcripts of their WhatsApp texts and those of their colleagues and collecting insights in shared discussions with the researchers. These insights served as material for the preparation of the next stage of the research. After this stage ended, it was possible to simultaneously perform the next two stages including collecting broader qualitative data collection.

Stage-2: Collection of WhatsApp Transcripts

Participants: 10 kindergarten-managers (including the two kindergarten managers that participate in the focus group) who corresponded over a period of 4.5 months with parents and the kindergarten staff members. The transcripts of their messages were collected. All the names of the participants, including mention of the

children's names were encoded to maintain anonymity by special objective assistant who blurred the identity of the participants and of all the people mentioned in the research.

Stage-3: Semi-structured Interviews

Participants: 21 managers (to avoid bias, different from the 10 managers who participated in the focus group). During the interviews, the managers often exposed some of their WhatsApp transcripts to reinforce statements that they voiced in their responses to the interview questions. The managers were asked to retrospectively reflect of their acts and considerations through inquiries about the reasons to use WhatsApp, the types of requests and requirements made by parents through the tool, which decisions were made immediately using the application and which not, the response time and the pressure to respond quickly.

Findings from the Analysis of the Qualitative Research

The data from the 31 managers (the 10 of stage-2 and the 21 of stage-3) was analysed. The analysis displayed 4 distinct categories, that shed light on kindergarten managers decision- making characteristics as reflected by WhatsApp communications: Parental pressure to provide fast replies, Communication overload and the types of decisions made.

Parental pressure to provide fast replies ("getting rid of the green dot")

The managers felt pressure from parents to respond and decide quickly. Before the introduction of WhatsApp as a communication tool (the age of notice boards, notes and pre-arranged meetings) they

had time to pause for thought and prepare for the meetings before making decisions.

One manager (aged 46, 20 years' experience) reflected:

I already felt the pressure from the beginning, because mothers apparently have free time in the morning but not when I have free time ↲ and I also saw that they thought that I should response to each message.

One other manager (aged 41, 16 years' experience) commented on the pressure:

… With the mothers (of the children) it puts me under pressure: having to think and decide and write it correctly. I must re-read before sending, so that I don't make a mistake and that takes energy and patience that I don't always have.

There is pressure to react immediately and, in most cases, to make decisions before typing the answer. From the moment that WhatsApp was introduced in the group discourse, the messages arrive in real time, within seconds and parents can see when their message was read by the manager, and when she entered the application.

One manager (aged 47, 21 years' experience) explained:

On WhatsApp, I don't think that I fail to use discretion, but it demands serious focus. There is not a lot of time to type the text. Decision-making and thinking using mail are different, it's not immediate. There is more discretion used there.

Non-response by the managers may be interpreted as avoidance by the parents. Several managers claimed that they needed to "get rid of the green dot" as quickly as possible. Especially since the parents can see that the manager got the message, and a "countdown" till response starts. When they reply quickly, they cannot examine

alternatives for their decision in the manner that they would do if they had more time and they feel inconvenience.

Communication overload

The managers complained about the vast number of daily messages they had to read and respond to. They claimed to be "overloaded" by these messages. The frequency of the messages made things very difficult for the managers because they entered constantly, during the daily work and the managers felt they were never "up to date" with the communication and they found it tiresome to cherry-pick the important messages from the general hubbub. As one (aged 39, 10 years' experience) explained:

> *After that the babble didn't end and I receive 100 messages a day, I really was annoyed. (The parents' messages) were about insignificant matters, they asked 'should we come early?'; 'when does it end?'; 'can I bring his brother instead of a parent?', 'do we have to pay'; 'what should we bring?'… and these messages were all sent after I had sent a detailed invitation…and what each one would bring. Its stressful with the mothers: having to write correctly, and reading the message again before I send it, in order not to make a mistake and that takes energy and patience that I don't always have.*

Other managers reported similar frustration from the message overload and presented their WhatsApp correspondence history (number of messages per day) to demonstrate the overload and emphasize their claims. Oddly enough, some managers (the younger ones) did not even find it an unreasonable expectation.

Types of decisions made – simple and complex

When asked, the managers claimed they limited the decision making performed via WhatsApp to simple ones. Decisions felt by the managers to be simple included arriving at the kindergarten in warm clothing on an especially cloudy day or early closing of the

kindergarten due to severe weather. An example of such decision-making was sent by manager (aged 35, 8 years' experience):

Dear parents, good evening, it was decided that it would be possible to bring cake to the birthday.

Other subjects necessitate deeper discussion, such as interactions between the kindergarten staff and the child and his family. The managers prefer to discuss these matters in a telephone conversation or in face-to-face meetings intended to go deeper into the matter and to enable decisions to be made outside the application's arena. One example of dialogical correspondence between manager (aged 31, 6 years' experience) and parent:

The mother: What is wrong with our child N? He doesn't want to invite friends to our home and he is not invited by them. …. What do you think should be done? I don't know how serious this is and whether I should take him for treatment?
The manager: I suggest we meet and talk about this.

Although we managed to identify cases in which the managers did make complex decisions through WhatsApp, the managers were not eager to expose these cases, perhaps they were not prevalent, because the managers were cautious or because in their daily lives they make very few complex decisions and most of the decisions that they make are not complex. One example of this can be seen in a lengthy correspondence between a manager (aged 45, 19 years' experience) and a mother.

Mother: … R (the assistant-manager) told me that my daughter did not agree to go to the toilet, even when they initiated this and asked her. I know that you told me not to make a fuss about it and, that this would pass, but it is difficult for me not to be worried about this, and it is already three weeks since this began. What do you think?

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Manager: … I suggest we allow the assistant to give her positive reinforcements, when she does not wee in her pants, and continue to suggest that she go to the toilet. If she agrees then she will give her a hug and kiss and for example she will tell her dad about this, in her presence.

Additionally, most interviews, the managers mentioned they told those who participated in the WhatsApp group that they should comply with the boundaries that they determined for the discussion, e.g. avoiding sending jokes, offending participants, and flooding the group with irrelevant pictures/video-clips etc. These stipulations had led in the past to the creation of writing codes for the use of WhatsApp. Writing in a WhatsApp group quickly took on the character of public discourse, the manager-parents correspondence became more liberated and intimate and the virtual boundaries were not so strictly or cautiously applied.

Background to the Quantitative Research

The several stages of the qualitative research provided interesting data on the assimilation of WhatsApp among the managers. It was clear that despite the disadvantages of this medium, its contribution and the pressure from the parents overcame the managers' hesitation and the discomfort. Yet, the reports received from the managers, regarding the need to "get rid of the dot" and to reply swiftly, led us to the hypothesis that the immediacy of the tool pushed the managers to take decisions "on their feet". The impressions that emerged from the conversations formed a complex picture that was not without internal contradictions. On one hand, the managers reported significant pressure to provide instant answers. On the other hand, they explained that they took care to make immediate decisions only when simple decisions were needed. When more complex decisions were required they delayed the

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decision until they could consider the matter more comprehensively. A different picture emerged from the transcripts of their conversations - according to which, some complex decisions did receive a response, even rapidly. The researchers' assumption is that during the interviews they preferred not to admit that complex decisions were made under pressure of time. To test this point, they decided to administer a questionnaire, so that they could find the parameters that led the managers to be willing to make complex decisions "on their feet".

The researchers suspected that the managers demonstrated some sort of defensive behavior that made them reluctant to report that they made complex decisions using WhatsApp. Especially, since they all reported a significant pressure to react and decide and particularly because the tendency of the parents towards full disclosure is known to contribute to that pressure (Baruh & Cemalcıla, 2018). This hypothesis could not be accurately examined by qualitative tools (yielding "more of the same" results) and a different, quantitative approach, was needed. We therefore decided to draw on a very broad sample, both in terms of a large number of participants and regarding the number of questions in the questionnaire (so that there would be no obvious spotlight highlight on the questions relating to decision-making). In addition, the broad scope of the questionnaire allowed us to collect much information on the assimilation of the use of WhatsApp by the managers.

- Participants: included 324 managers (with a response rate of 69%).

- Distribution of the research tool: The questionnaire was administered to the managers through Google Docs.

• Validation of the questionnaire: this was performed by turning to managers with many years of role experience (25 to 30 years' experience; in the first batch that was administered to 50 managers we asked for their written remarks on the questionnaire, and according to these responses we amended the drafting of the questions)

• The questionnaire structure: the participants were asked to fill in basic data concerning their age, years of role experience, type of kindergarten in which they taught and their education. They were asked to grade their level of agreement with a series of statements on a scale of 1-5.

Summary of the Findings

The most salient (and not surprising) finding (depicted in Table 1) was that the managers reported that the WhatsApp tool was helpful for them (more than 90% of the managers marked 5 for the statement "The use of WhatsApp is very convenient for me" and an even higher percentage for the statement "I use WhatsApp because of the speed with which information is transferred"). In other words, despite the complaints that we heard during the qualitative study, in general, the managers reported their satisfaction with this tool. It is interesting to note that the statement "The use of WhatsApp saves me much work-time" received less approval than the two previous statements (although it was awarded a high mean of 4.02. If we had merely sufficed with the qualitative study that included a substantial sample of interviews, we would not have been able to identify this difference and we would assume that saving time was the reason for use of the tool, however this finding apparently indicates that time saving, despite its importance was not the only or most important

value that the managers found in WhatsApp. This supposition is strengthened due to the sweeping support given to the statements "I use WhatsApp because the technology is friendly for parents" and "I think that the parents are satisfied with the use of this channel". To our surprise, it transpired that the statement: "I think that WhatsApp helps me to manage the kindergarten in a more effective way" was only awarded a mean of 3.48. Perhaps this is because communication with the parents is not perceived as "management", rather as complementary activities.

Table 1.

Questionnaire answers

Statement	Number of respondents					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
In our group WhatsApp is only used for text messages	156	35	45	25	62	2.39	1.58
I often use it to send the children's pictures to parents	87	43	59	38	95	3.04	1.59
I often use it to send messages to parents	41	31	59	56	136	3.66	1.42
I often use it to send video-clips to the parents	173	62	46	17	25	1.94	1.26
I often use it to send audio messages to parents	284	16	16	4	4	1.23	0.71
I believe that WhatsApp improves communication with parents	50	24	47	78	123	3.62	1.44
I think that parents are satisfied with the use of this channel	18	12	40	87	165	4.15	1.13
I set clear rules regarding the times for sending messages	106	29	41	28	118	3.08	1.72
The contents of the messages are limited to information only	42	20	41	45	173	3.90	1.44
I use WhatsApp because it is convenient to use	10	5	20	53	234	4.53	0.92
I use WhatsApp because its use is friendly for parents	24	15	27	53	202	4.23	1.23
The use of WhatsApp saves much work time	25	24	39	65	168	4.02	1.28
WhatsApp demands a lot of time at the expense of the time with the children in the kindergarten	182	51	37	16	38	2.00	1.39

Statement	Number of respondents					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
I use WhatsApp because of the speedy transmission of messages	10	6	14	51	239	4.57	0.91
WhatsApp is very convenient for me to use	12	13	25	64	207	4.38	1.04
My connection with the parents on WhatsApp is very formal	46	18	71	83	104	3.56	1.36
I spend time in order to properly compose my text messages	30	21	43	75	152	3.93	1.31
I prefer to answer on WhatsApp only when it involves decisions that seem simple to me	51	30	67	61	113	3.48	1.45
I reply on WhatsApp even when it involves a complex decision	28	18	45	68	163	3.99	1.29
I think that the media of WhatsApp helps me to manage the kindergarten more effectively	56	39	72	74	83	3.27	1.41
After a period of WhatsApp use I am satisfied with the use of this tool	29	6	17	35	234	4.37	1.24
The disadvantage of WhatsApp is the blurring of formal boundaries between work time and private life	36	16	42	77	151	3.90	1.34
I am unwilling to discuss subjects relating to my professional authority as a kindergarten teacher on a group WhatsApp	175	54	49	24	22	1.96	1.27
After using WhatsApp, I think that this media helps me to communicate with the parents	50	30	61	61	120	3.53	1.45
I don't limit the time when parents can send me messages	106	22	51	48	96	3.02	1.65

In contrast to the qualitative study, the level of the managers' dissatisfaction with the tool was not especially high – the level of agreement with the statement relating to the blurring of formal boundaries between private and work life, was a medium result of 3.27. "Time-demanding" was awarded an even lower result: 2. In other words, although the managers recognized that the tool demanded time, this consideration was not given an especially important place in comparison with the advantages of the tool. The researchers assumed that there was a correlation between managers

who limited the times for sending messages and the managers who reported a blurring of boundaries between their private and work lives (managers who felt that there was an interfering invasion into their private lives would tend to set time limits for the sending of messages). However, no such correlation was found.

Demographic Aspects

The researchers' basic assumption was that the acceptance level for the tool (as appeared from the level of agreement with statements concerning convenience, use in kindergarten-management, timesaving, friendliness for parents and parents' satisfaction) would correlate positively with the managers' demographic characteristics. They expected that the managers with more education would know better how to utilize the tool and that we therefore expected that they would have a higher acceptance level. Other expectations was that the younger generation would be more likely to accept the new technology. Surprisingly, no significant correlation was found between the above-mentioned statements and these demographic parameters, except for negative correlations with the level of education (depicted in table 2). It transpired that more highly educated managers were not convinced that the tool helped them to save time or helped them to manage the kindergarten effectively.

Table 2.

Pearson correlations and Significance.

Statement	Education		Years of experience in kindergarten		Kindergarten managers. ages in years	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
I use WhatsApp because it is convenient to use	-0.032	0.573	-0.079	0.153	-0.034	0.537
I use WhatsApp because the technology is user-friendly for parents	-0.044	0.442	-.128*	0.021	-0.055	0.322
The use of WhatsApp saves much work time	-.139*	0.014	-0.071	0.205	-0.035	0.532
The use of WhatsApp is very convenient for me	-0.084	0.139	-0.080	0.152	-0.041	0.458
I think that this media of WhatsApp helps be to manage the kindergarten in a more effective manner	-.184**	0.001	-0.055	0.326	-0.047	0.403

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Apart from a single finding regarding senior managers with more experience who claimed less that they used the tool because it was technologically friendly for parents, no significant correlations were found with age or years of experience. It can be assumed that this indicates that the technology was already mature at the time of the research, so that there is no significant difference between more senior or more experienced managers and new/younger managers.

Findings Relating to Simple/Complex Decision-making

As noted the main reason for the inclusion of a questionnaire was to examine the subject of decision-making. For this purpose, the questionnaire included two statements dealing with simple and complex decision-making: (1) I prefer to respond only when decisions

that seem simple to me are involved. (2) I respond on WhatsApp even when complex decisions are involved.

In order to understand which factors influence the managers' willingness to make complex decisions on WhatsApp, a process of stepwise regression was performed, to find the predictor for statements that were relevant to decision-making. As we had thought from the beginning, a large population was indeed needed to identify these correlations. The regression analysis (table 3) shows that there were only two statements that explain the statement regarding complex decisions: (1) Using WhatsApp saves much work-time. (2) I believe that the use of WhatsApp improves communication with parents.

Table 3.

Regression: "I respond on WhatsApp when complex decisions are involved"

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.075	.226		4.748	.000			
	Q.17 The use of WhatsApp saves much work time	.221	.054	.224	4.119	.000	.224	.224	.224
2	(Constant)	.922	.237		3.886	.000			
	Q17 the use of WhatsApp saves much work time	.158	.062	.160	2.557	.011	.224	.141	.138
	Q9 I believe that the use of WhatsApp improves communication with the parents	.112	.055	.128	2.049	.041	.208	.114	.111

a. Dependent Variable: q31 "I respond on WhatsApp when complex decisions are involved"

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In other words, insofar as the managers saw the tool as a medium that assisted their connection with parents then they were more inclined to increase their decision-making on complex issues. Managers who saw the tool as a mean to save time, tended to expand its use for more complex subjects. We assume that in the balance between saving time and resistance to expanding the use of the tool for more complex issues, managers for whom the tool saves time, agreed to be more flexible regarding the making of complex decisions. To supplement these data, an identical analysis was performed for the statement on simple decision-making (table 4). The analysis revealed that there were three explaining statements: (1) I prefer to examine things in depth before I respond on the group WhatsApp. (2) I invest time in order to draft the content of my messages correctly. (3) I do not limit the parents to a particular time for sending messages. It can be seen that the managers who perceived WhatsApp as an official communication tool tended also to invest time in composing their messages and these two statements were in line with a tendency to restrict decision-making to the simple level.

Table 4.

Regression: ″I prefer to reply on WhatsApp only when this involves decisions that seem simple to me″

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.540	.371		4.152	.000			
	Q23 I prefer to examine everything in depth before I reply on the WhatsApp group	.441	.080	.292	5.486	.000	.292	.292	.292
2	(Constant)	1.312	.373		3.518	.000			
	Q23 I prefer to examine everything in depth before I reply on the WhatsApp group	.309	.090	.205	3.451	.001	.292	.189	.181
	Q29 I invest time in order to correctly compose the content of my messages	.210	.066	.189	3.180	.002	.284	.175	.167
3	(Constant)	.997	.384		2.601	.010			
	Q23 I prefer to examine everything in depth before I reply on the WhatsApp group	.281	.089	.186	3.156	.002	.292	.174	.164
	Q29 I invest time in order to correctly compose the content of my messages	.218	.065	.196	3.339	.001	.284	.183	.173
	Q11 I don't restrict the times when parents can send me messages	.136	.046	.154	2.950	.003	.174	.163	.153

a. Dependent Variable: Q30 ″I prefer to reply on WhatsApp only when this involves decisions that seem simple to me″

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Discussion

The research investigated the assimilation of WhatsApp among kindergarten managers and the effects it had on their decision-making. A series of studies was conducted, beginning with semi-structured interviews followed by analysis of transcripts of WhatsApp conversations and concluding with a focus on a restricted number of questions in questionnaires. Five findings emerged from the research:

(1) The managers felt they were under constant pressure to read and reply fast to the incoming messages. Since the kindergarten manager is based significantly on interactions with the parents and there is an embedded will to increase parent involvement to improve the children achievement (Bassok, Magouirk, Markowitz, & Play, 2018; Murray, McFarland-Piazza, & Harrison, 2015) and since the parents are the ones choosing the specific kindergarten, is it understandable why the managers felt they needed to maintain good parental communication and respond accordingly.

(2) Not only did the managers felt they needed to reply constantly, they were very reluctant to limit the communication to work hours. The lack of well-established code of conduct for WhatsApp conversation left (Pielot, de Oliveira, Kwak, & Oliver, 2014) the managers exposed to parents' expectations for quick response almost all day long. Most managers could not effectively separate the work hours from their private time.

(3) Most managers reported that they could not stop the "flood" of incoming messages. The parents, being of the "Y-generation", expect the kindergarten managers to communicate via WhatsApp and to be "nearly-constant-available". Furthermore,

this is something that some managers (being millennials themselves) felt that it was a reasonable expectation. This correspond with the well-known phenomenon of message-overload and online fatigue (Dhir, Yossatorn, Kaur, & Chen, 2018; Shin & Shin, 2016) especially when received information was not requested by the receiver (Derks & Bakker, 2010). Since the managers have a lot of daily tasks and demanding workload, they needed to balance the need to attend to their tasks and the will to reply. This increased the load of message handling in their "private" time. This overload in known to lead to cognitive load and problems in multi-tasking (Vannucci & Ohannessian, 2019).

(4) The managers reported that they manage to limit the decision-making to simple decisions, despite the pressure to react immediately. They asserted that although there was pressure to react quickly in the computerized era ('to get rid of the green dot') and a heavy burden was imposed on them to respond more quickly than they would like to, they were able to cope with this and delay complex decision-making. Despite the claim that the managers cope well with pressure and not to make complex decisions on WhatsApp, it appears that increasing pressure on them nevertheless leads them to do so. This was seen at the interview transcripts. A questionnaire that was administered to examine this phenomenon discovered that despite their declarations concerning this subject, the managers did make complex decisions on WhatsApp. Managers that attributed high significance to saving work time and believed that WhatsApp improves connection with the parents, were less reluctant to use the tool even for complex decisions, thus compensating for the lack of information and time by relying on intuition and personal experience (Grünig & Kuhn, 2017). That might be explained by

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their wish to retain control on the occurrences (Buske & Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, 2018), and to leave their fingerprints (Schechter & Shaked, 2017). On the other hand, cautious managers who preferred to deeply check the messages' content before sending and invest time in phrasing, showed less tendency to use WhatsApp for complex decisions (also, these managers did not think it important to limit the parents' messaging to specific times).

(5) Age difference – apparently, the younger kindergarten managers are less disturbed by the infiltration of WhatsApp to their private time and are also less annoyed by the need to respond quickly. It seems that the millennials perceive these behaviours as more acceptable and a mere extension to their social lives, since their social lives are occur mainly in the digital arena anyhow (Hon, Cui, & Na, 2016; Soto, Almarza, & Wilkinson, 2017).

This study is one of the first relating to acceptance of instant messaging technology and online synchronic discussion groups as a tool for decision-making in the education system.

Contribution to Decision Making and Educational Technology

The research sheds a new light on the social arena where the kindergarten managers have to perform. The modern technology and the rapid means of communication force the kindergarten manager to expand their managerial duties to the social-media arena.

The characteristics of this specific social-media arena (immediate responses and constant availability) force the managers to make even complex decisions without giving them enough consideration. The managers yet need to learn how to distinguish between the simple decisions, that can be made "on the feet" (though, sometimes even

these are less recommended) and complex decisions that require time and thought not suitable for this arena. A code of conduct that separate these issues is yet to be developed and accepted by both parents and managers, since obviously the managers intuition fails to make this distinguish when under pressure.

As the main drive for these phenomena is the parental pressure, it may be worth to consider central regulation from the ministry of education to help the kindergarten managers. This directive may be especially important as the millennials (and in the future, generations Y and Z) become a majority among the managers.

Future Research

Additional research is needed to further explain the influences of this technology on decision-making at the different managerial levels of this system. The finding that the managers who attributed more importance to time-saving and efficiency were the ones who were less likely to limit WhatsApp to simple decisions suggests that as the importance of time-saving becomes more common, the barriers against making complex decisions on WhatsApp will weaken. Beyond the speed of the WhatsApp tool, it has other characteristics, such as the ability to collect many opinions from many users and to decentralize decision-making sharing it with all the members of the group. It would be interesting to examine whether this tool does indeed bring the managers to share their decision-making with group members, i.e. instead of making the decisions by themselves, they allow group wisdom to contribute to their decision-making.

The research limitations are the specific population – the kindergarten managers, and it would be advisable to expand the research to other managers of the educational systems and even

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beyond. Furthermore, the managers are well rooted in the local culture, which is a composed of heavy WhatsApp users. The code of conduct of using instant messages is still in its infancy and, thus, may alter as time goes by.

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Misconceptions in Phenomenological Research in Educational Administration: An Analysis Based on Theses[*]

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Abstract	Article Info
The present study intends to determine the ways followed and misconceptions held in the studies of phenomenological research design by analysing the theses in the field of educational administration. By using the database of the Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center, forty master's and ten doctoral	

theses conducted between the years 2010-2017 in the field of education administration were reviewed and analysed methodologically. The results indicated that researchers did not benefit from international literature on phenomenological research, the aims and objectives of the theses were not appropriate for employing phenomenology, the study groups of the theses were structured in an unfavourable way, the interview questions used to collect data were not directed to the essence of experience, appropriate methods for the process of data analysis process were conducted, and the interpretation of the findings included problematic points. These misconceptions held in phenomenological research were mostly due to not dominating the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology. Therefore, the researchers planning to conduct their research under the skin of phenomenology need to read enough about and to gain insights into the phenomenological research design before the beginning of their studies.

Cite as:

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Introduction

The paradigmatic shifts throughout the last century revealed new approaches to research in social science, and the last decades have seen a growing trend towards qualitative research methods. A number of valuable studies have employed qualitative research to analyse events and contexts, evaluate social processes and observe reality from different perspectives (Neuman, 2014). As a kind of qualitative research, phenomenological studies have also become a frequently used method to reveal the pattern of events and reality with its distinct philosophical background (Creswell, 2013; Frykman ve Gilje, 2003; van Manen, 2007).

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Recently, there has been an increasing interest in phenomenological studies among social scientists, which has also been reflected in the production of knowledge in educational sciences. There has been a considerable increase in the number of studies designed with phenomenology. For example, a search in Education Recourses Information Center (ERIC) database results in only 1312 research article about phenomenology until 2009, while the number has come up to 5217 in last ten years (ERIC, 2018). Bakanay and Çakır (2006) relate that increase to the constructivist philosophy adopted in the field of education and argue that constructivist philosophy's definition of education as a phenomenon focusing on the subjective element of reality is influential for the increase in the number of phenomenological studies. Moreover, Randles (2012) states that the phenomenological approach can reveal more accurate results about certain cases than quantitative methods, which leads to a change in the preference of research type in education. From a different viewpoint, Selvi (2009) draws attention to recent critics on education's role in reducing individuals' emotions, behaviours and beliefs into a monotype, and defends that the need for and the use of phenomenology have been increased as it can draw a more comprehensive framework for revealing the processes of interpretation of individuals who perceive different experiences in different ways.

Phenomenology presents a systematic framework for representing and interpreting the subjective experiences of actors in educational processes (Koopman, 2017). It has the potential to develop new perspectives for learning, teaching or management, which have a distinctive and complex structure, by identifying how actors of educational settings understand and interpret the educational processes (Van der Mescht, 2004). Besides, the use of

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phenomenological research in education can contribute to the productivity and creativity function of the educational systems through self-realization by emphasizing the uniqueness of individuals (Selvi, 2009).

It does appear that many researchers appreciate the potential of phenomenology for educational research and there is a growing body of literature examining different aspects of education by using phenomenological research methods. Especially the approaches and analyses by scholars such as Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986), Giorgi (2009), Marton (1986), Moustakas (1994), and Van Manen (1990) lead to the way of using phenomenology in educational research. When those research are considered, it is seen that phenomenology is employed to analyse the feelings and thoughts of students, teachers or managers, how they associate themselves with school and what meanings they assign to school-related processes. Therefore, the phenomenological studies in educational settings try to answer questions such as "What is the essence and nature of the learning experience of a student?" (Van Manen, 1990).

Being a sub-discipline of educational research, the studies in the field of educational administration mainly focus on educational areas such as management, leadership, organization, and evaluation (Oplatka, 2010). Since the primary element in these areas is human, it is possible to say that phenomenological approaches can be useful in researching the different aspects of educational administration. Indeed, the studies of Griffiths (1977), Hobbs (1977) and Greenfield (1978), which are revealing the pioneer discussions on phenomenology in the field of educational administration, are essential starting points in this sense. These discussions focused on the differences between system approaches, which were quite

popular at the time of the publication of those studies, and phenomenology, which was a relatively new concept in the field. It can be concluded from those studies that the abstract structure of the system approach was criticized and the need for a phenomenological perspective was accepted in order to reveal the nature of the educational organizations accurately. It was also mentioned that phenomenology could be used as a method to develop educational administrators by entering their inner world. In another perspective, it was accepted that the system approach and phenomenology were complementary. However, it was stated that phenomenology could not be used in all organizational situations and could not be influential in such stages as examining decision-making frameworks. These arguments show that phenomenology has been handled as an important philosophical foundation and research method for the field from the very beginning. Moreover, Greenfield's (1974, p. 3) call for 'employing phenomenological perspective in research on organizational problems' has been widely accepted in the upcoming years and there have been many studies conducted by phenomenological design (e.g., Blase, 1987; Chater, 1998; Gibson, 2014; Lum, 1997; Makoe, 2008; Van der Mescht, 2004; Waite, 2010). As in the context of these studies, many research topics in the field of educational administration such as the meanings attributed to school-related processes, the nature of the management and school, and the experiences about school, learning and administration can be analysed through phenomenological approaches.

