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This issue of *Leadership in Education* contains a selection of papers presented at the ENIRDELM 2019 Conference, held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 19–21 September 2019.

A Study on Clustering High Schools According to Multiple Success Variables

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This paper presents the results of a relational, descriptive study. Its main purpose is to examine variables that determine multiple success categories in high schools. The sample consists of 80 public high schools in Antalya. Data were collected through the school information form developed by the researchers, based on the related literature and data available at school. Academic Score (AS), Social, Cultural, and Artistic Score (SCAS), and Sportive Score (SS) were used as success categories. Four clusters were obtained by cluster analysis. Clusters were called Academically Powerful Schools (APS), Schools in Need of Improvement (SNI), Sportively Powerful Schools (SPS), and Socially, Culturally, and Artistically Powerful Schools (SCAPS). According to the results, APS was the best in AS, SNI was the worst except AS, SPS was the best only in SS, and SCAPS was the best only in SCAS. Science high schools were clustered in APS. Anatolian high schools were located in four different clusters, half of them in SNI. Vocational and technical Anatolian high schools were located in three different clusters, more than half of them in SNI, but none in APS. Anatolian imam and preacher high schools were located in two different clusters. Only one-third of them were clustered in SCAPS while two-thirds were in SNI. Multi-program Anatolian high schools were also clustered in SNI only. In the study, significant correlation coefficients were obtained among some selected success variables.

Keywords: multiple success variable, high school, cluster analysis, correlation coefficient

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Manpower is the most valuable resource of a country. Schools are institutions where these valuable resources are turned into power. Today, individuals with scientific thinking skills, productivity, creativity and the ability to solve the problems faced are very much needed. Schools have social, political and economic function. The social function of a school is to socialize the individuals and to de-

velop the culture. The political function is to educate youth to be loyal citizens while the economic function is to meet the needs of the economy in terms of not only manpower and but also brain power.

The Basic Law of National Education No. 1739 issued in 1973 determines general framework of Turkish national education system. According to this law, the overall aim of the education system is as follows: (1) to promote the welfare and happiness of the citizens, (2) to support and accelerate economic, cultural and social development in national unity and cohesion, and (3) to make the nation a constructive, creative and distinguished partner of contemporary civilization (MEB 2005). Education system in Turkey consists of two main parts: formal and non-formal education. Formal education is the regular schooling conducted within schools for individuals in a certain age group and includes pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education institutions. In this context, educational institutions at all levels have their own specific objectives. 'The aim of secondary education is to give students a minimum level of common culture, to acquaint them with problems of the individual and society, to teach them how to seek solutions, to raise awareness in order to ensure their contribution to the socio-economic and cultural development of the country and to prepare students for higher education, for professions, for life and for business in line with their interests and skills' (MEB 2005).

Secondary education institutions, which are the subject of this study, are called high schools. Various programs are applied in high school education and high schools are given different names based on their program diversity. High schools in the Turkish education system are the following: Science High School (SHS), Anatolian High School (AHS), Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (VTAHS), Anatolian Imam and Preacher High School (AIPHS), Multi-Program Anatolian High School (MPAHS), social sciences high school, fine arts high school and sports high school.

SHS provides a basis for upbringing students as scientists in the field of science and mathematics. Similarly, social sciences high school provides a basis for upbringing students as scientists in the field of social sciences. On the other hand, AIPHS aims at providing the necessary knowledge and skills that will be the source of religious services such as imamate, preaching and teaching in Qur'an courses. VTAHS aims at raising the labor force needed by the labor market in the fields of industry, trade, textile, construction, tour-

ism, chemistry, agriculture, and health. Youth in those schools is also being prepared for employment by providing them the possibility to gain the spirit of entrepreneurship, professional ethics, occupational health and safety, social and environmental responsibility, and work habits (MEB 2013).

AHS is open to enable students to prepare for higher education programs according to their talents and achievements and to learn foreign languages at a level that enables them to follow scientific and technological development in the world (MEB 1999). Multiprogram high school is open in accordance with objectives, principles and policies of National Education Basic Law, development plans, government programs and decisions of national education council, by taking into consideration education needs, student potential, and education cost of small settlements (MEB 2001).

At this point, the following question becomes important: to what extent are these schools able to achieve their goals and to what extent do the same types of schools provide expected outcomes? Evaluating the outcomes of the curriculum and using the information obtained as a result of these evaluations in the program development are of great importance for effectiveness of the education system (ERG 2019). The Ministry of National Education (MONE) has a huge quantity of data on the whole school system and educational data mining may be benefited in order to get the information needed. García et al. (2011) define the term 'educational data mining' as the process of converting raw data obtained from the educational systems into information that can be used by educational software, program developers, educational administrators, decision makers, teachers and researchers. Educational data mining is a new discipline that develops methods to examine increasingly large-scale data of the original type from educational organizations and uses them to better understand students and educational organizations (see http://www.educationaldatamining.org). It can be used to provide managers with the data-based information they need to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of educational organizations. With this information, it is possible to analyze the data, increase student achievement by revealing the reasons for student success and failure, identify problems in educational environments, and create more effective environments (Özbay 2015). Student learning data are being explored to develop predictive models by applying educational data mining methods. These models play an important role in developing adaptive learning systems. This way, adaptations or interventions based on

the model predictions can be used to modify student experience next or to suggest additional academic services to support learning (Bienkowski, Feng, and Means 2012). Especially in the field of education, there is a huge quantity of data about students, teachers, teaching environments, measurement and evaluation results. Such reality clearly shows the importance of using the information stored in these data collections in order to explore patterns and improve the efficiency and quality of education.

In education, data mining techniques, such as classification and clustering, are usually used to categorize students, based on the kinds of personal learning data, on student demographic data, or both (Bienkowski, Feng, and Means 2012). Cluster analysis is a multivariate statistical technique the main purpose of which is to group objects according to their characteristics (Hair et al. 2010). 'Clustering is the process of examining the properties of objects and grouping them into clusters according to some distance measurements. The aim of the cluster analysis is to collect objects close to each other in the same cluster, while collecting distant objects in different clusters' (Leskovec, Rajaraman, and Ullman 2014, 241). Likewise, James et al. (2013) described clustering analysis as the process of dividing objects into different groups, with observations within each group being very similar. Thus, while similar data enters the same cluster, different data is contained in different clusters (Singh and Singh 2012). Clustering examines a collection of points, and groups the points into clusters according to some distance measure. This means that points in the same cluster are spaced at a small distance from the others, while points in different clusters are spaced at a large distance (Leskovec, Rajaraman, and Ullman 2014). However, it needs to be revealed what it means for two or more objects to be similar or different in order to make this procedure concrete (James et al. 2013).

A limited number of studies on cluster analysis have been found in the literature. Among these researches, those related to education are summarized below: Perry (2000) conducted a research aiming at aggregating and summarizing data from Virginia public school districts, creating a paradigm that will quantify and rank order the variables, and place school districts into groupings. In the study, schools were clustered into two groups using the k-means cluster analysis procedure. According to the results, Virginia is experiencing shortages of instructional personnel, especially in the field of special education, mathematics, science, and technology endorsement. The most significant variables were the competition

from other school districts, retirement, efforts to reduce teacher to pupil ratios, and salaries. Green (2017) aimed at developing a typology of teachers and identifying the groups of teachers that perform better in regard to student achievement. In the study, three teacher profiles, high, mid, and low were found. The high cluster typically consisted of younger teachers, and predominately male. The older, with the majority of female educators were placed in the mid cluster while educators towards the end of their careers were found in the low cluster. On the other hand, Ungricht (1997) identified the relationship between learning strategies and demographic and educational performance variables, and explored patterns of learning of distinct clusters. The result shows that distinct groups exist among learners and that learning strategies are linked to specific educational performance measures. Conducting a study in Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, Warren (2007) used hierarchical clustering analysis and created five clusters of school divisions. The findings of the study indicate that there is a relationship between incidents related to student discipline and student achievement. Similarly, Halsell (2007) examined the performance of schools within homogeneous clusters by considering that a school's dominant student population will have a significant influence on academic performance. Schools were classified on the basis of dominant student populations and determinations were made concerning statistically significant differences in mean reading and math scores. According to the results, schools did demonstrate significant differences in reading and math scores with selected schools performing significantly above expectations, certain schools performing significantly below expectations, and many demonstrating no significant difference relative to similar populations located in homogeneous clusters.

Studies conducted by applying clustering analysis in various fields can produce different results based on preferred variables for the statistical usage. For example, Page (2004) investigated the impact of charter schools on student achievement by using cluster analysis in North Carolina and found that a four-cluster typology was the most 'optimal' for the study although there was a problem in internal validity. Page's primary concern was related to the lack of similarity between the charter and non-charter schools within the four clusters. Humphreys (2006) explored the institutional characteristics of California charter schools and the extent to which these characteristics relate to student achievement. Findings demonstrate that charter schools differ in both

teaching and student characteristics. Three clusters were found named 'under-resourced,' 'affluent,' and 'specialty' schools. Surprisingly, the under-resourced cluster had the highest academic performance on four different measures of growth. Teacher's length of service negatively predicted student achievement while student/teacher ratio positively predicted achievement scores. Crain-Dorough (2003) conducted a three-phase study in order to examine the characteristics of student dropouts and the characteristics of schools successful and unsuccessful in mediating dropouts. Three clusters of schools were found, named 'high achievers,' 'average achievers,' and 'low achievers.' As for the dropouts, three clusters were found, namely 'quiet dropouts,' 'typical dropouts,' and 'high-achieving pushouts.' Significant differences were found among the set of dependent variables such as attendance rate, class size, student achievement, suspension rate, teacher certification, and teacher test scores. The results showed that consistently low dropout schools had significantly higher student achievement than the less effective schools, while the more effective schools had significantly higher attendance rates and student achievement than the consistently high dropouts schools.

In the context of e-state in Turkey, big and various data collections are related to teachers and students and used by MONE; E-school, Educational Information Network, and MONE Information Systems. Unfortunately, these data were not used beyond reporting and they were not benefited sufficiently in order to obtain the information needed. However, MONE initiated a new study and focused on this issue in its 2023 Education Vision Document published in 2018. In this document, the emphasis is put on processing data obtained from all the levels of education and on using them in the process of decision-making, planning and evaluation. In order to achieve these targets, the following tasks were determined (MEB 2018):

- Initiation of 'Data Based Planning and Management System' at the school level for monitoring, evaluation and development of management and learning activities throughout the country.
- Integration of data from the Ministry's current systems into an easily accessible Educational Data Warehouse.
- Establishing an online platform where the Ministry and school administrators can monitor school development plans across county, province, region and country.

- Establishing a Geographic Information System to determine the capacity of schools when planning educational resources.
- Justice-based allocation of resources provided by the Ministry.
- Establishing a decision support mechanism to determine which school will be supported and what kind of support will be provided by following the school profile evaluation data.

All this knowledge reveals the need for identifying the levels of multiple success in high schools that are expected to prepare students for higher education or life experience. In general, there are very few studies investigating the impact of public schools on student achievement (Page 2004). However, many variables, which may be controlled or not, have an impact on student success; they are caused by students themselves and outside themselves (Demirtaş 2010). In light of this information, a study was designed to determine how high schools are clustered according to their multiple success levels and to compare schools in different clusters in terms of some variables.

General purpose of this study is to cluster high schools according to their multiple success levels and to compare them in terms of some variables. To achieve this purpose, the following research questions were identified:

1. How are high schools clustered according to multiple success variables?
2. Which type of high schools is situated in which clusters?
3. How are clusters compared in terms of some variables?
4. Are there significant correlations between selected two variables in terms of certain demographic characteristics of high schools?

Methodology

This is a relational, descriptive study. The main purpose of a descriptive study is to identify the state of a situation or phenomenon and explore the relationships between phenomena (Christensen, Johnson, and Turner 2015). In this context, variables that determine multiple success categories in high schools were examined in the study.

The population consists of 202 public high schools in Antalya. Social sciences, sports and fine arts high schools were not included

TABLE 1 Descriptive Data on the Population and the Sample

School Types	Population		Sample	
	N	%	*n*	%
Science High School	11	5.56	5	6.25
Anatolian High School	76	38.38	30	37.50
Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School	63	31.82	28	35.00
Anatolian Imam and Preacher High School	36	18.18	12	15.00
Multi-Program Anatolian High School	12	6.06	5	6.25
Total	198	100.00	80	100.00

in the field of inquiry due to their small number and differentiation from others in terms of admission requirements. Data were collected through the School Information Form (SIF) developed by the researchers based on the related literature and data available at schools. Since four schools were combined and closed, SIF were sent to 198 high schools. After incomplete incorrectly filled forms were excluded, analyses were made from the data of 80 schools. Table 1 illustrates descriptive data on the population and the sample by school types. As shown in the table, there are no big differences between the population ratio and the sample ratio by school types.

Rapid Miner for cluster analyses and SPSS 23.00 for correlation coefficients were used in order to analyze data. The variables of Academic Score (AS) used in cluster analysis are school mean on university entrance exam, school ratio of achievement certificates, and school ratio of appreciation certificates. The variables of Social, Cultural, and Artistic Score (SCAS) used in cluster analysis are school ratings obtained from the contests on poetry, essay, story, visual arts, painting, and sculpture as well as individual and team music competitions. The variables of Sportive Score (SS) used in cluster analysis are the results obtained individually and in team sports such as football, volleyball, basketball, tennis, table tennis, weightlifting, wrestling, and swimming.

Results

In this sub-title, data on the research questions were presented in tables and the results obtained in the study were explained.

Clustering High Schools According to Multiple Success Variables

In this study, accepted criteria were implemented in order to determine success scores used for clustering. In this context, three

TABLE 2 Quotient Criteria for District, Provincial, and Country Level Awards

Awards	District	Province	Country
Sport	1	4	8
Painting	2	4	10
Music	2	4	10
Literature	2	4	10
Projects	–	4	10

types of scores named Academic Score (AS), Social, Cultural, and Artistic Score (SCAS), and Sportive Score (SS) were used as success categories. The formula used for AS is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{AS} = &\text{ normalized score of achievement and appreciation} \\ &+ \text{normalized point average of the school.} \end{aligned}$$

Students get certificate of achievement when they obtain mean scores among 70–84. The formula of (70 + 84)/2 = 77 was used to obtain the certificate of achievement score. The score obtained from this procedure was multiplied by the number of certificates given at school. Then the obtained value was divided by the total number of students at school.

Students get certificate of appreciation when they obtain mean scores among 85–100. The formula of (85 + 100)/2 = 92.5 was used to obtain the certificate of achievement score. The score obtained from this procedure was multiplied by the number of certificates given at school. Then the obtained value was divided by the total number of students at school.

Quotients were determined for SCAS and SS based on characteristics of the awards gained by individual students or student teams at school. Expert opinion was obtained to determine quotient criteria shown in table 2. The scores obtained were normalized in the 0–1 range when determining clusters.

K-Means clustering algorithm was used for data analysis. Eighty schools were subjected to statistical analysis for clustering according to their scores in three categories. Cluster analyses were made five times by using the number of clusters from three to seven. As a result of cluster analysis, schools were classified into four clusters (numbered 0–3) with expert opinion. Table 3 illustrates Euclidean distance in cluster analysis. Cluster 0 consists of 10 schools. In this cluster, all scores obtained for AS, SCAS and SS are larger than average at a ratio of 192.43 percent, 54.04 percent, and 52.01 percent, respectively. Cluster 1 consists of 45 schools. In this cluster,

TABLE 3 Euclidean Distance in Cluster Analysis

Cluster	Distance	Average dist.	Notes
0	10	0.155	AS is on average 192.43% larger SCAS is on average 54.04% larger SS is on average 52.01% larger
1	45	0.023	SCAS is on average 64.00% smaller SS is on average 40.67% smaller AS is on average 28.94% smaller
2	9	0.072	SS is on average 188.00% larger AS is on average 33.10% smaller SCAS is on average 0.62% smaller
3	16	0.066	SCAS is on average 148.45% larger SS is on average 23.87% smaller AS is on average 20.27% smaller

TABLE 4 Cluster Model

Cluster	AS	SCAS	SS
Academically powerful schools (APS)	0.840	0.344	0.264
Schools in need of improvement (SNI)	0.204	0.079	0.103
Sportively powerful schools (SPS)	0.192	0.222	0.501
Socially, cult., and artistic. powerful schools (SCAPS)	0.229	0.556	0.132

all scores obtained for AS, SCAS and SS are smaller than average at a ratio of 64.00 percent, 40.67 percent, and 28.94 percent, respectively. Cluster 2 consists of 9 schools. In this cluster, only SS is larger than average at a ratio of 188.00 percent while AS and SCAS are smaller than average at a ratio of 33.10 percent and 0.62 percent, respectively. Cluster 3 consists of 16 schools. In this cluster, only SCAS is larger than average at a ratio of 148.45 percent while SS and AS are smaller than average at a ratio of 23.87 percent and 20.27 percent, respectively.

Four clusters obtained by cluster analysis are given names according to their success differences within the three categories. Table 4 illustrates the names of the cluster as well as the mean score of schools in each cluster in the range of 0–1. Cluster 0 was called Academically Powerful Schools (APS), and APS was found to have the best AS. Cluster 1 was called Schools in Need of Improvement (SNI), and SNI had the worst scores except AS. Cluster 2 was called Sportively Powerful Schools (SPS), SPS had the best score only in SS. Cluster 3 was called Socially, Culturally, and Artistically Powerful Schools (SCAPS), and SCAPS had the best score in SCAS only.

TABLE 5 Numbers of Members in Four Clusters by School Types

Clusters	School Types					
	AHS	AIPHS	MPAHS	SHS	VTAHS	Total
1. Academically Powerful Schools (APS)	5	–	–	5	–	10
2. Schools in Need of Improvement (SNI)	15	8	5		17	45
3. Sportively Powerful Schools (SPS)	3	–	–		6	9
4. Socially, Culturally, and Artistically Powerful Schools (SCAPS)	7	4	–		5	16
Total	30	12	5	5	28	80

Distribution of High Schools into Different Clusters According to Their Types

As illustrated in table 5, all five science high schools included in the study were clustered in APS. Anatolian high schools were located in four different clusters and half of them were placed in SNI. Vocational and technical Anatolian high schools were located in three different clusters and 17 out of 28 schools were placed in SNI while no school was in APS.

Anatolian imam and preacher high schools were located in two different clusters. Only one-third of them were placed in SCAPS while two-thirds were in SNI. Multi-program Anatolian high schools were also clustered in SNI only.

Comparing Different Clusters in Terms of Some Variables

In order to compare different clusters in terms of some variables, descriptive data on 16 variables were examined. As illustrated in table 6, APS was found to be the best for nine variables. However, APS was the worst for variables 'information technology,' 'number of students per teacher,' and 'number of students per classroom.' On the other hand, SNI was the best only for two variables 'laboratory facilities' and 'sport facilities.' SPS was the best for variables 'ratio of white flag,' 'information technology,' and 'teachers' length of service at school.' However, it was the worst for variables 'laboratory facilities,' 'sport facilities,' 'ratio of teachers with graduate education,' and 'ratio of certificates of achievement and appreciation.' SCAPS was only the best for two variables, namely 'number of students per teacher' and 'number of students per classroom.' Nevertheless, it was the worst for variables 'ratio of white flag,' 'average teachers' length of service,' and 'teachers' length of service at school.'

TABLE 6 Comparisons on the Characteristics of Four Clusters According to the SIF Variables

Items	Clusters			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ratio of white flag (%)	80.00	73.33	88.90	68.80
Laboratory facilities	11.2	12.9	7.0	11.97
Having information technology	1.2	6.1	7.5	3.2
Music, painting classroom	6.5	2.1	2.5	6.2
Sport facilities	10.2	12.1	9.1	9.4
Number of students per classroom	28.5	22.1	23.4	20.0
Ratio of hourly paid teachers (%)	0.0	8.8	8.4	6.7
Ratio of teachers with graduate education (%)	9.4	9.1	7.0	9.0
School's admission score	452	235	237	274
School's mean on university entrance	357	196	203	206
Ratio of certificates of achievement and appreciation	87	25	22	27
Ratio of disciplinary punishment (%)	0.0	6.8	4.4	3.2
Days of absence without excuse	4.90	6.20	5.78	5.19
Average teacher's length of service	19.2	15.2	16.2	12.3
Teachers' length of service at school	6.40	6.62	8.80	4.60
Number of students per teacher	14.5	12.1	12.1	11.4

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) academically powerful schools, (2) schools in need of improvement, (3) sportively powerful schools, (4) socially, culturally, artistically powerful schools.

Correlations between Two Selected Variables in Terms of Some Demographic Characteristics of High Schools

Correlation coefficients were calculated in order to determine relationships between some selected demographic characteristics of high schools. These values were also interpreted based on the criteria recommended by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) for the effect size of correlation coefficients.

As illustrated in table 7, sixteen correlation coefficients were calculated. In order to determine the common variance between the two variables, it was necessary to calculate the effect size and for this purpose, the value obtained from the square of the correlation coefficient was used. The square of the correlation coefficient shows the proportion of variance in one variable that can be attributed to its linear relationship with the second variable. In other words, it indicates the amount the two variables have in common (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2007).

Although all correlation coefficients were significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ level, eleven of them had weak effect sizes. A strong positive relationship ($r^2 = 0.57$) was found between variables 'academic score' and 'school admission score.' It means that 57 percent of the vari-

TABLE 7 Comparisons on the Characteristics of Four Clusters According to the SIF Variables

Variable 1	Variable 2	r	P	r^2	Int.*
Academic Score	School's admission score	0.75	0.000	0.56	Strong
	Ratio of hourly paid teachers	–0.45	0.000	0.20	Modest
	Average teacher's length of service	0.29	0.008	0.08	Weak
	Ratio of disciplinary punishment	–0.23	0.039	0.05	Weak
	Music, painting classrooms	0.24	0.027	0.06	Weak
Social, Cultural, & Artistic Score	Music, painting classrooms	0.25	0.023	0.06	Weak
	School's admission score	0.22	0.042	0.04	Weak
	Ratio of disciplinary punishment	–0.23	0.040	0.05	Weak
Sportive Score	Average teacher's length of service	0.42	0.000	0.17	Weak
	Teacher's length of service at school	0.26	0.016	0.07	Weak
	Ratio of hourly paid teachers	–0.24	0.027	0.06	Weak
Ratio of certificates of achievement and appreciation	School's mean on university entrance exam	0.76	0.000	0.57	Strong
	School's admission score	0.72	0.000	0.52	Strong
School's mean on university entrance exam	School's admission score	0.69	0.000	0.47	Moderate
Days of absence without excuse	School's admission score	–0.26	0.020	0.07	Weak
	Ratio of certificates of achievement and appreciation	–0.23	0.042	0.05	Weak

ation shown by academic score can be attributed to the tendency of academic score to vary linearly with school admission score. 'Academic score' had a modest negative correlation (r^2 = 0.20) with variable 'ratio of hourly paid teachers' but a weak negative correlation (r^2 = 0.05) with variable 'ratio of disciplinary punishment.' Other strong effect sizes were calculated in correlations between variables 'school admission score' and 'ratio of certificates of achievement and appreciation' (r = 0.72) as well as between variables 'ratio of certificates of achievement and appreciation' and 'school mean on university entrance exam' (r = 0.76). A modest effect size was found in the negative correlation (r = –0.45) between variable 'ratio of hourly paid teachers' and 'school admission score.' Not only sportive score but also social, cultural, and artistic score had weak relationships with the selected variables, and their effect sizes ranged from 0.04 to 0.17 (table 7).

As shown in table 7, 'school mean on university entrance exam' can explain 57 percent of the variation shown by 'ratio of certificates of achievement and appreciation' with a strong effect size. Similarly, school admission score can explain 52 percent of the variation shown by 'ratio of certificates of achievement and appre-

ciation.' In addition, 47 percent of the variation of 'school mean on university entrance exam' can be explained by 'school admission score.' On the other hand, weak correlation coefficients were obtained between the variable 'days of absence without excuse' with both variables 'school admission score' (r = –0.26) and 'ratio of certificates of achievement and appreciation' (r = –0.23).

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, public high schools in Antalya province were examined in terms of clusters according to multiple success variables based on 2018 data. The aim of the study was to determine success clusters of schools and to compare schools in different clusters in terms of some selected variables. Clustering analysis was applied by using K-Means algorithm with AS, SCAS, SS obtained from the data collected from schools. At the end of the analysis, it was determined that schools were divided into four clusters called APS, SNI, SPS, and SCAPS.

The APS cluster consisted of 10 schools that were above average by all scores. It means that only 11.25 per cent of schools in Antalya were found successful in all three categories. On the other hand, the SNI cluster consisted of 45 schools that were below average by all scores. The fact that the SNI cluster, consisting of 56 percent of 80 schools included in the study, had scores below the average in all success categories, shows the real dimensions of differences between schools in Antalya. Turkey has a quality problem in education in terms of standards accepted on international levels. In addition, success in education is not disseminated homogeneously across the country. In other words, there are schools with success levels that range from the highest to the lowest in the same region, in the same province and even in the same district (Önder 2012). It is known that the MONE authorities also see this issue as an important problem. Quality differences among schools in Turkey are a fundamental problem, and the differences between good and poor schools are so large that this fact can be called a quality gap. However, it is one of the tasks of the state to provide equal opportunities for all children to receive the same level of education (Yıldız 2015). Therefore, taking measures to eliminate quality and quantity differences among schools is a necessity, and the General Directorate of Secondary Education in MONE is responsible for this task. Quality differences between the types of schools in which students are selected via central examination and the open

admission schools are quite high. This fact indicates that opportunities are not evenly distributed. Such a situation contradicts the principle of equal distribution of opportunities in education (Berberoğlu and Kalender 2005).

Kurebayashi (2015), one of faculty members at Tokoha University, visited some schools within the scope of a project in Turkey, and determined by observation that there were big differences among the quality of schools in various regions. According to Kurebayashi (2015), these differences should first be eliminated and qualified teacher training should be addressed. By drawing attention to this problem in the 2023 Education Vision Document, MONE (MEB 2018) suggested a student achievement follow-up research in order to reduce the differences between schools and regions and to see the education system as a whole. In this document, the need for setting up a 'Geographic Information System' was also expressed in order to determine capacities of schools in terms of educational resources.

In this study, all science high schools were clustered in APS. This result shows that science high schools are the most successful schools in terms of achieving their goals. Although some Anatolian high schools were placed in the best cluster together with science high schools, they were also distributed to other three clusters. The reason of this may be that all general high schools were converted into Anatolian high schools after 2013. Two thirds of Anatolian imam and preacher high schools were clustered in SNI, and only one third were in SCAPS cluster. No Anatolian imam and preacher high schools were in APS and SPS clusters. Similarly, six out of ten of vocational and technical Anatolian high schools included in the study were in SNI cluster. There were no vocational and technical Anatolian high schools in APS cluster. All of five multi-program Anatolian high schools were also classified in SNI cluster. Likewise, Bilen et al. (2014) conducted a cluster research by using data of the students who took the university entrance examination in Istanbul. As a result of their study, it was determined that schools were grouped into five clusters in terms of student achievements at the university entrance examination. Science high schools in their study were classified in the best cluster, and the success ranking continued by Anatolian high school, general high school, Anatolian imam and preacher high school and vocational and technical Anatolian high school. In the study conducted by Köse (1999), schools were ranked according to university entrance scores and based on the university registration rates,

vocational and technical high schools were found the least successful. By applying K-means clustering algorithm on the training data, Shovon, Islam, and Haque (2012) grouped students in three classes; high, medium and low, according to their grade. As could be seen in the above-mentioned studies, schools were classified using only few variables in terms of student achievement. In this context, the current study based on multiple variables data differs from the previous ones.

In this study, APS cluster is seen to be disadvantageous in terms of the number of students per teacher and the number of students per classroom although school admission scores and school mean at university entrance exam in APS cluster are higher than the others. Nevertheless, the majority of students and their parents prefer high schools in this cluster and student quota for each classroom gets full all the time.

When compared with other clusters, in APS both disciplinary and absenteeism rates are the lowest while the rate of achievement and appreciation certificates is the highest. This result is consistent with the following findings of the research conducted by MONE and UNICEF (MEB 2011, 5): 'The presence of children in school ensures that they are protected against all kinds of risks that may come from outside and that they can obtain educational attainment from school. The fact that children stay away from school affects all aspects of their development negatively, and makes it difficult for them to meet with appropriate prevention and intervention programs timely.' However, absenteeism, grade retention and dropout, which negatively affect one's participation in education and the quality of education they receive, are very common in secondary education (ERG 2011). Student absenteeism is a growing problem in public schools and the adverse effects have been well established through research (Grant 2016). Chronically absent students are more likely to experience negative academic outcomes, such as grade retention and dropping out, compared to their peers who consistently attend school (Wallace 2017). According to Jermain (2018), absenteeism not only affects the student who does not attend school but also affects those around the student. Chronic absenteeism is an indicator something is wrong and should be addressed as soon as possible. Commitment to school, on the other hand, affects student attendance and academic performance (Boesel 2001). For this very reason, schools with low suspension rates report using a variety of successful incentive programs to promote positive academic and social behavior (Christie,

Nelson, and Jolivette 2004). It can be seen that the results of this current study are consistent with the above-mentioned literature since APS has the lowest and SNI has the highest absenteeism rate.

In another comparison, it was seen that the school admission scores and school mean on university entrance exam were lower in SNI cluster than the others. Whereas SNI cluster had more sports and laboratory facilities. SCAPS cluster was only advantageous in terms of the number of students per classroom and the number of students per teacher. Surprisingly, SPS cluster was found to be disadvantageous in terms of sports facilities. It was also disadvantageous in terms of laboratory facilities, ratio of teachers with graduate education, and achievement and appreciation score while it was advantageous in terms of white flag and teachers' length of service at school. Although two-thirds of Anatolian imam and preacher high schools were clustered in SNI, they were in the best position in terms of 'number of students per classroom,' and 'number of students per teacher' variables. Unfortunately, science high schools, all clustered in APS, were found in the worst situation in terms of the same variables. The fact remains that although the success level of such schools is still low, MONE has been allocating much more resources to religious education for years. In 2017 budget proposal, allowance per student for imam and preacher high schools was twice as high as for general secondary schools (ERG 2017). However, not only teachers and principals but also parents and community expect a fair budget and a balanced support by MONE for all types of schools.

As it is well known, the teacher has a vital role in education. In this study, APS is found to have the highest number of experienced teacher, being also paid the lowest. On the other hand, SNI has the highest number of paid teachers and SCAPS has the lowest number of experienced teachers. Similarly, in South African education, there are gross differences noticeably in the per capita spending, the availability of physical facilities, the average qualifications of teachers and the pupil/teacher ratios (Turnage 2011). Stiefel, Schwartz, and Iatarola (2001) report that low performing schools have higher teacher/pupil ratios, employ teachers who are proportionately less licensed, less paid, and less experienced. In Turkey, the rotation of teachers among schools, especially in disadvantaged areas is higher because it is difficult to keep qualified employees working in hard conditions for a long time. Unfortunately, MONE prefers to employ paid teachers instead of experienced ones, to cover the numerical deficit (Önder 2012).