Phenomenological research generates new perspectives on management and leadership by exploring certain experiences in the field of educational administration (Van der Mescht, 2004). It is also valuable in terms of understanding the nature of educational organizations and describing and interpreting the experiences of the

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actors involved in the process of learning-teaching. Despite the agreement on the value of phenomenology, the debate continues about how to use phenomenology as a research method and the issue of implementing correct strategies of phenomenological research has been a controversial and much-disputed subject within the field of educational science (Finlay, 2009). It is possible to say that these debates are also reflected in educational administration research. In some studies, which have adopted phenomenological approaches, the appropriateness of the research design and the ways followed in the research to the assumptions of phenomenology is controversial. Therefore, there is a need to question whether research problems can be solved by using phenomenological approaches and existing research in educational administration is congruent with the philosophies underlying the phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). Drawing upon that questioning, the present study intends to analyse the theses employed phenomenological research design and produced in the field of educational administration in Turkey in behalf of the ways followed and to determine the misconceptions when conducting the phenomenological research. This study, therefore, set out to examine the use of phenomenological research design, and thereafter, to develop a guideline for researchers by relying on 'not to do' points. In light of these aims, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

In the theses produced in the field of educational administration and employed phenomenological research design;

(i)   Which sources were used and referenced to justify employing a phenomenological research design?

(ii)   Are the stated aims and objectives appropriate for conducting phenomenological research?

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(iii) Which sampling methods were used when creating the study groups?

(iv) Which data collection and analysis methods were conducted? And were they appropriate for phenomenological research?

(v) How were the findings interpreted? Were findings interpreted appropriately for phenomenological research?

Research should be conducted in a framework that is coherent with the underlying assumptions of the research design chosen (Creswell, 2013). In this respect, it is hoped that this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of phenomenological research design in the field of educational administration. The results should make an instructive and directive contribution by revealing "not to do" points based on empirical findings, and thus guiding students and scholars of educational administration while doing research in phenomenological design. Moreover, in the part of the conceptual framework, inexperienced researchers planning to conduct phenomenological research will meet primary sources forming the base of phenomenology. As a limitation, this study is unable to encompass the entire research articles, master and doctoral theses conducted in phenomenological research design in educational administration due to practical constraints. However, we believe that our study group serves as just a starting point and exemplifies the current situation, and the findings reveal inclusionary insights for the phenomenological research in educational administration.

The first section of this paper begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research and looks at the philosophical foundations of phenomenology. It will then go on to explaining phenomenology as a research design. The second section is

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concerned with the methodology used for the study. The fourth section presents the findings of the research, focusing on the key themes that answer the research questions of the study. In the end, the findings are discussed and the paper is concluded with some suggestions for the next research.

Philosophical Foundations of Phenomenology

Phenomenology, which was developed with the studies of Edmund Husserl and expanded its scope by Martin Heidegger, is considered as a philosophical movement reflected on the fields of psychology, sociology and education (Bakanay and Çakır, 2016). The essence of phenomenological studies is a complete and precise definition and understanding of human experience (Creswell, 2013). Van Manen (2011) notes that phenomenology stems from a highly complex tradition guiding philosophical movements such as existentialism, post-structuralism, and feminism, and it is also a method of humanities used to determine how people make sense of a specific phenomenon. Spiegelberg (as cited in Baird, 1999) explains the primary purpose of phenomenology as to directly examine and define a phenomenon as experienced in consciousness.

From the viewpoint of Van Manen (1990), phenomenological research is a kind of attempt to continuously question the world we are experiencing and to understand it with different dimensions. The following explanations of him about the characteristics of phenomenology are noteworthy for understanding the philosophical foundations: (i) Phenomenology seeks to understand what an individual's daily experiences are and how people interpret them. (ii) Phenomenological studies allow researchers to have a direct connection with life and a logical understanding of it rather than

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developing theories by which researchers can control and explain more variables about the world. (iii) Phenomenological studies are not interested in the present but the past, since they focus on the lived experiences; in other words, it is the aim to reach factors transforming a phenomenon to a "thing" by getting to the heart of it.

Two Main Approaches in Phenomenology: Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology and Heidegger's Hermeneutical Phenomenology

Phenomenological studies are generally accepted as derived from two philosophical traditions. Based on Husserl's philosophy, the first is the transcendental phenomenology which aims to describe a phenomenon rather than explaining it. The second is Heideggerian hermeneutical phenomenology that focuses on how individuals make sense of a phenomenon. Although they have common sides, these two approaches differ in some ways in interpreting the philosophy of phenomenology and implementing the research.

The main point of Husserl's phenomenology is to approach the phenomenon as it appeared through consciousness, in other words, the real source of reality is consciousness. Both minds and objects are formed by experience, which occurs as a situation eliminating mind-body dualism (Laverty, 2003). One of the most critical factors in Husserl's phenomenology is the concept which he calls as 'lived experience'. According to Husserl, it is not easy to reach the lived experience of the individuals, because these experiences consist of situations that are ignored or taken-for-granted by the individual at first. What we need to do here is to return these ignored or taken-for-granted experiences and re-analyse them. Husserl's main objective is to reach basic 'structures' of consciousness based on these experiences. In this context, Husserl's phenomenology always focuses

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on the meaning of human experience and accepts the lived experience as reality (Koch, 1995).

An important element of Husserl's phenomenology is intentionality. According to Husserl, intentionality is directing the mind toward objects (Eyim, 2006; Koch, 1995). More clearly, intentionality is 'the directedness of consciousness toward the world to understand it,' and Husserl stated that everything could be explained by using directedness (Smith and McIntyre, 1982, as cited in Bakanay and Çakır, 2016, p. 166). The concept of essence or the essence of the phenomena is another key factor in Husserl's phenomenology. Husserl maintained that phenomenology should consider description as an essential point, and that description would return things to themselves, or in other words, to "essence" which constituted the consciousness and sense of lived experience (Koch, 1995). Another critical point for Husserl is bracketing or phenomenological reduction. The process of bracketing can be explained as the elimination of preconceived knowledge, sensation, evaluation and perception of the researcher about the phenomenon that will be examined (Koch, 1995). In the same vein, as noted by Bakanay and Çakır (2016), there is an essential condition in transcendental phenomenology as presenting the experience from the level of consciousness and perception of the individual who experienced it, and thus the researcher should abandon intentionality of his/her consciousness and focus on the consciousness of that individual.

Bringing a different perspective to phenomenology with the hermeneutic approach, Heidegger built his ideas on theology. Accordingly, hermeneutical phenomenology tries to explain and interpret how the individual makes sense of the experiences taking

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place in his/her world (Laverty, 2003). The principal understanding of transcendental phenomenology that 'the experience is lived and shaped only by the individual' evolves into the idea that some experiences can be culturally transmitted in hermeneutic phenomenology (Bakanay and Çakır, 2016).

Although phenomenology is considered as a journey to search for meaning based on experiences of the individuals (Creswell, 2013), it is necessary to underline that there are some distinctions between transcendental and hermeneutical phenomenology. In this respect, Giorgi's (2009) statement that one of the most significant distinction between transcendental and hermeneutical phenomenology is related to bracketing and phenomenological reduction is noteworthy. While examining a phenomenon in hermeneutical phenomenology, it is not possible to put aside preconceived feelings, thoughts, or sensations of the researcher and present the experience only from the level of consciousness and perception of the individual who experienced it. In other words, the difference between these two phenomenological approaches concentrates on consciousness and language. Accordingly, against the understanding in transcendental phenomenology as everything has a consciousness, and thus, the phenomenon should be analysed as it appeared through consciousness (Bakanay and Çakır, 2016), hermeneutic phenomenology highlights the language and its context:

> …. where men first meet with Being is not consciousness, but language. Language always exists before the subject. Subject develops within the area of language. The mutual relation between Being and human is realized through language. Language, rather than being a means of conveying the right information, includes 'truth' that the reality 'demystifies' and present itself to our thought. The place where the Being and human are connected is language. Heidegger expresses this idea in 'Letter on Humanism' as 'Being comes to

*language: Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells.'
(Heidegger, 2002, p.37, as cited in Aydoğdu, 2018, p. 1335).*

Focusing on the differences between transcendental and hermeneutical approaches, Koch (1995) lists these differences as follows: (1) Hermeneutical phenomenology focuses on the questions about how individuals interpret the phenomena. Therefore, Heidegger opposes to epistemological assumptions of Husserl's phenomenology and refer to transformation consciousness to existence. (2) Heidegger stands up to the idea that meaning can be accepted as a representation of an independent reality and theory can be produced from the perspective of an outside observer. (3) The meaning cannot be isolated from its cultural and historical context in hermeneutical phenomenology tradition. In other words, the meaning is not neutral, and it takes shape according to the purpose and perspective of the interpreter. Therefore, an individual activates his/her interest and expectations while reaching the meaning. In this respect, bracketing makes it impossible to reach the meaning that is thought to appear in pure consciousness. Describing and interpreting cannot be seen as different processes, and thus cannot be separated from each other.

Phenomenology as a Research Design

In recent years, phenomenological studies have increasingly been conducted in educational research along with the replacement of positivist thoughts by post-positivist paradigm and the rise of individual-centered approaches. Based on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology or Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, some scholars considered phenomenology as a part of the research methodology and contributed to the process of phenomenology's

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becoming one of the important designs for qualitative studies. At this point, Polkingmore and Moustakas came into prominence for transforming transcendental phenomenology to a research design, while Van Manen has made important contributions to hermeneutic phenomenology in this respect (Bakanay and Çakır, 2016). Besides, there is a need to note that Giorgi (2009) has also made significant contributions to organizing the transcendental phenomenology as a research design.

The main aim of phenomenological studies is to examine human experiences (Creswell, 2013). In other words, the research topic in phenomenological studies is human experience and researchers seeks to reveal the meanings individuals attribute to their lived experiences (Denscombe, 2007). The need for describing or interpreting a phenomenon experienced by the individual forms the core of phenomenological research (Bakanay and Çakır, 2016). The question 'Under what circumstances, what was experienced, and what kind of meaning was reached?' explains the orientation of phenomenological studies' objective (Ersoy, 2016, p. 57). In terms of sampling methods, phenomenological studies are carried out with fewer participants when compared to other research designs, and they mostly employ purposeful sampling methods such as criterion, snowball, homogeneous or maximum variation sampling (Ersoy, 2016). However, some other scholars state that it is more suitable to use criterion sampling method in phenomenological studies as they require studying on more homogeneous groups (Creswell, 2013).

One of the most distinctive features of phenomenological studies in qualitative research paradigm lays on the way raw data is analysed. Indeed, one can also talk about the difference in analysing the data between transcendental and hermeneutical phenomenology.

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Based on the lived experience of the individual, it is aimed to reach to the essence of the phenomenon perceived by consciousness in transcendental phenomenology (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Therefore, one needs to get an unbiased perspective and to bracket his/her knowledge and feelings about the examined phenomenon, while performing analysis in phenomenological research. On the other hand, transcendental phenomenology requires to interpret the experience rather than describing and reaching its essence (Moustakas, 1994). According to Giorgi (2007; 2009), who has made significant contributions for structuring Husserl's transcendental phenomenology as a research design, the first step in the phenomenological data analysis starts with analyser's bracketing of all his/her perceptions, expectations and views about the phenomenon examined. Then the process is continued by reading the transcribed statements of the participants one after another and determining the points where the semantic differentiation took place, which is called as phenomenological reduction. The next step is the imaginative variation which refers to reaching the meaningful units through the statements that participants produce to convey their experiences, and thus, to deduce the themes revealing the structure of the phenomenon. Called as the synthesis of meanings and essences, the last step includes synthesising meaning units obtained from the interviews with the participants, reaching basic themes and determining the original and unchanged essence of the phenomenon examined. On the other hand, transcendental phenomenology attaches importance to the historical and cultural context in which data appears, which requires a more complicated process for data analysis (Ersoy, 2016). As an example of this complicated process, we can talk about Gadamer's concept of 'fusion of horizons'. (Gadamer, 1989). Gadamer emphasises the interaction between the transcribed

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text and the reader by using the concept of fusion of horizons. More precisely, there are actually two horizons, one of which includes the reader's own feelings, thoughts and experiences about the phenomenon, and the other covers the real meaning of the text itself. In terms of hermeneutical phenomenology, "to understand" refers to the fusion of these two horizons, in other words, to the integration of the meaning reader attributed to text and the real meaning of the text itself. Following direct quotation from Gadamer (1989) can be instructive to understand that concept:

"In our analysis of the hermeneutical process we saw that to acquire a horizon of interpretation requires a fusion of horizons. This is now confirmed by the verbal aspect of interpretation. The text is made to speak through interpretation. But no text and no book speaks if it does not speak a language that reaches the other person. Thus interpretation must find the right language if it really wants to make the text speak. There cannot, therefore, be any single interpretation that is correct "in itself," precisely because every interpretation is concerned with the text itself. The historical life of a tradition depends on being constantly assimilated and interpreted. An interpretation that was correct in itself would be a foolish ideal that mistook the nature of tradition. Every interpretation has to adapt itself to the hermeneutical situation to which it belongs."

Laverty (2003) states that a unique process for data analysis has been followed in hermeneutical phenomenology and that the researcher and the participant structure the data together in a hermeneutical cycle. Based on imagination, hermeneutical cycle, language and writing, the researcher and the participant try to reveal lived experiences. In other words, participants try to present and interpret their experiences together with the researcher (Koch, 1995), just like a doctor and a patient interact with each other during a consultation process and experience fusion of horizons by leaving the

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previous understandings, prejudices or conceptualizations (Clark, 2008). As Husserl claims, it is not possible to describe the phenomena as they are, because describing a phenomenon means it is already interpreted. Therefore, it can be stated that it is not right to suggest a form of data analysis for hermeneutical phenomenological studies, as the interaction participant and researcher is highly emphasized.

Method

Research Design

This research is conducted using the methods and techniques adopted in qualitative research. A case-study approach was chosen to examine the methodological misconceptions in theses employed a phenomenological research design in the field of educational administration. Case studies include analysing a case or a system in the context of a conceptual framework (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002) and addressing the research problem by getting detailed information about it (Merriam, 2002). Case studies are divided into four sub-models: holistic single-case, embedded single-case, holistic multiple-case, embedded multiple-case (Yin, 2014). The present study employed the embedded multiple-case design in which multiple cases are divided into various sub-units to analyse. Each thesis was considered as a different case, and each sub-unit of these theses was analysed comparatively with others.

Data Sources

The data sources used in the study consist of 40 masters' and 10 doctoral theses. The reason in choosing the theses as the data source was that they were more accessible and convenient when time and cost constraints were considered. Moreover, as the theses were

evaluated and approved by a committee, they could also reflect the perspective of academics in the field of educational administration. Distribution by years of the theses used as the data source is in Graphic 1. Please note that master's theses have been presented as MT, and doctoral theses as DT.

Graphic 1.

Distribution of phenomenological research by years
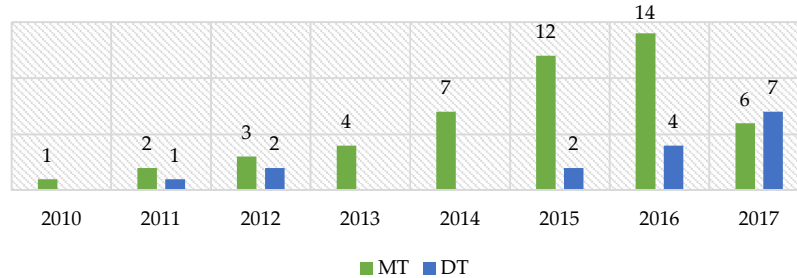
As seen in Graph 1, there was only one thesis designed with phenomenology in 2010, but this number reached to 18 in 2016. In 2017, there was a decrease in the number of master's theses while the increase continued for doctoral theses. Therefore, it can be concluded that the theses produced in Educational Administration in Turkey increasingly prefer phenomenology as a research design.

Data Collection Process

When determining the theses to be included in the study, the database of the Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center was utilised as the targeted study group would include the theses conducted in Turkey. The reasons for targeting only the theses conducted in Turkey were: (i) the context of the research necessitated that and (ii) there were practical manners to be taken into

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consideration such as time and cost as it would be impossible to include all of the studies which employed phenomenology as the research design. Theses have been reached by entering the specified keywords into the search engine of the database. As their language is Turkish, the keywords included eight different Turkish synonyms of 'phenomenology and phenomenological research' [fenomenoloji, fenomenolojik araştırma, fenomenolojik desen, olgu bilim, olgubilim, görüngü bilim, görüngübilim, görüngüsel yaklaşım] which were found to be used in the literature. Our nomination of the keywords depends on the previous research in Turkish language so that every synonym could be involved in search results. After determining the keywords, we narrowed down the search results to the Division and Discipline of "Educational Administration" and "Educational Administration, Supervision, Planning, and Economics" by using detailed search tab. Note that there were a total of 391 theses in the scope of educational administration in the database, and we have used the keywords as a starting point and sort out the theses which defended that their research design was phenomenology. Forty-nine master's and sixteen doctoral theses employed 'phenomenology' as research design appeared in the narrowed search results by 31st December of 2017. Nine master's and six doctoral theses have been excluded as they are under embargo at the request of their author. Thereafter, the purpose and objectives of the theses, stated reasons for employing phenomenology, the study group, the data collection process, the questions asked for data collection, the data analysis and how the findings were presented were entered into the forms created for each of the remaining fifty theses.

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Data Analysis

The master's and doctoral theses produced in the field of educational administration were analysed by using the method of document analysis, and a methodological evaluation was performed. Document analysis is a kind of qualitative research process used for evaluating printed or electronic material systematically, eliciting the meanings in these materials and developing empirical findings (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The methodological evaluation includes comparing various studies with each other and evaluating them according to different perspectives (Neuman, 2014). While performing document analysis and methodological evaluation, we analyse data following a case-study design that requires describing, giving examples, revealing themes and patterns and reaching comparative results (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2016). The misconceptions held in the theses were determined by comparing them with the related literature on how to build a phenomenological research.

The purposes and objectives of the theses, the ways followed to form study groups, the process of data collection and analysis, how the findings presented and interpreted were analysed according to principles of transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology. We began with structuring categorical classifications and frequency of occurrence by performing content analysis, as Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) suggests, to determine which sources were referred to justify employing phenomenology, which sampling methods were used to form the study groups, which methods preferred to collect and analyse the data and how the findings were presented. In the next step, we examined the purposes of the theses, the ways followed while conducting the study, presentation and interpretation of the findings according to the appropriateness to the phenomenological

design. After categorizing the misconceptions held in the theses, examples for the categories were presented with direct quotations.

Ensuring Trustworthiness of the Research

Discussions on the concepts of validity and reliability are continuing in qualitative research paradigm, and the issue is handled in different ways by various scholars and authors (Maxwell, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Kirk & Miller, 1990). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest using credibility, transferability, dependability or confirmability rather than concepts of positivist paradigm such as validity and reliability. We have acted in accordance with that suggestion in the present study. In this sense, prolonged engagement, persistent observation and peer debriefing have been used to ensure the credibility of the study, which gives confidence in the accuracy of the findings. Prolonged engagement requires the researchers staying in the field for a sufficient amount of time and reaching all necessary data. In this study, all available theses designed with a phenomenological approach in the educational administration field in Turkey were examined. Moreover, the researchers have a great research experience in the context in which the study was conducted, and therefore, they are familiar with the way the scholars and students follow while doing a research in this context. Persistent observation states that there may be many things in the research field related to the subject being investigated, but it is important to go directly to the data that will contribute to finding answers for research problem. For this purpose, while working on the data sources of the research, we consistently focused on the patterns that can be related to the methodology of them. For example, the theses might be comprised of many different parts; however we have persistently focused on the problem statements, objectives,

methodology and findings as they were the main clues informing about the design of a research. For peer debriefing, we asked a colleague who was competent in qualitative research to check if there was any logical and methodological error in the way the findings of the present study were discovered. She has examined the processes of data collection and data analysis, and made inferences about how the findings were reached, and compared those inferences with the present study together with the researchers. Transferability, on the other hand, is related to whether the findings of the research can be transferred into similar contexts. Thick descriptions, which refer to describing the context and the data of the study in a detailed way, becomes essential for transferability. Therefore, we gave information about the data sources of the present study and explained in detail how the data were collected and analysed in previous parts (See the parts data sources, data collection process and data analysis). To provide dependability and confirmability, inquiry audit was performed. For this reason, after the report of the study had been completed, an external researcher examined the whole process of the research. Differently from the work done in peer debriefing, another scholar who had competence and experience in educational research has read the final report and analysed the whole process, not only data collection and analysis. In this way, he could confirmed the way followed in the present research. Moreover, the study was presented to the participants of a conference, and their feedback was considered while constructing the final report. Indeed, the raw data will be kept in the digital environment for possible confirmations in the future.

The Position of the Researchers

Doing a research that can serve as a kind of guideline especially for a methodological purpose may require an 'interrogation' of the

researchers' position about the subject. Therefore, we feel obliged to explain the researchers' academic background and experience in conducting phenomenological research so that the reader can judge how the researchers are qualified to conduct this research. Firstly, all of the authors are studying in the field of educational administration and have a sound grasp of the context in which the study conducted. All of them have participated in many conferences on educational administration, and three of them have taken part in academic journals as a member of the editorial board or a referee, and therefore they had opportunity to analyse a great number of studies with phenomenological design, which shows their familiarity with how phenomenology is absorbed in the field of educational administration especially in Turkish context. Secondly, four of the authors, who especially took the responsibility of the data analysing and interpreting process of the present research, have studies on 'research methodologies in education' including a book on phenomenological research. Therefore, we can assure that all of the authors have enough experience to conduct and evaluate a qualitative research including phenomenological design.

Findings

The findings are presented accordingly to the objectives of the research. The examples and direct quotations from the theses were offered to enrich the explanations, where possible. As the original language of the theses was Turkish, the direct quotations have been translated into English by the researchers of the present study. Please note that the names of the authors and the original titles of the theses were reserved, and each example referred by a code like T1-MT-2000,

which shows the number (T1), the kind ('MT' for master's theses and 'DT' for doctoral theses) and the year (2000) of the study.

Findings on the sources used to justify the employment of phenomenology

The first of the questions aimed to determine the references used for justifying the employment of phenomenology as the research design. Herein, the main intention was to show on which basis the authors and their supervisors build their theses. In this way, we have planned to reveal whether there is a repetition and duplication or diversity. Therefore, the theses were first analysed in terms of the references authors cited to explain the reason in stating their research design as phenomenology. Please note that each reference was created with a certain abbreviation and the expansions of these abbreviations were given in ANNEX-1. Master's and doctoral theses were evaluated respectively through the graphs as follows:

Graph 2.

The sources for phenomenological research design in MTs
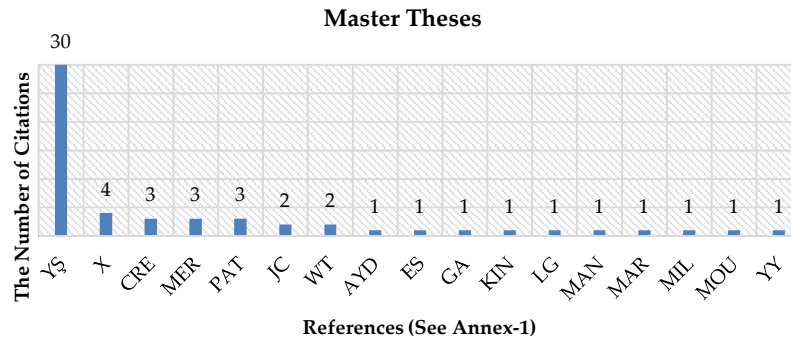
Graph 2 shows that the primary source used for conducting the phenomenological research is Yıldırım and Şimşek's (2016) book in Turkish. The phenomenological approach was tried to be justified without referring to any sources in four of the theses. Additionally, Cresswell (2013), Patton (2015), Merriam (2009), Johnson and Christensen (2012) and Wade and Tavris (1990) were cited in a limited number of the theses. There were also some other sources cited once each.

Graph 3.

The sources for phenomenological research design in DTs
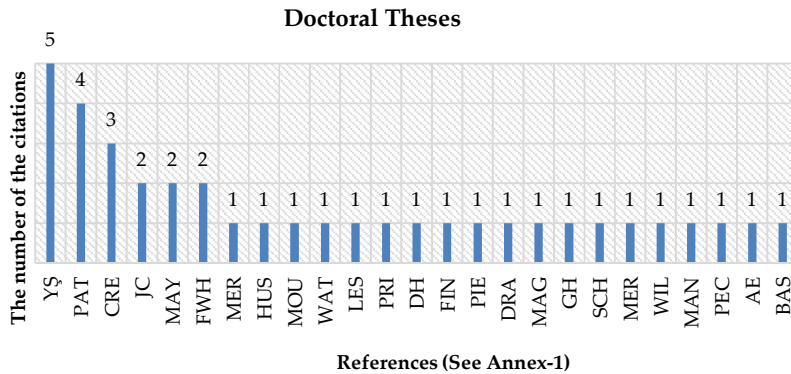
According to Graph 3, the book of Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016) was used intensively for the justification of phenomenological design in doctoral theses as in the master's theses. The studies of Patton (2015) and Creswell (2013) were also referred. It is possible to say that the references used in doctoral theses have more variety than master's theses.

Findings on the stated aims and objectives of the theses

The aims and objectives of the theses were examined in order to determine if they were appropriate for phenomenological research. Please note that the criterion for appropriation here relates to whether the aims and objectives set out in the theses are intended to draw meaning from an experience. Graph 4 shows which misconceptions have occurred.

Graph 4.

The misconceptions about the stated aims in theses
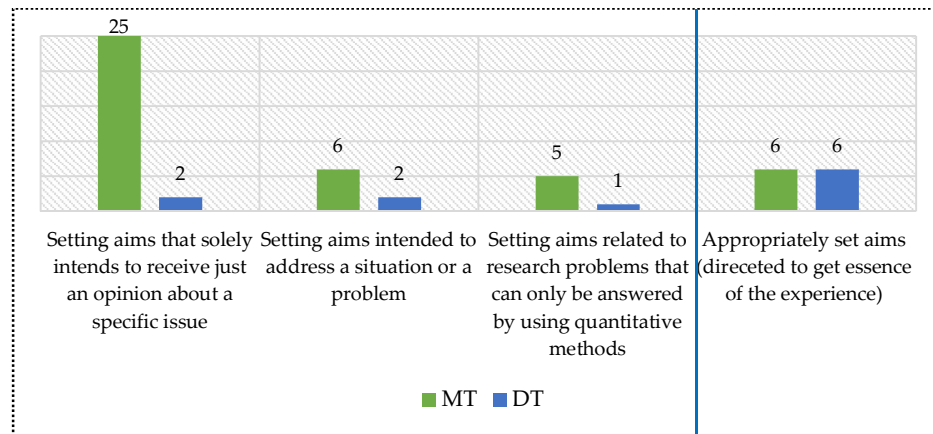
Graph 4 implies that the aims and objectives, especially in master's theses, were not appropriate for conducting phenomenological research. The same situation applies to half of the doctoral theses. The most common misconception was 'setting aims that solely intend to receive just an opinion of the participants about a specific issue'. Below is a direct quotation taken from a thesis to exemplify that misconception:

It is aimed to reveal the perceptions of headmasters and supervisors about the training process of primary school pre-service teachers and to suggest a

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solution to the problems of the training process of teacher candidates. In this context, the main aim and problem of the research is "evaluating the process of primary school pre-service teachers' training." It is purposed to qualitatively analyse the training process of primary school pre-service teachers by headmasters and primary school inspectors.