Since this study was carried out in 80 high schools in Antalya, it has some limitations and no doubt the results cannot be generalized to the entire Turkish education system. However, the number of clusters can be re-examined in similar studies conducted in the future. At the same time, MONE may benefit from this study in evaluating the performance of the schools. As targeted in 2023 Education Vision Document (MEB 2018), school needs should be determined based on the data such as general and special classrooms, gymnasium, numbers and qualifications of teachers. In this way, ensuring a fair distribution of resources can reduce differences between schools. Based on student population and preference system, undesired schools can be transformed into different types of schools. Schools implementing vocational programs can be organized by taking into account the needs of industry and society employment area in the country. Similarly, Perry (2000) asserts that practical application of cluster identification is to enable educational agencies to develop targeted intervention strategies that address common issues within clusters. In this way, targeted and focused intervention strategies would facilitate the most efficient allocation of resources.

Creating elite secondary education institutions and considering the fact that these institutions are seen as a means of going to university, causes serious inequalities in Turkish education system, especially in practice and social perception. Indeed, providing elitist education to a small number of students in a small number of schools poses a major threat to social cohesion and economic development. This situation is no longer sustainable and threatens the future of all segments of the society as a whole. Scores obtained at the national scale are generally evaluated in terms of only ranking and the meaning of knowledge and skills levels for individuals and the society is not emphasized. Unfortunately, evaluation shows that only 2 per cent of students across Turkey could be given 'good education' (TED 2008). Success differences between schools could be reduced by giving every child access to better education in a more egalitarian system. For this reason, it is necessary to allocate government resources based on school conditions instead of providing general equality in the distribution of public resources. Not following the school success equals waste of resources. In this respect, a structure that will systematically monitor student success and ensure measures when the school falls below the standards is also needed (Önder and Güçlü 2014).

As a conclusion, it is expected that education authorities on both provincial and central levels may benefit from the findings of this study in order to discover the actual school conditions and to improve the unsatisfactory areas. The study can also contribute to more effective and need-oriented usage of human resources and money allocated to education. However, considering that the current study does not even include all high schools in Antalya province, it can be clearly seen that further research is needed in this subject.

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Views of School Improvement Coordinators on Peers and School Observation

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The aim of the research is to determine the views of school improvement coordinators on peer and school observations and to develop recommendations. The research was conducted through a case study of qualitative research designs to examine the views of school improvement coordinators on peer and school observation. Nineteen coordinators working as teachers were chosen to participate. Data for the study were obtained from semi-structured interviews. According to results, participants pointed out some themes, namely 'organizational benefits, benefits for teachers, social benefits, benefits for observers of peer observation.' Participants also said that they had 'difficulties themselves, difficulties arising from the observation process, and observed teachers, as well as organizational difficulties.' Many suggestions were given about professional development, ensuring continuity of observation, managing the observation process and evaluating the school improvement process with data.

Keywords: school observation, peer observation, school improvement, coordinator teacher

Introduction

The Education system has a structure that affects the quality of life as well as the quality of society and is influenced by the societal dynamics. Improvement of schools and school workers is important in order to educate highly creative, productive and environmentally sensitive individuals (Çelikten and Özkan 2018). Therefore, restructuring and transformation efforts are observed in school systems to correct most of the practices that are not effective, to increase individual performance and to implement educational vision. Systematic and deliberate change effort in learning conditions of one or more schools aimed at ensuring effective achievement of educational goals is defined as school improvement (Helvacı

2005). This way, it is possible that schools, being aware of social change, become able to respond to the changing needs of society and to provide change, generally with restoring policies and practices (Şişman 2016) and especially by having well-trained teachers who are open to change. In this context, the purpose of the research is to determine the views of the school improvement coordinators on peer and school observation.

Theoretical Framework

Considering the central role of teachers in the success of changing application in school, professional development studies become prominent. As a matter of fact, starting a change that teachers do not consider appropriate and being in a passive situation in this process is the most important problem. In this context, teachers must be trained primarily for change. During this process, activities such as workshops, seminars, projects, assemblies, panels, etc., can be used for professional improvement studies. It is important that professional improvement studies are approached through scientific dimensions and shared with teachers according to their application dimensions (Tonbul and Altunay 2010).

In school improvement applications, one of the ways used to mobilize the structure is employing one or more change agents in schools. A change agent has several roles, such as focusing on performance objectives, leading to organization of specific tasks, establishing effective communication channels, using technology efficiently, evaluating performance with performance and encouraging the actors to work at full capacity. Furthermore, the agent of change is active in management and dissemination of change at organizational level (Lunenburg and Ornstein 2013). In the change process, the coordinating teacher, specifically trained to use the school's technical learning equipment is perceived by the other teachers as a colleague who serves in the area of technical inadequacy (Akkoyunlu and Orhan 2003). As a change agent in school, coordinator (peer observer) can be seen as a self-improving teacher, activating the structure, leading-advocating for continuity of school improvement. Change agent (observer) observation is a process during which teachers enter their classes as observers in order to share experience related to education, make feedback, evaluate and develop classroom management skills and, as a result, reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson. At the same time, teachers in this process are proponents

of information sharing and learning, both in their functions of observing and being observed (Bozak, Yıldırım, and Demirtaş 2011). The widespread use of peer observer as a change agent can enable evaluation of the teaching process and serve as basis for change of school culture. In this context, Bandura's theory of social cognitive learning is remarkable in understanding that structure and strategies provide both development of the change tool (coordinator), and richness of learning during the school improvement process.

The Social Cognitive Theory of Bandura (1977) emphasizes that learning emerges from interaction between individual, behavior and environmental factors. According to the theory, symbolic, indirect and self-regulation processes are effective in learning (Çakır 2018). The theory describes ways to lead organizational development: development of competencies through model acquisition, use of self-regulation mechanisms, motivation and self-regulation through purpose determination (Çakır 2018). Therefore, it can be foreseen that change agents (coordinators) will contribute to school management in the area of development and change of learning. On the other hand, it is primarily the responsibility of school administrators to achieve educational goals. School administrators are able to make the necessary plans for achieving certain goals and can increase the participation of school members in this process in order to have more success.

The school principal and the appointed change agent (coordinator) within the acceptance area of all teachers can facilitate the process. Teachers being in a critical position in terms of learning effectiveness are expected to be perceived as resource persons able to benefit from change mediators – coordinators at the expected level and to be affected. Barnard's (1938) cooperation theory emphasizes the concept of an 'area of acceptance' that facilitates acceptance of authority within an organization (Bursalıoğlu 1997). Coordinator teachers are able to play a role of a guide and change agent for all teachers of the school in areas such as commitment to the profession, classroom management, effective communication, etc. (Aydemir 2003), as well as a role of developer within the board of directors for branch teachers. In this context, the widespread use of peer observation as change tool in schools can enable evaluation of the teaching process and can serve as a basis for change of school culture.

School administrators need to design the professional development of peer Observer coordinators and determine priority areas

of developmental activity. In schools, staff centered, long-term, job-embedded learning experience process (Bümen et al. 2012) is able to provide support in terms of professional development of peer observer coordinators and development of other teachers. In this context, peer observation could be useful in providing development of common understanding between teachers in the education field (Bozak, Yıldırım, and Demirtaş 2011). In terms of identifying strengths and weaknesses of human resource during school improvement process, peer observation is likely to provide a significant boost for education administrators. Due to the limitations of studies found in literature (Bozak 2014; Hıdıroğlu, Hıdıroğlu, and Tanrıöığen 2019; Straughter 2001), it is expected that this research, by attempting to determine the views of school improvement coordinators on peer and school observations, might contribute to the field. Accordingly, the sub-problems of the research, namely: 'What are the benefits of in-class and out-of-class school observation in the school development process?' 'How did the observer's perspective change in the peer and school observation process?' 'What are the difficulties of peer observation in the school development process?' and 'What are the recommendations for improving the peer and school observation process?'

Method

Model of Research

This research was conducted through a case study of qualitative research designs to examine the views of school improvement coordinators on peer and school observation.

Study Group

Research participants were identified through a purposeful sampling technique included in a qualitative research approach. For this purpose, participants are in fact nineteen teachers who serve as coordinators in five districts: Bayraklı, Bornova, Çiğli, Karşıyaka, and Konak, all of them located within the borders of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality. Participants in the research were teachers who were assigned to be coordinator teachers in their schools, in the area of school improvement practices.

The number of females was (n = 13, 68%) higher: most professional seniority was (n = 14, 74%) above ten years experience, education level was (n = 13, 68%) mostly undergraduate, working

duration at school was (n = 13, 68%) between 1 and 5 years mostly. Participants were trained as school improvement coordinators in the school improvement process and voluntarily assisted school principals in school improvement practices. They made peer observation in their schools as mediators of change and school improvement coordinators.

Data Collection

The data of the study were obtained in a semi-structured interview form. Research questions that should be included in the interview form were determined by scanning the literature. The interview questions in the form were formulated as understandable, open-ended questions that can easily be responded by coordinator teachers. The interview form was presented to experts in order to get their opinion. Interviews were conducted between May and July 2019, within 3 months. Each interview has taken approximately 40–60 minutes. The answers given by participants were taken by voice recording during the interview and then transferred to computer form by means of the Microsoft Word. Qualitative data collection process, with all procedures being performed, was described in detail for external validity (transferability). While internal validity (credibility) was hardly ensured by the long duration of the interviews, expert examination, and participant confirmation, internal reliability could only be provided by consistency review. External reliability (confirmability) could be provided by expert confirmation review. In order to support the research process reliability, the conceptual framework used in data analysis, the position of the researcher, the working group as data source and analysis methods are described in detail. Also, raw research data was stored to increase external reliability if comparisons would be wanted in another research or if other researchers requested them.

Data Analysis

Data has been analyzed by descriptive and content analysis. For descriptive analysis, the sub-problems and the theme list were determined through literature review. For content analysis, 'categorical analysis' was used in content analysis types (Saldana 2019). In categorical analysis, data were coded first. Coding was done according to the concepts that appeared during the data coding process as well as according to predetermined concepts (Saldana

TABLE 1 Themes Arising from Data Analysis

Sub Problem	Themes
Benefit of in-class and out-of-class school observations in school improvement process	Organizational benefit Benefit for teachers Social benefit Benefit for the observers
Change of coordinator's point of view in the observation process	Pre-observation perspective Post-observation perspective
Challenges of peer observation in the school improvement process	Difficulties for observer Difficulties arising from observation process Difficulties arising from teachers observed Organizational difficulties
Recommendations for the peer and school observation process improvement	Professional development Ensuring continuity of observation Managing of the observation process Evaluating the school improvement process with data

2019). Codes are symbols that describe similar answers to questions and help organize and analyze data. Next, themes that explain codes at the general level were determined and findings were interpreted. Participants' opinions are based on confidentiality, using a digit with 'PC' mark for primary school coordinator teachers and 'SC' for secondary school coordinator teachers. For instance, (PC1, SC1,...) is type of coding used in this study. Themes that emerged as a result of the research data analysis are shown in table 1. The first sub-problem as a result of the data analysis includes themes such as 'organizational benefits, benefit to teachers, social benefits, benefit to the observers.' In the second sub-problem, themes are 'pre-observation perspective, post-observation perspective.' Themes of the third sub-problem are 'difficulties for observer, difficulties arising from observation process, difficulties arising from observed teachers, and organizational difficulties.' The last sub-problem themes are 'professional development, ensuring continuity of observation, managing of the observation process, and evaluating the school improvement process with data.'

Findings

Views on the Benefits of In-Class and Out-of-Class School Observations in the School Improvement Process

As shown in table 2, among these themes, 'organizational benefits' (n = 50) and 'benefits to teachers' (n = 40) are mostly emphas-

TABLE 2 Views on the Benefits of In-Class and Out-of-Class School Observations in the School Improvement Process

Themes	Sub Themes	*N*
Organizational benefits	Identifying the causes of the school's problems	9
	Comprehending the consequences of parent participation	9
	Supporting the functions of the principal	9
	Producing solutions to problems together	8
	Information sharing	5
	Sharing good practice – appreciation	7
	Planned work	3
	Total	50
Benefits to teachers	Cooperating and bonding among branches	6
	Maintaining professional improvement	8
	Learning teaching techniques of different courses	16
	Supporting of self-assessment	4
	Promoting the use of technology	6
	Total	40
Social benefits	Improving communication-developing team motivation	4
	Recognizing colleagues	3
	Gaining awareness of cooperation	6
	Supporting sharing atmosphere	7
	Motivation development	2
	Total	22
Benefits to the observers	Being aware of the transformation process of the school	9
	Self-criticism	4
	Becoming an entrepreneur	4
	Transition to deep thinking	3
	Developing empathy	2
	Increasing of Social status	3
	Recognizing students	5
	Total	30

ized. Within 'organizational benefits' theme, sub-themes 'identifying the causes of the school's problems' (n = 9), 'comprehending the consequences of parent participation' (n = 9) and 'supporting the functions of the manager' (n = 9) are most emphasized. In benefits of teachers theme, sub-theme 'being aware of the transformation process of the school' (n = 9) is most emphasized. A quotation from the 'organizational benefits' theme on 'identifying the causes of the school's problems' subtheme:

> Our school teachers have at least 30 years of experiences. But the students are varying as a generation. As I observed, I

> realized that the methods and techniques were used by these teachers who were not valid for this generation of children. My compeers also have problems with class management. Usually, the teachers communicate more with the children that sit in the front than the children sit in the back. That's why they can be forgotten. [P C 7]

A quotation from the 'organizational benefits' theme in the participant's view on the sub-theme 'comprehending the consequences of parent participation:'

> We started getting our parents to come to school, we got them to participate in the events. This was very good for parents to understand teachers and classroom management because the parents began to empathize with how a teacher dealt with so many students in 40 minutes and also how they managed the time. We've had some pretty positive feedback from the parents. [S C 7]

A quotation from the 'organizational benefits' theme in the participant's view on the sub-theme 'supporting the functions of the principal:'

> I shared more information about issues that the school principal did not know. For instance, I told the school principal that this was the case, but this was not the way to solve it, and I mentioned we could review it. For instance, we had a parent who was constantly accusing our teacher, but the problem was not about the teacher. The school principal did not make observations as much as me, and I contributed a lot to the conduction of the duties of the school principal. So the school principal indirectly benefited from the observation. [P C 2]

Change of Views of Coordinator Teachers in Peer and School Observation Process

As shown in table 3, pre-observation theme has three sub-themes which are 'reaction to observation' (n = 21), 'interested in developing' (n = 20), and 'lack of information about the field' (n = 10). Among these sub-themes 'reaction to observation' is most emphasized. Also emphasized are codes 'feeling anxious' (n = 14) and 'wondering about a different classroom' (n = 10).

TABLE 3 Views on the Change of the Coordinator's Perspective in the Observation Process

Themes	Sub Themes	Codes	*N*
Pre-observation	Lack of information about the field	Seeing observation as unnecessary	3
		Lack of self-efficacy	7
		Total	10
	Interested in developing	Wondering about a different classroom	10
		Feeling self-confidence	2
		Interested in learning	8
		Total	20
	Reaction to observation	Having prejudices	2
		Feeling anxious	14
		Thinking about facing difficulties	4
		Total	20
Post-observation	Analytical analysis	Looking at the school as a whole	6
		Acting purposefully	2
		Total	8
	Development of individual and professional qualifications	Renewal of information	3
		Providing individual development	15
		Motivation development	2
		Reduction of biases	3
		Improving the direction of query	11
		Total	34
	Developing positive attitudes in human relations	Recognizing colleagues	10
		Increased social interaction	4
		Empathy with managers	7
		Feeling of belonging to school	3
		Total	24
	Acquiring of process evaluation skills	Understanding the benefits of observation	6
		Recommending peer observation	7
		Share their experiences	2
		Total	15

In post-observation, there are four sub-themes, namely 'analytical analysis,' 'development of individual and professional qualifications,' 'developing positive attitudes in human relations' and 'acquiring of process evaluation skills.' Among these sub-themes 'development of individual and professional qualifications' ($n = 34$) is emphasized. Also emphasized are codes 'providing individual development' ($n = 15$), 'improving the direction of query' ($n = 11$), and 'recognizing colleagues' ($n = 10$). Here below a quotation from the 'reaction to observation' theme among the participants' views on the code 'feeling anxious:'

> Before I started school and compeer observations, I was anxious to be criticized. Because I'm the youngest teacher in our school. I had concerns about my teacher friends' thoughts, 'Are you going to observe us, do you have this qualification, why are you observing us?' [PC2]

A quotation from the 'developing positive attitudes in human relations' theme among the participants' views on the 'recognizing colleagues' code:

> As I observed, I got to know my peers. I perceived my peers, who I never expected to elicit a high performance at the point of using classroom management and teaching techniques. [SC7]

A quotation from the participants' views on the code 'providing individual development' from the sub-theme of 'development of individual and professional qualifications:'

> Self-confident can be increased by gathering knowledge. In the process, I realized my weaknesses and my strengths. I had self-criticism, too. For instance, when I was observing a teacher's lesson, I didn't know that this technique could be so useful. If I observed this teacher before, the past 4–5 months would not be wasted, and this would be better for me. [SC1]

Challenges of Peer Observation in the School Improvement Process

As shown in table 4, among these themes 'difficulties for observer' (n = 26) and 'difficulties arising from observation process' (n = 23) are most emphasized. And also among the sub-themes, 'resistance to observation' (n = 13), 'workload' (n = 13), 'personal qualifications' (n = 8) and 'lack of self-confidence' (n = 8) are most emphasized. A quotation from the 'difficulties arising from observed teachers' theme in the participants' views on the sub-theme 'resistance to observation:'

> The major problem from my teacher colleagues was that they did not want me to observe their lessons. They said that how could you attend our class when even the inspector could not do this? The reluctance of the teachers was one of the major difficulties. [SC8]

A quotation from the 'difficulties arising from the observation

TABLE 4 Views on the Challenges of Peer Observation in the School Improvement Process

Themes	Sub-themes	N
Difficulties for observer	Personal qualifications	8
	Acting impartially	6
	Lack of self-reliance	8
	Previous experience	4
	Total	26
Difficulties arising from observation process	Continuity of observation	3
	Workload	13
	Unsuitable conditions	7
	Total	23
Difficulties arising from observed teachers	Resistance to observation	13
	Prejudice related to observation	7
	Total	20
Organizational difficulties	Uncommon of peer observation	6
	Lack of sharing culture	7
	Weakness of social relations	3
	Total	16

process' theme in the participant's views on the sub-theme 'workload:'

> Besides, the difficulties of both courses and lessons, I could tell you that I had difficulty in spending time on the project. I spent my leisure time, but unfortunately, my free time always was coincided with the same teachers. I always had to change lessons to observe different teachers. This was how I tried to find a solution by asking the other colleagues. [SC3]

A quotation from the 'difficulties for observer' theme in the participant's views on the sub-theme 'lack of self-reliance:'

> I felt nervous when I was observing some expert and old teachers. So I wasn't sure about my self that I should be the one who observe those teachers. I was in a state of anxiety, and I might say that in that sense, I discovered my weaknesses. This situation has pushed me a little. [PC1]

Recommendations for the Improvement of Peer and School Observation Process

As shown in table 5, among these themes 'management of observation process' (n = 50) and 'evaluating the school improvement

TABLE 5 Recommendations for the Improvement of Peer and School Observations Process

Themes	Sub Themes	*N*
Professional development	Analyzing the demands	4
	Interest in academic education	6
	Proactive approach to professional development	4
	Following scientific publications	6
	Total	20
Evaluating the school improvement process with data	Sharing information	5
	Expressing positive examples	3
	Sharing of results of observations	7
	Create an Action Plan	6
	Rewarding based on data	2
	Data sharing inter-schools	15
	Total	38
Ensuring continuity of observation	Determining the observation plan	6
	Organizing process meetings	2
	Continuing expert supports	13
	Total	21
Management of observation process	Explaining and sharing the observations process	8
	Cooperation of administrators and teachers	10
	Sharing selection criteria of an observer	4
	Development to sharing working atmosphere	8
	Promoting peer observation	8
	Increasing the number of observers	12
	Total	50

process with data' (n = 38) are mostly emphasized. And also among the sub-themes 'data sharing inter-schools' (n = 15) and 'continuing the experts supports' (n = 13) are most emphasized. A quotation from the 'evaluating the school improvement process with data' theme in the participant's views on the sub-theme 'data sharing inter-schools:'

> To promote good practice, we have implemented activities which were done by other schools that were involved in this project. In this context, meeting with coordinator teachers in different schools can also make this process more successful. [SC4]

A quotation from the 'ensuring observation of continuity' theme in the participant's views on the sub-theme 'continuing expert supports:'

> Meetings which were organized by experts should be continued until teachers were convinced. Because if the teachers were not convinced and were in doubt during the observation, this could cause some problems for the coordinator teacher. The explanation of the school administrators and the coordinator teacher may not be enough. [PC1]

A quotation from the 'management of observation process' theme in the participant's views on the sub-theme 'cooperation of administrators and teachers' is as follows:

> All responsibilities should not be only for a person. It is very important for school administrators to believe in peer observations and I think it has a direct impact on the success of this process. If the headmaster said: 'I can not observe, I am perceived as a professional principal. I can only arrange classroom observations to give marks' this perception can be an important factor in the success of this process. The principals need to be conscious about this so they can share peer observation and contribute to facilitate the process. [PC2]

Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

The research aims to determine the views of school improvement coordinators on peer and school observations and to develop recommendations. Research questions are about the benefits of in-class and out-of-class school observations in the school improvement process, change of the coordinators' point of view during the observation process, challenges of peer observation in the school improvement process, and recommendations for the improvement of peer and school observation process.

According to the first sub-problem of the study, 'organizational benefits' and 'benefits to teachers' themes have come into prominence. According to Doyle's (2012) study, peer observation has been emphasized to increase dialogue and problem-solving skills among teachers. Shook's (2011) study shows that co-coaching contributes to implementation of more effective classroom methods, thus increasing student achievement and making management more effective. Also, developing teachers' competences to support organizational improvement can be achieved by modeling (Çakır 2018). We can also say that the reason why coordinator teachers emphasize the benefits of the observation process to organizations and teachers is that it is easier for teachers to give professional

feedback to each other in the observation process for school improvement and that they share their views and engage with each other. In other words, according to Richards (2018) whilst encouragement and harnessing of ongoing (and non-formal and formal as well as informal) 'experiential learning' is the key to optimal learning at every stage of the human lifecycle.

In the findings of the second sub-problem of the study regarding change of coordinator's point of view in the observation process: in the pre-observation theme, 'reaction to observation' and 'interested in developing' are sub-themes which could be emphasized most. In the 'post-observation' theme, the sub-theme 'development of individual and professional qualifications' is most emphasized and in the second step, the sub-theme 'developing positive attitudes in human relations' is highlighted. Bozak and Demirtaş's (2017) say it was concluded that teachers who participated in the study often supported the view that the peer observer's method would be beneficial to them, especially in learning new methods and techniques.

According to Nelson's research (2000), peer observation is important for development of teachers' instructional skills and contributes to emergence of a more collaborative learning environment by increasing their learning skills. In this context, our research coincides with results of these studies. According to Aydemir (2003), formative teachers lead the professional development issues and can play a role of developers for the branch teachers. In this context, the reason why some coordinators had a previously negative view on peer observation may be related to the lack of widespread peer and school observation in schools and low readiness for this experience. However, some coordinator teachers may have considered the professional competence of observation as positive and supportive. Besides, according to coordinator teachers' views, they may contribute to individual, professional and social skills after observation, since the observation process requires regular interaction between school members, accelerates learning and makes them rethink their own experiences while observing the other teachers.

At first, in the opinion of observers, a negative view of peer observation may be related to the lack of peer and school observation in schools and the low readiness for it. The point of view of positive-minded observers can be said to be related to thinking of their professional qualifications as supportive and contributory. According to the observers' views, the reason they contribute to

individual, professional and social skills after observation may be that the observation process requires regular interaction between school members, speeds up learning, and makes the observed individual rethink their own experiences while watching.

According to the third sub-problem of the study, the view of coordinator teachers of the challenges of peer observation in the school improvement process, the 'difficulties for observer' theme is most emphasized. In the study of Bozak and Demirtaş (2017) on peer observation, there is a statement that it was the negative factors such as lack of time and intensive course schedules that make it difficult to observe: the unease of being observed, lack of continuity in the application process and the lack of sharing culture in the environment were experienced. Actually, the school improvement process can be a development process for all school members.

It is seen in the literature that teachers face barriers for professional development. According to Can (2019), obstacles for teachers professional development are based on legal, pedagogical, executive and social reasons. According to the results of our study, we can say that coordinator teachers do not have environment supportive enough among members of the school community in the process of acquiring a new skill. At the same time, there is strong inadequacy of legal regulations of the school improvement process.

As for the fourth sub-problem of the study, among the themes raised in the observation proposals for developing of peer and school observation process, the 'management of observation process' theme is most emphasized. In the study of Bozak and Demirtas (2017), participants emphasized that for the peer observation method to be more effective the implementation must be continuous and supported by principals. They also stated that the practice of peer observation should be carried out with teachers in the same school as well as with colleagues from nearby schools. Finally, considerating these results, we can say that, unlike traditional supervision, the school improvement observation process requires collaboration with school members, but coordinator teachers thought that they were not supported in their schools. In this regard, we can also say that coordinator teachers have developed proposals to ensure continuity of the process as they witness its benefits.

In this context, based on the research results, suggestions are as follows:

- Activities can be organized by sharing observation results and information sharing to disseminate and diversify good practices in schools.
- For schools to become learning organizations: in the observation process, studies can be organized to proactively increase the level of access to information and evaluation of common goals.
- For prevalence of the observation process, leading services can be organized, training through guidance service, workshops with expert support and sharing environment between teachers groups in order to ensure coordination of teachers.
- Peer observation can be included in the scope of activities of the council of teachers from different branches, in order to make observation more feasible and supportive for teachers.
- Training on managing the observation process can be implemented to school administrators by experts. School principals' awareness of leadership behaviors can be improved. An observation evaluation team can be formed to ensure the continuity of the observation process.

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Making the Case for Enhanced School Leadership Capacity in a Networked Education System

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The aim of the LeLeNeT project is to develop school leadership capacity to ensure that teachers are facilitated to maximise the potential of their professional learning networks (PLN). The design of the educational modules for leadership development focuses on the knowledge and skills required to establish professional learning networks and to understand how leaders can support staff in achieving shared goals in an ever-changing environment. Networking can support collective professional learning in schools related to a changing and increasingly diverse communities. The paper offers the theoretical, framework, research basis and underpinning design principles for a leadership programme informing this complex agenda.

Keywords: networks, leadership capacity, programme design

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

The Leading Learning by Networking, ERASMUS+ project (LeLeNet) has been funded to develop a development programme to enhance leadership capacity to maximise the potential of networks. The overall aim of the project is to build and sustain school leadership of professional learning networks (PLN) for teachers. The aim of the paper is to explore the nature of the capacity required of leadership when their education institutions are working in networks, internal or external to the institution. In order for this aim to be achieved the working premise, adopted by the project team, of the concept of networks in the education is elaborated. Through the development of a theoretical framework and extensive evidence collection, across the six European partner countries, the following conceptualisation has been adopted as the working definition for the project (OECD 2003, 154):

> Networks are purposeful social entities characterised by a commitment to quality, rigour, and a focus on outcomes. They are also an effective means of supporting innovation in times of change. In education, networks promote the dissemination of good practice, enhance the professional development of teachers, support capacity building in schools, mediate between centralised and decentralised structures, and assist in the process of re-structuring and re-culturing educational organisations and systems.

The recognition of networking as a benefit to those individuals directly involved in the collaborations and to the institutions as a

whole is a persuasive argument for establishing networking practice. What is less well recognised is that to achieve positive outcomes a network must be led by those that accept responsibilities beyond the immediate school environment.

The project intentions are based on the idea that the educational context is constantly evolving, and this requires teachers to adapt aspects of their professional practice. Professional Learning Networks can provide conditions to foster the inclusive learning and development of teachers. Sachs (2001) indicates that collaboration and collegiality are cornerstones of democratic discourses. Consequently, one principle of the programme design is that networks can help teachers overcome individual difficulties together, when faced with new expectations. Networks can provide support for individuals in making sense of the changes that they face and in ensuring that their decisions are informed through critique of the change that they are facing and consideration of the possible responses. The project evidence indicates that school leaders play an essential role in the implementation and sustainability of networks within their schools and their wider communities. The extension of the leadership roles to address the complex matter of leading and managing network activity across a wide range of external networks is indicated as one potential area for development. Also, the capability of leaders to adapt their leadership portfolio to accommodate an inclusive approach to networking that benefits all learners is considered in the paper. The ongoing dialogue around the inclusive nature of networking and the needs of those that support this form of collaborative learning will inform the design of the educational modules for school leaders and the conceptualisation of future networking practice in educational settings.

The concern of the LeLeNet project was to firstly identify the nature of the leadership of networks and then to determine the needs of school leaders. As a basis for the gathering of evidence a theoretical framework was developed for the project (Vanlommel, Schelfhout, and Vanhoof 2018) and agreed as part of the leadership needs identification process. In all participating countries Belgium, Czech Republic, Sweden, Slovenia, Spain, and the United Kingdom headteachers have to take part in formal, pre- or in-service training. Consequently, evidence-based school leadership development is a valued feature of the professional environment. The target group for the needs identification interviews and the questionnaire were school leaders in the compulsory school sys-

TABLE 1 Cases

Country	Total cases	Valid and used cases	Unused cases
United Kingdom	40	40	0
Slovenia	67	50	17
Sweden	64	50	14
Spain	56	50	6
Belgium	64	50	14
Czech Republic	57	50	7
Total	348	290	58

tem. Five qualitative interviews with leaders were undertaken in each country participating in this aspect of the project. In addition to this case study evidence a questionnaire was developed and distributed to head teachers, with two purposes. Firstly, to get an overview of the extent of teachers' networking between schools, with a focus on the school leader view of these activities and secondly to identify development needs for school leaders.

The 25 interviews were based on pre-agreed interview schedule with seven areas of interest:

- linking networking with teaching and learning;
- topics for networking;
- teachers' motivation for networking;
- the role of head teacher in networking;
- the benefits of networking;
- head teachers' strategies for supporting and sustaining networks;
- limits, challenges and head teachers' needs.

The basis of the definitions adopted in the theoretical framework and indicated in the interviews informed the questionnaire design. The coding for the comments utilised in this paper are based on a system indicating country of origin and a number allocated to the respondent e.g. (CZ1). The questionnaire targeted a wide group of school leaders across the six participant countries, 290 questionnaires form the basis of the findings (table 1).

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain an insight from school leaders, engaged in compulsory schooling, into the current situation of networking between teachers and to identify the training needs of school leaders. The purpose of the research activity was to ensure that the needs of the participants were met by the programme design. The questionnaire also had some open ques-

tions where informants developed in depth answers to the questions. These responses and the interview evidence have illuminated the design features of the planned programme.