[Objectives]:

1. What is the opinion of primary school headmasters about the process of primary school pre-service teachers' training?

2. What is the opinion of primary education supervisors about the process of primary school pre-service teachers' training?

T1-MT-2010

When the above example is considered, one can see that the thesis was prepared to determine the options of the participants on "teacher candidate's training". It was stated in the methodology that phenomenological research design was employed, however, the study aimed to get opinions of the participants rather than revealing the patterns of experiences about teacher candidate's training. In order for this study to be conducted as a phenomenology, the researcher should have aimed to reveal the meanings imposed by the teachers to the training they had. For example, it would be more appropriate to build this study on 'being a teacher candidate' and to have an aim like 'investigating how teacher candidates interpret their experiences in the process of teacher candidate training'. The objectives would be exploring (1) 'how teacher candidates experience the process of teacher candidate training' and (2) 'how teacher candidates interpret the process of teacher candidate training'.

Another misconception was setting aims intended to address a situation or a problem. In some of the theses, it was found out that the main aim was to evaluate the current situation of a particular

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issue or to reveal the problems related to this situation. An example of this misconception is below:

> *In this study, it was aimed to determine the views of the preschool teachers working in the state primary school in Ağrı city center, 2014-2015 academic year related to the managerial problems that they encounter.*
> *[Objectives]:*
>> *1. What are the problems that preschool teachers encounter in personnel services?*
>> *2. What are the problems that preschool teachers encounter in general management services?*
>> *3. What are the problems that preschool teachers encounter in curriculum services?*
>> *4. What are the problems that preschool teachers encounter in student services?*
>> *5. What are the problems that preschool teachers encounter in budget services?*
>> *6. What are the problems that preschool teachers encounter in supervision services?*
> *T19-MT-2015*

It can be understood from the direct quotation that the thesis was intended to determine the managerial problems. Depending on this general aim, the objectives included identifying the problems in different sub-areas. The researcher did not focus on how teachers who have managerial problems interpreted the essence of these problems, but instead on finding out what the problems were. The main aim of the research should have related to a more experience-based problem like 'examining preschool teachers' experiences related to managerial problems'.

The next misconception is setting aims related to research problems that can be answered by using quantitative methods. It is unfavourable to employ phenomenology and even qualitative

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research practice to solve the research problem in that kind of theses. The following example can clearly illustrate that misconception:

> *This study aims to investigate the effect of inspection on classroom teachers'*
> *motivation in the class and to make suggestions about inspection and*
> *motivation.*
>
> *[Objectives]:*
>
> > *1. Does inspection affect classroom teachers' motivation in class?*
> >
> > *2. How inspection affect classroom teachers' motivation in class?*
> >
> > *3. What is the effect of the pre-observation period of inspection process on classroom teachers' motivation in class?*
> >
> > *4. What is the effect of the observation period of inspection process on classroom teachers' motivation in class?*
> >
> > *5. What is the effect of the post-observation period of inspection process on classroom teachers' motivation in class?*
> >
> > *6. What is the effect of the inspection process on classroom teachers' performance in terms of planning, practicing and measurement and evaluation?*
> >
> > *7. What is the effect of the inspection process on classroom teachers' performance in terms of classroom management?*
> >
> > *8. What is the effect of lesson observation of inspection process on classroom teachers' motivation in class?*
>
> *T37-MT-2017*

Some theses set aims to analyse the relationship between two variables (motivation and inspection in that case) and their effect on each other as in the example above. 'Effect' and 'relationship' are concepts implying a cause and effect situation. However, qualitative research designs including phenomenology are not interested in causes or effects; rather, they attempt to have a deep understanding of a phenomenon. Therefore, it would be more convenient to resolve those research problems by employing quantitative methods.

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Findings on the Study Groups of the Theses

One of the problems of the present study is about the preferred sampling methods while forming the study group in the theses. Firstly, the sampling methods of the theses have been analyzed according to their frequency. Secondly, the misconceptions about forming the study group have been explained.

Graph 5.

The sampling methods of the theses
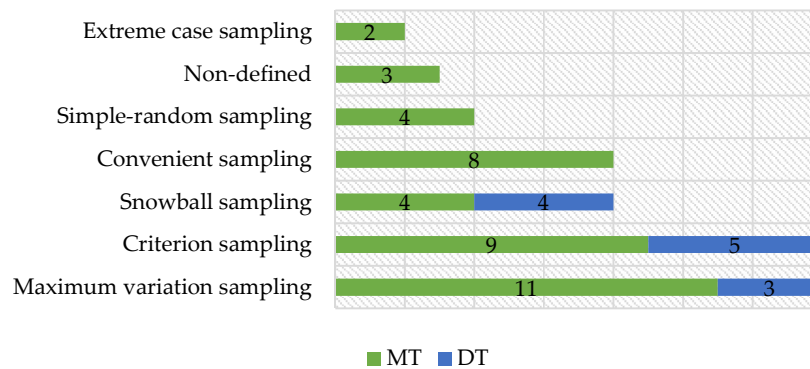
Graph 5 shows the sampling methods preferred in the master theses and dissertations. While the master theses mostly used maximum variation sampling (f=11), dissertations preferred criterion sampling method (f=5). In addition, the snowball sampling method was used four times in both groups. In the master theses, convenient (f = 8), simple random (f = 4), and extreme case (f = 2) sampling methods were also used, however, there was no information about how sampling was done in some of them (f = 4). In the following table, there are misconceptions about forming the study groups.

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Table 1.

Misconceptions about forming the study group

Misconceptions	f
Including the participants who have not experienced the phenomena	23
Despite the use of maximum variation sampling, not explaining the characteristics of the participants in detail	9
Employing the convenient sampling method	8
Employing quantitative techniques	4
Not mentioning about the criteria for criterion sampling	3

Table 1 presents an overview of the misconceptions about forming the study group. The most significant misconception was the inclusion of participants who have not experienced the phenomena. For example, in a thesis (T33-MT-2016) which examined 'the teacher's opinions related to servant leadership qualities of primary school principals', the study group included teachers who had never experienced leadership. Another misconception was in the usage of maximum variation sampling. Most of the theses and dissertations did not explain the characteristics of the participants in detail, which made it difficult for the readers to understand the context of the research. As the convenience sampling method disallows interviewing with the individuals who had experienced the phenomena, employing it in a phenomenological study should be accepted as a misconception. Finally, some theses did not mention about the criteria used for criterion sampling.

Findings on the Process of Data Collection and Analysis of the Theses

The next objective of the present study was to determine which methods were followed and which misconceptions were held in the collection and analysis of the data. As shown in Graph 6, the majority

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of the theses preferred semi-structured interviews as a data collection method (f=46). Focus group interviews (f=3), structured interviews (f=3), document analysis (f=1) and observation (f=1) were other methods.

Graph 6.

Data collection methods performed in the theses
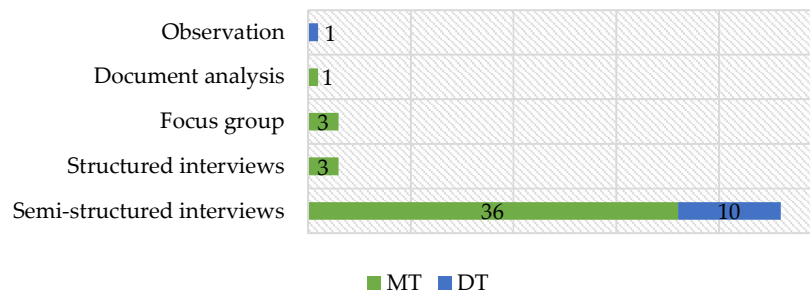
The determined misconceptions about the data collection are set out in Table 2. Where possible, examples were given for the misconceptions, and a code number (C) such as E1, E2, E3 etc. was assigned to follow them in the text.

Table 2.

Misconceptions about the data collection

Misconceptions	Example	C
Formulating interview questions that are not mainly directed to patterns of experience (308/508)	What are your opinions about the effectiveness of training for trainee teachers?	E1
Asking the questions to the individuals who cannot or won't experience the phenomenon. (65/508)	What do you think about your students' choice of basic high schools?	E2
Asking questions to reveal the conceptual knowledge (42/508)	What are the sources of income of schools according to the regulations?	E3
Using the objectives as interview questions (10/508)	What are the solutions to the financial problems of the schools?/How should an effective source management be?/ What are the alternative ways to increase the financial sources of schools?	E4
Asking questions for quantitative information (33/508)	What is the number of children of refugee families?	E5
Asking questions involving an assumption (23/508)	What kind of studies are you doing to develop and implement academic studies in your academic unit?	E6
Doing interviews for the points that can only be analysed by observation (f=4)	What are the elements of non-verbal communication used by the school principals against teachers?	E7
Not formulating enough questions to cover the problem being investigated (2)	No example is available.	N/A

Table 2 sets out an overview for misconceptions about the data collection in theses. We have analysed a total of 508 interview questions included in the master's and doctoral theses one by one. It was found out that 308 of 508 interview questions analysed were not directed to reveal the patterns of an experience. As shown in E1, the question was prepared to get a view on effectiveness of training, rather than describing or interpreting the meaning. Sixty-five interview questions were aimed at individuals who have not experienced the phenomenon investigated. When E2 is analysed as

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an example, it is seen that the question were asked not to the students who had experienced the process of basic high school choice, but to the teachers who can only be an external observer of the process. Another misconception was asking questions to reveal conceptual knowledge of the participant. For example, E3 is a kind of question to evaluate the conceptual knowledge of school principals about the sources of income. In some theses, objectives of the research were arranged as interview questions. The questions in E4 indicated the objectives of the research and were used as interview questions. The questions that can only be answered by quantitative methods such as E5 were not aimed at revealing the meaning of the phenomenon. In some questions, it is seen that the researcher directs the participant with a certain assumption. When E6 is examined, the statement 'What kind of studies are you doing …' seems to be based on the assumption that the participant have already done some studies. However, the possibility of the participant's not having done such a study was ignored. Another misconception was doing interview for the points that can only be analysed by observation, which was seen in four theses and exemplified in E7. Finally, in two of the theses, it was found to be another conception that comprehensive questions were not prepared in a way to address the phenomenon in all its dimensions. In these theses, only three questions were directed to participants to deeply understand the phenomenon. However, these questions did not cover the whole aspects of it.

Graph 7.

Data analysis methods performed in theses
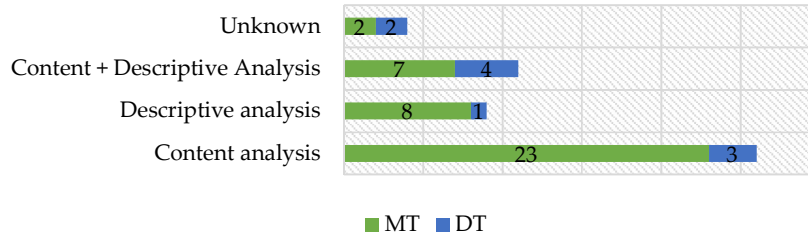
Graph 7 illustrates the data analysis method employed in the theses. Accordingly, most of the master's theses performed content analysis to analyse the data. On the other hand, doctoral theses mostly employed content analysis and descriptive analysis together. In addition, some theses did not explain the method of analysing the data and the process of analysis. Those theses marked as 'others' in the graph. The misconceptions about the data analysis are summarised in Table 3 below:

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Table 3.

The misconceptions about the data analysis

Misconceptions	Example	C
Not explaining the process of the data analysis (f=29)	*The data collected by using semi-structured interview protocol were analysed by employing content analysis which was one of the qualitative data analysis methods. The main purpose of the content analysis is to reach the concepts and relations that can explain the collected data.*	E8
Reducing the descriptive analysis to only direct quotations of the participants. (f=7)	*Descriptive analysis technique was used to reflect the views of the participants.*	E9
Confusing descriptive analysis with descriptive research of quantitative paradigm (f=2)	*Descriptive analysis was performed for some of the interview questions.* [Interview questions]: *How old are you? What is your seniority in profession and management? What kind of school are you working in?*	E10
Not mentioning about the coding process (f=44)	*No example is available*	N/A

As shown in Table 3, an important misconception in data analysis is not to explain the process of data analysis in detail. As in E8, most of the theses and the dissertations stated that the data analysis were performed by using content analysis. However, there was no explanation for the stages in which raw data went through for analysis. Another misconception is to refer to descriptive analysis as only presenting the direct quotations expressed by participants. For example, descriptive analysis was stated as an analysis method to reflect the views of the participants. However, as explained in the discussion part of the present study, the descriptive analysis does not include only presenting direct quotations. Moreover, there was a misconception about using concepts of descriptive analysis and quantitative descriptive research. In two of the theses, the questions for obtaining quantitative information about the demographics of the

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participants was answered by employing descriptive analysis, which is exemplified in E10. Finally, most of the theses have not mentioned about the coding process in the data analysis. Since it is impossible to exemplify a non-existing situation, it will be explanatory to give a direct quotation from a thesis which explains the coding process in detail. When the following example is examined, it is possible to see what steps and what kind of coding methods the researcher chose during the coding process:

> *'In the process of analysing the data, the transcribed interviews have been read again and again, and so the data were conceptually categorized. The themes have been reached by establishing a relationship between the codes. While the answers for the questions of the interview protocols and the data obtained from the literature was being analysed, superficial coding were performed. The codes obtained from superficial encodings were combined under a common concept. After that, employing axis coding, the basic codes were determined by revising existing codes. Finally, the themes have been revised and the main themes of the study have been reached by selective coding.'*
> *T27-MT-2016*

Findings on the Presentation and Interpretation of the Findings of the Theses

Analysing the presentation and the interpretation of the findings in the master theses and dissertations designed as phenomenology is another objective of the present study. For this purpose, how the findings were presented and the misconceptions that were revealed during the interpretation were examined.

Graph 8.

The way of the presentation of the findings
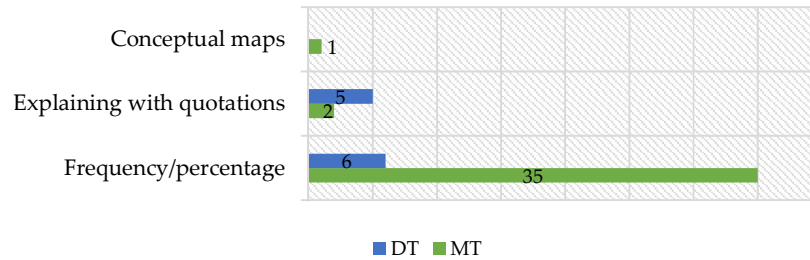
Graph 8 shows that the findings were presented as frequency/percentage of themes in most of the theses (f=41). In addition, some theses preferred to explain the themes by providing direct quotations (f=7). A master thesis presented emerging themes by using cognitive maps. The misconception on presenting the findings are summarised in the Table 4 below:

Table 4.

The misconception about presenting and interpreting the findings

Misconceptions	
Not discussing the findings according to conceptual framework	2
Not explaining the findings according to the context	5
Including only the supporting literature while interpreting the findings	4
Repeating the findings again and again in the discussion part	9

As can be seen from Table 4, not discussing the findings according to the conceptual framework on which the study was constructed is an important misconception. Indeed, the context, in which the study was performed, was disregarded while interpreting the findings. For example, different statements of the participants in

the specified study group were not compared, and the situations that might arise due to the differences of the participants were not interpreted. In addition, when writing a discussion on findings, the authors have cited only the research that supports their findings. However, there was no mention of the literature that could provide a different perspective for the research. Finally, the findings were repeated in the discussion part and they used in the same sense with the 'conclusion'. Together these results provide important insights into misconception on presenting the findings.

Discussion

The present study aimed to determine the misconceptions when conducting the phenomenological research by examining the theses employed phenomenological research design and produced in the field of educational administration. Within the scope of this aim, firstly, the resources used to justify employing phenomenological research design were examined. The findings revealed that using the phenomenological research design was justified by referring to a single resource (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016), especially in master's theses. This source is one of the first books on qualitative research written in Turkish, and thus, it is not surprising that many authors and scholars often refer to it for phenomenological research. However, it can be argued that referring mostly to a single source may lead to a one-way perception and in-depth readings from different sources are necessary to better understand the phenomenological research design. A limited number of references to respected scholars such as Cresswell (2013), Patton (2015), Merriam (2009), Johnson & Christensen (2012) and Wade & Tavris (1990) further highlights this necessity. However, in the doctoral theses

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examined within the scope of the present research, it is seen that there was a strong reference to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016), but the studies of Patton (2015) and Creswell (2013) were also referenced. Therefore, it can be stated that the sources used in the doctoral theses varied when compared to the master's theses. Although this finding seems to be consistent with our expectations, only one doctoral thesis referred to Husserl and Heidegger, who have laid the philosophical foundations of phenomenology, which suggests that the researchers and their supervisors conducted their studies without fully understanding the phenomenological design and its philosophical underpinnings. Moreover, even if the phenomenological research is defined in general as the studies to reveal the structure of the experience and consciousness (van Manen, 1997), some factors cause these studies to be placed on different axes. As Laverty (2003) maintains, phenomenological research is generally carried out by counting on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology which focuses on describing, or Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology that engages in interpreting, and the purpose of the research is decisive in that point. Therefore, just stating 'the phenomenological design is employed' is not explanatory enough for phenomenological research. Then, it is possible to suggest that the arguments presented in order to justify the phenomenological design were insufficient and that researchers held misconceptions about the phenomenology even before beginning to study on their problem.

The second question in this study sought to determine whether the aims and objectives of the theses were appropriate for employing a phenomenological research. The findings indicated that the phenomenological research design was not appropriate for the aims and the objectives of most of the master's and half of the doctoral theses. The most significant misconception was setting aims and

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objectives that solely intended to receive just an opinion of the participants about a specific issue. The discussion of this finding takes us to the literature on philosophical and methodological foundations of the phenomenological approach, which was explained in the previous parts. The relevant literature suggests some basic criteria for employing a phenomenological research design. For example, Creswell (2013) argues that the most basic criterion for the decision on whether a research can be carried out as phenomenology is to have an aim directed to the in-depth understanding of the human experience that can be generalized to a group of people. Similarly, Denscombe (2007) offers that the experiences of people are the subject of phenomenological research and researchers should aim to determine the common points of the meanings attributed to these experiences. Langdridge (2007) accepts the phenomenology as a research design to set light to the world in which people live and the meaning that this world expresses to them by lying on the experiences. According to Merleau-Ponty (1962), one of the respected scholar in the field of phenomenology, phenomenological research is a process of depiction, and reaching the essence of human experience is at the center of it. This combination of literature provides support for the argument that although the framework of the phenomenological research tradition has not been clearly elaborated, the main point of phenomenological research, in general, is to study of human experiences and to elucidate the meanings attributed to certain phenomena by analysing these experiences. However, it was explicit in some theses examined within the scope of the present research that the researchers only struggled to get the opinions of the participants instead of considering their experiences as the starting point, aimed to reach superficial findings about what the problems were encountered in some specific situation rather than to focus on

how the participants made sense of these problems and stuck to aims requiring quantitative research paradigm like analysing the relationship between some variables and explaining the effects of them on each other. We believe that lack of dominance on the philosophical underpinnings of the phenomenology and a series of debate on phenomenological research tradition (e.g. Finlay, 2009; Giorgi, 2009; Langdridge, 2007; Laverty, 2003; Merleau-Ponty, 1962) has played an important role in the emergence of all these misconceptions.

Another objective of the study is to determine which sampling methods were used in the studies employing phenomenological design. According to the findings, sampling methods such as extreme case, simple-random, convenient, snowball and maximum variation were preferred. It is important to note that some of the theses examined have never given information about the sampling method. As the phenomenological research focuses on the experience of a group of participants in order to reveal the different dimensions of the phenomenon studied (Creswell, 2013), the most critical point about the participants becomes that they must have experienced the phenomenon before (Moustakas, 1994). However, one can conclude from the findings of the present research that whether the participants had experienced the relevant phenomenon was not considered in some theses. Moreover, the sampling methods preferred are also questionable. It is seen that some of the theses used the sampling methods of quantitative research paradigm such as simple-random sampling, and some others employed convenient sampling which prevents close examination of the phenomenon. The simple random sampling method is related to forming the sample of a study by making a list of the sampling units in a given population and assigning them randomly to the sample (Best & Kahn, 2006). On

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the other hand, it is adopted to carry out the study by including the nearest participant who is accessible in the convenient sampling (Saldana, 2011). As stated in many parts of the present study, the bottom line in phenomenological research is to reveal or interpret the patterns of the experience. However, randomly selecting the participants or including the nearest person the researcher can reach makes it impossible to fulfill the principle of 'including participants who have experienced the phenomenon examined'. Therefore, it has been suggested that phenomenological studies are conducted with relatively few participants and criterion, snowball, homogenous and maximum variation sampling methods are preferred for the inclusion of these participants in the study (Ersoy, 2016). Similarly, (Creswell, 2013) defends that as creating homogenous and experienced-based study groups is an important step for phenomenological research, the criterion sampling would be more appropriate to employ. However, determining and defining the criteria for inclusion of the participants becomes an essential part for creating a homogenous and experience-based study group (Patton, 2015). Patton's claim differs from the findings presented here, as they showed that most of the theses employing criterion sampling had not mentioned about their criteria for inclusion of the participants in the study group, which implies another misconception. Moreover, the present study showed that the identifying characteristics of the participants were not explained in detail and that findings were not discussed according to the variations. However, the most important issue in maximum variation sampling is 'to reflect the variation of the participant who may be different sides of the problem examined' (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 108) and thus, it aims to examine the problem according to the different aspects and to identify the points shared in the views of the participants different from each other (Patton, 2015). From this point

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of view, the way of employing the maximum variation sampling in the theses is also a matter of misconception. There might be differences among the participants, who have different characteristics and present the different sides of the phenomenon, in adopting a perspective for the problem as well as in comprehending, interpreting or sense-making of it. Then if maximum variation sampling basically aims to examine the phenomenon with its all dimensions and from the different perspectives of the participants interpreting it, findings of the examined theses would be expected to represent these differences.

The process of data collection and analysis in the theses employing phenomenological research design has also been examined in the present research. The results indicated that semi-structured interview forms were used as data collection tool in most of the theses. Other data collection tools such as observation, document analysis, focus group interviews and structured interview protocol were also accommodated. While Creswell (2013) suggests interviews as the primary data collection tool in phenomenological research, it is also possible to use observations and documents to get more detailed information. Therefore, the findings of the present research about data collection tools corroborate the literature. However, Bakanay and Çakır (2016) claim that there are a series of studies conducted inappropriately to the phenomenology in terms of data collection process in the literature, and the main reason for this case is insufficient knowledge of the researchers' basic philosophy of phenomenological research design. Consistent with this claim, this research found that there were some remarkable misconceptions in the theses analysed. For example, in their interviews, researchers asked the questions that were not related to the patterns of the experience and directed these questions to those who did not or

would not live the experience. However, as stated earlier, whether it is organized as transcendental or hermeneutical, the 'heart' of the phenomenological research consists of individual's experience about a phenomenon and the meaning attributed to it by her/him (Bakanay & Çakır, 2016; Creswell, 2013). Accordingly, the data collection process of the theses must have been designed under the skin of reaching the experience. The other misconceptions such as asking questions that aims to reveal the conceptual knowledge or quantitative information and involves an assumption or prejudgement and doing interviews for the points that can be only analysed by observation are also signals implying that researchers did not dominate philosophical and methodological underpinnings of the phenomenological research. Researchers should have considered the fact about the phenomenological research that the aim was not to reach infinite and precise information, to generalize the findings to a particular population or to achieve a generalizable concept or principle (Bakanay & Çakır, 2016; Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994).

On the other hand, some theses accommodated content analysis or/and descriptive analysis in the data analysis process. There were also some others that did not give information about the issue. As a misconception about the process of data analysis, not explaining the process in a detailed way became prominent. However, the way data is analysed may be a touchstone for reaching the accurate findings especially in phenomenological research, and that is why it is not enough just asserting that 'The content/descriptive analysis is performed in this study'. In this discussion, our aim is not to give a lecture about how data is analysed in phenomenological research, but we wish to draw attention to the fact that performing content or descriptive analysis requires dominating the focal point of the

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phenomenology. In this context, Bakanay and Çakır's (2016: 172-173) following statements are instructive for researchers intending to conduct a phenomenological research:

"Does a researcher desire to describe or interpret the phenomenon? Do we accept that the experience is fully individualized and must be lived individually, or that some experiences can be transferred by enculturation? The philosophical position taken in this kind of questions determines whether the prejudices, assumptions and cultural implications will be included in the process of explaining the phenomenon."

Similarly, Finlay (2009) maintains that all the phenomenological research attempts to describing rather than explaining, but some researchers distinguish between transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutical phenomenology. In this context, she states that while transcendental phenomenology focuses on revealing the underlying structures of the meaning of a phenomenon, hermeneutical phenomenology takes the contextual conditions in which this phenomenon is experienced into account, and thus these two traditions have different reflections on the methodology of data analysis. For example, according to Giorgi (2007; 2009), who have significant contributions to organizing Husserl's ideas as a research design, the data analysis in transcendental phenomenology must go through the phases of bracketing, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation and reaching a synthesis of the general structure of the experiences. On the other hand, Ersoy (2016) points out that a more complex data analysis process is awaiting the researchers in the studies carried out in line with hermeneutical phenomenology since the characteristics of the context in which the data collected are considered. One of the most referenced scholars for phenomenological research design, Moustakas (1994), starts the data analysis process of phenomenological studies with describing the

phenomenon, then continues with revealing how participants experienced the phenomenon by determining the important statements about the experience. At this phase, the statements are brought into a meaningful unit and reduced the themes. What is experienced (textural description) and how it is lived (structural description) are described at the next stage. At the last stage, the descriptions of what the experience is and how it is lived are gathered together to reach the essence of the phenomenon. Therefore, the data analysis model Moustakas (1994) presents for phenomenological research may be utilized as a common framework for both transcendental and hermeneutical phenomenology. However, as can be understood from these valuable insights of different scholars mentioned above, the data analysis process in phenomenological studies corresponds to a much more complex case than just stating what content or descriptive analysis is as in the theses examined in the scope of the present research. Another point that needs to be discussed for the misconceptions in the process of data analysis in the phenomenological research is related to the descriptive analysis. It was found out in some theses that researchers perceived descriptive analysis as just giving direct quotations of the participants and sometimes confused descriptive analysis of qualitative paradigm with descriptive research of quantitative model. Creswell (2013) argues that direct quotations of the participants may be used to improve the quality of expression or to arouse the interest of readers, especially in the phase of textural description in which the answers for the question of "What is experienced?" are explained. Therefore, there is a need to remind that descriptive analysis of qualitative paradigm engages in 'summarizing and interpreting the collected data according to predetermined themes' (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 224).