The Complexity of the School Leader Role in Networked Schools

A premise of the LeLeNet project was to demonstrate the need for capacity building of school leaders in the area of network leadership. The rationale being that if staff in schools are involved in networks then this involvement should be aligned with the strategic direction of the school. Ideally the outcomes of the network engagement should be recognised by the school leaders and utilised effectively for the benefit of staff and pupils. The evidence gathered indicated that school leaders and staff are engaging with a variety of networks for a range of purposes. There were a very small number of schools across the sample that reported no network activity of any kind. Respondents recognised the 'very effective cooperation and mutual learning' (s14). The formal and informal activity is very varied and involves individual staff or identified groups, often in planned curriculum projects or leadership development. Consequently, the need for leaders to be aware of the range of activity and to guide and support the practice of their colleagues is evident both from the literature and the evidence gathered by the project team. If the linkages between staff and other schools internally or externally is not known by school leaders it would not be possible to capture the impact on teaching and learning. This indicates that the monitoring of network links, by school leaders, is an important area of strategic knowledge. If the notion that networking is of value to staff and pupil learning, then engagement and impact needs to be monitored for the potential to be maximised within the school setting.

Participant responses indicated that all or almost all of their teachers are involved in informal collaboration and formal networks within their own school. Fewer, but still near to 75%, estimate that self-regulated networking is common in their schools. These organic groups of staff may be focused on informal development or sharing practice on aspects of schooling, such as working with parents or supporting new teachers that are involved in induction. The impact of this type of network could be high but if not recognised and nurtured by the leaders there will be no way of harnessing the benefits from these collaborations. Awareness of these groups and their activities is an essential part of a school

TABLE 2 To What Extent Are Teachers Involved in Different Kinds of Collaboration and Networks?

Answer	1	2	3	4
Informal collaboration within school	4	15	89	178
Informal collaboration between schools	18	119	119	29
Self-regulated networks within schools	20	52	129	77
Self-regulated networks between schools	59	125	73	13
Formal organised networks within school	16	29	77	159
Formal organised networks between schools	46	87	97	49
Other networks within and/or between schools	59	33	36	25

NOTES 1 – not at all, 4 – fully.

leadership role, even though the activities might be informal or operational. It may also be a way of motivating teachers and raising the awareness of staff 'that they are not alone in the problems' (S15) that they face. Self-regulated networks within schools are an area for school leaders to at least foster, if not lead, due to the potential contribution to the culture and practice within the school, as well as being a positive feature of shared learning.

The role of the school leader in the collaboration and networking between schools is considered to be an area for development for many of the respondents. It is difficult for school leadership to facilitate some of the activity beyond the school and to capture and acknowledge the benefits of the involvement of their staff engaging with informal collaboration. There are potential resourcing issues to overcome. The way forward for school leaders is first to acknowledge the nature of the networks and plan for staff engagement to enhance their learning experience and that of their pupils. Some of these are internal networks or Professional Learning Networks (PLN) operating under the routine practice of the school and the role of the school leadership. Other collaborative approaches are fostered through wider networks that undoubtedly promote the professional learning of staff but the impact on the learning of pupils is less clear. Given the complexity of activity and variety of individual involvement at the teacher level all stakeholders need to raise their awareness of the essential conditions in which teachers can share and construct knowledge with colleagues and reflect upon their practices. As Poortman and Brown (2018) assert, professional learning networks have the potential to promote inclusive practice and enable teachers to address challenges of a diverse student population.

The evidence generated through the work of the LeLeNet pro-

ject, over a period of two years, has indicated that, as in the work of Jackson and Timperley (2007), there are characteristics of networking that enhance collaborative learning. These key characteristics, shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration and the promotion of group and individual learning, feature in the theoretical framework and are recognised in the evidence gathered. Networking involves complex and costly involvement of staff in a range of none routine behaviours. The sharing of knowledge and practice across networks by teachers and leaders can impact on pupil learning. However, an essential feature of successful professional engagement is that the school leader recognises the benefits but guards against the potential difficulties that staff may face. The leadership of a networking school also determines how well new knowledge and practice inform staff and feed the learning into the school setting. The notion that in order to ensure positive outcomes from networking leadership capacity must be enhanced through specific guidance on the skills and knowledge of network leadership. On this basis and the evidence relating to the knowledge and understanding of participants there is a sound justification for the leadership programme to include as a core module the enhancement of theoretical knowledge related to networks.

The recognition that the headteacher should facilitate staff to engage with wider networks in the pursuit of professional learning and school improvement has emerged from both the literature, earlier studies and the evidence gathering undertaken by the project members. It appears that some teachers find great difficulty in the translation of their learning toward change in classroom practice or into new insights for colleagues. The identification of the need to further enhance the roles of school leadership to include support for the transformation of classroom practice based on the learning of teachers is one which requires specialist knowledge and supportive practice. Research undertaken by Ballet and Kelchtermans (2009) indicates that professional learning is clearly influenced by school culture and policy, but that the enhancement of staff knowledge and skills happens in a rather isolated, separate set of activities from the other school policy domains. In order to maximise the potential of teacher learning through the sharing of practice and the dialogue associated with the learning process these activities should be facilitated by school leadership.

Research has shown that professional learning communities (Stoll et al. 2006) and other forms of teacher teams (Vangrieken

et al. 2015) do not arise without leadership support. Successful development of different forms of learning networks will depend on the way head teachers embed collaborative practice in their school policy and school structures (Stoll et al. 2006). Hargreaves (2006) argued that the expected presence of collegiality fostered by networks specifically invokes an institutional base and structural conditions, which emphasizes the organizational context and the important role of the school leader in 'sense making and sense giving' (SE 1). Shaping this kind of policy cannot be done within a traditional top-down hierarchical view of leadership. To be able to reach this goal an inclusive, cooperative leadership is crucial to improving the core educational processes which take place in schools as a basis for sustained school development (Hallinger 2003).

Networks can operate across traditional structures and beyond the school, especially as many teachers have access to digital networks as well as those that are in geographic proximity. Some schools reported working within nationwide networks and others with schools in other countries. In shared leadership models the school leader recognises activities in an interactive web of different leaders and followers in different situational circumstances (Hargreaves 2006). Marks and Printy (2003) integrated the different lines of research on school leadership into an overarching concept called 'shared instructional leadership.' Verbiest (2014) indicates that 'the school leader on the one hand works transformationally, stimulating the involvement and development of teachers. On the other hand, they co-operate with teachers to optimize the learning process. It is clear that the head teacher does not have to lead all networks in which the staff operate, but rather provide guidance to the teachers that lead the process' (p. 4). A strong indicator for the LeLeNet project is that school leaders indicate a need to be aware of the appropriate leadership models and determine appropriate leadership roles to ensure the success of the networks. Consequently, a programme design feature is that elements of the first module, addressing knowledge and understanding of network leadership, is recognized as a foundation for all modules to be developed for the project.

Successful network development will depend on institutional conditions at the school and classroom levels. The organization will need to ensure strategic alignment between the organisation and the network activity. This will involve (1) shared goals and visions (2) shared leadership values (3) a culture of inquiry and (4)

supportive relationships and trust (Vanlommel, Schelfhout, and Vanhoof 2018). Teachers need to be motivated and have a positive attitude to collaboration, internally and externally, given the need for membership of many networks to be voluntary and possibly accessed in the personal time of staff. Head teachers can have a positive impact on conditions for the success of an internal network, but it is more complex for leaders to address all the potential networking of teachers and associated outcomes. There is recognition that they and other school leaders may have to adopt flexible, composite and adaptive leadership models in which the need to serve multiple agendas and fulfil a range of leadership to facilitate successful networking. Furthermore, the respondents note the need to 'foster a culture of mutual professional respect' and a whole school approach to networking. On the basis of the evidence gathered by the project team leadership development in fulfilling the multiplicity of roles required to sustain networks and benefit from networked learning are essential features of the programme design.

School Leader Development Needs

Most of the school leaders responding to the questionnaire seemed to appreciate the multiplicity of leadership functions of the networking agenda in identifying their training requirements. They highlighted many of the areas suggested by the theoretical framework as areas of need, particularly building structures, capacity for networking and how to extend and distribute new knowledge within the organization. Given the range of experience of participants it is not surprising that confidence about their ability to build trust and positive working relationships was not as important as the other areas of development where they described their needs as essential. A particularly interesting aspect of this evidence was that further areas for development were not suggested by the majority of the respondents. This may suggest that through the scrutiny of the literature and the case study evidence the project team had captured an appropriate range of leadership capability required for networking. Consequently, the design of the questionnaire 'saturated' the response options for most school leaders. Suggestions for areas of further training in the open answers include how to intermix participation in networks and work with pupils, communication techniques for managers and how to deal with colleagues who 'only do the minimum.' However apart from

TABLE 3 I need additional training in …

Answer	1	2	3	4
How to create and enhance a learning culture among staff	21	85	108	72
How to build trust and positive working relationships within school	38	90	92	65
How to build structures for sustainable, personal and interpersonal capacity development	16	76	113	82
How to stimulate and support the quality of individual and group learning processes	10	74	109	93
How to foster collective responsibility for student learning	19	68	99	96
How to develop a shared vision for working in networks	19	81	103	76
How to extend and distribute new knowledge within the organisation	22	68	119	77
How to work with teachers motivation and committment towards professional learning networks	17	57	100	111
Other training needs? Please specify below	25	6	6	13

NOTES 1 – not at all, 4 – fully.

the first area the other aspects are not specifically tied to leadership of networking. One respondent suggested a forum where head teachers can share examples from their development work concerning stressful situations. The notion that a problem shared is one that can be lessened permeates the concept of networked learning.

Verbiest and Timmerman (2008, 21) argue that the roles of the school leader, in the development of professional learning networks, can be grouped into three aspects. The role of 'culture developer' disseminating and strengthening of values, views and standards in the service of a commonly supported professional learning culture. The role of 'educator' fostering the intensity and quality of the individual and collective learning processes of team members, so that profound learning takes place for all. The role of 'architect' involved in building structures, processes and systems in schools that enhance personal and interpersonal capacity development. This structure seemed to be supported by the evidence base of school leader needs and as a result three of the five modules designed for the LeLeNet project are based on these structures and features. It is intended that the modules will be of value to those responsible for networking activities, but they will also reinforce any collaborative, social construction of learning. The rationale for this decision is conceptual, evidence-based, experiential and, unavoidably based on the belief system of the project team.

The opportunity for school leaders to explore their approach

and commitment to the creation professional learning communities (Mulford and Silins 2003) is central to the module that addresses the role of the 'culture developer.' A school leader's understanding of the elements of collaborative culture may vary significantly even though the evidence indicates that supportive relationships within the school teams is recognized as an essential condition for networks to flourish. The response to the questionnaire indicates a very high level of informal collaboration within schools. However, concerns arising in the open comments and some of the case studies refer to staff who are unwilling to involve themselves in networking within the school and who do not see external networking as a necessary part of their professional activity. This indicates that there will be variation in the extent of collaborative practices between colleagues and some leaders indicate a need to explore this aspect of staff commitment. In order to empower school leaders to evaluate existing collaborative culture in their schools the module will address the evolving nature of a learning culture (Fullan 1993) and the steps to be taken toward the inclusion of all staff.

An associated area of focus in this module will be the need to create a climate of trust and positive working relationships (Louis and Kruse 1995). Research has shown that learning at any level requires a culture of trust and support (Bryk and Schneider 2002). Leaders have a responsibility to create an environment in which teachers trust each other, are not afraid to admit mistakes and ask for help. These positive working relationships tend to exist (Louis and Kruse 1995) where collaborative learning is fostered. Fullan (1993) suggests that a learning culture recognizes different interests of all stakeholders, focuses on people rather than systems and encourages people believe they can change their environment. A culture that is based on these principles makes time for learning, adopts holistic approaches to problems, encourages open communication and is based on teamwork. The interview evidence gathered through the LeLeNet project supports this view and adds the need for a shared sense of purpose as an essential pre-condition of networks, particularly with those beyond the immediate school environment. In these settings expectations are agreed and monitored but not micro-managed. Colleagues are trusted to work together to achieve positive outcomes and share learning.

The module addressing the role of 'educator' in the context of Professional Learning Networks (PLN) fosters a paradigm for

school improvement in which the relationship between staff learning, teaching and student learning co-exist. The intensity and quality of the individual and collective learning processes of team members is harnessed to assure that profound learning takes place. Head teachers hold an important role as educator, since they will have to focus on learning at all levels (Leithwood and Jantzi 2006; Louis and Kruse 1995) and they will need to be a role model (Stoll et al. 2006) within this learning environment. The notion that teachers can learn together, build and exchange knowledge, have ideas and advise if there is a safe learning culture (Fullan 1992) is one supported by the project evidence base. All case studies reported strong relationships between networks and enhanced approaches to learning and teaching. 'teachers share experience, they attend lessons of other teachers to find out how to work with materials' (CZ1). There was also representation about the validation of the work of teachers by their peers within the school setting and beyond. The opportunity for teachers to 'get feedback about where they are but also approval of their practice. Critical judgement leads to improvement of their work' (S11).

The encouragement of teachers by school leaders to share ideas and try new approaches was evident throughout the interview evidence provided by the twenty-five schools. The fundamental notion that 'you can develop your practice most effectively if you can learn from each other' (S14) is a central aspect of the learning together philosophy that underpins the programme. The questionnaire illustrated the range of potential learning areas that can benefit from inter or intra school networking. Topics typically indicated as a focus of networks related to developing curriculum content, pupil competence or supporting school specialisation (65–70%). Many organised networks focus on teaching method development (approximately 75%). In the open answers (6g) the respondents gave examples such as 'common problems' being shared, 'cultural topics,' 'ICT as a tool for learning,' 'assessment' but also lesson planning and addressing students with special educational needs. Networking encourages reflective professional inquiry and collaboration that are needed for learning and knowledge creation (Hall and Hord 2006; Louis et al. 2010). Across all areas indicated by school leaders the synergies of collaborative action were acknowledged and the notion that colleagues will achieve together a great deal more than each educator can do alone.

The role of 'architect' is possibly the least familiar to the project

TABLE 4 To What Extent Are the Organised Networks Involved with the Following Topics?

Answer	1	2	3	4
Curriculum content development	22	61	99	98
Teaching method development	7	55	119	105
Development of pupil competence	13	66	121	85
To support school specialisation/development/imp.	11	66	128	80
Development of inclusive education	23	101	102	56
Development of school leadership capacity	47	97	76	33
Other focus? Give example below	27	19	14	18

NOTES 1 – not at all, 4 – fully.

respondent groups, although many of them are aware of some of the activities that are involved in this role. The language of the architect role is also less familiar such as building structures, identifying and distributing knowledge and sustainable systems that enhance personal and interpersonal capacity development. The module content focuses on the facilitation of knowledge exchange, recognition of resource capacity and innovation between teachers. One key message for the architect is that the school needs to be organized to allow time for staff to meet, talk and share thoughts regularly (Louis and Kruse 1995; Stoll, Fink and Earl 2003). Dialogue is essential to the professional exchange needed for the process of shared learning (Dimmock and Walker 2004). A bottom-up approach to school development, focusing on educational processes for pupils and staff needs to take place to ensure that the needs of learners are addressed. Creating liminal spaces for dialogue, ownership of agreed agendas through delegation of tasks, sharing responsibility and more involvement of teachers in well-defined strategically aligned tasks is a required practice of successful networks. The creation of opportunity for physical proximity to allow exchange of ideas is important but in the digital age this can be achieved at distance, provided that the resources are there to facilitate online activity.