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Analysing the presentation and interpretation of the findings of the theses and dissertations was the last part of the present study. The methods used to present findings such as drawing conceptual maps, describing with the help of direct quotations and performing frequency analysis are employed extensively in qualitative research, and so in phenomenological designs. The issue to be discussed here is how the findings are interpreted. In this sense, the first conspicuous misconception is that the findings were not interpreted in the light of a conceptual framework. However, one of the most crucial points for qualitative research is to evaluate the findings of the research within a certain theoretical framework, and the research is expected to contribute to an existing theoretical foundation from a different point of view or to force this theoretical foundation to change (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Moreover, it is important to interpret the findings in the context of the research so that readers make a better evaluation on the results (Creswell, 2013). However, it was found out that the factors covering the context of the research such as the study group, the time and place of the study and the role of the researcher were not referred in the discussions of the theses. Another misconception in the interpretation of the findings is the inclusion of only the supporting studies for the findings. However, the comparative presentation of the previous research conducted in a different context and revealing different results should strengthen the design of the research by providing a full and objective interpretation for readers. Finally, in some theses, only a summary of the findings was presented under the topic of discussion. The authors have not gone beyond repeating the previously stated findings of the research, and therefore, the meaning expressed by the findings cannot be fully reflected.

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Conclusion and Suggestions

The field of educational administration has welcomed more sophisticated methods of investigation and moved to a more knowledge-based arena beginning from 1990s. (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). As a result, quite a few empirical studies have been produced in the field, employing various research designs that include phenomenology (Gumus et al., 2016; Murphy, Vriesenga & Storey, 2007; Oplatka, 2012). The production process seems to be continued in the near future, which increases the significance of gaining competence in research methods. Given the potential contribution of phenomological studies to the field by producing interesting and surprising results (Van der Mescht, 2004), scholars or postgraduate students should consider and apply phenomenology as a research design properly by remaining faithful to its nature. In this sense, even if the sample of our research is limited to Turkey, we believe that international readers can deduce useful insights while conducting a phenomenological research. To be able to use the results of this research, we recommend international readers enter in a process of intercultural transfer of knowledge by abstracting from experiences of previous researchers whose thesis were examined in our research. They can learn about the misconceptions hold by heir Turkish counterparts and be aware of 'not to the points' while conducting their phenomenological research in international settings.

The results of the present study show that the misconceptions held in phenomenological research are mostly due to not dominating the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology. In other words, it seems that researchers and their supervisors in educational administration did not have the philosophical and conceptual knowledge necessary to carry out a phenomenological research

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design. Actually this kind of misconceptions may be more linked with supervisors, as they are responsible for guidance and assistance to students to carry out their research in the most suitable way. Therefore, the supervisors need to read enough about the phenomenological research design and to review the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl and hermeneutical phenomenology of Heidegger as well as relevant works of the scholars such as Giorgi (2007, 2009) and Merleau-Ponty (1962), who brought new perspectives for these two approach, so that they can help the studens planning to conduct their research under the skin of phenomenology. The present research has also identified that the misconceptions in the theses were concentrated in the selection of participants, the formation of data collection tool and interview questions, analysis of data and interpretation of the findings. This result indicates that the related studies are methodologically problematic. A key priority should, therefore, be to review the recognized works of the scholars such as Corbin and Strauss (2008), Creswell (2013), Moustakas (1994) for eliminating those misconceptions.

This study included only the theses of educational administration. Therefore, the next research may analyse the articles of the scientific journals as the phenomenology has become an increasingly employed design in the field of educational administration (Çakanay & Çakır, 2006). Moreover, the misconceptions about the other research designs of the qualitative paradigm such as case-study, narrative research, grounded theory or action research can be examined in the scope of the theses and articles produced in the educational administration.

When the misconceptions are considered, the results implicate that the researchers and their supervisors were not able to answer

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their research problems by employing phenomenological research design. In many of the theses, it is seen that the researchers have aimed to gather opinions on a particular subject. It will be more appropriate to use the model 'basic interpretative research' based on the studies of Merriam (2002) and Sandelowski (2000) for such research. In this research model, the opinions of the participants about a particular event, the reasons for their choice in a specific subject and the problems they experience in relation to a certain issue can be analysed by employing the methods of the qualitative research paradigm. When we consider the theses examined in this study, it is possible to say that the basic interpretive research model would be more functional and reduce the discussions about the design.

Limitations

The work of the members of an academic field is the first-hand account to see how some particular standards of research are set (Whitley, 1984, as cited in Oplatka, 2010). Therefore, in the present study, we assume that the theses can reflect the facts on how educational administration perceives and employs phenomenological research design, as the authors and supervisors of the theses are the main members of the field. However, that can also serve as a limitation for the study, as we include only theses, but not other published works such as journal articles for the time and cost constraints. Apart from that, although our inferences in the present research are based on the most referenced guidelines in phenomenological research, they eventually reflect our way of interpretation for those guidelines. The qualitative research paradigm takes a stand against the perception that 'there is one specified way of doing research', which would make it questionable to assert that

'unless you do it in our way, it is wrong'. Therefore, the present study can be valued as revealing one of the correct ways of doing phenomenological research in educational administration.

Acknowledgment

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Mikail Yalçın was a beloved friend and a promising scholar in the field. We lost him in a tragic event in 2017. We still feel the deep sorrow of his loss. He is gone but not forgotten.

Rest in peace…

Neoliberal Governmentality and Performativity Culture in Higher Education: Reflections on Academic Identity

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Abstract	Article Info
This qualitative study aims to explore how the culture of performativity resulting from the influences of neoliberal governmentality on the academe is perceived by academics throughout their career and interrogates how their perceptions could reflect on their professional identity. The study was conducted with twenty-four academics from state universities in Turkey. The analysis of the in-depth interviews revealed that the emerging culture of performativity in higher education institutions seems to establish three identity trajectories as perceived by academics. Accordingly, some resist to conforming to the neoliberal norms in the academe, some feel obliged to conform to these norms albeit with ethical dilemmas while some welcome and embrace these emerging norms. The findings highlight some threatening consequences of performativity as a neoliberal policy tool in higher education for both the soul of the academic profession and the quality of work in the context of Turkey. Implications are identified, which include the need to develop new policy tools prioritizing professional integrity and internal accountability to achieve desired quality in higher education.	

Introduction

In the literature, there seems to be a consensus on the transformative influence of neoliberalism on the nature, organization and culture of higher education (Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Dougherty & Natow, 2019; Lynch, 2006). However, existing research manifests two camps in terms of the nature of the transformation. Some of the mainstream research in public higher education management celebrates the use of performance indicators as an influential tool of governing the institutions in general and the employees in particular (Derrick & Pavone, 2013; Geuna & Piolatto, 2016; Heinrich & Marschke, 2010; Hicks, 2012). Critical research, on the other hand, underlines how the same technologies of power can harm the fundamental values and functions of higher education and be counterproductive at both the institutional and individual level (Ball, 2012; Clarke & Knights, 2005; Kenny, 2017; Kim & Bak, 2016; Macfarlane, 2017; Teelken, 2012).

In the present study, the critical research perspective is used so as to investigate academic's professional identity in the neoliberal academe. Critical research analysing the influence of new tools of governing on the academe and academic profession mostly uses the Foucauldian concept of governmentality as an analytical guide (Fimyar, 2008). Governmentality refers to the link between the mentalities and practices of the government and the construction of the subject (Foucault, 2011; Lemke, 2001), and thus helps to analyse

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how the neoliberal policy tools and practices are internalised on the level of the self (Fimyar, 2008).The concept of performativity, on the other hand, has been generatively used across disciplines in the recent years, leading to different interpretations of the term (Gond et al., 2016). It can be defined as "a new mode of state regulation ... [which] requires individual practitioners to organise themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations" (Brown, 2003, p. 215). Following the work of scholars such as Ball (2000, 2003, 2012) who applied the term to the field of education relying on Lyotard's (1984, p. 53) definition of performativity as "the predominance of the performance criterion in knowledge creation", performativity, in the present study, is defined as a mode of regulation or a regime of truth in which "the performances ...serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of "quality", or "moments" of promotion or inspection, ...stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation" (Ball, 2000, p. 1).

In higher education literature, numerous researchers note that performance indicators such as grant income, higher index scores and the number of international publications have become pressing issues for the academic career, and these have created a culture of performativity in the academe (Kandiko Howson, Coate & de St Croix, 2018; Kenny, 2017; Macfarlane, 2018; Olssen & Peters, 2005). It is frequently underlined that the initiatives of world policy agencies (e.g. the IMF, the World Bank) and the European Union policies of education have triggered the spread of these neoliberal norms to a large extent from the West through the OECD countries (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Morrissey, 2013). Turkey, as a member of the OECD and a candidate for the European Union, has thus undergone similar changes, and neoliberal tenets addressing performativity have taken their place in higher education policies. This has recently been

indicated as having an effect on Turkish academics' perspectives regarding their professional roles and identities (Odabaşı et al., 2010). As Ball (2003) states, the culture of performativity could become a resource in the construction of the self, and while it could become an opportunity for some people to make a success of themselves, it could also cause inner conflicts, inauthenticity and resistance for some others. Therefore, the present paper aims to investigate how the current performativity culture of higher education as an outcome of neoliberal governmentality interacts with academic identity in the Turkish higher education context as perceived by academics. Below, the current higher education system and the state of academic profession in Turkey are discussed for the readers to better contextualise the research and translate its findings to other similar contexts whenever possible.

Higher Education in Turkey

Neoliberalism has begun to flourish as a political ideology in Turkish governments since the 1980s. Following the military takeovers in about the same years in addition to the increasing influence of neoliberal governmentality, the establishment of the Higher Education Council (YÖK) and the enactment of Law No. 2547 to regulate academic life have transformed Turkish higher education. Universities where academic autonomy and freedom were assured to a greater extent (Seggie & Gökbel, 2014), underwent a profound change after being placed under the administrative control of YÖK. As YÖK was – and still is – directly connected to the government (Balyer & Gündüz, 2011; Özcan & Çakır, 2016), this system has been criticised for harming academic autonomy and freedom through maintaining political control over universities. Despite several revisions to the law and the structure of YÖK, the core of the system

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has remained the same, and currently issues such as the resource allocation, the foundation of new departments and the training, evaluation, assignment and promotion of academics are all under YÖK's surveillance (Kurul Tural, 2007).

Before the beginning of the new millennium, the privatization of universities and the establishment of quality standards through creating competition among universities became the keystone of higher education policies (Gül & Gül, 2014). Since then, the number of universities has reached 206 in total (130 state and 76 private) with new state universities established in small cities and new private universities in larger cities with the purpose of meeting the growing demands for higher education, increasing growth and efficiency through competition. Furthermore, new performance standards were developed for the allocation and promotion of academics, such as the number of international publications, the research grant earnings, conference attendances and research partnerships (Balaban, 2012). Every university has been subject to these standards under YÖK's surveillance regardless of whether it is a developing provincial university or a well-established university with a strong background.

The global and national forces that have shaped Turkish higher education have also challenged the traditional context of academic work. Increased emphasis on vocational education in response to the demands of labour market, increased ratio of students to academic staff, increased competition among universities, increased duties of leadership and consultation and increased demands for engaging into income generating activities have reshaped academic work life (Kurul Tural, 2007). As a result, traditional scholarly values such as dedication to intellectual inquiry and objectivity, uncompromising search for knowledge without finance or publicity seeking,

collegiality and academic freedom (Bok, 1982) have been greatly challenged by the market-oriented neoliberal norms.

The Current State of Academic Career Progression in Turkey

The norms of performativity that include the routines of constant reporting and recording performance as well as valuing people for their productivity (Ball & Olmedo, 2013) are evident in the recent higher education policies in Turkey. Neoliberal governmentality has currently influenced the system of governing academic careers in Turkish universities, where the logic of quantification, competition, and constant evaluation of performance is being reinforced from assistantship to professorship.

As defined by Higher Education Law (Law No. 2547), there are three positions for professors in higher education institutions: assistant, associate and full professorship, all three positions are assigned by the Rectorate according to academics' scores calculated based on their performance outputs such as article, book and book chapter publications, and projects supported by research grants as well as proof of English language proficiency with a centralised language test score. Assistant professors are assigned with a five-year contract that may be renewed up to three times according to their performance (both research and teaching). Due to heavy teaching loads, which can count up to thirty hours a week, assistant professors already meet the performance criteria and their contracts are normally renewed according to this scale. Associate professorship is a permanent post in a university, which can only be assigned after being awarded the title by the Inter-University Board (ÜAK) and the Higher Education Council (YÖK). Being appointed to a full professorship requires having worked as an associate professor for five years and having gathered over a hundred points from similar

academic activities. Once academics become a professor, they remain a professor until their retirement. No performance requirement is defined for them by the Law (2547), which implies that performativity demands are no longer applicable to them. The title of professor also brings with it the possibility of becoming a dean, a rector or a member of higher management boards of YÖK (Higher Education Law No.2547), so professors are more active agents of the decision-making processes that influence the future of the academe.

Academic Identity and the Performativity Culture

Theories of identity development seem to have evolved under the influence of social and political changes, and this has offered different interpretations of the process of identity construction through time. While essentialist and liberal theories of identity have represented individuals as bearers of a 'core identity' and the source of free rational choices, social theories of identity have signified the interaction between the individual and the society, and attempted to interpret processes of identity construction in the context of social institutions and relationships (Henkel, 2005).Two themes are common in social theories of identity: the structure (i.e. external forces that shape identity) and the agency (i.e. the subjectivity and self-determination of the individual), and they attempt to explain identity development with the dual and ongoing interaction of the structure and agency (Willmont, 1999). Archer (1982) contributes to this line of argument with her theory of analytical dualism and postulates that "structure logically predates the action(s) which transform it" and that "structural elaboration logically postdates those actions" (Archer, 1982, p. 468). Based on this perspective, Archer (1982) develops a three-stage model of social change;

structural conditioning, social interaction and structural elaboration, and underlines that this process is "not only dualistic but also sequential" (1982, p. 458). Archer's theory helps to understand identity development in the social context through identifying structural, cultural and agential interests while simultaneously accepting the social construction of each, and through highlighting the overlapping and intertwining relationship between structural and agential forces (Newman, 2019) that eventually influence identity development.

The basic assumptions about the nature of identity have also been challenged by profound epistemological, structural, political and cultural changes that have emerged since the beginning of the 21st century. The definition of identity as a stable construct has given way to an understanding of identity as a fluid, open-ended project (Hall, 1992) as the social and institutional frameworks in which the identity is shaped have become less stable and cohesive, and more transitory and blurred.

The same arguments have also been made for the higher education context. In particular, neoliberalism and the influence of its signifying principles on academic work have become the key themes of recent critical higher education literature (Archer, 2000). Structural, political and cultural changes brought by the neoliberal turn is believed to have changed the key academic institutions, namely the discipline and the university, as newer forms of knowledge creation and dissemination have emerged and new institutional expectations and structures have taken place in universities. As a result, disciplinary and institutional culture, once defined as the basis of academic identity formation (Clark, 1983), is now considered to have weakened (Henkel, 2005) as "traditional academic identities based on

collegiality and the exercise of autonomy ...are indeed under threat, ...and the newer discourses of higher education are productive of newer subject positions" (Clegg, 2008, p. 331), with significant implications and consequences for academics' professional identity (Archer, 2008; Henkel, 2005). As argued in the literature, the policy technologies of neoliberal governmentality change both what academics as scholars and educators do, who they are, and what it means to be an academic (Ball, 2015; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Macfarlane, 2018); namely, their academic identity .

Existing studies on academic identity underline the contextuality of identity development (Busher, 2005; Gardner & Willey, 2018; McAlpine & Emmioğlu, 2015), and highlight that academic identity is produced and constantly shaped by the social, political and cultural influences surrounding academics (Fortune et al., 2016; Mockler, 2011; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015). The present study bears a similar theoretical lens, but also recognises the influence of agency on academic identity construction. In other words, our conceptualisation of identity recognises both individual and broader structural aspects. In Foucauldian terms, the study focuses on the interaction of the technologies of power (i.e. the contemporary, performative structure of the academe) and the technologies of the self (i.e. the subjectivities of the individual academic), and investigates the outcomes of this interaction in the form of academic identity trajectories. In this regard, the technologies of power as the means of structural change in academic profession and higher education context provide the conditions under which academics make their choices and these choices create who they become in the end (Ball, 2003; Besley, 2009). Hence, the study particularly looks into how academics organise themselves in response to the culture of performativity as a new mode of state regulation, and attempts to identify academic identity

patterns that are likely to emerge from the juxtaposition of the technologies of power (the norms of performativity) and the technologies of the self (the individual academic's subjectivities) in Turkish academic context.

Existing literature mostly exhibits studies that address the effects of neoliberal policies on university systems and academic work in Western countries, which have long internalised liberal democracy and are now strongly influenced by the practices of neoliberal governmentality. However, such research in a non-Western context is scarce (Fimyar, 2008). In this regard, Turkey offers a different context as it is a developing country where the institutions and values of liberal democracy –from free and fair elections to the rule of law–lack a strong basis. Turkey, also offers a unique context as it combines Western ideals with Eastern, traditional values in all spheres of social life due to its historical and geographical location between the West and the East. Furthermore, Turkish higher education, which had been governed with non-market bureaucratic mechanisms for almost forty years and which has had a rather nascent scientific understanding and intellectualism as compared to the West, is now passing through a transformation phase under the influence of neoliberalism in addition to the other developments unique to Turkey (Kurul Tural, 2007).

Method

This study employs the qualitative research method, which helps to build a complex, holistic picture of a social or human problem in connection to its real context (Creswell, 2007). We believe the qualitative method enables us to analyse the holistic and meaningful characteristics of academic identity in the context of Turkish higher

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education based on participants' rich and detailed accounts of their experiences from their own perspectives.

Research Setting and the Participants

Three medium-sized, typical Turkish state universities with a minimum background of about twenty five years were selected purposefully for the study. Participants were selected from these universities using the snowball sampling method. We started data collection by contacting one academic willing to talk about his/her experiences from each university and asked these participants to identify other academics that could provide us with richer data. In order to gain insights into the issue from different perspectives, participants with different titles, age, gender and disciplinary background were conducted. As the emphasis was on having sufficiently rich data rather than a sufficient number of participants, data collection stopped when data saturation – namely the point where no new and further insights have been provided by the participants and the data have started to repeat itself (O'Reilly and Parker 2012) – was reached. The final sample comprised twenty-four female and male academics aged between thirty-six and fifty-two. The participants were assistant, associate and full professors from different disciplines.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews lasting approximately one hour each were conducted in Turkish in 2016. Interviews were guided by these questions: (1) How do you define the academic profession based on your personal experiences?, (2) How do you define the basic values and principles of the academic profession?, (3) What do you think is expected from academics by society and how do these expectations

influence your work?, (4) What is your opinion of being an academic in the past, present and future in relation to the context of Turkish higher education?, (5) What is your opinion of the current higher education policies in regard to the academic career? Some probing questions were also asked to understand the participants' perceptions and personal experiences better. All interviews were tape-recorded with the participants' permission and transcribed on the computer. As declared on the consent sheet, all personal identifiers were removed to preserve anonymity. The participants are referred to by codes (e.g. P-1, P-2 … – participant 1, participant 2 …) at the end of the quotes used for illustrative purposes in the results section.

Data Analysis

Data analysis started with reading and rereading the transcripts individually for an initial and holistic understanding of the participants' accounts. Following this initial phase, emerging codes were identified with a systematic search throughout each participant's accounts for answers to the research question. Then, recurring codes across the transcripts were compiled to form the initial list of codes. At this point, researchers compared their interpretations of data, and discussed any non-convergent codes until an agreed list of codes was formed. Codes that emerged from this thematic analysis were first arranged into categories, and then charted into three main themes. Each theme refers to a pattern (trajectory) of academic identity in the particular research context.

Credibility

Creswell (2007) proposes that a minimum of two procedures of credibility should be adopted in any qualitative study. In this study, to ensure the accuracy of the qualitative findings, the data were

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carefully analysed by two researchers and the researchers cross-checked their interpretations of the data. Any inconsistencies between researchers were discussed and resolved before the final list of codes and categories were formed. Additionally, peer debriefing was used to check the accuracy of the findings. In that process, the identification of the codes and categories was reviewed by three uninvolved colleagues, who were experts in qualitative research, to see whether the same or similar accounts resonated with them. At the end of the debriefing process, no significant divergence appeared between the researchers and uninvolved colleagues, which is accepted as the sign of accuracy of findings.

Results

After the analysis of the data, three themes were identified, which delineated three identity trajectories followed by academics. These identity trajectories were named 'academic self as ethical and aesthetic project', 'academic self as calculating entrepreneur', and 'academic self in ethical dilemma'. These identity trajectories reflect who these academics tend to become under the current conditions of the academe.

The First Identity Trajectory: Academic Self as Ethical and Aesthetic Project

Academics following this identity trajectory adhere to traditional scholarly ideals and professional values, following their genuine interests rather than focusing on fashionable or commoditised topics; that is, their priorities are not determined by 'what counts', but by 'what resonates with their ideals'.

> *I specialise in crystallization. Many people do not prefer it because the studies in this field take longer time. If you want to move up as fast as possible, this*

field would not be a good choice. But this does not bother me, because I like it and I am happy working like this. Titles and tenures will eventually come any way if you are scholarly successful (P-21).

When I do research I must believe in it. I mean I do not want to study something because it is popular or because I can publish it more easily (P-6).

Some of these academics seem to even resist participating in some conferences, claiming that they have turned out to be 'stones to jump onto for the sake of collecting points' (P.10) like in some computer games, just serving the current performativity demands rather than serving the best interest of the academic society or society at large.

They say 'you are different', and I tell them 'you are all the same!' There are many of them around me who are driven away from real science, and just stick to some 'buzz words' only because these topics are popular, I mean they 'sell' now in our field (P-2).

Academics inclined to this trajectory seem to perceive being an academic not just as a career but actually life itself; something that gives meaning and is integrated into their whole lives. It seems to reflect on how they see, feel and approach to life.

My profession has become a lifestyle, actually, the life itself. I am an academic here at work, on the bus going home, cooking in the kitchen or lying in bed because I keep acting like an academic; observing, thinking critically, questioning and nourishing my curiosity no matter what (P-5).

The Second Identity Trajectory: Academic Self as Calculating Entrepreneur

The second identity trajectory –academic self as calculating entrepreneur– could actually be classified as 'an objective identity' as opposed to the other two trajectories as 'subjective identity'. Objective identity refers to how a person might be viewed and

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identified by others in light of certain biological or social facts about that person while subjective identity describes how a person conceive himself/herself to be (Bilgrami, 2006, p.5). Although academics interviewed were self-identified with either one of the two identity trajectories – namely academic self as ethical and aesthetic project or academic self in ethical dilemma, none of them identified themselves as following this second identity trajectory. However, all of these academics explicitly referred to the existence of a group of academics who reflected such a professional identity in Turkish academic context.

The analysis revealed that academics as calculating entrepreneurs were enjoying the opportunities of the metrication system and seemingly feel no regret or need to complain about the current way of knowledge-creating. They have seemingly normalised the systems of performativity culture and are willing to sustain it to progress their academic career. In other words, these academics praise the new metric-based performance evaluation system as a more accountable and transparent means of making an academic career, perceiving the demands of performativity as a duty to be achieved successfully so as to deserve the promised rewards (i.e. status, power, title or tenure).

> *I appreciate the recent developments in the academe. We have started to do good things. Everyone knows what to do beforehand, and works accordingly. The more productive you are, the more you are recognised by the authorities. I believe similar developments in the future will make the academe a better place (P-8).*

Hence, these academics tend to restrict their work to activities that could produce the most measurable and visible output. They conceive the current metric-based system as an opportunity to reach higher positions that could give them more power and reputation in

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the academe. When they are appointed to these positions, they begin to believe that they deserve the right to apply the norms of audit culture to those under their surveillance. Indeed, this resembles Ball's (2012, p. 20) statement that "performativity is a moral system that subverts us to its ends. It makes us responsible for our performance and performance of others".

The further analysis of similar statements by the participants also showed that these academics had internalised the audit system so fully that they tended to criticise the academics in pursuit of an ethical and aesthetic self as being selfish, bohemian, lazy, and truant. These academics seem to believe that things are changing in the academe and so are 'the old scholarly ideals'; thus, the academics insisting on these old ideals are actually in a reactionary and non-progressive state. Having internalised the system, these academics' attempts to climb the career ladder seem to aim at executing and instilling the norms of the audit culture they have gone through.

> *There are academics who insist on the old school. Now the system has changed. The topics of priority are already determined by the Scientific and Technological Research Centre, so the projects to be worked on are addressed clearly. The criteria for promotion are also clear, but these people are not concerned about any of them. I find these academics really resistant to change (P-10).*

Another significant finding that emerged regarding these academics was that the current system of the academe was actually both encouraging and allowing their existence. In fact, the analysis of data portrayed a purpose beyond just surviving in the academe, but indicated a tendency to be freed from the surveillance of others for the purpose of surveiling them instead. The following quotes which also criticise these academics actually indicate the existence of such a case in the academe.

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In the past, academics used to stay away from administrative roles because they thought these roles would keep them away from scholarly activity. However, nowadays the number of academics clamouring for managerial ranks such as deanship or rectorship has risen. People want to become a professor in the quickest way possible, sometimes at the expense of ethics, care for others or care for self even. Why? To become powerful, to control others while not being controlled by them (P-11).

Academics that have neither broad knowledge nor even one authentic study could be encountered everywhere now. Most are even managing us, determining our career. They have the power to influence academics that are actually better than them in every way (P-3).

The above quotes also reveal how academics as calculating entrepreneurs are inclined to seek a short-cut to academic positions without excelling professionally but through working in accordance with the metric demands. The data also implied that these academics have strong ties with social networks. These networks are either close to power or comprise the academics who know the delicacy of surmounting the metric requirements since they are overtly concentrated on the ways and means of acquiring outputs to count in the current system. Their capability of being integral to the decision-making mechanisms through strong social networking could give them the power to shape the academic context through influencing other academics' professional lives, the practices of management, and the procedures for promotion, task and reward allocations.

There are some academics who can earn titles and tenure despite lacking a solid knowledge base. They get the support of their social or political ties. They are so into this publication business that they can simply ignore everything else, justifying themselves that it is the only way to meet the expected criteria. Maybe they are not 'plagiarizing' but still posing a challenge to other research ethics; having their names included in papers to which they have contributed nothing, self-publishing a study all done by their assistants, slicing,

duplicating or falsifying the results. We all observe or hear about these things here and there. I think these academics are dangerous because they can easily become an authority and shape the dynamics of our academic context (P-7).

The Third Identity Trajectory: Academic Self in Ethical Dilemma

The third identity trajectory called academic self in ethical dilemma seemed to be followed by those academics that experienced ambivalence between sticking to scholarly integrity and conforming to the norms created by the performativity culture. These academics tend to keep up with the system's performance requirements at a level just enough to survive, and at the same time attempt to engage in more authentic and voluntary work such as authentic projects or extracurricular activities that would support students' learning.

When I was an assistant professor, I insisted on doing the job as it should be; I was following the recent developments in the literature, and providing my students with current materials. I was in favour of doing research that really interested me and so on. In the meanwhile, the people around me used to ask how many points I had collected to become an associate professor. Then I observed that some of my colleagues who concentrated on collecting points but nothing else got titles quickly. They are now either professors or in management positions. I began to think that we should not leave the academe to these 'audit minded' people who do not believe in professional ethics but rather in the external accountability systems. Unfortunately, we now lack the luxury to be the academics we wish to be. Although it is already late, I have recently started to collect points by any means like sending my graduate students to these fabrication conferences and so on, even if it felt so humiliating (P-1).

I feel 'kind of guilty' when I publish or produce something that is inauthentic. I try to keep it at minimum, like a side dish to dress my CV. I do a little bit of this and a little bit of that; I keep my authentic work as the main dish on the table though. That's the only way to catch up with the 'number seeker' academics (P-14).

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These academics seem to be constrained between the identity-trajectories previously described, while actually feeling closer to the previous norms of scholarly thought. On one hand, they maintain an awareness of professional integrity and believe that real science requires more effort, longer time and deeper thinking, which is no longer allowed by the current performativity demands. On the other hand, they feel obliged to meet the demands of performativity so as to survive in the academe and perhaps to be able to counter-balance the dynamics created by the frantic 'number seeking' acts of pragmatic and committed 'performers'. From this perspective, in contrast to the academic self as calculating entrepreneurs that normalise and embrace the new numbered performativity culture, academics in ethical dilemma refuse to normalise these standards but feel obliged to prevent their pervasion of the whole system before it is too late.

Discussion

This study examined how the emerging performativity culture in higher education resulting from neoliberal governmentality reflects on academic identity. The study has revealed significant findings supporting the view that the increasing demands of performativity which have reinforced a metric-based evaluation of quality and merit at Turkish state universities seem to reflect differently on academics' identity. According to our findings, some academics resist emerging neoliberal norms in the academe, some feel obliged to conform, albeit with a sense of humiliation and guilt, while others welcome and embrace this new vision. These findings largely support Ball's (2003) statement that neoliberal norms of performativity could have different outcomes in the making of the self as these norms might

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lead to inner conflicts, inauthenticity, resistance or opportunities for
actualizing a new, potential self.

As suggested by Ball (2015), and Ball and Olmedo (2013), the
technologies of neoliberal governmentality set the cultural and social
limits to the possibilities of the self through opening new spaces of
decision and action, and through shaping academics' purposes,
decisions and social relations accordingly. However, the course of
identity (re)making is actually determined by academics' activism in
engaging with the professional context and the external political
environment (Jawitz, 2009; Mockler, 2011; Romanowski & Nasser,
2015).Every individual academic creates a unique balance through
their preference of being active or passive, struggling or giving up,
and compliance with or opposing to what is given to them (Arasa &
Calvert, 2013; Henkel, 2005). The goals to which academics are
committed to orient their choices and responses to these
environmental demands (Leisyte, 2007), and their stances make them
the academic they are (Carra et al., 2017). As a result, a range of
identity trajectories that represent different identity formation paths
emerge from this inevitable negotiation between the norms of the
academic work and the subjectivity and agency of the individual
academic (Billett, 2004).

In the present study, this negotiation results in three patterns of
identity: *academic self as ethical and aesthetic project*, *academic self as
calculating entrepreneur* and *academic self in ethical dilemma*. Teelken
(2012) addresses the existence of similar responses to neoliberal
governmentality in the European context, and labels the three
responses as *symbolic compliance, professional pragmatism and formal
instrumentality*. These tendencies bear striking similarities with the

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three identity trajectories in the current study although the two studies were carried out in different contexts.

Teelken's (2012) concept of symbolic compliance corresponds to the academic self as ethical and aesthetic project. The term symbolic compliance implies that academics who have an enthusiasm for autonomy and performing in their own way only adapt to changes at a superficial or cosmetic level while remaining loosely-coupled from measures that lie outside the primary process of academic activities. In this regard, symbolic compliance bears a combination of acquiescence and avoidance in addition to an attitude of 'critical resistance' to what is not considered to be genuine academic work. In the present case, academics in pursuit of a self as ethical and aesthetic project display a willingness to be truthful to scholarly ideals despite the pressures of performativity, the temptation of quick routes to power and prestige, or the risks of slower career advancement or being challenged by the power mechanisms. They are inclined to achieve a meaningful academic self rather than a secured one. Thus, they have strong moral concerns in regard to their conduct with students and contribution to the profession and humanity, which seems to provide them with inner rewards rather than the promises of the neoliberal norms (e.g. fast-tracking career, financial support or credibility in the market). Foucault (2011) also defines such identity-making as ethical and aesthetic self-formation, and being inspired by Foucault, Ball (2015, p. 13) defines it as 'ethics as a practice rather than a plan' and 'not a matter of asserting ideals but rather an aestheticism'. Ball (2015) describes this identity trajectory as a resistant self that chooses to refuse the neoliberal norms that potentially harm traditional scholarly ideals.

The second identity trajectory –*academic self as calculating entrepreneur* – is followed by academics that seem to have internalised the current performance standards which value quantity over authenticity and honesty, and be seduced by the rewards such as status, prestige and power. These academics who tend to channel their energies into taking shortcuts to these rewards could easily be tempted to produce the requisite output at the expense of scholarly content or the erosion of research ethics, as supported by some previous research (Clarke, Knights & Jarvis, 2012; Corbett et al., 2014; Keenoy, 2003). Teelken (2012) labels this inclination with the term *formal instrumentality,* which indicates a lack of critical perspective on formal arrangements and tools. These academics appreciate the regimes of performativity and fulfil its formal requirements in pursuit of achieving the recognition and approval of the authorities so as to secure a valued, stable identity. Brown (2003), in his comprehensive description of neoliberalism, states that neoliberalism constructs individuals as entrepreneurial, rational, calculating actors and measures their moral autonomy by their capacity for 'self-care', which he defines as "the ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions" (Brown, 2003, p. 42). In achieving this, neoliberalism 'equates moral responsibility with rational action; it erases the discrepancy between economic and moral behaviour by configuring morality entirely as a matter of rational deliberation about costs, benefits, and consequences' (Brown, 2003, p. 42). Lyotard (1984) also puts forth the view that the culture of performativity tends to pull attention to the measures of performance rather than the real enterprise and potentially drives out aesthetic and justice values such as ethics. Emphasis on performativity could result in a displacement from a 'reasoned justification' to a narrower 'instrumental rationality' (Townley, Cooper, & Oakes, 2003). These

statements and interpretations regarding the influences of the performativity culture could also explain the academic identity as a calculating entrepreneur.

Academics in ethical dilemma (following the third identity trajectory) feel insecure, uncertain and somehow humiliated under the audit culture of performativity. Not having normalised the demands of performativity with a clear conscience, these academics seemingly confront tensions and contradictions due to producing fabrications or engaging in inauthentic work in order to survive in the academe on one hand and experiencing an inner disturbance and ethical dilemma doing so on the other. Hence, they try to catch up with the demands of the performativity culture by demonstrating the minimum performance standard to secure an identity that is valued and rewarded in the current system while at the same time attempting to spare some time for authentic work as much as the circumstances allow. According to Clarke and Knights (2015, p. 17), they adopt an 'if you can't beat them, join them' perspective in playing the new career game, or as Teelken (2012, p. 287) observes, they want "to play the game according to the rules and intend to win". These researchers define it as a pragmatic tendency that indicates the recognition of the new regimes of truth to increase their chances of success while simultaneously remaining conscious of their ethical responsibilities to others and to themselves. Although academics in the present case seem to bear similar concerns, they are also different in that they seem to be sacrificing their priorities in order to prevent the academe from being overwhelmed by neoliberal norms. In a way, they attempt to form a balance between their inner scholarly pursuits and the outer demands, although this often results in ethical dilemmas. From this perspective, these academics are actually not passively complying with the norms but actively reacting

against them in their own way. These academics seem to believe in the possibility of returning to the traditional scholarly academe and preserving the soul of the academic profession by using the current norms as a vehicle to 'win the new career game' ahead of the ones that have internalised the current 'audit culture' as the new academy.

These academics with a revolutionist compliance seem to believe that insisting on pure science with an antagonistic attitude towards performativity would remain too utopian under the new, pressing circumstances and would put them at a disadvantage in their race for the rewards (e.g. titles, tenure, prestige, power) promised by the technologies of power. As a result, academics embracing fabrications in their pursuit of collecting points in the shortest and easiest way could possibly become the winners of the race, and turn the academe into a business enterprise rather than a scholarly atmosphere in ceaseless search of the truth, while 'real academics' (in their terms) could become the losers.

Conclusion and Implications

Neoliberal interventions to increase performance and efficiency through increasing competition and research-based performance evaluations have been progressively deployed in higher education around the world. Previous studies have highlighted how these interventions could damage the fundamental values and functions of higher education and prove to be counter-productive at both the institutional and individual level (Ball, 2012; Clarke & Knights, 2015; Kim & Bak, 2016; Lynch, 2006; Marshall, 2009). Although carried out in a different context from these studies, the present study yielded similar findings, and potentially contributes to the existing literature by discussing the perceived influence of performativity as a

neoliberal policy tool, which is a new mode of governance, on the (re)formation of academics' professional identities in a developing country which already lacked liberal ideals.

As Hanlon (1998) describes, there are winners and losers in the struggle for the soul of professionalism under the pressures of performativity. In the Turkish context, academics as calculating entrepreneurs seem to be winning the new performativity game since the current neoliberal norms sustain their existence and operation in the academe. Those in pursuit of a self as ethical and aesthetic project, on the other hand, strive at maintaining their academic professionalism and integrity albeit risking a slower career and being deprived of the potential rewards. Academics in ethical dilemma seem to be even more troubled, due to taking a critical stance on the alluring and coercive demands of the current norms on one hand and struggling to compromise the demands of performativity with traditional academic professionalism on the other. Thus, these academics with *revolutionist compliance* might be unconsciously enforcing the norms that victimise them, or they might become *passive conformists* with a feeling of learned helplessness. Future studies (maybe in ten or fifteen years from now) could yield clearer results regarding the status of these academics.

The findings of the present study underline that attempts to fulfil the desired quality of higher education through the neoliberalist policy tools (i.e. external accountability systems, auditing, paying for performance…) are likely to fail, which is also supported by previous research (e.g. Ball 2012; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Clarke & Knights, 2015; Kenny, 2017;McAlpine & Emmioğlu, 2015; Teelken, 2012). The current trends in the academe support conditions that reinforce an instrumental approach to academic work or create tensions,

dilemmas and conflicts. In fact, a common conclusion that can be inferred could be the need for extending scholarly integrity (that is largely based on internal accountability) to the whole system in the academe so as to create genuine scientific knowledge and offer quality education. As the technologies of power (i.e. the government and its policy tools) seem to have a significant influence on academics' work and views, educational policy makers aiming to increase the quality should benefit from the result of this study and, in planning the future of academe, responsible parties must reconsider the adverse effects of the neoliberal norms and develop ways to reinstitute them. Emphasizing the significance of being truthful to science, having a critical mind and bearing a strong sense of ethical self as well as calling attention to quality rather than solely focusing on output quantity are some of the ways that can be prioritised. In addition, initiatives must be taken to support academics in ethical dilemma and the ones in search of ethical and aesthetic self, who already bear internal accountability and attend to professional integrity, before the soul of academic professionalism vanishes from the academe. Current practices of performance evaluation and reward allocation should also be reconsidered, recognizing the intrinsic motivational nature of the academic profession as well as its responsibility to protect truthfulness in science (Kenny, 2017; Macfarlane, 2017).

The present study might offer a conceptual and methodological perspective for future studies on the neoliberal governance of educational institutions that would contribute to the debate over the harmful effects of neoliberalism on the essence of educational practices and would keep these criticisms fresh in the minds of policy-makers. Furthermore, this study attempted to explore the possible identity trajectories that could emerge from the interaction of

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academic subjectivities with the performativity demands of governmentality, and thus the influence of demographic factors such as age, gender, discipline or title were not in the scope of this paper. However, a future investigation into how Turkish academics form and maintain the emergent identity trajectories could yield interesting and useful insights.

In addition, the present study did not reveal any significant findings that indicate a possible connection between academic title (or the career phase) and the selection of the three identity trajectories. Similarly, the fact that the present study revealed similar identity trajectories as compared to Western contexts might be implying that some factors (e.g. globalisation, universal academic values, and professional socialisation) other than the cultural context might be more imperative in the formation and selection of identity trajectories. Future studies that are designed accordingly could offer significant findings to enhance our understanding in this regard.

Acknowledgements

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Principal Voice for Successful Policy Implementation: Lessons Learned from Teacher Tenure

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Abstract	Article Info
This study examined the perceptions of US school principals toward one US state's revamped teacher tenure law and how principals perceived that the law affected their ability to evaluate and retain effective teachers. Principal interviews indicated the law had a positive impact on their ability to evaluate and retain effective teachers despite barriers associated with the teacher evaluation system. Findings were examined through Hess' (1999) political attractiveness of reform framework. Results highlight that future research should examine stakeholder and principal voice in policy initiatives and education agendas. As such, a conceptual model for predicting the success of educational reform initiatives is provided.	

Introduction

As the policy discourse in nations throughout the world has shifted over the past three decades to one which embraces a neoliberal slant, educational systems have felt the consequences of this shift. This shift empowered schools to manage their finances, hiring, firing, and other organizational operations, while local education authorities saw their power lessen (Prendergast, Hill, & Jones, 2017). Neoliberal policy, particularly as applied to education, includes "marketization, commodification, degradation, managerialisation and privatization or preprivatisation of public services" and is associated with "minimal state intervention and minimal public expenditure" in the dissemination of these services (Prendergast, Hill, & Jones, 2017, p 27).

Klees (2017) pointed out that in this era of educational neoliberalism there were two common ideas repeatedly heard; that is, that schools are failing and the responsibility for the failure lay with teachers. As a result, a new model of schooling was needed. As part of this new model, along with government grants, US states began to reassess and rework policies regarding teacher evaluation and teacher tenure.

Tenure in the United States provides due process protections for teachers against unfair dismissal. Tenure is normally granted after a probationary period and annual evaluations from supervisors. Attempts to reform tenure have focused on tying evaluation benchmarks to classroom instruction and student achievement. As Ovando and Ramirez (2007) pointed out, while the leadership role of the principal has been a crucial element for successful implementation of teacher evaluation, "few have attempted to determine school leaders' views regarding instructional leadership

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actions within the performance appraisal of teachers as a basis for improving instruction" (p. 106). Davidson (1998), in an earlier study of Tennessee's reform efforts in the United States, concluded that principals did not perceive the tenure law as beneficial in identifying and retaining quality teachers and believed that the law did little to improve the quality of education in Tennessee. Yet, the Tennessee teacher tenure law received no revisions following the study done by Davidson and was only considered for revisions once federal funding became available.

During the most recent legislative efforts to address tenure and evaluation reform, policy makers failed to consider stakeholder perceptions. In an effort to receive federal funding, Tennessee relied heavily upon achievement data and reports, such as those mentioned from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) (2009, 2011) and the Institute for a Competitive Workforce (2007) that highlighted weaknesses in Tennessee's education system; specifically, identifying and retaining quality teachers while dismissing ineffective ones. While reports such as these hold value, asking for stakeholder support for a specific option or course of action, such as the case of principals and teacher tenure, may help determine political practicality (Alexander, 2013).

Soliciting support of those ultimately responsible for policy implementation, such as principals, may determine how effective policy will be once signed into legislation (Alexander, 2013). Including principal voice on teacher tenure and intended reform agendas, as implementors of policy at the school level, principals may be more likely to carry out policy provisions and be more willing to offer input to policy makers that can help devise a course of action

that could lead to a change in the dynamics of support (Alexander,
2013).

Ovando and Ramirez (2007) argued that research that focuses on
the perceptions of school principals regarding "their actions within
the performance appraisal of teachers" (p. 106) is necessary, noting
that principal perceptions of the new tenure law as it pertains to
evaluation may be invaluable when reviewing the effectiveness of
new procedures for evaluating effective teaching. As Alexander
(2013) pointed out, "no matter how good a policy seems to be in
theory, if it does not get implemented, it does not work" (p. 94).
Moreover, consideration should be placed on the judgment of
professionals, such as principals and district leaders, who understand
teaching and learning in schools as it relates to granting and revoking
tenure. As Baratz-Snowden (2009) argued, the development of
systems that require professional educators, as opposed to "law
judges and economists with arcane formulas" (p. 27), to make
decisions concerning teacher competence, should be the focus.

McGuinn (2010) suggested research that can provide empirical
evidence on the effectiveness of teacher tenure policies should be the
basis for policy makers' discussion regarding costs and benefits of
teacher tenure. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the
perceptions of public school principals toward the Tennessee teacher
tenure law and how this legislation has affected school principals'
ability to evaluate and retain effective teachers. For purposes of this
study, we use the definition of perception as "a way of regarding,
understanding, or interpreting something; a mental impression
("Perception", 2019).

To achieve this purpose, the following research question guided
this study: How do Tennessee public school principals perceive that

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the teacher tenure law has affected their ability to evaluate and retain effective teachers?

Review of Literature

Tennessee Teacher Tenure Reform

In addition to modifications to the statewide evaluation system for teachers, Tennessee refurbished its tenure legislation to connect to specific evaluation criteria and subsequent evaluation scores for teachers. The Tennessee legislation, entitled First to the Top Act, revised due process procedures for tenured teachers to require that dismissal hearings were attended by impartial hearing officers selected by the school's governance board, as opposed to presented directly by the governance board (First to the Top Act, 2010). The following year, new legislation (hereafter referred to as the 2011 tenure law) retained the provisions for teacher dismissal and was intended to make dismissal hearings for tenured and non-tenured teachers standardized (Wesson, 2012). McGuinn (2010) argued that tenure statutes should incorporate teacher effectiveness data from evaluation scores. Under the 2011 tenure law, teachers may lose tenure as a result of low evaluation scores, which are also considered appropriate cause for dismissal. More importantly, the new law redefined teacher "inefficiency," thus providing a means for dismissing teachers who earned tenure prior to 2011 (Mead, 2012; Office of Research and Education Accountability [OREA], 2008; State Collaborative On Reforming Education [SCORE, 2012]; Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-401 2011). While teachers who earned tenure prior to 2011 cannot be dismissed for low evaluation scores, they can be dismissed for inefficiency (Wesson, 2012), consistent with literature regarding evaluation and tenure revocation (Baker et al., 2010; Baratz-

Snowden, 2009; Coleman et al., 2005; Dixon, 2011; Eady & Zapeda, 2007; Kersten & Israel, 2005; McGuinn, 2010; National Council on Teacher Quality [NCTQ], 2009, 2011; Oliva et al., 2009; Range et al., 2011; SCORE, 2009; Shakman et al., 2012; Weisberg et al., 2010; Wilson, 2012).

In an analysis of policy in Tennessee in the wake of educational reform, Finch (2012) discussed the controversial nature of educational reform and the attention Tennessee's new policies have generated. Finch argued that Tennessee faced considerable pressures to reform education after receiving several failing rankings (NCTQ, 2009) and suggested that policy innovation is fueled by the availability of new revenue; hence, Tennessee entered a national grant competition. As a state that has shown promise as a national leader in education reform, literature has indicated that Tennessee may be on the proper pathway in connecting tenure decisions to evidence of teacher effectiveness, leading to a positive impact on student achievement (Finch, 2012; NCTQ, 2011; SCORE, 2012, Wesson, 2012).

Perceptions of Evaluation and Tenure

As part of the Tennessee tenure law provisions, a five year probationary period for teachers is required as well as evaluation scores that are directly tied to tenure decisions. A report by SCORE (2012) noted Tennessee's revised evaluation system is "improving both the quality of instruction in the classroom as well as the establishment of accountability for student results," (p. 4). Mobley (2002) conducted a quantitative study that investigated principal perceptions of Tennessee's evaluation system. The study examined principals' willingness to embrace changes associated with a revised and more complex system of teacher evaluation. Findings from the

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study suggested that the state model did not provide an accurate portrait of teaching behavior, nor did they feel that they could identify effective teachers by using the performance standards in the state model. Mobley also noted that although the Tennessee State Department of Education mandated a highly complex model for teacher evaluation in 1997, no significant follow up studies existed that helped determine the extent to which principals were implementing the new system of evaluation as it was intended. The same rings true for this study on principal perceptions of teacher tenure: although Tennessee mandated a new, complex model for teacher evaluation connected to tenure in 2011, no significant follow up studies (qualitative or quantitative) existed that provide insight into whether or not Tennessee public school principals perceived the new system as beneficial in the evaluation and retention of effective teachers. Now that the Tennessee teacher evaluation system is tied directly to tenure decisions, in spite of literature that has highlighted negative sentiment regarding teacher evaluation and tenure policies, this study is particularly relevant (Davidson, 1998; Donaldson, 2011; Eady & Zepeda, 2007; Kersten, 2006, Kersten & Israel, 2005; Range et al., 2011, 2012).

The Need for Perception Data in Policy Research

Given the debate that has surrounded education reform, teacher tenure could be viewed as a highly controversial and highly visible policy – a policy that, according to Torres, Zellner, and Erlandson. (2008), is unlikely to be successful. As Kersten (2006) argued, "a better understanding of how various stakeholders view teacher tenure may provide valuable insights toward finding some common ground between boards of education and teacher organizations" (p. 240). Moreover, Kersten and others noted that future research

designed to understand the perceptions of educational stakeholders is necessary to open productive dialogue on tenure (Kersten & Israel, 2005; Range et al., 2012). Range et al. (2012) examined principal perceptions about teacher competency issues in a survey sample of 286 principals and recommended that future research should focus on principal perceptions regarding supports needed to manage incompetent teachers and how their perceptions of incompetency may be influenced by teacher tenure. Other studies, such as one conducted by Blankenship (2013) in a quantitative policy analysis on tenure law revisions across the US, have argued that an examination of the relationship between teacher evaluations and teacher tenure should be explored. Additionally, research should examine the impact such legislative changes may have on teacher retention (Davidson, 1998; Donaldson, 2011; McGuinn, 2010).

Alexander (2013) argued that by addressing the positions of key groups and noting their nonnegotiable points, policy makers can "determine whether a policy is acceptable to actors in the political process and if clients and other actors are receptive to any change in the status quo" (p. 93). Moreover, U.S. education reform relies on a plurality of interests; that is, citizens exert indirect influence through elections and in the case of teacher tenure, principals hold influence as actors, stakeholders and implementers for new policy. The influence principals' perceptions may have on policy should "encourage policy analysts to look at the larger policy ecology lest they miss important influences" (Weaver-Hightower, 2014, p. 117). By examining principal perceptions of contractual limitations that may impact teacher quality, policymakers may be better able to work with leaders at the district and state level to construct policy informed by perception data. In addition, rewards for experienced teachers as well as robust career growth opportunities could be

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considered if future tenure and evaluation revisions are to be made (Donaldson, 2011; Kersten & Israel, 2005).

Conceptual Framework

The framework selected for this study will provide the lens from which to view the possible impact of teacher tenure legislation. Specifically, the framework serve as a guide in examining the degree of impact tenure reform legislation has had on the principal's ability to evaluate and identify effective teachers. For this study, examining the political attractiveness of reform in the contexts of visibility and controversy will be utilized as the conceptual framework. Although this framework has been rarely used and only employed once in a similar fashion by Torres et al. (2008), employing this framework can allow for findings to portray a more holistic picture of teacher tenure and evaluation as perceived by public school principals, one which policy makers can consider when making decisions regarding teacher tenure and other educational policies. Torres et al. (2008) employed Hess' (1999) framework of policy attractiveness to examine principal perceptions of a school improvement policy in a high-impact policy environment. The authors noted that the results that places emphasis on understanding policies and their impact on perceptions could be used to "guide policy makers in designing and structuring educational policy" (p. 7). In this way, regardless of the policy at hand, policy makers will have a means to consider if a highly controversial, highly visible policy can still be perceived as successful by stakeholders, actors, and implementers for improving the quality of education in a state.

Political Attractiveness of Reform Concept

Hess' (1999) research on policy attractiveness provides a capable framework from which to measure policy appeal (Torres et al., 2008). According to Hess (1999), a legislator's preference for and selection of policy can be viewed through an interaction of two separate factors: policy visibility and policy controversy. Hess (1999) presented a four-quadrant format where a selected policy can be high and low in both dynamics. Figure I represents the proposed model for political attractiveness of reform.

Figure 1.

Two-by-two matrix for viewing the political attractiveness of reform

| Visibility | *Relative Controversy* | |
	Low	*High*
High	Attractive	Mixed
Low	Mixed	Unattractive

*Adapted from "Spinning Wheels: The Politics of Urban School Reform," F.M. Hess, 1999, p. 107. Copyright 1999 by The Brookings Institution. Used with permission.

Hess (1999) conducted a national survey of school district internal and external observers (teacher union chiefs, school board members, and education reporters) to examine the visibility and controversy levels of school policies such as site-based management (SBM), professional development, and student evaluation and scheduling changes. Hess found that policies such as scheduling changes scored low in visibility and high in controversy while policies such as SBM were more inclined to be selected by superintendents due to their less controversial and highly visible nature. In the case of scheduling changes, Hess (1999) asserted that

such reforms tended to disrupt the routine nature of the school day and were less likely to be selected by superintendents due to their adverse character (Hess, 1999; Torres et al., 2008). Meanwhile, student evaluation scored high in both controversy and visibility. Torres et al. (2008) noted that "while it seems intuitive to hypothesize that school personnel would tend to favor highly visible, less controversial policies over the contrasting case, this question has not been specifically tested on school leaders within a high-impact policy context" (p. 3). The authors utilized the political attractiveness of reform model by Hess (1999) to assess findings. Findings from the study indicated that less controversial, high visibility policies were perceived by principals as having a greater positive impact. Further, findings from their study confirmed Hess' material on policy attractiveness, which suggested that policy makers are likely to choose reforms that maximize political impact and minimize potential adverse reaction.

Teacher Tenure and the Political Attractiveness of Reform Framework

Similar to Hess' (1999) findings on student evaluation, a review of literature revealed the highly controversial and highly visible nature of teacher tenure reform by highlighting the need for teacher tenure and evaluation revisions to be made in the U.S. (Baker et al., 2010; Baratz-Snowden, 2009; Coleman et al., 2005; Dixon, 2011; Eady & Zapeda, 2007; Kersten & Israel, 2005; McGuinn, 2010; NCTQ, 2009, 2012; Oliva et al., 2009; Range et al., 2011; SCORE, 2009; Shakman et al., 2012; Weisberg et al., 2010; Wilson, 2012). According to Hess (1999), measures that attract more notice and engender little conflict are most attractive and are intended to generate the greatest sense of progress with the least amount of destruction. While tenure reform in

Tennessee was intended to generate a constructive sense of progress for evaluating and retaining effective teachers, tenure reforms have simultaneously generated high levels of controversy that have been recognized at the state and national level (Dixon, 2010; Finch, 2012; Mead, 2012; NCTQ, 2009, 2012; OREA, 2008; SCORE, 2012).

Changes to the Tennessee teacher tenure law have been accompanied by changes to the teacher evaluation system (Dixon, 2011). Hess' (1999) conceptual model of political attractiveness of reform allows for integrated findings to be viewed through a four-quadrant matrix to examine the political attractiveness of reform within the contexts of visibility and controversy. The framework for this study served as a guide in determining the degree of impact Tennessee's tenure reform legislation has had on the principal's ability to evaluate and retain effective teachers. Tenure reform is viewed as highly attractive while conveying high levels of controversy, accordingly allowing impact analysis of tenure reform measures regardless of apparent controversy. Though research on policy attractiveness is lacking in the field of educational reform, recommendations have been made in the literature that stress the importance of stakeholder and principal perceptions for informing policy (Alexander, 2013; Davidson, 1998; Donaldson, 2011; Kersten, 2006; Kersten & Israel, 2005; Ovando & Ramirez, 2007; Painter, 2000; Range et al., 2011, 2012).