Resources such as time, space and opportunity to cooperate need to be used to create the pre-conditions for shared learning. School structures that encourage different forms of learning communities are fostered by appropriate development conditions that form an essential starting point for successful networks. To promote, sustain and extend PLN, schools need external support in the forms of partnerships and links into associations and other educational bodies that share the need for interaction. This might

be other schools, local administrative arrangements, leadership schools or government resourcing. The school leader not only needs to construct structures within the school, but actively build bridges with external partners (Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach 1998; Rosenholtz 1989). Professional Learning Networks comprise links within schools and across schools, which are both important from a learning perspective. Head teachers cannot consider their schools as an island, they need to be responsive to external partners to jointly learn and develop. Consequently, the architect function of the leadership role requires further development for most headteachers and those responsible for inclusive engagement with the wider community

Teacher willingness to participate in networks and their motivation to cooperate with others from a development perspective is one area that needs to be carefully facilitated by school leaders. One starting point for PLN's is that they can emerge from identifying shared needs, without pressure or obligation from external policy (Hall and Hord 2006). In this case teachers can make choices about their areas of interest and focus for development, which facilitates a diverse group of teachers through inclusive learning. Networks consist of a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive way (Toole and Louis 2002). This approach encourages teachers to apply new ideas to the problems they share and generate creative responses that are a good match to the needs of the community that they serve. These development-oriented systems are heavily dependent on teachers being self-motivated in their engagement (Sutherland 2004). Consequently, a role of the school leaders is to facilitate inclusive practice where staff are encouraged to work together to achieve a well-defined goal and to gather evidence of the impact on practice.

Some teachers are intrinsically motivated to function collaboratively as part of their philosophy of education and others are less willing to do so. However, in the same way that the headteachers need to undertake different roles to lead networks staff can undertake different roles in networks. Not all staff involved have to make the same contribution. They can fulfil different functions in the shared learning process and have an asynchronous benefit to the network. It is as important for school leaders to recognize the diversity of their staff and the skills and experience they bring to a network as it is to recognize the diversity of their pupils and the community that they serve. Collaboration allows some staff in

complex and challenging circumstances to take the risk of investing in long-term improvements, rather than going for short-term gains Hadfield and Jopling (2006). Understanding how staff can hold different roles in networks can contribute to an inclusive culture, a feature of the final module that permeates the programme as a whole. The extent to which this approach works, for all levels of learning, is an important feature of the evaluation of networked learning.

Concluding Comments

The project, to date, indicates that there is a broad, international consensus, based on the literature and the evidence gathered by the partners that networks can promote an inclusive approach to the leadership of learning. The conceptual model proposed is learning-orientated, growth promoting and operates as a collective enterprise (Mitchell and Sackney 2000). The LeLeNet project team identified key characteristics that are essential for building and fostering the culture of networking. Factors such as formality of network structures, strength of connectivity, levels of learning and availability of network facilitation expertise impact on the focus, design and orientation of the planned learning activities. The need for school leaders to recognise the challenges of networking such as teacher motivation and attitudes toward this collaborative way of working were explored as a fundamental part of leadership of connected organisations. The need to develop the leadership capacity to adopt roles that support networking schools is a core purpose of the programme.

The evidence gathered on the basis of the theoretical framework was supportive of the view that the role of the school leader is a precondition for successful networking in schools. The creation of efficient teacher networks relies on the development of a variety of professional knowledge and skills from both teachers and school leaders and the development of a collaborative learning culture. There is a powerful and persuasive case demonstrated across the three forms of evidence brought together across six countries that appears to validate the programme design proposed for school leaders.

However, it is also evident that schools will vary in their enthusiasm and skepticism of the need for networks and the leadership readiness to adopt the concept. In a time when school networks have become 'ever more popular' (SI and UK) as the mode of ini-

tiating changes and large-scale reforms there is a strong case for the development of leadership roles that accommodate inclusivity in diverse settings. School leaders must be enabled to promote learning activities within an interactive web of leaders and followers in different situational constellations (Hargreaves 2006) if they are to effectively serve the needs of their learners and the wider community.

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Ways of Managing Mental Health Programmes for Children and Adolescents Based on the Example of Polish Schools

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Psychiatrists in Poland are becoming increasingly alarmed about deteriorating mental health of children and adolescents in Poland. The foundation for building and developing psychosocial health of children and adolescents is the family environment. However, it is important to remember that school is also an important part of that environment. Educational institutions should therefore be places that engage in comprehensive actions to protect the mental health of children and adolescents, with all members of the organization getting involved in the process. Mental health must be recognized as an important issue in student development. There is also a need to build a culture of openness and understanding, as well as to promote pro-health attitudes and behaviors, and to promote mental health education. Therefore, it is worth considering how Polish educational leaders deal with the growing mental problems among their students. How do they manage the school's mental health programme for children and young people? To that end, a desk research was performed by searching for nationwide programmes for mental health protection for children and adolescents and a survey was conducted among Polish school principals to find out what specific protection and education measures regarding pupils' mental health are being taken. The results of the conducted research show that both education and protection concerning the mental health of children and youth in Poland are insufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to diversify and intensify the activities undertaken. The results and conclusions may be useful for policymakers in establishing mental health protection programmes for children and adolescents, as well as for school leaders. Moreover, the results provide an excellent basis for further research and may therefore be of interest to researchers. This article is also addressed at those interested in prevention of mental health issues in children and adolescents.

Keywords: educational leadership, management in education, mental health, school principal, social development

Education and Disease Prevention in the Scope of Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in Poland

To start with, it should be pointed out that 'health is not only physical, mental and intellectual fitness, but also a will to live a full life, an ability to cope with various problems and an ability to fulfil everyday life roles and professional roles. It is also mental resilience and an ability to deal with various ailments and diseases' (Wojtczak 2009, 3). Whereas wellbeing is 'a subjective assessment of the state of health, not so much related to its biological dimension, as to such experiences as self-esteem and a sense of social belonging' (p. 208). Both definitions clearly mention a number of issues directly related to mental health.

However, it is worth stressing that 'mental health problems can take the form of mental disorders (causing suffering or impairment, being more than a generally accepted form of response to a particular event and constituting a manifestation of mental dysfunction) or difficulties in any psychosocial sphere of one's functioning (emotional, behavioral, cognitive or social)' (Tabak 2014, 114). In this context, education and prevention of mental health issues in children and adolescents is important.

At this point it should be stated that health education is 'planned and comprehensive activities involving transfer of knowledge, experience and practical skills in order to strengthen health' (Wojtczak 2009, 109) and disease prevention is 'measures taken independently of the state of health to maintain the health of individuals or communities. They aim to reduce the incidence of diseases and premature death by reducing the impact of factors detrimental to health, leading to disease or disability' (Wojtczak 2009, 212).

In Poland, the most important document on mental health is the Mental Health Protection Act (Ustawa z dnia 19 sierpnia 1994 r. o ochronie zdrowia psychicznego 1994), stating from the very beginning that 'mental health is a fundamental personal human good and protection of the rights of persons with mental disorders is the responsibility of the state.' For this reason, preventive activities in the scope of mental health protection should be primarily aimed towards children, young people, the elderly and people in situations posing a risk to their mental health. Such activities include, in particular, applying the principles of mental health protection in schools, educational establishments, care and educational facilities and rehabilitation centres. Whereas the National Programme for Mental Health Protection for 2017–2022 (Rozporządzenie Rady

Ministrów 2017) contains more detailed provisions, stating that local government units are obliged, inter alia, to:

- provide psychological and pedagogical support for pupils, parents and teachers;
- provide psychological and pedagogical support to children and youth at nurseries, schools and institutions.

There is also a consensus in Polish literature that 'support and promotion of mental health of children and adolescents and prevention of mental disorders should be provided by parents, school staff (teachers, educators, school counsellors) and primary care physicians' (Tabak 2014, 132). The need to create an environment favourable to health is therefore recognized, which means 'favourable conditions for health both at home and in all places where people work, learn and rest' (Wojtczak 2009, 104). Unfortunately, 'there are virtually no national mental health promotion programmes in schools, and the activities undertaken in this area are implemented on a local or even an individual scale' (Tabak 2014, 132–133).

Meanwhile reports indicate that mental health issues in children and adolescents in Poland are increasing. It needs to be frankly admitted that 'information on the prevalence of mental disorders among children and adolescents in Poland is incomplete and fragmented. There are no methodologically-correct, comprehensive epidemiological studies which would determine the prevalence of mental health disorders among Polish children and adolescents' (Namysłowska 2013, 4–9; Tabak 2014, 117).

Aim

Therefore, the aim of the study is to determine the state of disease prevention and education in the scope of mental health of children and adolescents, as well as to identify ways of managing that system based on the example of Polish schools.

Research Questions

1. How Polish educational leaders deal with growing mental problems among their students?
2. How do they manage the school's mental health programme for children and young people?

Method

In order to achieve the objectives of this work:

- desk research was performed in a search for nationwide mental health care programmes aimed at children and adolescents, and
- a survey was conducted among Polish school principals.

In the first part of the questionnaire, school principals were asked to indicate the importance of disease prevention and mental health education for children and young people in order to find out to what extent (if at all) mental health was perceived by them as a value in student development.

In the second part, school principals were asked about classes and special activities fully devoted to mental health issues. Respondents were then asked to specify who at their school was responsible for direct provision of psychological support for pupils.

In the third part, an attempt was made to find out whether Polish school principals see the need to introduce a comprehensive programme of disease prevention and education in the scope of mental health of children and adolescents at every school. They were also asked if there was such a programme in place at their establishment. Subsequently, depending on the answer given, further questions were adjusted:

1. Those who replied that they did not have a comprehensive mental health disorder prevention and education programme for children and adolescents implemented at their school were asked about:
   - the reasons why such a comprehensive mental health disorder prevention programme did not exist and
   - if they would like to have such a programme in place at their organization.
2. Whereas those school principals who replied that such a programme was in place at their organization were asked about:
   - who is involved in the process of its creation and implementation,
   - what kind of activities does it involve,
   - whether they have encountered problems with management of such a programme (and if so, what specific ones), and

TABLE 1 Numerical Distribution of Respondents

Category	Group	Number
Age	25–34	0
	35–44	3
	45–54	20
	55–64	13
	Total	36
Educational level	Bachelor's degree	1
	Master's degree	9
	Master's degree + postgraduate studies	25
	Doctoral degree	1
	Total	36
Experience as a school principal	First term of office (0–5 years)	12
	Second term of office (6–10 years)	8
	More than two terms of office (11 years or more)	16
	Total	36
Type of managed school	Nursery school	3
	Primary school	22
	General secondary school	4
	Technical college	3
	Vocational school	1
	Other	3
	Total	36

- what kind of support would be useful in the process of managing such a programme.

At the end of the form, there was also a particulars section to collect basic information about the surveyed school principals and their schools.

Study Group

The survey involved 36 school principals from Poland (i.e. 30 women and 6 men). The main group consisted of principals aged 45–54, with a Master's degree supplemented with post-graduate studies, with experience as a school principal of more than two terms of office (i.e. 11 years or more), managing public primary schools.

Table 1 presents a detailed numerical distribution of respondents in terms of age, level of education, experience as a school principal and type of school managed.

Results

This section first presents the results of the study derived from desk research, i.e. national mental health care programmes for children and adolescents, and subsequently presents detailed results of the study from the questionnaires addressed at Polish school principals.

Results of Desk Research, i.e. Nationwide Mental Health Care Programmes Aimed at Children and Adolescents

As far as a coherent programme in the scope of mental health of children and young people is concerned, it unfortunately has not yet been made. The Ministry of Health is currently working on a reform in order to 'establish a nationwide, comprehensive system to provide support for minors experiencing mental health disorders and their families' [...] The aim of the reform is, inter alia, to ensure that all children and young people in the country receive appropriate psychiatric care by levelling out differences between regions (see https://www.gov.pl/web/zdrowie/ochrona-zdrowia-psychicznego-dzieci-i-mlodziezy). In connection with the reform, the Ministry of Health's expectations towards the education system are as follows: 'creating a first line of support for children and families (school and psychological-pedagogical counselling centers).' It is worth noting that the new model of mental health protection for children and adolescents in the whole country is to become fully operational only from September 2023. It should also be mentioned that in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Health of 31 January 2019, a new specialization was introduced, namely 'psychotherapy for children and adolescents.'

In conclusion, the debate on mental health of children and adolescents on the national level is only just beginning.

Results of the Survey Conducted among Polish School Principals

The results of own research show that for majority of the 36 school principals surveyed, prevention and mental health education for children and adolescents is very important (25 out of 36 responses). A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 1.

14 out of 36 school directors surveyed declared that the school they manage sometimes (i.e. once a month) organizes lessons fully

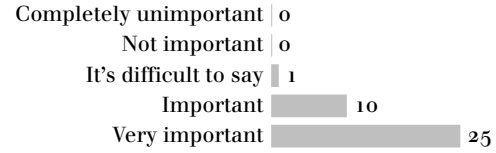

FIGURE 1 Principals' Opinion on the Importance of Prevention and Education in the Area of Mental Health of Children and Adolescents

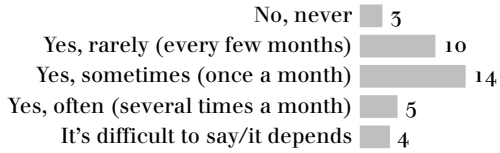

FIGURE 2 Frequency of School Lessons on Mental Health Issues

FIGURE 3 Occurrence of School Campaigns on Disease Prevention and Education in the Area of Mental Health of Children and Adolescents

devoted to mental health issues in children and adolescents. A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 2.

2/3 of the respondents (i.e. 24/36 school principals) declared that the school they manage also organizes special campaigns in the scope of prevention of mental health disorders and mental health education for children and adolescents. A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 3.

Among 24 surveyed schools which organize special campaigns on disease prevention and mental health education for children and adolescents:

- as many as 21 organize different workshops (e.g. in the area of stress management),
- 20 offer consultations with a psychologist-therapist,
- 5 organize mental health weeks,
- 4 organize mental health knowledge competitions,
- and among 4 other answers the principals mentioned: information boards displaying information on how to look after mental health, classes on emotions for the first grade of primary school, prevention of eating disorders, campaigns

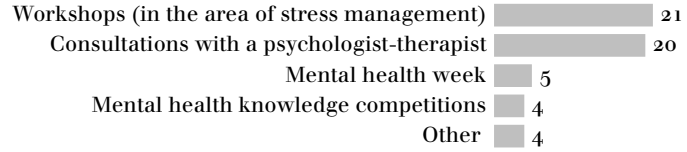

FIGURE 4 List of School Campaigns on Mental Health Disorder Prevention and Mental Health Education for Pupils (Multiple Choice)

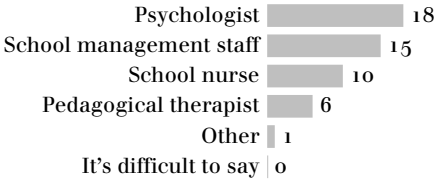

FIGURE 5 List of Persons Responsible for Providing Direct Psychological Support to Pupils in Schools Surveyed (Multiple Choice)

related to the influence of cyberspace on peer relations and mental health (cyber-bullying) and training for teachers.

A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 4.

Among the 36 schools surveyed, the person responsible for providing direct psychological support to students is:

- in as many as 31 of them – school counsellor,
- in 28 – also head of year (class tutor),
- in 19 – the entire teaching staff,
- in 18 – psychologist,
- in 15 – school management staff,
- in 10 – school nurse,
- in 6 – pedagogical therapist,
- and in one school it was declared that 'in practice, we all try to be aware of any alarming symptoms and possible threats to the mental health of our pupils.'

A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 5.

The vast majority (i.e. 30 out of 36) of school principals see the need to introduce a comprehensive programme of disease prevention and education in the scope of mental health of children and adolescents at every school. A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 6.

Unfortunately, at 30 out of the 36 schools surveyed, there is no

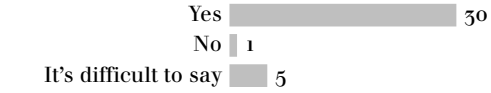

FIGURE 6 The Need to Introduce a Comprehensive Programme of Disease Prevention and Education in the Scope of Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in Every School, in the Opinion of School Principals

FIGURE 7 Occurrence of a Comprehensive Mental Health Disorder Prevention Programme for Pupils in the Schools Surveyed

integrated mental health disorder prevention programme for pupils. A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 7.

30 school principals who said that their school did not have a comprehensive and integrated mental health disorder prevention programme for pupils in their school were asked about the reasons:

- the most frequent response was pointing out a shortage of people who could implement such a programme (14/30 responses),
- many respondents also stated that there was no time for such activities (11/30 responses),
- and a lack of financial resources (8/30 responses),
- among 8 other answers there were statements that 'some issues related to mental health disorder prevention are included in the educational and disease prevention programme of the school' and that 'such tasks are performed by specific persons as part of their duties,'
- in addition, 1 principal stated that there was no motivation to engage in such activities.

A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 8.

The 30 school principals who declared that they did not have such a comprehensive programme for mental health disorder prevention for children and adolescents were also asked whether, if possible, they would like such a programme to exist in their organization. Vast majority, i.e. 23 out of 30, said they would. A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 9.

On the other hand, school principals who declared that they had such an integrated mental health disorder prevention programme

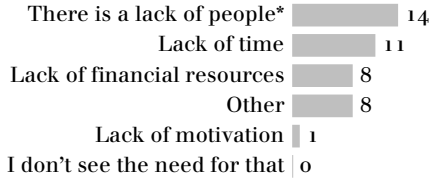

FIGURE 8 Reasons for the Lack of a Comprehensive Mental Health Disorder Prevention Programme for Pupils in the Schools Surveyed (* who could implement such a programme)

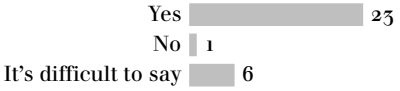

FIGURE 9 Willingness to Have a Comprehensive Mental Health Disorder Prevention Programme for Pupils in the Schools Surveyed

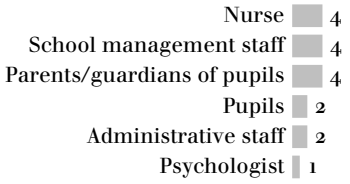

FIGURE 10 Persons Involved in the Process of Creating and Implementing an Integrated Mental Health Care Programme for Students in the Schools Surveyed

for students (i.e. 6/36), were asked who was involved in the process of its creation and implementation. Almost all of them replied that they were the school counselor (5/6), heads of year (5/6) and the whole teaching staff (5/6). A detailed distribution of responses can be found in figure 10.

Principals with a comprehensive programme of mental health disease prevention for pupils (6/36) were also asked what exact activities it involved. Their answers are given in table 2.

Of the six school principals, as many as five report that they sometimes face challenges in managing their mental health care programme for pupils, and one of them acknowledges that there are problems, but very rarely.

Of these six school principals, five gave examples of specific challenges in the process of managing the mental health care programme for pupils, as shown in table 3.

Due to the challenges they face, they were also asked what kind

TABLE 2 Activities of Six Schools Surveyed Within an Integrated Mental Health Care Programme for Children and Adolescents

Consultations, workshops, individual talks during festivals and integrative games.
Dealing with difficult situations, emotions and stress.
Workshops for pupils, talks for parents, individual consultations for pupils and parents, school campaigns promoting mental health, specialized classes for pupils, sport and recreation events. Monitoring behavior of pupils with mental health problems, meetings with a psychologist.
Ongoing monitoring of the situation and needs of students. Close cooperation between head of year, specialists and parents. Rapid intervention. Individual and group classes and workshops taking into account genuine needs of students. Cooperation with support institutions from the local environment.
A number of activities included in the School Education-Disease Prevention Programme, e.g. Tolerance Day, peer violence prevention programme, 'Stress under Control' programme, training in inclusive education, cooperation of Class Teachers' Teams in providing psychological and pedagogical support to students, 'Cyber-Security' programme, parental education, motivational classes, socio-therapeutic classes conducted by a counsellor, activities aimed to integrate the school community, e.g. Christmas Eve celebrations at school, etc.

TABLE 3 Challenges Faced by the Schools Surveyed in the Process of Managing the Mental Health Care Programme for Pupils

Resistance of pupils and their parents to participation.
Too many children in need of support and assistance in relation to qualified staff and restricted number of hours available for working with children. Lack of interest in children's emotional problems by their parents.
Lack of knowledge among parents and pupils.
Poor parental cooperation or lack of it.
The challenge is to efficiently coordinate and manage a large team, a large number of pupils at school.

of support they could use to manage such a comprehensive programme of mental health care for pupils. Their answers are given in table 4.

Discussion

When summarizing the analysis of the results of the conducted research, the main conclusion is that disease prevention and education in the field of mental health of children and adolescents is insufficient, although the need for it is increasingly noticed both by state authorities (i.e. the Ministry of Health, which is working on a reform of the system) and by school principals (who confirm that this is a very important issue for them).

Although many of the schools surveyed sometimes conduct les-

TABLE 4 Need for Support in the Process of Managing the Mental Health Care Programme for Pupils

Consultations with a counsellor.
Training.
Increasing the number of hours allocated to provision of psychological and pedagogical support.
Workshops for pupils, parents and teachers.
Specialized support from healthcare services.
A possibility for pupils to access quick, free consultations with children's psychiatrists, especially a possibility to access quick psychological consultations, diagnoses and regular, free therapy/psychotherapy.

sons and special campaigns in the scope of mental health of children and adolescents, in practice still only few of them have an integrated programme dedicated to this subject, although at the same time a vast majority of them declare that they would like to implement such a programme in their schools. The main obstacles are lack of people who could do it, lack of time and lack of financial resources. In addition, experience of school principals who have such a programme in place shows that greater involvement of parents/guardians is also needed.

It is therefore difficult to talk about ways of managing a mental health care programme for children and adolescents following the example of Polish schools, when there are not many projects of the kind. However, based on results of the research conducted, there are a few practical recommendations to be made.

First of all, a consultative approach is required in preparing a nationwide reform of the system of mental health care for children and adolescents. Not only psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, but also family doctors, paediatricians, nurses, midwives, school principals, counsellors, teachers, educators and parents should be involved in the process of planning the reform. Only this way, by using knowledge and experience of different groups, will it be possible to create a system, which responds to the growing needs. It is necessary to successful implement a nationwide reform, as well as to continuously improve the system in the course of its evaluation.

Also, additional positions are needed in schools, as well as significantly more financial resources for disease prevention and education in the scope of pupils' mental health.

On a local level, in turn, it is important to create a comprehensive and integrated programme of mental health disorder preven-

tion and education for children and young people in every school, because the demand in this area is increasing and the school and everything that happens in it is an important part of young people's lives. It is worth using this for their benefit, but in the long run, for the benefit of the society as well. It seems equally important to involve the whole school community, and not just selected groups of people, in this complex process of development and implementation. This is crucial as it not only takes into account the perspective and thus the needs of all groups, so that the programme is highly likely to be effective; but it also grows a sense of being part of a creative community, which in itself can be a preventive measure in terms of maintaining good mental health.

Therefore the role of a school leader is to build the organizational culture of the school based on central values, i.e. care for the development and well-being of students. In connection with the above, the role of a school leader in managing mental health programs in school is to initiate, coordinate and supervise activities in the field of education and prevention of mental health in children and adolescents.

Finally, it should be emphasized that it is not only necessary to introduce a reform of the mental health protection system for children and young people, but also to improve the existing programmes for disease prevention and education in the scope of mental health of pupils, as well as to develop such programmes in all schools. Further research in this area is also needed in order to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon, but also to support practice by constantly improving it.

Acknowledgments

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How To Be Prepared for the Difficult Conversation

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In this paper, we present a minor research and development project with a group of teachers in primary school who, in agreement with the school management, have been trained and educated in the challenging task of facilitating 'The difficult conversation.' In the project, a reflecting team has been used as a method to consolidate empowerment as an opportunity for the teacher to lead various processes being part of many teachers' tasks. The main objective of the project was to research if this way of educating can lead to development of empowerment for the whole school. We also wanted to see if we could use a reflecting team in the mentoring process of learning. In their professional relationship with children and their parents, teachers must be more than regular educators. They need to be leaders of professional teams, cooperating with other professionals in dialogues with parents. Sometimes an individual teacher has to take part in difficult conversations and show both leadership and responsibility. Many teachers perceive this as an emotional challenge that concerns themselves as well as their counterparts. It is important to focus on their own teacher competence to facilitate such situations. A possible route to success is developing empowerment in teacher's professional work. By using a reflecting team in various situations, teachers will experience empowerment as strengthening support in their daily work. The reflecting team method was originally used in therapy, but has over time been redesigned and adapted to an educational method for mentoring, teambuilding, planning and problem solving.

Keywords: difficult conversation, reflecting team, empowerment, mentoring process of learning, leaders of professional teams

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

This paper refers to a joint project between Østfold University College and an elementary school affiliated with Østfold University College teacher education program. The subject of the project concerns a challenge to most schools and teachers in their work with children, colleagues, leaders, and guardians in the course of

the school mission; *The difficult conversation* (Drugli and Onsøien 2010). By this, we mean a conversation showing respect (making people feel that they are seen, heard and accepted) and focusing on the need for concrete problem solving. We use the word *conversation;* but maybe some would use the word *communication* in this setting. We understand *communication* as passing on some information or message, and conversation as mutual talk and reflecting upon a subject.

A teacher has to cooperate with many different people in the daily work, in addition to teaching. The school is a meeting point for everyone, and every single pupil needs attention in connection to his or her learning and needs. This is incorporated in the law (by the Education Act), which also grants rights to each individual child during the education period. In addition to this, there are certain children who are granted extended rights because they have special needs and are unable to benefit from ordinary teaching. In Norway, the Education Act grants these children extended rights, and providing them special education is the school's responsibility (Regjeringen 2006).

All parents want the best for their children, and it can be hard to accept that there is a need for special education. The school is responsible for identifying such needs and challenges and accommodating for the child in order to secure a good learning outcome. It can be challenging to convey these needs to the parents, to plan for them with colleagues, and to communicate them to the school owner and the management (Drugli 2012). These conversations are often professionally structured, but they can also reflect different perspectives on possibilities, resources, and ability to execute. On the other hand, parties in such conversations are all humans, influenced by their own feelings as well as with feelings concerning the needs and possibilities of the child (Kvarme, Früh, and Lidén 2017). According to teachers, not all teacher education programs prepare them for such situations and conversations, likely perceived as difficult since they concern both the pupil and all the pupil's microsystems (Bronfenbrenner 2005). These conversations may therefore create difficult situations and being prepared for them is wise.

Our project is about preparing for these difficult conversations. Given our previous work on the use of *reflective processes* and a *reflecting team* (Sträng, Sørmo, and Navestad 2016; Sträng and Sørmo 2017; Sørmo and Sträng 2018), we wanted to see whether we could also use *reflecting teams* as a method for this type

of learning. Andersen (1987) uses the term 'Reflecting team' because the team reflects on the conversation, which its members are listening to.

Theoretical Framework

It seemed natural to divide this chapter by topics that are the most relevant for the research question. We have chosen to look at teacher's role, selected topics in communication, and the importance of the *reflecting team*. We also tie our work with *reflecting team* to the term *empowerment* because it is that connection that makes teachers aware of and helps them strengthen their self-understanding and their skills beyond their professional skills (Askheim and Starrin 2012; Sørmo and Sträng 2018).

The Role of the Teacher

What is perceived as a difficult conversation depends on the persons and the circumstances they find themselves in. When working with children, we think of conversation between school and home first, but also of the direct conversation with children in a difficult situation (Drugli 2012). In addition to this, various situations may arise when the teacher cooperates with colleagues or receives signals from the administration. Each group requires a different form of attention and a unique approach. Teachers therefore need the ability to relate to different groups, and may find these conversations difficult in some way (Westergård 2012). As humans, we are also moved by emotional circumstances that affect both our own attitude and how we deal with situations that we are exposed to. Facing disagreement could be a good way to calibrate knowledge and attitudes toward other people's experience of different life situations (Drugli and Onsøien 2010).

Both in kindergarten and in school, teachers may find that their opinions differ from professionals as well as pupils and their parents. Such situations may communicate to children and their guardians that some circumstances are less than useful in a learning situation. For example, behavior could be unacceptable, rooted in upbringing and pedagogical circumstances, but also related to traumatic circumstances, neurological damage or pedagogically inadequate reasoning in teaching (Nordahl et al. 2014). Circumstances like these may be stigmatizing statements and perceptions where the teacher, child and parents are unable

to understand the other side when facing a challenge or a problem. Such a situation can end up with a statement against statement where the parties are unable to listen and understand the whole situation, possibly because the topic in question touches the parties emotionally, professionally, and culturally (Lindseth 2009).

Another difficult situation arises when colleagues disagree on how to handle a certain case. In the planning and application phases of measures for children with special needs, professional disagreement can lead to situations that are difficult to deal with for both parties (Tinnesand 2007). Professional disagreement may appear resulting from different knowledge and experience, but also from easy and questionably founded solutions (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2017). This may create tension when working with children with special challenges, needs or problems, and their families. Out of these situations, difficult to handle discussions and conversations may arise. Conveying to parents a message that their child is in need of a different type of a professional effort could well be challenging in itself, but sometimes it is also difficult because pedagogical professionals disagree on where the problem is or what measures to apply (Drugli 2013).

Difficult conversations are being a part of everyday life for most people. For various reasons, some people encounter them more often than others do. The difficult conversation does not occur only in direct teaching situations. Many people find that in addition to pedagogical reasoning and application of measures, life situation itself is challenging and leads to difficult conversations (Drugli and Onsøien 2010). This could be a divorce, a death or loss of family in different circumstances, traumatic experience, unstable economic or social circumstances, crime or addictions, or sexual assault and neglect (Smith 2004).

Sometimes it is easy to forget that teachers themselves can be affected by emotions and conditions, depending on their current situation as professionals or on private experiences. Many teachers are affected by their care and responsibility for children in difficult situations. Namely, the teacher shows responsibility that exceeds professional requirements and is therefore affected by the ups and downs in the child experiences. Teachers thereby take on responsibility for children who for different reasons are mentally absent. They take care of the way of communicating the circumstances of child's quality of life in kindergarten or in school. This could put the teacher in a situation where actions and conversa-

tions would be challenging and difficult, in addition to the emotional presence that colors the situation.

Professionally, a teacher is in a position defined by the structures of power (Nordahl and Drugli 2016). Teacher's mission consists of official tasks, expectations from the management, colleagues, parents, and children. As being responsible for the learning process, the teacher, in the role of a pedagogical professional, is in a situation of power (Saenz 2012). Teacher role is composed of the power of employer, society and culture, but the teacher does also execute power through the learning process. This is in many ways natural since learning can take place through relations best (Hughes and Chen 2011). A teacher must be aware of this power relation and know when the situation or communication needs to be symmetrical or asymmetrical. A teacher is often perceived as a person of power in an asymmetrical relation, because power is linked to the teacher role. Nevertheless, relations can be challenging and symmetrical in conjunction with cooperation, research, and development. This balance in the power structure can also play a part in how the teacher participates in difficult conversations where professional as well as relational and emotional factors play a part.