Methods

Instrumentation

This study reports the qualitative phase of a mixed methods study. The Phase 1 quantitative portion has been reported elsewhere (Lomascolo & Angelle, 2019). As part of Phase 1, Tennessee principals responded to a survey measuring their perception of the recent Tennessee teacher tenure law. Respondents who completed the survey (n = 177) were asked to contact us (contact information was included at the end of the survey) if they were willing to volunteer for an interview regarding teacher tenure in Tennessee. An interview protocol was developed from the literature as well as survey item responses which raised questions for the researchers, submitted to content experts for face validity, then piloted. The revised interview protocol was piloted to five practicing public school principals in Tennessee. Upon completion of all pilot interviews, feedback from pilot interviewees was taken into consideration, resulting in a final protocol that included ten open-ended questions. The revised protocol included questions meant to increase understanding of how principals enacted the current tenure and evaluation mandates, such as: describe how the current teacher tenure law under Senate Bill 1528 and your school's evaluation model has affected your ability to evaluate and retain effective teachers and would you make any changes to the current teacher tenure and evaluation system (if yes, what changes).

Sampling

Twelve respondents volunteered and were verified as practicing public school principals in the state of Tennessee. Telephone interviews were conducted using a semi-structured protocol (~60

minutes per respondent) to gain further understanding and deeper meaning about the possible influence teacher tenure has on principals' abilities to evaluate and retain effective teachers. School level, community type, or geographic region was not considered criterion for interview participation because attention to the tenure law is required for all principals, regardless of school context. Interviews were recorded and verbatim transcribed for analysis. Tennessee's teacher evaluation system is dichotomized into five different models. Since all principals must report teacher evaluation scores in accordance with the percentage breakdown in the state rubric (50% classroom observations, 35% student growth data, and 15% student achievement), the interview protocol was constructed so that transferability of results was attainable (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; First To The Top Act, 2010). Regardless of whether all principals in the qualitative sample of this study adhere to different (or the same) teacher evaluation rubrics, interview protocol and results can be of use for any principal or policymaker who may read this study.

Analysis

After all interviews were transcribed, data were uploaded to NVivo qualitative analysis software for open coding. Initial codes were assigned in reflection of how principals perceived the teacher tenure and evaluation system; that is, whether they perceived aspects of the system in a positive, negative, or uncertain manner. Any negative perceptions expressed by principals are represented and discussed as barriers. Initial codes reflected exact words of participants regarding their perception as well as factual statements referring to what evaluation model they used, whether their perception had been considered at any time by state policy makers and what influence (if any) they believed their perception would

have in state policy making decisions. The first iteration of open coding yielded 47 initial codes which were then condensed into 9 categories during the second iteration of coding. Finally, three themes emerged in the final iteration of coding. These themes include: (1) Positive impact; that is, the teacher tenure and evaluation system as having a positive effect on principal ability to evaluate and retain effective teachers; (2) the value of tenure; that is, tenure was perceived as a construct with less impact than it once had, regarding protection of ineffective teachers and tenure was perceived as having a negative effect on principal evaluation of teachers; and (3) perception matters; that is, principal voice is important to legislation and policy makers because their input provides valuable information regarding whether a policy is likely to be effective.

Findings

Positive Impact

Principals perceived that the teacher tenure and evaluation system in Tennessee has had a positive impact on their ability to evaluate and retain effective teachers as well as on the quality of education in their school. Principals responded that since the tenure law change, they have been able to assess teachers more thoroughly, provide consistent constructive feedback, and fairly standardize the evaluation of teachers. Specifically, principals related the positive changes to the state evaluation system. Despite positive sentiments regarding the tenure and evaluation system, principals nonetheless expressed some concern for barriers associated with the current system that may hinder their ability to properly evaluate teachers if they do not account for such barriers.

Evaluation Improvement. Principal 1 explained "the [state] model puts a greater focus on what the students are actually doing in terms of the type of thinking, problem solving, and those sorts of things. So, I think it is a more rigorous model" and that the "model has improved instruction because now, teachers, even good teachers – highly effective teachers, are still getting valuable feedback." As a teacher assessment tool, the evaluation rubric has "definitely improved" the way principals evaluate teachers. As Principal 3 stated, "under the old state model you could just make stuff up and write stuff down and it didn't really matter." However now, "evaluation is much more objective. There's this rubric that everybody knows about and is exposed to, but it gives us common language for evaluating teachers and setting goals for the year around them" (Principal 5). Principal 9 explained the ways the tenure and evaluation system has helped assess underperforming teachers: "The new model has sort of given us this universal understanding of what good teaching is because the rubric kind of touches all those things."

In addition to positive perceptions surrounding the evaluation system associated with tenure, principals had positive perceptions regarding the quality of education since the new tenure system was implemented; that is, principals generally felt that the quality of education in their schools has improved.

Educational Improvement. Principal 10 explained that "the change has been a good thing" and the quality of education in their district has "most definitely improved." With regard to education in the state, Principal 10 went on to state that "it is improving…we can see it in our scores, the increase in standards…I think in so many

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different ways we are on the right track." Principal 11 explained that the new model:

allows everybody to state up front 'here's what we expect a good plan to have in it.' We can articulate to teachers very clearly. I think that the standardization of the indicators in the rubric has been very helpful because it says to teachers we know what the minimum expectations are here.

Principal 2 further affirmed the notion that the tenure and evaluation system has improved the quality of education in the state when they asserted "under the current model I think it gives a lot more [standards], everyone should evaluate and be evaluated the same way."

According to the majority of principals, the evaluation system has helped them be more specific in the "conversations had before and after an observation…has helped teachers be more deliberate about what they are doing in instruction daily" (Principal 4), has been beneficial in helping them "have the best of the best teachers" (Principal 6), and has brought "consistency to a lot of things" (Principal 11). Consistency is operationalized as schools that have enhanced classroom instruction which has "consequently led to greater achievement, greater growth in students, and also more accountable talk throughout the school and across grade levels" (Principal 4). Further, the system has helped principals "weed out people that didn't really need to be in [teaching]" (Principal 5) and retain those that are truly effective teachers.

Despite the positive impact that principals perceived the tenure and evaluation system has had locally, nearly all principals articulated the barriers they have experienced with the current system. Barriers may have negative consequences when retaining teachers worthy of tenure. However, principals generally took the

view that when barriers are accounted for by the principal, the overall evaluation system is effective in evaluating and retaining effective teachers.

System Barriers. A majority of principals responded that the teacher evaluation system has not been helpful in assessing teachers of non-tested areas of instruction. Specifically, the evaluation model was not designed to evaluate areas such as band and physical education. As Principal 2 argued, "what makes a good science teacher does not make a good P.E. (physical education) teacher, and I think our P.E. teachers here take as much pride in being a good teacher as the science teachers do" yet the evaluation rubric "does not clearly go with every job it's evaluated under…it was used in modified ways to evaluate music teachers or P.E. teachers or Special Education teachers and it doesn't always align perfectly with what they are doing" (Principal 5). Thus, principals felt that they are not always able to clearly assess teaching effectiveness within their school. Principal 4 explained that the current evaluation system falls short in its attempt to help principals assess the effectiveness of all teachers across grade levels in their school:

> *Right now there is no accountability…tied to student learning for every teacher. For instance in elementary schools, the teachers of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade are the folks who are carrying the stress of what the assessment data is going to be each year.*

Similar to Principal 4, Principal 6 asserted "you don't have test data in a [primary] scenario…you don't have test data for well over fifty per cent of your certified staff so that's gone." Principals generally felt that the testing data and percentages associated with the evaluation rubric have "been more of an obstacle than help" (Principal 6) and standardized testing data "takes into account one

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snapshot, and that's performance on one test" (Principal 12) thus "mucking up" (Principal 6) the true picture of a teacher's effectiveness. "You can still be a poor teacher, you know you can be a P.E. teacher in high school and not even be an ethical person and get tenure" (Principal 6) because to account for all teachers, principals have to "average a certain score to get that tenure" (Principal 9). As Principal 3 explained, "there are teachers in my building that don't have individual growth data, they go on the school data…so there are some teachers that aren't ever in jeopardy of losing their job because they don't have individual accountability…just because I'm a P.E. teacher doesn't mean I can't be ineffective." Principals seemed to feel that the evaluation rubrics should be modified to account for non-core subject areas because "one size does not fit all" (Principal 2, Principal 7, Principal 9).

While principals voiced standardized test scores as the most detrimental pieces that have affected their ability to evaluate and retain effective teachers, time spent on evaluations was noted among principals as another, smaller barrier associated with the tenure and evaluation system. Principal 10 stated: "from the principal's perspective, the workload has increased dramatically in terms of observations, time commitment…I think maybe two or three times the amount of time." Similarly, Principal 12 felt that "to hit all areas of the rubric in 45minutes, I think is nearly impossible…for basically three months this fall semester I will be doing an observation a day and a post-conference [with the teacher], and there are some days it is hard to find time to do that." Of importance to note is the fact that even though the amount of time required to properly observe teachers within the probationary period was perceived as a barrier, principals nonetheless felt as though when done properly, the observations of teachers were worth their time.

Principals perceived the evaluation system associated with the awarding of tenure as being a system that has helped them focus on instructional improvement and teacher quality. Yet teacher tenure, as a law by itself, seemed to hold little importance to principals in terms of improving the quality of education in their school and in the dismissal and retention of teachers.

The Value of Tenure

Tenure was perceived by principals as an outdated concept in terms of today's educational environment in that it is "not even an issue" (Principal 10) and "it doesn't mean a lot…it is an old school concept that probably doesn't have a place in education today" (Principal 12). Several principals expressed shortcomings and barriers of the teacher evaluation system, while also reflecting a lack of concern regarding teacher tenure. Despite the barriers of time and achievement scores associated with teacher evaluation, principals responded that tenure, as its own construct, has little effect on their evaluation and retention of teachers. Specifically, since the tenure law came into effect, tenure has become more of a goal for teachers to work towards since tenure in has become primarily a symbol of status and recognition for good work. Moreover, almost all principals noted if they carry out their duties as a principal appropriately when evaluating and hiring teachers, tenure status should have no influence over whether a teacher can be dismissed.

Tenure Barriers. Test data as a barrier to evaluation was directly related to tenure as a barrier. Since testing and achievement data were perceived by some principals as an inaccurate portrayal of a teacher's true effectiveness, principals felt that overall teacher evaluation scores may not give an accurate assessment of who deserves tenure. As Principal 12 stated, "I have no level of confidence

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that every teacher deserving of tenure status will earn that status with this current evaluation system." In addition, once a teacher receives tenure, some principals felt that there is "nothing easy" (Principal 10) about the dismissal process and that "very few tenured teachers get dismissed, ever" because "it is a lot of paperwork and a lot of trouble" (Principal 2). With regard to ineffective teachers, Principal 6 explained that "it is likely that if they are doing a poor job they will be put on a plan of improvement. It is not likely there would be much of a dismissal process. That is still just very difficult to do." Despite notions that suggest evaluation scores might not accurately inform whether a teacher should be awarded tenure and that dismissal proceedings are tedious and time consuming, principals overwhelmingly perceived the probationary period associated with tenure in a positive way.

Controversy/Visibility. Teacher tenure has generated considerable controversy surrounding its implementation and political practicality in recent years (Dixon, 2011; Hess, 1999; SCORE, 2012; Wilson, 2012). However, principals in this study generally did not perceive the law as detrimental or an obstacle in their evaluation and retention of effective teachers. Quite the contrary, principals perceived the probationary period associated with tenure adequate to evaluate teachers and implement comprehensive programs for remediation. Before the 2011 changes, "you really only had two and a half years" to collect data on a teacher which did not allow enough time to "average or look at any comparisons or correlations within the three years before they received tenure" (Principal 10). Since the probationary period for teachers has been extended from three to five years, "the lengthening of time it takes to get tenure has been a good thing. Three years was a little short, so I do think that it has improved" (Principal 2). As Principal 1 explained, "when a teacher

takes a hit on their scores, whether that be the student data or the qualitative component – the observation data – there is a plan for remediation where you design some professional development for that teacher around where the problem areas are." Even for teachers who have awarded tenure and have since become "ineffective" as indicated by evaluation scores, in many cases this allows "a year-long process of getting better" for the teacher(s) (Principal 11). Regardless of a teacher's tenure status, principals can develop and implement plans for improvement that include "conversations with the teacher on how to get better" (Principal 11), meeting with "professional learning coaches and data coaches" (Principal 12), partnerships with "teacher mentors that can give specific feedback on things we want to see improved" (Principal 2), and individualized learning cycles (ILC) that consist of "nine weeks with coaches that give really direct support of a teacher" (Principal 5).

Overall, principal perceptions indicated that the probationary period and remediation processes associated with teacher evaluation has diminished the levels of controversy and visibility that previously surrounded teacher tenure (Baker et al., 2010; Baratz-Snowden, 2009; Coleman et al., 2005; Dixon, 2011; Eady & Zapeda, 2007; Kersten & Israel, 2005; Wilson, 2012) to the extent that some principals suggested the tenure law be abolished entirely. As Principal 12 stated, "If it was me, I would just say that there would not be any such thing as tenure." Even for teachers, especially those new to the profession, tenure is no longer held in high esteem. The controversy and visibility the law once brought for teachers in regard to their contracts and employment seem archaic. Principal 5 explained the deterioration of tenure's status among teachers and principals:

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I really don't think that they think of tenure much anymore. I think that they believe the potency of it has diminished to a point where it just really doesn't matter. And what I share with teachers often is your job security is really performance. So if you do your job and do it well, that's your new tenure.

Since the new law has been in place, principals perceived tenure as "a professional goal for a teacher to have" (Principal 1), something tangible for a teacher to work towards – a status that does not necessarily protect their job, but gives them a sense of achievement after a rigorous probationary period. Tenure to principals is "the kind of thing that just gives teachers a recognition…a credible identification" of their "work, their effort…it is nothing more than just a label on somebody" (Principal 7). In this way, tenure is still highly visible but no longer holds the negative connotation it once did, assuring lifetime employment for teachers. As principals generally perceived the tenure law as holding little influence in their systems, principal responsibility was voiced among participants as an obligation for principals to do their jobs well because their dedication strongly impacts the effectiveness of the teacher tenure and evaluation system in Tennessee schools.

Principal Responsibility. The need to do their jobs well as an administrator and as an evaluator was a concept voiced by nearly all principals who participated in this study. In accordance with the themes and categories discussed thus far, the success and/or failure to properly evaluate and retain effective teachers, regardless of tenure, was perceived by most principals as dependent upon the extent of effort put into working effectively. For example, when asked about evaluating and dismissing teachers, Principal 10 explained, "I think it is solely based on the building level administrator. It goes back to documentation…once you start the process of requesting someone's tenure, I think it is based on a lot of the competency of the building

level administrator, the commitment they have." Much of the reasoning behind the notion that tenure is no longer a concern is that if principals properly evaluate teachers and document teacher progress, tenure is not an issue. While principals admitted that dismissing a teacher can be tedious and time consuming, dismissing an ineffective teacher is still possible. As Principal 10 stated, "based on the importance of my faculty and children, the same thing as the evaluation model, it is worth the time, but it does take time, yes. But it is nothing that I would not begrudge or did not do because of the time it was going to take." Further, "there have always been tools in the administrators toolbox to be able to get rid of ineffective teachers" (Principal 11) and the principal is good at "documenting, presenting memos and getting signatures" (Principal 12) then tenure is "not a barrier to getting rid of ineffective teachers" (Principal 7).

If principals can show "they have taken the right steps to remediate the teacher" (Principal 1) and "giving the supports that they need to give and doing their documentation then it is very possible" (Principal 4) to dismiss an ineffective teacher. Moreover, principals felt that in addition to effective evaluating and remediating, they have a responsibility to make logical hiring decisions to avoid dealing with ineffective teachers in the future. Aside from the generally positive perceptions expressed by principals regarding teacher tenure and evaluation, principals felt their abilities as a building level administrator can and have been limited when the state previously implemented changes.

Perception Matters

Far too frequently, principal voice has remained absent from the political discourse. Principals in this study responded that their perception should play a role and "principals need to be

heard…people would listen to principals and really understand that we are really the spokes in the wheel, we keep things connected" (Principal 10).

Perception in Policy. When asked whether their perception has been considered and/or collected by state policy makers, principals in this study said that they "have not been heard enough" (Principal 10) and they "really don't have much of a voice as a school administrator" (Principal 11). Principals generally remarked that their voice is important as they "are the people in the trenches who are working with the teachers" (Principal 9). When asked whether the state department of education considers principal perception when implementing legislation, Principal 2 said "there was no feedback, no conversation, it was just 'this is what we are doing, live with it'…I don't know that any state policy is influenced by the school level… They tend to make their own decisions and tell us what they want us to do." Further, principals felt that policy makers "don't listen to what we have to say often enough" (Principal 3) and input from the school "certainly has not influenced legislation on the state level" (Principal 5). Principal voice, according to the respondents in this study, has remained absent from conversations surrounding policy. As such, principals expressed that their perceptions could have an impact on the quality of education in the state, if considered and taken seriously by policy makers. Principal 11 said:

> *We are the people doing the work. I think absolutely that we should be involved in the discussion, and most of your school administrators think that there is a balance that has to happen with what the business community wants, what the legislative community wants, what the parents in your community want, but we're the ones with boots on the ground actually balancing those three demands on a daily basis.*

Accordingly, if principal perception were considered, then the likelihood of "principal buy-in" (Principal 12) would increase; that is, principals believed if they were heard, their willingness to properly implement legislative changes would increase as "things are funneled in to the school through principals" (Principal 10) and policies can be received negatively "when educators don't feel like they have been involved in the process" (Principal 1).

Policy Barriers. Principals in this study voiced a number of barriers associated with policy implementation on which they had no input. Additionally, principals mentioned shortcomings in properly addressing principal concerns regarding education policy. Principal 2 provided an example of such a scenario:

> *They changed the graduation requirements to require four years of math. But when you pass a law and there is already a shortage of math teachers and you increase the requirements by twenty-five percent, you have just made a shortage of math teachers a critical shortage of math teachers. If they had discussed that with principals, principals would have pointed out that 'hey I can't find a math teacher already' and maybe they would have invested some in training or invested some in recruitment of math teachers by just asking for feedback on the practical application of laws.*

As a consequence of failing to acquire principal buy-in, the state may risk overlooking crucial elements related to school environments where principals may have knowledge. Principal 2 pointed out that "the state does so much for political purposes that really is not functional at the school level." Principal 3 argued that the state "needs to do more study on what the impact these laws are going to have – the unexpected consequences of what they are mandating." Currently, "there is a big disconnect between legislators and educators" (Principal 5) as the state "seems to be all over the place in the last two years" (Principal 9) concerning changes in policy. As a

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result, principals felt as though changes aren't as likely to work properly because "legislators aren't educators" (Principal 5) and thus principals become frustrated as policies may complicate "school operations and may impact the balance" (Principal 11) of what principals are trying to accomplish in their school every day. Although principals had positive perceptions of the teacher evaluation system, barriers such as time and test scores could have been alleviated or avoided if principal voice been considered. Principal 2 pointed out that if legislators had reflected: "if this bill is passed, what will happen?" a more accurate projection of the law's intended impact could have been assessed.

Collecting Perception. When discussing level of participation in the development of policy, principals provided suggestions for how policy makers could collect principal perception data. Suggestions included "advisory committees of principals" (Principal 10), "interest groups" (Principal 11), "send surveys" (Principal 3), and "form regional committees" (Principal 9) that "assess principal perception at all different levels – elementary, middle, and high – from rural, suburban, and urban" (Principal 4). Principals felt that policy makers could "seek input pretty simply" (Principal 1) and the potential for unforeseen barriers, such as those associated with tenure and evaluation, could be diminished. Responses indicated that the potential for barriers to surface increases when change occurs with no consideration for those working at the school level.

Discussion

Principals generally perceived the teacher tenure and evaluation system as having a positive impact on their ability to evaluate teachers and on the quality of education in their schools. The

evaluation rubric, the extended probationary period and standards for teacher performance have helped principals remediate teachers in need of improvement and develop high performing teachers. Despite the barriers of time and achievement scores associated with teacher evaluation, principals responded that tenure has little effect on their evaluation and retention of teachers.

However, despite the positive sentiments expressed regarding tenure and evaluation at the time of this study (2016), during the period when the new tenure law, the revised evaluation system, and the policy dialogues were taking place (2011), there was a great deal of distress, fear, negative conversations, and angst regarding the impending changes. The visibility was high as governance structures made clear that change in tenure policy was imminent. The controversy surrounding the policy was higher still as principals and teachers generally viewed tenure and evaluation as paperwork processes.

In the years following passage of the law, principals and teachers began to view the new systems as beneficial to instruction. The awarding of tenure has become less critical while the improvement of pedagogy has become the most important factor, even though principals indicated that barriers still exist. Nonetheless, respondents in this study indicated that had their voice been a part of the policy process, initial resistance would have lessened, barriers might have been avoided, and implementation would have been a much smoother process. Principals responded that had their perceptions been considered prior to changes in policy, their inability to properly implement procedures might have decreased. Principals believed that with inclusion of principal voice, more efficient and thoughtful

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policies could be created that would seek to minimize barriers associated with said policies.

This study sought to examine whether a highly controversial, highly visible law such as tenure was perceived by principals as an effective policy with positive benefits. According to Hess' (1999) concept of political attractiveness of reform, policies with high levels of controversy and high levels of visibility are not likely to be successful. In the case of teacher tenure in this research, findings showed that despite previous levels of controversy and visibility, over time, principals perceived the tenure law positively.

Despite the generally positive perception of a law that once held high levels of controversy and visibility, results surrounding the importance of principal perception in education reform affirm recommendations from the literature that principal and stakeholder perceptions are necessary if reforms are to be implemented effectively. As Alexander (2013) argued, understanding the perceptions of key stakeholders can help policy makers implement more effective strategies for change that are more likely to be valued and accepted.

This study confirmed findings from literature (Eady & Zepeda, 2007; Range et al., 2011) where principals described barriers such as the "one size fits all" approach to evaluation, time spent on observations, and shortcomings with the evaluation system. These were all reiterated by principals in this study. Findings here indicated that if policy makers had considered principal perceptions prior to making changes to the tenure and evaluation system, such barriers could have been eliminated or, at the very least, accounted for as possible limitations. Therefore, inclusion of principal voice

may diminish controversy surrounding legislation, increase positive visibility and decrease the likelihood of barriers to implementation.

Turning again to the neoliberal agenda of decisions made by those in power to mandate policies meant to standardize, a complete understanding of the consequences of these policies for those responsible for implementation is often missing. Visible evidence for teacher performance is a part of this agenda. However, principals who enact said policies in efforts to support teachers and improve pedagogy decrease controversy surrounding the implementation. Thus, the experiences of principals in Tennessee may serve as a lesson for other states and countries whose policies are passed without inclusion of those who implement the policies in the discourse.

Limitations of the Study

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the limitations from this study. We first note the location and size of the sample. A survey administered to the principals in only one state is not indicative of the perceptions of principals in the US and we make no claims that the respondents in our study represent the perceptions of all principals. Future research should expand the breadth of this study so that generalizations may be offered.

The sample size was also small, both in Phase 1 and in Phase 2. We suggest that this study be replicated in an attempt to increase the size of both the quantitative and qualitative sample.

While Tennessee has experienced some satisfaction among principals and teachers with the tenure and evaluation system in the years following implementation, future studies are worthy of consideration. A longitudinal study of Tennessee principals is called

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for to examine whether this satisfaction continues.   Moreover, investigating the perceptions of teachers who are evaluation and undergo the tenure process is needed to find whether teachers share the perceptions of principals regarding the tenure and evaluation system.

Finally, states, other than Tennessee, as well as other countries, likely use different systems of evaluation, different processes for awarding tenure, and different governance structures. Future studies may include cross comparative studies to examine success rates and principal and teacher satisfaction.

Successful Policy Implementation Model

The model proposed here is a modification of the political attractiveness of reform matrix presented by Hess (1999). Modifications are based on findings from this study, which have shown Hess' (1999) concept may be improved through consideration of stakeholder voice. As such, we present a revised model that expands upon the concept of political attractiveness of reform. Moreover, once policy has been enacted, this model is predictive in gauging a policy's likelihood of success. Figure 2 depicts the Successful Policy Implementation Model.

Figure 2.

Successful Policy Implementation Model
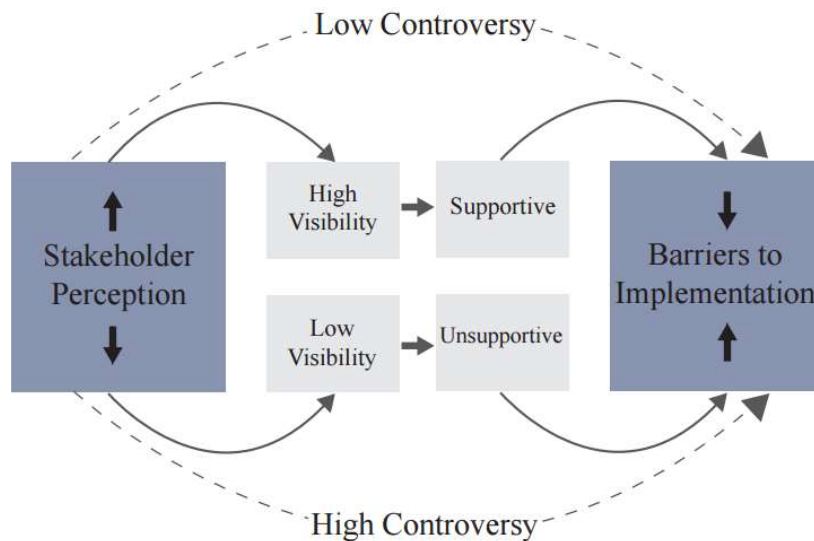
Following findings from this study and extant literature that surround the need for principal perception in education reform (Davidson, 1998; Kersten, 2006; Kersten & Israel, 2005; Ovando & Ramirez, 2007; Painter, 2000; Range et al., 2011, 2012), this model illustrates that the more stakeholder perception is considered in the arena of policy debate, the more likely that policy is to be highly visible and supported by stakeholders while maintaining low levels of controversy. As a result, barriers to implementation are likely to decrease once said policy is in effect. This model is not meant to suggest that if stakeholder perceptions are considered then the policy unconditionally will be supported and successful. Rather, this model is meant to allude to the likelihood of those events when increased stakeholder perceptions are considered. As stakeholder perception

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increases, visibility likely will be high by default as more individuals are aware of the policy. Similarly, if stakeholder perceptions are not considered, visibility likely will be low as the majority of stakeholders will not be aware of the policy in question.

However, even when stakeholder perceptions and visibility increase, stakeholder perception of the policy may not always be positive nor may the policy be considered attractive. We argue that although negative perception expressed by stakeholders exists as a possibility, stakeholders are nevertheless more likely to support the implementation of a policy when they feel their voice has been considered. Thus, as stakeholders believe their perceptions have been considered, despite expressing a negative opinion of a policy which nonetheless has been enacted, support for the policy is more likely. As several principals in this study pointed out, if their perceptions had been considered prior to policy initiatives, their support of and willingness to implement changes would have increased.

These findings lead us to recommend that policy makers should scan the educational environment and in doing so, should be alert to likely areas of resistance and support (Alexander, 2013). As Alexander (2013) argued "while implementation is not equivalent to outcome, managing the implementation process bolsters the chance that the enacted policy will yield the results sought" (p. 154). Likewise, the less stakeholder perceptions are considered, the more likely the policy is to hold low levels of visibility, thus limiting support from stakeholders while maintaining higher levels of controversy. As a result, barriers to policy implementation are likely to increase.

There will never be a "one size fits all" solution to any issue in education. As educators, researchers, policy makers and

stakeholders, we know that there are far too many variables that can impact a student's success in the classroom. This study has highlighted the need for principal voice in policy research since principals enact policy at the school sites through implementation; they are the eyes on the ground. While an intricate and rigorous rubric for evaluation can have perceived positive benefits, barriers are likely to surface. The question then becomes: how can we account for said barriers? The plight, then, becomes minimizing barriers as best we can. As principals in this study mentioned, as a consequence of failing to acquire principal or stakeholder perceptions, policy makers may risk overlooking crucial elements related to school environments for which principals may have first-hand knowledge. Therefore, the first step in working to bridge the gap between theory and practice is knowing that for researchers, understanding is the output of their work and for practitioners, understanding is the input of their work.

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The Struggle of Lebanese Teacher Unions in a Neoliberal Period

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Abstract	Article Info
Teacher unions worldwide are being criticized for disregarding their responsibility as professionals towards education and students. Critics have claimed that teacher unions tend to protect incompetent teachers, place their own needs and interests above their students, and continuously demand for financial increases even when there is more urgency to elevate teacher professionalism and improve teacher quality. This statement does not take into consideration the political, social and economic aspects that influence unions' decisions. Therefore, this study utilizes a qualitative research design, specifically a grounded theory approach to investigate the challenges facing teacher unions in Lebanon from the perspective of union leaders and union members. Data was collected from seventeen public school union leaders and twenty-one teachers. Findings have revealed that teacher unions have assumed a social justice role limited to raising awareness. There are organizational, legal, political, educational, social, and economic barriers that prevent teacher unions in Lebanon from assuming a more active role as a union.	

Introduction

Teacher unions are accused of obstructing reform initiatives and criticized for disregarding their responsibilities as professionals towards education and students (Bascia & Osmond, 2013). Critics have claimed that teacher unions tend to protect incompetent teachers, place their own needs and interests above their students, and continuously demand for financial increases even when there is more urgency to elevate teacher professionalism and improve teacher quality (Moe, 2011). There are also concerns about the extent of influence that teacher unions have on schools and policies. Collective bargaining rights have granted unions much power over decisions related to teacher salaries and working conditions (Strunk, 2011), but there are conflicting views about the impact of unions on teachers, schools and students (Carini, 2002; Cowen & Strunk, 2015; Hanushek, 2006; Lovenheim, 2009; Stevenson, 2003). Also, teacher unions in the Global North are among the largest labor unions and have mandatory union membership fees making them influential actors in policy with the financial means to lobby in politics. However, teacher unions also have "less allies and are politically isolated" because of this power (Weiner, 2012, p. 11). Thus, solely highlighting the power that teacher unions hold is inadequate without understanding their purpose, goals, perceptions and the challenges that affect their decisions.

Lebanese teacher unions are also perceived to be self-serving associations (El-Amine, 1994). This perception is partially influenced by the image and the discourse that the media presents about teacher unions. It was visible in 2012 when a strike was called by the teachers' Union Coordination Committee (UCC), where thousands of teachers marched the streets demanding a salary scale increase of

121%, based on the inflation increase since 1996 (Bou Khater, 2015). Although the demand is a long-overdue right, the media described it as a "fever" (Albawaba, 2012) that "will cripple entire Lebanon" (Aboulmona, 2013).

The politicization of teacher unions became evident after 2014 when the UCC resorted to boycotting the invigilation of the official exams demanding a salary scale increase. The Minister of Education requested that the UCC halt their strike and return to invigilating exams, assuring them that if the salary increase was not passed, they can then boycott the corrections of the exams (Lakkis, 2014). However, with the political instability and the presidential void, political leaders hardly convened in parliament, which resulted in the failure to pass the salary increase law. As a result, teachers returned to protesting, and the Minister of Education issued passing certificates to all students. Teachers saw the automatic promotion of all students as a dire decision jeopardizing students' academic future and the quality of education (Lakkis, 2014). Teachers blamed their union leadership for the Minister's decision and shifted their trust to their political parties representatives ("Political Parties Sweep," 2015).

This paper examines Lebanese teacher unions' challenges from the perspective of union leaders and union members. The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the challenges that teacher unions are facing in the neoliberal period?
2. What kind of strategies do teacher unions use to address these challenges?

Most of the Western literature has focused on the political arena, examining teacher union-government relations (Bascia, 2016; Bascia & Osmond, 2013), new unionism models and roles (Poole,

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2001; Stevenson, 2015), and the political influence that the union possesses (Flavin & Hartney, 2015). However, limited studies examine internal challenges that lead to decrease in union density and the reasons for union ineffectiveness. Our study intends to capture these reasons from an internal perspective of union leaders and union members. In addition, there is a gap in Arab literature about labor unions and teacher unions in particular. Studies about labor unions emerged mainly after Arab Spring with the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions that revealed a significant role for union in reforms. For example, Netterstrom (2016) that was conducted in Tunisia concluded that Arab labor unions are not simply "empty shells" or submissive unions. This research showed that Tunisian union leaders in Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) used a compliance-resistance strategy to appear submissive to Ben Ali's regime, but was in fact protecting their members and sending them signals of when to protest. This finding also emphasizes the importance of understanding the context and taking into consideration the perception of union leaders before reaching a conclusion. Moreover, research on teacher unions in Lebanon is rare. There seems to be only one empirical study conducted by Samaha (2006) about teacher unions which revealed that there is a dichotomy in having a union consciousness and a professional consciousness among Lebanese teachers. Yet, this quantitative study did not take into consideration the perspective of union leaders in particular.

Our study is significant for participating union leaders since they can improve their strategies to attain their goals and better represent their members. Policymakers in Lebanon can also understand how to build a more effective relationship with teacher unions to improve education. Also, researchers can be informed

about factors that influence union membership and density that they could take into consideration in their own studies.

Unionism, Unionization, and Education Reform

The first unionism model used by teacher unions in many countries was a meet and confer method, which was closer to "begging and deferring" for teacher demands and teacher rights during meetings with policymakers (Bascia, 2009). However, during the 1960s and 1970s, teacher unions in many states in the US and in Canada protested and were able to attain collective bargaining rights (Carlson, 1992). The power of teacher unions in collective bargaining, however, was limited to deliberating mainly on salaries, benefits, and working conditions. Teacher unions were not permitted to participate in educational policies. After teacher unions were criticized for not being active in improving education (Lieberman, 2000), they sought new unionism models that would improve teacher professionalism and education quality such as peer assistance and review (PAR) (Sawchuk, 2009).

Teacher unions have sought opportunities to collaborate with the government and expand their role in decision-making on education reform projects (Bascia & Osmond, 2012). However, teacher unions faced challenges in assuming this new role because of history of conflicts and power struggle (Bascia, 2012). Teacher unions have also stood strongly against neoliberal policies that followed free market rule. Neoliberalism reduces government intervention to promote economic growth; it also increases social inequality. In Ostry et al. (2016), International Monetary Fund researchers have recognized that some policies such as capital account liberalization and fiscal consolidation have been found to raise inequality,

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economic volatility and the risk of economic crisis. In addition, some of the education reform policies in US that were proposed targeted teacher salaries and public education such as linking teacher evaluation to teacher pay and student performance, supporting and increasing charter schools, issuing school vouchers for parental school choice which would decrease the funding for public education. This placed National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers on the opposing end of the spectrum (Hartney & Flavin, 2011). There are also neoliberal programs that are promoting precarious work such as Teach for America that permits fresh new graduates to become precarious teachers for about two years without having the pedagogical skills to teach (Barnard, 2019; Bascia, 2009). Some school administrators are using Teach for America to replace permanent unionized teachers (Barnard, 2019). In Ontario, a Canadian province that Pasi Sahlberg refers to as a "highway to heaven" in education (Kennedy, 2018), teacher unions are confronting the Progressive Conservative government's budget cuts on educational programs and resources that would lead to teacher dismissals and class size increases (Chen, 2019). This province was among top-scoring states on PISA test as a result of many factors, including a strong union and a good government-union relationship that was able to create a collaborative effort to improve student outcome and wellbeing and teachers' professionalism (Bascia, 2013).

Governments that viewed teacher unions as partners have achieved successful reforms. Bascia and Osmond (2012) have shown how Alberta Teachers Federation chose to support the government in professional learning by creating a resource manual and providing training for school council participants. Another example is Ontario Teachers' Federation when they partnered with the Liberal government in 2007 to offer experienced teachers professional

development through a project called Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) (Lieberman et al., 2017). TLLP was a bottom-up approach in professional development that catered to the needs of teachers and has shown to improve instructional practices, teachers' self-efficacy, communication, collaboration, research skills, and management skills (Lieberman et al., 2017).

Conceptual Framework

This study adopts one of the new unionism models called social justice unionism as described by Peterson (1999), a model constructed by and for teacher unions to address organizational, social, economic, educational-related and political barriers. This model incorporates an aspect of the traditional model of unionism that emphasizes the importance of defending the rights of union members while also fighting for the rights and needs of the broader community including students. Bascia (2016) asserts that teacher conditions indirectly reflect on teachers and student learning. Thus, Bascia states, "when teachers can teach well, students have a better chance of learning" (2016, p. 162).

Teacher unions must expand on their traditional role to become more involved in improving the teaching profession and education (Peterson, 1999). Hence, the second component of social justice unionism emerges from professional unionism, which urges teachers to go beyond the economic and social interests and bargain on educational aspects and improve teachers' professionalism. Bascia (2016) reveals the struggle of teacher unions in developed and developing countries with school budget cuts is related not only to teacher salaries but also to school supplies, professional development

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programs, and social services. Teacher unions in these cases used their power to maintain teacher quality.

The most important part of social justice unionism stems from the political lens. Using the social justice unionism model in Lebanon, the union would work on addressing social justice issues that occur in the classroom and in society. In Lebanon, sectarianism has been and continues to be the main cause of Lebanese internal conflicts. Sectarianism is engraved in the countries policies through the power-sharing agreement that is reinforced in Taif Accord of 1989, which ended the Lebanese Civil War (Karam, 2017). Using this model can help identify if teacher unions in Lebanon are playing a social justice role. In addition, the social justice unionism model emphasizes the importance of involving rank-and-file members in leading the union and building external alliances with the community to strengthen the union's stance.

This conceptual framework below was constructed from literature in examining the challenges facing teacher unions. We chose social justice unionism as a comprehensive model that can address union challenges. The framework below portrays the dynamics between teacher unions and their environment.

Figure 1.

The dynamics between teacher unions and their environment
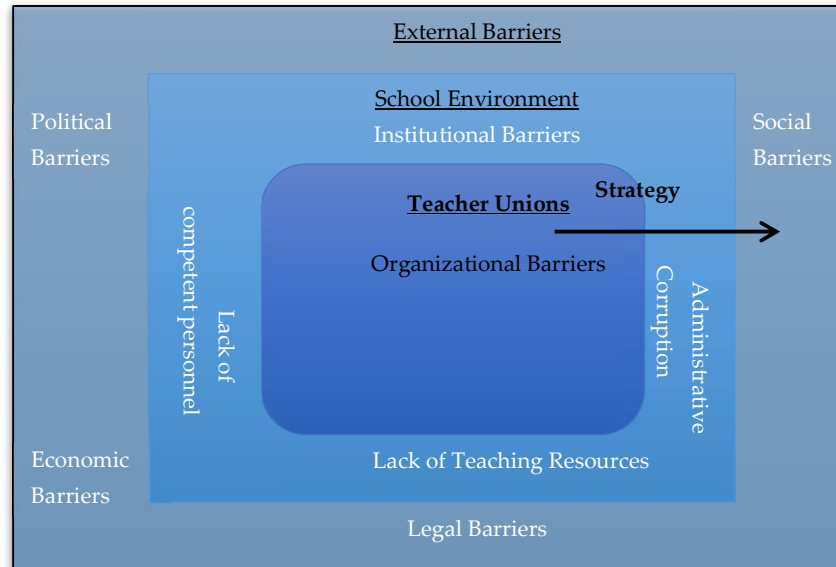
Teacher Unions in the Context of Lebanon

There are three teacher unions in Lebanon: the Teacher Syndicate of Lebanon, the Public Primary School Teachers League, and the Public Secondary School Teachers League. The history of these unions can best be described as a progressive movement where the primary purpose of teacher unions was to improve teachers' professional status. However, despite their work, these Lebanese unions struggled to establish their identities and reinforce their presence.

Teachers in private schools along with school principals attempted to form a union since 1910 and succeeded in 1938 during the French mandate. The private school teacher unions' aim was to

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raise teachers' economic, social, and professional status and improve education (Samaha, 2006). However, the sectarian and political conflicts in the country have negatively reflected on the union leadership, particularly in their union elections, collaboration, and decision-making. In fact, in 1971, disagreement among union leaders on the election results and on the allocation of union positions according to sectarian quotas caused a split in the union ("Teacher Syndicate of Lebanon," 2018). This conflict was resolved in 1992, reunifying the union under what is today called Teacher Syndicate of Lebanon.

Contrarily, public school teachers struggled to form a union because similar to any public work setting, the government is believed to be just towards its employees. Public primary school teachers were the first to demand to improve their working conditions because they felt marginalized compared to other teachers in public and private schools. They demanded a raise in wages, an increase in the rate of promotion, and a decrease of years of service (Samaha, 2006). The persistence of elementary teachers led them to get two promotion scales and a proportionate raise on their salaries. In addition, in 1972, Decree No. 335 was issued that granted primary teachers in public schools the right to become members of a league called Public Primary School Teachers League. This league had a social and cultural orientation and was not allowed to act as a union. Its membership is mandatory for all elementary public school teachers but no dues are paid to the league for its services. Moreover, the law compelled the formation of five regional leagues, each in one of the five governorates of Lebanon. The government's decision to form five leagues instead of one united league impeded the leagues' work, particularly in decision-making. However, in 2009, the Public

Primary School Teachers League was finally able to unify its five leagues under one based on Decree No. 1553.

Subsequently, Public Secondary School Teachers League was established in November 25, 1980 through Decree No. 871. This decree granted the establishment of a unified union that was less restrictive on the league activities. The decree did not include statements that banned teachers' strikes. This flexibility was due to the on-going Lebanese Civil War, which weakened the government's control over the public sector (Samaha, 2006). The Public Secondary School Teacher League held their first strike in 1966, when the government differentiated between teaching and other prestigious professions, whom were granted special remunerations. The strikes resulted in special pay remuneration and a promotion of two grade levels every two years (Samaha, 2006).

One of the key challenges faced by teacher unions in Lebanon was the heavy-handed interference of political parties. During protests, escalations often occurred that led to injuries and sometimes even death and often resulted in retaliatory measures made by the government. One of these measures included issuance of Decrees No. 4820 and 4824, which dismissed 309 teachers and assigned 252 new teachers to replace them in 1973 (Samaha, 2006). Eleven months after being terminated from their jobs, conducting many strikes, and communicating with various political and religious leaders, teachers were reassigned to their jobs (Samaha, 2006). This and similar crisis, marked the history of teacher unionism and helped them establish negotiation tactics to achieve their demands.

Method

This study follows an exploratory qualitative approach and adopts a constructivist paradigm, which states that the world is constructed by people who perceive it through "human action, interaction, and emotional responses that people have to events and problems they encounter" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 6). This study also follows the grounded theory guidelines that were originally constructed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and were further built on by Charmaz (2006).

For this study, thirty-eight participants were selected, including seventeen union leaders from the executive committee of Public Primary School Teachers League and Public Secondary School Teachers League and twenty-one union members. Of the participants, seventeen were female and twenty-one were male. The leaders in the union were chosen based on their availability and consent to be interviewed.

Table 1.

Distribution of Union Leaders

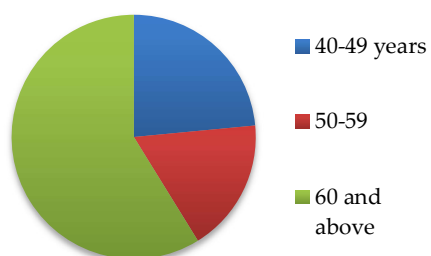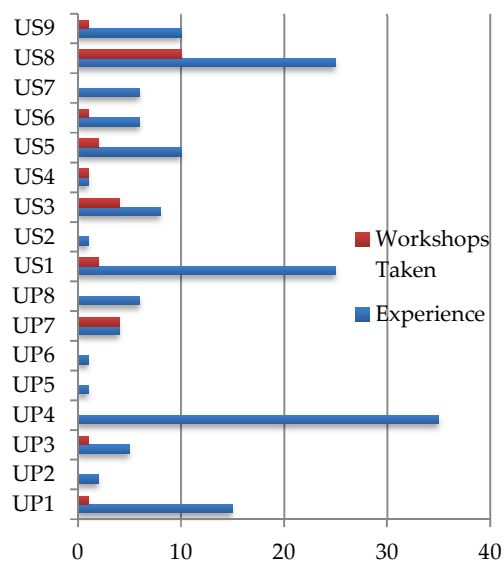|	Public Primary School Teachers League	Public Secondary School Teachers League
Total number of committee members	18 (16 Male, 2 Female)	18 (16 Male, 2 Female)
Sample of participants	8 (8 Male, 0 Female)	9 (8 Male, 1 Female)

Figure 2.

Age of union leaders

Figure 3.

Experience and training of union leaders

Union members were chosen from Greater Beirut Area for convenience purposes and were divided between active members in the leagues and inactive members. Union members were considered active members if they "served on union committees or were building representatives, had attended at least five union meetings in a year, engaged in political action and promoted union issues in their buildings or community" (Popiel, 2010, p. 12). Participants in this research also included contractual teachers. Contractual teachers belong to one of the two committees, the Public Primary School Contractors Committee or the Public Secondary School Contractors Committee. Since their leagues are not officially recongnized, their demands are represented by the public school leagues. Contractual teachers make up around 33% of the teaching body in the public sector (El-Amine, 2012) and therefore their responses were taken into consideration.

Table 2.

Distribution of Union Members

	Active Members		Inactive Members	
Sample of participants	12		9	
	Elementary & Intermediate	Secondary	Elementary & Intermediate	Secondary
Number of Teachers	7	5	5	4
Males/Females	6/1	2/3	5/0	3/1
Full-timers/Contractual	7/0	4/1	3/2	3/1

The primary union leaders were coded UP and the secondary union leaders were coded US for confidentiality purposes. The primary teachers were coded AP and the secondary were coded AS. As for inactive members, they were coded IP for primary and IS for secondary teachers.

Data were collected through three methods: formal field interviews, focus group interviews, and semi-structured interviews. A formal field interview is a type of group interview where a researcher meets two or more participants in a field setting. The interview used a semi-structured format where the researcher takes a directive role (Frey & Fontana, 1991). Table 3 below illustrates the method used for data collection with each group of participants. Data were collected first from focus groups, but because we could not hold focus groups with primary union leaders and active members, we resorted to semi-structured interviews. Participants were asked about the purpose of teacher unions, responsibilities or tasks that are required of their union, and possible setbacks that block the union from achieiving success, as well as their opinion regarding the union's ability to be part of any education improvement acts, in school or outside of it.

Table 3.

Data Collection Method

Participants	Quantity	Method for Data Collection
Primary Union Leaders	8	Semi-Structured Interviews
Secondary Union Leaders	9	Two Methods (2 Semi-Structured Interviews with Current and Past Presidents; 1 Focus Group with 8 leaders)
Primary Active Members	7	Two Methods (5 Semi-Structured Interviews; 1 Field Group Interview)
Secondary Active Members	5	Two Methods (3 Semi-Structured Interviews; 1 Field Group Interview)
Inactive Members	9	One Focus Group (3 Secondary, 6 Primary)

This study used constant comparative as a method for analysis of data collection and followed the procedural guidelines of the grounded theory methodology as outlined by Charmaz (2006). Data collected from focus groups and interviews were transcribed into codes and underwent four levels of analysis: 1) initial coding, 2) focused coding, 3) axial coding, and 4) theoretical coding. We analysed data from focus groups and semi-structured interviews, and several themes emerged. For member check and triangulation purposes, we requested from a number of participants in each group to comment on the results. Additionally, we used discourse analysis to analyse union artefacts, such as the internal policies as well as laws and decrees related to the two public schools teacher unions.

During data collection and data analysis, we made sure to use strategies to legitimize the findings of the study and ensure quality

was provided in the research. For transferability, this research is made to ensure a proper detailed description of the data, a step-by-step procedure, and reflections to allow for comparison to take place. For dependability, we specified the research design and selection of the sample and described the setting, the data collection tools, data collection and data analysis procedures, and any detail or limitation that might affect the study. For confirmability, we used triangulation to further validate the data collected and bring forth more clarity and understanding of the responses of participants.

Results

This section presents the challenges facing teacher unions that were identified from the perspective of union leaders, active union members, and inactive union members and from the analysis of union documents and policies followed by the strategies that teacher unions in Lebanon have used.

Challenges Facing Teacher Unions

These barriers fall under five general dimensions: social and economic barriers, organizational barriers, legal barriers, education-related barriers, and political barriers. Afterward, we present the strategies that public teacher unions used to achieve their objectives. We present only themes that we thought were significant for discussion.

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Table 4.

Themes of Challenges Facing Teacher Unions

Themes	Total Union Leaders (out of 17)	Total Active Union Members (out of 12)	Total Inactive Union Members (out of 9)
Social and Economic Barriers			
Low Salaries	9	5	0
Decrease in Teachers' Benefits	3	3	0
Organizational Barriers			
Authoritarian decisions imposed by the Minister of Education	2	2	0
Low morale and lack of creative tactics	11	5	9
Lack of unity among union members	2	5	0
Lack of supportive conditions needed to facilitate union work	2	4	0
Excessive loyalty of union leaders and members to political parties	3	10	9
Legal Barriers			
Lack of legal union recognition	11	7	0
Punitive decrees against unionizing	3	3	0
Education-related Barriers			
Teaching as a low status profession	3	1	0
Acute organizational dysfunctions	1	3	9
Political interferences in education	17	9	9
Political Barriers			
Manipulation of the public perceptions about teacher unions	2	2	0
Lack of union participation in education policy	11	3	0
Influence of international development agencies on education policy	1	4	0

Social and Economic Barriers

Participants reported the challenges related to social and economic barriers. These challenges include two main issues: low salaries and a decrease in teachers' benefits. Union leaders and active members also considered the government's attempt to reduce teacher benefits as a key challenge that has shaped the union work. The former president notes:

We have faced a huge attack on our previously attained benefits. For our retirement, they removed 15% [they get paid only 85% of their salaries]. In cooperatives for civil servants, teachers would try to benefit from the coverage, but we receive fewer services.

Many active members conquered and related that the attempt to remove teachers' benefits has made union members seek new ways to protect their rights. A secondary active union member (AS1) pointed out:

We have received 6 scale levels… This increase differentiates us from administrators… Today, when they [government] placed a draft of the salary and scale increase, they removed 60%. All of the strikes and demonstrations that took place, from 2000 until now, were to preserve our previously acquired rights, whether monetary or motivational.

Organizational Barriers

Teacher unions face organizational constraints mainly, authoritarian decisions imposed by the Minister of Education, low morale and lack of creative tactics, absence of unity among union members and supportive conditions needed to facilitate union work, and excessive loyalty of union leaders and union members to political parties. Below is one of the union's organizational charts created from analyzing internal documents and decrees.

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Authoritarian decisions imposed by the Minister of Education

Union leaders and active union members shared how the decrees that established public school teacher unions granted the Minister of Education power over the unions. The union documents and decrees indicated that the Minister of Education is considered to be an honorary president of the leagues and is granted authority through legislative Decrees 871 and 1553 to limit the work of the leagues administrations. Additionally, the Minister has the power to dissolve the executive committees of the two leagues if any of the following cases take place: if the leagues are unable to perform their tasks in accordance to decrees, if the leagues are harming the public interest, or if the leagues do not perform activities that benefit teachers or have stopped conducting activities for three consecutive years.

A primary union leader (UP3) explained, "this league is under the jurisdiction of the Minister: if he decides to eradicate it, he can." Union leader UP6 added that this power over teacher unions limits them in decisions that they can make, "If we decided to do something and the Minister of Education and his team do not approve, then nothing happens."

Figure 4.

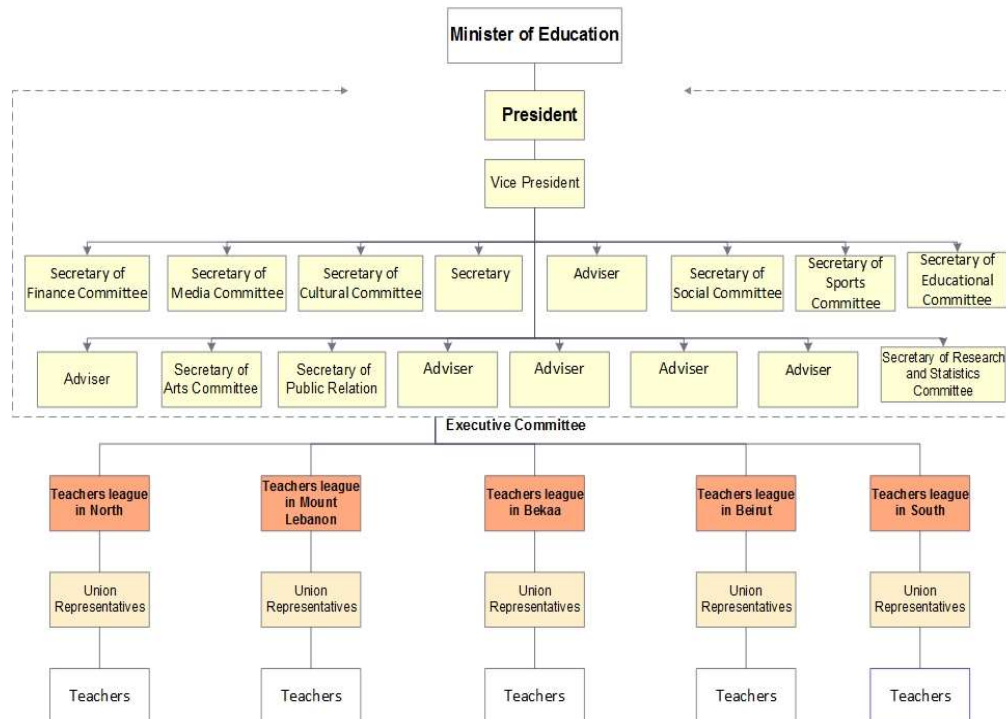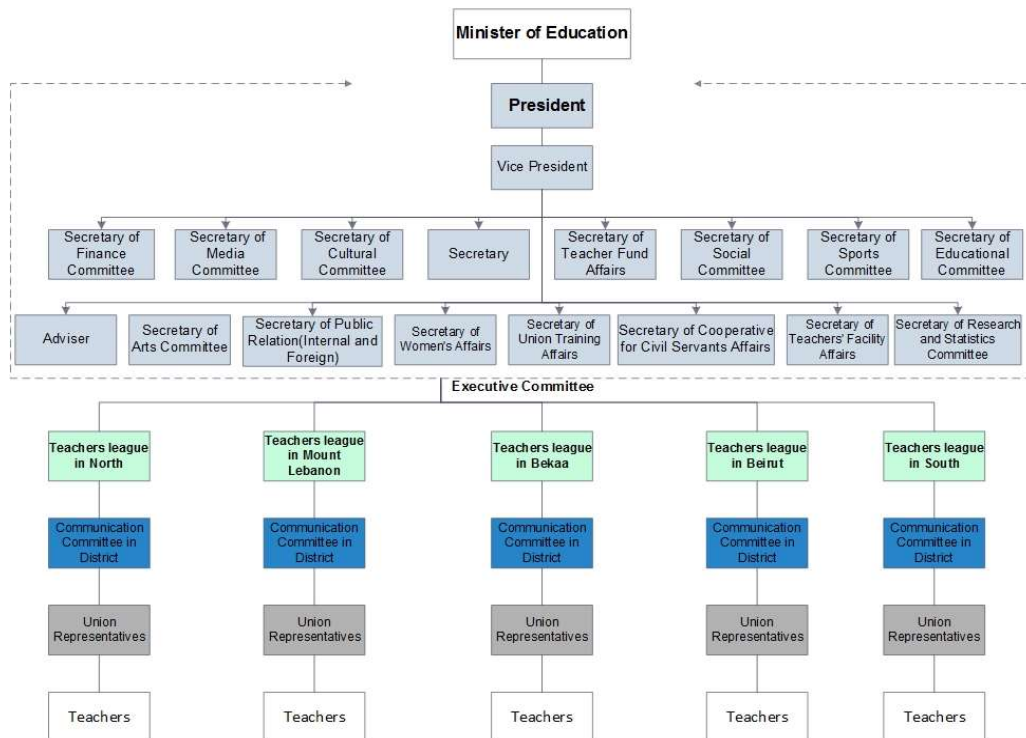*Public Primary School Teacher League's Organizational Chart*

Figure 5.

Public Secondary School Teacher League's Organizational Chart

Lack of supportive conditions needed to facilitate union work

Union leaders and active members noted the absence of necessary conditions that facilitate union work. One of the primary union leaders (UP3) discussed the limited time that a teacher union leader has to work on the many union issues.

Union members, even the president of primary and secondary leagues, are committed to school hours. Subsequently, he or she would follow up on union

work after work. If there was a conflict in the work hours of the union and the school, then the priority is for the school.

The lack of training and absence of union facilities are also other challenges that hinder union work. Primary union leader (UP3) indicated that the experience of union leaders derives mostly from their political background rather than from union specific training. Although most union leaders are almost at the retirement age, they do not conduct training sessions to prepare new leaders to lead teacher unions in the future. He also stated that there is an absence of resources such as teacher union centre despite having a decree issued in 1982 for its establishment. Similarly, active members noted that both leaders and union members needed more training. A secondary active union member (AS3) stated: "there are a lot of union representatives who do not have union backgrounds. There are people who get elected, but they do not have previous union experiences."

Excessive loyalty of union leaders and members to political parties

Union leaders and members agreed about excessive loyalty to political parties having a detrimental effect on unions in Lebanon. However, the results have shown a discrepancy between the perspective of union leaders and union members about this loyalty. Primary union leaders, who are partisan, asserted that they do not necessarily work based to their political parties' agenda and have a union consciousness.

Contrarily, most active and inactive union members viewed their leaders as controlled by political sectarian leaders. Respondent AS1 conveyed this view stating:

In the leagues, they distanced independent union leaders and the former president because he is an important union leader. Unfortunately, the

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executive committees in the leagues became representatives of political parties… We cannot do anything if our league's administration does not call on its members to take a stance. With respect to the current league, the decisions we take in general assemblies are not taken into consideration.

Similar to active members, inactive members believed that their union is currently submissive and pro-government, stating that the "the governing and political authority works to split the league and bring in a league that is loyal to it." A primary union leader (UP3) supported the union members' perspective when he discussed the flaw in the election process that allows incompetent union members to reach leadership positions.

The selection of trade union leaders has been based on political affiliations, especially when it is done on a broad level… It is not always the most competent teachers who end up in the highest union leadership positions.

Another union leader (UP6) recognized that their political affiliations negatively affected their performance when he said, "we are a political group. We represent politicians even if we are educators. If politicians get into a dispute, we also get into a dispute." Union leaders also believed that their members had more loyalty to political parties than they do to their union. Primary union leader (UP4) provided an example where a demonstration was expected to attract only around 300 members due to rainy weather. When union leaders invited a political sectarian leader to join the demonstration, member participation reached approximately 3000 to 4000.

Legal Barriers

The legal barrier was a major theme that emerged, and it included the lack of legal recognition of union and punitive decrees against unionizing in the public sector.

Lack of legal union recognition

Union leaders and active union members considered the lack of legal recognition as a union a major challenge. Secondary union leaders noted: "The first union challenge is that the league is not a union. We are a cultural league that was established under pressure, which resulted in the issuance of a decree."

Also, one of the primary union leaders feared fragmentation of the league if it became a legal union:

> *Even though Lebanon has agreed on Convention 87 of International Labour Organization (ILO), union work is not allowed in public education… We are afraid to form a union and then have teachers in the north say they want their own union, the south wants a union, mathematics teachers want their own union, and Arabic teachers want a union.*

Punitive decrees against unionizing

Union leaders and active members pointed to the punitive mandates that govern the union. As per Decree No. 112 issued in 1959, public school teacher unions are not allowed to organize and strike. Active union members expressed their fear of the use of these punitive decrees. A secondary active union member (AS2) stated that teachers are under continuous threat to get fired from their jobs.

> *Today, the Minister has threatened us. We conducted a strike, and he said that he would apply the Decree. If he applies the Decree, it means he can stop us from teaching and he can get us fired… On the other hand, if we have a union, the opposite happens. It would have statutory immunity.*

Education-related Barriers

Participants in all three groups have raised the issue of the current status of the teaching profession, the existing acute

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organizational functions that create challenges for union work, and the political interference in education.

Teaching as a low status profession

Union leaders and active members agreed that there is an absence of respect because of teaching being viewed as a blue-collar, feminized, and low salary profession. The politicized selection process of teachers is also compromising teacher quality and contributing to the low status of teaching. Union leader (UP5) pointed out that, similar to a notary public, teachers were previously considered to be a reference in the community and would be consulted on matters related to reading or writing. Today, according to union leaders, society views the teaching profession as a blue-collar profession. Union leader (UP3) explains:

> *Teaching and teachers are viewed as inferior, which is negative… This results in a person choosing teaching as a career only if compelled. If a person finds an alternative, he will forego teaching as a career. We live in a country where we will soon export teachers from outside like we do with housemaids.*

Additionally, union leader UP8 discussed the problem of disrespect for teachers that led to physical abuse. This respondent criticized the methods that have been used by the Ministry to support students who have increased intimidation against teachers.

> *There is also another issue we have been talking about for two years now: violent acts that occur in schools. As a response, the Ministry of Education has created hotlines for parents. If teachers say anything to students, parents call. These days, teachers are getting mistreated as well. I saw a teacher who was physically abused by a student because he told the student to leave the classroom.*

Moreover, a secondary active union member (AS4) described the dominance of female teachers in the school and attributed it to low salary.

Why is the percentage of female teachers reaching approximately 90% in public primary school, while the percentage for male teachers is only 10%? This is because a male considers that teaching does not allow him to form a family or secure the demands for his family.

Acute organizational dysfunctions

A union leader, active union members, and inactive members stressed the severity of the organizational problems that public schools face. Participants noted that the public no longer trusts the government or public schools due to its long history of neglect. Participants pointed out that the current curriculum is outdated, textbooks contain many errors, and the government does not secure teachers. There are many children who have social and psychological problems but do not have access to a professional staff of psychologists and counselors that can help them. This neglect has increased and reflected a negative school climate.

A primary union leader (UP3) described this school climate stating that these students with psychological problems have affected their fellow classmates and the learning environment.

Children from the lower impoverished classes go to public school. If you conduct a study in public schools, you will see a large percentage of students whose parents are divorced, whose dad is married to another woman, whose dad and mom are in dispute, whose [the parents] social condition is bad and who has placed the child in an orphanage since the parents have 10-12 children.

One of the inactive members (IP3) has mentioned the students' difficult social conditions and the rest agreed:

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We, in public sector, are part of a social reality, which has many challenges because no one places their children in public schools. Public education is mostly for people who cannot afford private schooling... These students do not have enthusiasm to learn.

A primary active union member (AP5) pointed out the problems related to the quality of the curriculum.

The last curriculum that was implemented was supposed to be a five-year experiment. If there was an improvement, they will continue to use them and if not, they would remove them. It has been 18 years and they have not changed the curriculum. It has a lot of mistakes. We communicated this problem with them a hundred times. Every session we do on the refining of books, they end up leaving the same mistakes that we have previously highlighted.

Political Interferences in Education

In addition, participants from the three groups explicitly communicated how political sectarian leaders interfere in educational decisions to appoint their followers in public schools. These followers are, most of the time, incompetent, unprepared or have no desire to teach, but are only there to seek teaching as an employment opportunity.

A secondary school union leader (US8) communicated this problem when he highlighted appointment of contractual teachers and how sectarianism is engraved in society and in schools.

Contractual work is also a challenge because it transformed from an educational process to a political bazaar… Selection of members on committees is done based on political affiliations and sectarianism…sectarian quotas and clientelism have replaced competence.

Similarly, primary union leader (UP3) mentioned that the political leaders' interferences in hiring school principals have

resulted in having no criteria for appointment except for sectarian political affiliations.

Appointment of principals is not done based on experience or competence. First, if a person is going to be appointed in a Shiite area, he or she must be a Shiite. If he or she is going to be appointed in a Sunni area, then he or she has to be a Sunni. In Beirut, you cannot appoint a Shiite even if he has a doctorate and his opponent is a teacher who has only a brevet [brevet is a grade 9 certificate]. The priority is for the sect and the unification of the sect.

Moreover, active union members expressed concern over the corrupted politicization of educational inspection and professional development management. They noted, "Inspection is also politicized. Even professional development is politically assigned."

Inactive members focused on the school environment and tenure process stating that political leaders have created a tense sectarian environment in schools, where teachers feel injustice within the recruitment and promotions processes.

Political Barriers

Participants highlighted the political barriers in union work to be reflected in the manipulation of the public's perception about teacher unions, the lack of union participation in educational policies, and the influence of international development agencies on education policy. It is noteworthy that those who are actively involved in the union such as union leaders and active union members are the one that were able to highlight political barriers.

Lack of union participation in education policy

Most union leaders and few active union members discussed the absence of involvement of teacher unions in the Ministry's education reform initiatives. According to primary union leader

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(UP3), one way the government marginalizes teacher leagues' role is through blocking unions from being part of educational planning.

The Ministry of Education is not engaging teacher unions in educational planning, in curriculum planning, or program planning. Teacher unions do not even have a true participative role in regular issues such as internal regulation in the schools.

Influence of international development agencies on education policy

Former president and few active union members attributed the negligence that occurs in public schools to neoliberal policies implemented by international development agencies to privatize the educational sector. As an example of neoliberalism, the former president discussed the Paris III conference. This conference set the conditions needed to promote economic reform through trade liberalization, privatization of the public sectors, and reduction in government expenditure. The former president explained:

We were fighting a project controlling the country. This project, which was part of Paris III and is related to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, is neoliberalism, the beast that has swept all third world countries. It struck the welfare state. Its aim is to privatize all the public services of the government.

Strategies Used by Public School Teacher Unions

Participants were asked about the strategies that teacher unions use to reach their goals. These methods include meet and confer, the use of pressure tactics, the formation of alliances with other labor unions, the use of modern communication tools, and the creation of networking opportunities. However, inactive members were only familiar with meet and confer and the use of pressure tactics as strategies. Here, we only present themes that were vital for the discussion section.

Table 5.

Strategies Used To Achieve Union Goals by Teacher Unions

Themes	Total Union Leaders (out of 17)	Total Active Union Members (out of 12)	Total Inactive union Members (out of 9)
Meet and Confer	15	4	9
Prepare Educational Conferences	16	9	0
Use Various Types of Pressure Tactics	17	11	9
Form Alliances with Other Labor Unions	2	4	0
Use Modern Communication tools	5	1	0
Create Networking Opportunity to Gain Support	1	0	0

Meet and Confer

Nearly all of the union leaders and inactive members and some active members indicated that teacher unions use meet and confer method as a union strategy. Secondary union leaders declared that they usually meet with politicians to follow up on union matters. Likewise, active union members described meet and confer method when the union negotiates demands with authority figures. Through meet and confer, teacher unions have also advocated for gender equity and attained benefits for married female teachers. Respondent AP5 stated: "we as female teachers now receive a family allowance. This was accomplished thanks to the league."

Prepared Educational Conferences

Union leaders and active union members indicated that teacher unions prepared educational conferences to raise awareness of educational issues. However, active members disagreed on the extent to which public school teacher unions addressed educational concerns.

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Public Secondary School Teachers League's union leaders communicated their attempts to have a role in improving education, but the current external constraints are impeding their work.

We have conducted many educational conferences. We have pointed out problems. However, the overall corruption that exists in the educational sector controlled the academic setting and secondary school teaching.

However, one active secondary school union member (AS3) specified that public school teacher unions focus mostly on increasing wages and have ignored their role in improving the educational sector.

From the practical side, the league is focused on increasing wages only. This is the reality… Leagues should also have a role in organizing programs and in following up on the advancement of education.

Use various types of pressure tactics

Nearly all participants recognized union pressure tactics. Inactive members are not quite aware of the procedure but know that teacher unions use strikes. Teacher unions have also used protests to raise awareness on the corruption in the country. A primary union leader (UP4) described how they used protests to criticize the corruption in the country and prove that the salary and scale increase can be financed.

Teacher unions acted as a civil movement through struggles, strikes, and protests… We saw the absence of accountability in real estate, harbors, and in marine properties, which in and of itself can finance the salary and scale increase if used properly. We formed a committee and started investigating all these issues.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal that public school teacher unions in Lebanon are facing many internal challenges that are caused by external factors. Also, the current legal and political constraints are impeding the public school leagues from achieving their goals. In the following section, we discuss these challenges and strategies used under three headings: absence of union presence and unity, disproportionate attention devoted to education-related demands, and external political pressure influencing union-government relationship.

Absence of Union Presence and Unity

The organizational and legal challenges have conveyed that a major problem facing public school teacher unions is the lack of legal recognition of the union. According to Decrees No. 871 and 1553, the purpose of public school teacher leagues is to focus "on social and cultural matters that concern teachers, organize their professional conditions, and improve their productivity" (p. 1). However, based on the results of this study, it is clear that this definition does not fully capture the objectives of public school teacher leagues. The actual function of public school teacher leagues differs from these decrees' definition. Also, Article 15 of Law Decree No. 112 states that civil servants including teachers are prohibited from engaging in any political organizations, participating or inciting others to strike. This law would make the work of teacher unions extremely difficult, especially in representing their members. Moreover, the presence of such laws can discourage union members from participating in union activities, and hence, it is probably one of the causes for low union participation in strikes that is shown in Samaha (2006). The current

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laws also impose the current organizational structures on public school teacher unions, making it more similar to a sports or cultural club. Roles such as secretary of arts committee, secretary of sports committee, and secretary of cultural committee are not similar to the structure of any labor union. In addition, some of the titles held by union leaders such as secretary of training affairs and secretary of teacher facility affairs are not functional, as the responses of union leaders and members showed that they do not have teacher union facilities or conduct training. This structure would undermine the function of the union and lead to a lack of transparency, blocking union members from monitoring what their leaders do. Furthermore, according to Bishara (2014), the absence of legal recognition of union creates a challenge for union leaders to collect membership fees and can weaken its power to support its activities. Similarly, Murillo et al. (2002), in examining teacher unions in Argentina and their impact, shows that there are unions referred to as inscripta in Argentina that are considered to be weak since they lack legal status but are still able to represent their members and call for strikes. Then, the authors state that monopolistic unions that have high density and legal recognition would be considered strong and able to attain "teachers' tenure, budget allocation, employment, and even policy preferences" (Murillo et al., 2002, p. 24).

Most union leaders who have been supported by political parties and have assumed a leadership position are not qualified to lead. This problem exists because of the lack of criteria in the public teacher unions' internal policies that does not require candidates running in elections to have militancy experience or union training to lead. Wolf and Lefèvre (2012) showed that union leaders of Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) that led the social movement during the Jasmine Revolution in 2011 were experienced since the UGTT's

internal policies require union leaders to have at least nine years of militancy experience to run in the UGTT elections. In addition, there is currently no union training that would prepare newly elected public school union leaders and union representatives for their leadership roles.

More importantly, internal conflicts that have emerged from loyalty to political sectarian leaders and the superiority-inferiority dilemma between secondary and primary teachers have created disunity and contributed to ineffectiveness in the union. Union leaders being partisan raise serious concerns about the autonomy of unions, in terms of who makes the decisions and who do these decisions benefit. Union leaders in their response admitted that conflicts arising in political parties have reflected internally on them. Union members through their responses have also highlighted how union leaders' decisions were at times not aligned with their rank-and-file members. Daou (2017) agrees that union leaders have continuously hesitated to criticize political leaders and made pro-government decisions because of interferences from political leaders. Daou, however, did not differentiate between union decisions made by head of Independent Frontier Hanna Ghareeb or by pro-government leaders who came after 2015 elections. In fact, UCC under the leadership of Hanna Ghareeb, advocated for gender equity in benefits and raised awareness on corruption in society. Teacher unions in 2013 had protests and sit-ins in Zaitunay Bay and revealed statistics on public corruption made by political leaders with an aim to fund the salary scale increase (Lebanese Ministry of Information, 2013). Because the UCC's intention was mostly economic and no follow up was pursued, it did not win them the community support, but nevertheless they did seek a social justice approach and had full support of their members.

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Disproportionate Attention Devoted Towards Education-related Demands

Lebanese teacher unions have played an awareness-raising role in education and prepared five educational conferences that addressed problems in public schools; however, they need to assume a more influential role in improving education. Union leaders have expressed that their role in education reforms with MEHE was marginalized and at other times limited to advisory, but union members believe that the unions have the capacity to be more proactive and involved in education reform. Public school teacher unions have worked with Educational International organization in 2016 and conducted surveys to examine the challenges facing Syrian refugees in accessing education. According to the results, they seek to plan a series of workshops to advocate and assist in addressing these challenges (Educational International, 2017). Despite the attempt of teacher unions to move beyond their traditional role and change their practices, research has shown that there is reluctance among different groups including teachers, school officials, and policymakers to view teacher unions as agents of change (Bascia, 2005; Simsek & Seashore, 2008).

External Political Pressure Influencing Union-Government Relationship

The government's intentional neglect of public schools, including an outdated curriculum, errors in textbooks, increase in precarious teachers, and lack of educational and teaching supplies are the consequences of neoliberal policies. Lebanon is a liberal state that was built on free-market ideology since the 1950s (Traboulsi, 2014). After Lebanese Civil War in 1989, Prime Minister Rafic Hariri introduced neoliberal reform policies to revive the Lebanese

economy. He managed to strengthen the financial and economic sectors but did not anticipate the increase in social inequality. Conferences such as Paris I, II, III and Cedre I were held to cover the Lebanese public debt that has currently reached $80 billion due to political corruption (Azar, 2018). These conferences were supported by international organizations such as World Bank and IMF but their underlying motives and "hidden conditions" were feared by some of the political parties (Schenker, 2007). Moreover, in examining educational policies, one would note the neoliberal affect in the excessive autonomy granted to private schools, specifically in criteria for attaining a license, recruiting teachers, and choosing curriculum and assessment tools (El-Amine, 1994). This loose coupling system for private sector can also jeopardize education quality if there are no criteria set by MEHE or assessment for quality in place. Another neoliberal effect can be seen through appointments of incompetent teachers in public schools. In 2006, teacher unions held strikes against neoliberal policies where "200 thousand workers demonstrated against contractual appointments promoted by the Lebanese government following the Paris III conference" (Bou Khater, 2015). To understand the effect of precarious employment on education, Seifert et al. (2007) examines adult education contractual teachers' behaviour and perceptions in Quebec, which reveal that precarious employment can negatively impact a person's mental health, relationships with their fellow colleagues, and productivity. The job insecurity creates competition between teachers who are contractors and those who have permanent positions.

The relationship between Lebanese teacher unions and the government can mostly be described as moving from defiance before 2015 towards compliance and passivity after the political party affiliates won the teacher unions' elections in public and private

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schools. Murillo (2000) explains that unions that choose to cooperate with employer and restrain the union, or oppose the employer and use militancy, would usually lead to concessions if the restraint or militancy were successful. However, in Lebanon, boycotting official exams resulted in unsuccessful militancy and no concessions because the government refused to negotiate with the union. Also, with the election of partisan union leaders, it did not lead to full cooperation or concessions since many of union members were not in agreement with their leaders on their decisions. Although a law was passed to increase salary scale increase of teachers, it was never implemented and teachers currently face dire economic conditions. In addition, Murillo et al. (2002) explains that teacher unions that have high density but a conflicting relation with the government tend to result in an increase of strikes. Lebanese teacher unions can learn from the South African unions on how to develop positive government-union relationship. South African Democratic Teacher Union (SADTU) and National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) have formed alliances with political parties in government and community to influence policy deliberations on South African Schools Act (Govender, 2015). SADTU improved its policy expertise and preserved its independence, while NAPTOSA, being autonomous and advocating for teacher professionalism, became a legal trade union, formed political alliances, and balanced between unionism and professionalism.

Limitations

The sample size of this study did not cover the private education sector. Consequently, expanding the sample size and reaching other sectors could have captured more challenges facing

teacher unions. Moreover, some of the union leaders who were contacted voiced their mistrust in the motive of the research and researcher. People in the Middle East perceive the researcher as a public investigator (El-Amine, 2009), which created a challenge for the researcher. Many of the primary and secondary union leaders refused to conduct interviews, preventing this study from capturing women's perspective as leaders and capturing all of the union leaders' views. Another limitation is that the questions and participants' responses were in the Arabic language; nonetheless, the researchers were cautious during translation.

Conclusion

This study contributes new insights into the challenges facing teacher unions in Lebanon and the strategies they currently use to achieve their objectives. This study uses the perspective of union leaders and members to identify public unions' challenges and strategies. The results of this study indicate that teacher unions in Lebanon have attempted to take a social justice role, but this role was limited to raising awareness. Also, they have not adopted any new creative strategies, resulting in failed militancy and ineffective unions. In addition, they are facing many internal and external barriers, including legal barrier that restricts the definition of unionism under the label of "leagues" and places decision-making power in the hands of the Minister of Education and organizational barriers that include union structure, submissiveness of union leaders and union members to political sectarian leaders, lack of training, incompetence in leadership positions, and disunity among public school unions due to superior-inferior dilemma between secondary and primary teachers. This study also contributes to the literature on

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teacher unions in suggesting ways to strengthen the internal structure of the organization and maintain unity in times of hardship and continuous attacks on unions. Despite the fact that some teacher unions have collective bargaining rights, it does not create unity within the union. Establishing good communication with union members is among the steps to ensure union representation and resolve conflicts. Moreover, having a union with a social justice orientation changes the perceptions about a self-serving association and strengthens the connection with the community. Also, it is essential for the union to attempt and create a partnership with the government and work towards effective education reforms.

We recommend that public school teacher unions in Lebanon gain legal status as a labor union. This step could prevent government interferences and allow public schools teacher unions to better represent their members. Second, union leaders must set criteria for the elections that ensure competent teachers reach leadership positions. Third, when teachers are elected in a union representative positions or executive committees, they should be informed about their roles and expectations. Training is also essential for union leaders to improve their union's effectiveness and ensure its sustainability. Fourth, union leaders must use new strategies such as creating alliances with the community to be able to combat sectarianism, racism, violence, and corruption in the schools and in society. Finally, the Ministry of Education needs to establish a partnership with teacher unions to improve education.

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Book Review

Social Theory and Education Research

Understanding Foucault, Habermas, Bourdieu

and Derrida

Edited By: Mark Murphy

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Book Review

For education researchers wishing to have a deep vision, social theory is a prolific source. Although they have benefitted from the work of a large number of theorists in this field, Jacques Derrida, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault and Jurgen Habermas are more influential in shaping contemporary education theories. The effect of these theorists stems from their authentic works, applicable to

education studies. However, education researchers face a challenge, a lack of suitable reading material that can provide a sufficiently in-depth overview of this quartet of theorists. Therefore, there is strong need for a suitable guide to education researchers / practitioners to assist their acquisiton and application of social theory.

Aiming to provide education researchers/practitioners and graduate students with theoretical and practical information on how to apply social theories into their research, this book appears to be one of the most updated resources on social theory and its applicability on education. As the title emphasizes, the book adresses the work of the quartet of social theorists.

The book was produced by the contributions of 14 authors from the field of education. It covers 336 pages including 5 chapters. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction about the theorist and goes on with an overview of characteristic terms belonging to the theorist. Then the authors provide detailed information and examples on how to use the social theory of the relevant theorist in an education research. Each chapter concludes with how to apply the theories into educational practices.

Chapter 1 discusses details about what social theory is. After providing some brief information on four social theorists mentioned in the book and their work rooted from the terms such as capital, social class, exploitation, political economy and liberal democracy Karl Marx put forward, the chapter gives important information on the dilemmas of educational researches concerning social theory and its practices.

In chapter 2, Julie Allan begins with the interest of educational researchers on Foucault and his work. The chapter focuses on how Foucault presents his ideas about reality in different discourses, from structures and discourses to the archeology of knowledge, the concepts of treatment and evidence. The chapter points to Foucault's changing focus based on genealogy, institutions such as prisons and schools, and the issue of sexuality and provides a critical perspective on what is normal.

In chapter 3, Terrence Lowat begins with the discussion on the benefits of teaching, authentic pedagogy, values, citizenship education, and servant learning, providing a more holistic learning experience to re-evaluate schools as transformative learning tool. This chapter argues that Habermas' theories of knowing and operational action deepen understanding of some issues such as teacher role, effective learning and schools as transformative learning areas in educational research.

Chapter 4 is about the relationship between Bourdieu's theoretical studies and education as well as the benefits of these studies to educational researchers. Shaun Rawolle and Bob Lingard discuss the key concepts of Bourdieu's work such as field, habitus, cultural capital, symbolic violence at the beginning of this chapter. They also mention his work in the context of being reflexive, denial of epistemic innocence and methodology in social sciences.

Chapter 5 covers Derrida's work. The chapter begins with the detailed discussion of the unique concepts concerning education philosophy of Derrida. This chapter also deals with how Derrida's deconstruction is adapted to educational research environments, particularly in the areas of program design and pedagogy.

This prominent resource has a few noticeable weak points. Initially, this book superficially outlines the key concepts underlying the theories of Foucault, Habermas, Bourdieu, Derrida. Considering the non-sociologist target audience, it could be challenging to understand abstract points and theoretical ideas behind their philosophies. They need more explanation on each theory for clarification. Secondly, the findings of the conducted research based on the social theories, especially those of Habermas and Bourdieu, mentioned in the book are unclearly expressed. They seem ambigious. Lastly, the editor mentions the difficulties in grasping the social theories in the book at several times. Even though they are abstract and require substantial effort to understand, numerous repetition of this matter by editor / writers can be distracting for readers. Despite these problems, this book constitues a worthy resource for those interested in social theories and education since it establishes a connection between theory and practice preserving the boundaries of both areas.

References

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