The Teacher and the Conversation

Awareness of Bateson's (1973) statement that 'everything is communication' is a good foundation for understanding that a conversation is much more than the exchange of verbal expressions. Conversation contains much more than digital words. It is also colored by intonation, facial expressions, body language, and context (Lindseth 2009). It is primarily in the analogue part of the conversation that emotional expressions emerge. These expressions are often difficult, and appear as a sort of burden added to the message of the words chosen. Laughter and smiles, anger and aggression all enhance the message. Prejudices and preconceptions influence the way conversation would be interpreted, both positively and negatively. If the recipient in a conversation has a positive attitude towards the sender, he or she will normally be inclined to interpret everything in a positive way. A suspicious or negative attitude, perhaps based on previous experience, rumors or professional perspective, can effectively hinder communication (Bateson 1973).

A teacher is often in contact with both children and parents who

are excessively passive and almost silent. For different reasons, they dare not take part in the conversation, which in turn may be unexpectedly and undesirably asymmetrical. Situations in which the other part due to different and perhaps unknown reasons does not wish to speak, increase the risk of the sender exerting power (Eastburg and Johnson 1990). In such situations we may wonder whether the conversation could turn complementary in the way that the more the teacher speaks, the quieter the other part becomes, and the more difficult it is to escape the situation through reciprocity and a common understanding.

A teacher's task is being able to face many different situations and people, and it is important that to be prepared for a scenario in which the school is perceived as difficult. This is also the focal point of our project on how the teacher and the school can prepare for *the difficult conversation.* Conversations between school and home often take place when the school invites parents to a conversation about their child's social and cognitive development. An important subject is how the parents perceive the child's possibilities, well-being and learning environment, as well (Regjeringen 2006).

Such a conversation is intended to form the basis for a common understanding and development of the work ahead, and the pupil's well-being. However, schools also report that parents more frequently contact the school to complain about the teacher's treatment of their child, and about methods of teaching (Drugli 2010). These instances may challenge teachers beyond professional scope, even if the teacher is prepared and expects to face them.

Empowerment

Meetings in the teaching profession, both in kindergarten and school, demand for more than just professional skills. Empowerment is about strengthening teacher's pedagogical and practical awareness and scope of action (Askheim and Starrin 2012). There are many ways for this to happen, but in our project, we have decided to focus on a *reflecting team* as a tool (Andersen 1991).

A teacher is required to cooperate with every group in their line of work and must be confident to fulfil the mission and to help in coming to understanding of what is important in the learning process and children's development for many different people. Children with special challenges or needs and adapted educa-

tion, both ordinary and special education, demand a greater degree of cooperation between all parties. Parents may find the situation demanding in regard to the child as an individual as well as in the context of a system of connections to a greater whole. Therefore, cooperation is paramount, even when dealing with difficult topics. When faced with a child's special needs, the teacher needs a lot of flexibility and creativity. Working on empowerment strengthens teacher's understanding of pedagogical reasoning as well as the ability to plan and execute educational measures. Mentoring makes it possible for the teacher to get help in planning and executing measures that can create change for the child and the micro levels of that child (Bronfenbrenner 2005). Mentoring creates consciousness that can in turn increase empowerment of the teacher.

Reflecting Teams

Reflecting team was developed specifically for the field of family therapy by Professor Tom Andersen (1987). The method was originally designed to help families and individuals in need of change in their own lives or patterns of action. Over the years, the method has become a method of guidance in other contexts as well (Lauvås and Handal 2014). Through various development and research projects, it has emerged to be well suited in pedagogical contexts. Especially in cases where the school, the family and teachers work together facing behavioral, neurological and individual challenges (Sträng, Sørmo, and Navestad 2016; Sträng and Sørmo 2017; Sørmo and Sträng 2018). In addition to this, children's behavior may be a symptom of unrest and problems on various micro levels of a child. Understanding of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) 'meso-level' can contribute to change in the life situation of a child. The school represents a basic resource for the child in these situations.

Time is a limited resource for those who work with children, particularly the time available for cooperation and reaching a joint understanding of the learning and development processes. By working in a *reflecting team,* we find that short guidance meetings attended by all parties can release extra time and reduce stress (Sträng and Sørmo 2014).

The set-up for a reflecting team is three or four teachers meeting for guidance sessions. They agree on who will be the mentor and who will be the mentee. The mentee does not prepare a

written guidance note, but turns up with thoughts and emotions that arise from the given situation. This is the starting point for a conversation on mentee's workday (Seikkula 2012). The mentor asks open questions about the topic and identifies which questions need to be addressed immediately and what can be put aside for a while. The team´s general task is listening, but the mentor regularly opens for input from the team, namely reflections, questions and positive feedback (Schön 2001). The mentee listens, but is not allowed to take any part in the conversation with the team. Such team conversation lasts for a brief period of time, 2–3 minutes or so, before the mentor puts an end to it and asks the seeker to comment on what has been said. This way, the mentee is guided closer and closer to whatever he or she needs to understand or receive support in (Andersen 2007). The mentor eventually stops the conversation and initiates a meta-conversation on mentoring itself, and everyone sums up what the seeker needs to work on next.

Method

Through our projects on *reflecting team* we have received feedback from participants, telling us that the teacher has to face a lot of difficult ethical decisions alone (Skagen 2013). On workdays, teachers have limited access to colleagues and management. Furthermore, teachers are not a homogenous group and the employees have different skills, competence and experience … We have used a *reflecting team* in various situations, especially for developing empowerment. Empowerment may change teacher's day and contribute to better learning conditions for the pupils.

After using the *reflecting team* method of mentoring for several years, we wanted to see if we could use this tool as a method of preparing teachers for 'The difficult conversation.' Based on our experience from previous projects (Sträng and Sørmo 2014), we focused on this topic … We invited an elementary school nearby Østfold University College to take part in in a small project on this subject. The school showed great interest in the subject and we made an agreement and a letter of intent. The school management was thrilled with our initiative. We also made an agreement with the management to fulfil a project between the school and the university college for the duration of roughly one year. The principal informed the staff that they could participate in the upcoming project.

The professional skills of teachers were connected to the ele-

mentary school level. One of them was also a special needs educator. None of the teachers had formal training in mentoring, and they were not familiar with *reflecting teams*. We agreed on monthly meetings to work as a team. Teachers were expected to write down and send us personal log entries from every meeting during the entire period. We also invited them to take part in a research conference, presenting their experience from our project. The university college provided a mentor and a meta-observer. The role of the meta-observer was to supervise the guidance setting without interacting or commenting on anything that happened (Johnsen 2013). The observer was supposed to survey all forms of communication and cooperation during the course of the project (Cronholm, Guss, and Bruno 2006). Everything the observer noted was carefully analyzed and communicated to participants after mentoring (Johnsen 2013). Observation is also a task for the reflective team, but the team is limited to communicate what they see and hear during the ongoing guidance.

The meetings were organized in three stages. The first stage, around 20 minutes of length, was a brief introduction to the method and its various elements. These lectures focused on important terms, roles, and methods of the guidance. During the second stage, the members decided who was going to receive guidance. The rest made up the reflecting team. The roles were changed in every meeting so all of them got experience in different roles. Each mentoring session lasted 50–60 minutes. In the third and last stage, we summarized what had happened and received feedback from the meta-observer. After each session, everyone wrote down their individual experiences in a log. Those logs, along with the analysis from the meta-observer, created a solid foundation for reflection on usefulness and results of mentoring, in the light of the difficult conversation.

Results

Observations from the mentoring showed that emerging themes often revolved around stress factors, lack of time to collaborate, and concern for pupils with special needs. Frustrations around the resource situation also emerged, making teachers worry about whether the child received sufficient help from the school … The teacher's role in the local community and its impact on the teacher-parent collaboration was also noticed. When teachers met parents in their spare time, it often lead to spontaneous conversa-

tions about various situations. Teachers reported stress over such situations because they were unprepared and normally lacked time for such meetings.

Meta-observations showed that body language through facial expressions had high impact on how the message was communicated (Bressendorf 2009). Sometimes, the body language seemed a little out of tune with the spoken message. The teacher smiling in an intolerable and taxing situation would be a good example. A signal to the counterpart could therefore be confusing and contradictory (Bateson 1973). Awareness of body language became an important point that the teachers had to work with. The body language also disclosed whether question topics were uncomfortable or unexpected (Lindseth 2009). Teachers showed that by clenching their fists or crossing their arms, leaning forward or backward, or becoming quiet and shy. On the other hand, there was an obvious correlation between the verbal message and the body language displayed. The movements and facial expressions helped underline the seeker's messages.

The logs told us that teachers' experience from the reflecting team sessions gradually became part of their reasoning behind actions in the classroom and among colleagues. In the logs, the team members elaborated on what the conversations had meant to their self-image, and to their relations with colleagues, pupils, and parents. Feedback from the conversation and the team's reflections helped the participants to get a clearer pictures of their role as a teacher, and cemented their personal confidence in their profession. Learning is about building relations (Drugli 2012). Through increased belief in their own abilities, participants strengthened their professional skills and their empowerment. The log entries and summarizing conversations made it clear that this had an impact on how the teachers practiced their profession while facing daily challenges.

Teachers clearly became more aware of what their body language signaled to pupils and colleagues. They also became emboldened to share how they perceived collaborations, and to draw lines for parents and the local community.

Discussion

The Reflecting Team

To a certain degree, this project breaks with the idea of a 'know-nothing' attitude. Andersen (2007) maintained that the parties

should meet without preconceptions or prejudices toward the seeker's (client's) needs or background. The focal point is the conversation and the open questions that are relevant in order to discover the important topics of discussion, as well as the insignificant ones. The results of our project show that teachers work closely together and hold a lot of silent knowledge on each other's strengths and weaknesses, without ever discussing or talking about it. Silent knowledge means knowledge based on experience, which is difficult to put into words, either in writing or in a conversation. It just exists between people and is further developed in social settings. Conversation and the log entries show that participants add to this knowledge by voicing the reflections they have made about themselves and their colleagues. The *reflecting team* leads towards constructive feedback, reflections, and questions that both challenge and reveal the seeker's message (Andersen 2007). Log entries show that this will strengthen each individual participant.

The teacher's profession, whether it is in kindergarten or school, is one where time is often experienced as a scarcity (Glaser 2016). Teachers in our projects pushed themselves hard to be able to participate, because they felt that participation would be useful for them. The log entries show that they consider participation in sessions as a form of investment. The stress factor in participating has decreased, and all the participants report having gained a lot from the attendance.

In previous studies we have noticed that the school leaders have acknowledged the importance of this kind of development work. If groups like this are firmly anchored with the school management, they will help relieve the leader and increase the professional skills needed to solve the tasks at hand with more trust and greater control (Sträng, Sørmo, and Navestad 2016).

Participants in our projects have previously not been familiar with a *reflecting team.* That is why we provided a certain amount of training before we started the mentoring. The subject of how to prepare for the difficult conversation was fully accepted by them. Through mentoring sessions, we received clear signals on their insecurities when faced with challenges both in the classroom and outside it. Participants managed, through mentoring, to present what was of importance to them when preparing for conversations with colleagues, parents, and the school management. The received feedback prevented preconceived statements and created trust.

Guidance normally focuses on the language and how it can help people to express opinions and emotions (Lauvås and Handal 2014). Courage to address difficult subjects demands a confident teacher who is secure with the surroundings. Log entries from the participants show that positive feedback and controlled way of question-posing are paramount for progressing and identifying good solutions or new paths to walk. When mentor uses open questions, the mentee is challenged to give reasons for the actions and plans for future measures. Closed questions usually steer in the direction the guide wants, and provide only limited possibilities for the seeker to signal what is important to address.

The Reflections

The reflective team's task is contributing to guidance by listening and observation, without participating in the actual conversation. Their questions and reflections do not necessarily capture what the seeker says, but rather what they hear the seeker saying. There is a divergence or difference here (Bateson 1973). Reflecting processes in the team clarify what they perceive from the seeker. When the team members comment on what they hear, they help clarify the seeker's intention. This can take place in the following manner:

Team: I hear that the seeker is afraid to approach the boy's mother. I wonder why, because she appears so calm and clear. She seems unafraid and well-reflected.

Mentor: Now you have heard what the team thinks of what you said. What comments do you have to this representation?

Mentee: That was not at all how I meant it. I was afraid that the mother would find an excuse to avoid talking about her son with us after so many had complained about him.

The act of listening to the mentee crystallizes the true meaning in the statement. Reflections from the listening role of the team thus help clarify the statement's meaning. In that way, various conversations demonstrate how mentee is led to identify what is important to talk about in depth.

One of the participants wrote in her log:

> I experienced the conversation as exciting; many of my experiences with 'the difficult conversation' came to me again. I find it interesting to get feedback from the observers and

> it was a good feeling to explain some of the statements they where wondering about.

Another participant wrote in her log about what mentoring did for her:

> I am fascinated with the final results. I think that many of the episodes and challenges we talked about represent something that has (so far) shaped me as a professional and a teacher.

This shows how the participant felt empowered by mentoring. This strengthens the seeker and increases the scope of action and the possibility to deal with difficult questions, thereby increasing teacher's empowerment and consequently possibilities to help the pupil and the family.

A participant wrote in her log:

> We talked about having different perspectives, and this is what I think to be essential when it comes to conversations. It is rather important to have sympathy and skills to see and understand the situation for the parents, their worries and what they wish for the children.

Mentoring made the teacher conscious and aware of the perspective for the parents. Kierkegaard wrote that this is necessary to be in a helping position (Pedersen 2007).

The size of a *reflecting team* may vary (Andersen 2007). In the project, there were 2–3 participants in the team. This enabled them to talk to each other and avoid the temptation to communicate with the seeker. Such situation would be confusing, as it could give an impression of having several guides at one time. You can also be a reflective team on your own by talking aloud to yourself in a mirror, but this requires some practice (Andersen 2007). When Andersen had no one to use in a reflecting team, he turned his chair and told his client to listen to a one-man-talk, with himself, about the subject (Andersen 2007). After this 'talk' he turned his chair back again and asked his client for feedback.

Ethical Remarks

Each mentoring session is a situation in which information flows back and forth (Lauvås and Handal 2014). What is said during guidance remains in the room, but each participant brings experience and reflections back into the daily work. It is important for

credibility of work and safety of participants that everyone in a *reflecting team* understand what this means. If mentee's thoughts and knowledge find different ways, the work will create concern and worries instead of being sustainable. This is also fundamental for the teacher's mission in kindergarten and in school. The confidentiality agreement spans all information that surfaces in connection with work, the only exception being information that expresses criminal behavior towards children (Norwegian Public Administration Act §13). Needless to say, this also applies when working in *reflecting teams*.

During our previous projects, we have sometimes received questions regarding ethics of the *reflective team* method. This is no surprise, as the *reflective team* method originates from the field of therapy. Misgivings towards the method or the tool stem from idea that it could be perceived as therapeutic and invasive towards participants (Lauvås and Handal 2014). The original method, as used by Andersen, was closely connected to family therapy. Andersen noticed that it was hard to work with people without the context of their surroundings, most often their own family and their local community.

In educational or special education perspective, work in *reflecting teams* is connected to professional mission. Nonetheless, it is natural to see a connection between the mission and the person performing it. They are connected in a way that enables the teacher to teach. Any conversation between people is a chance to be influenced or to influence others. This leads to reflection and thinking about one's own point of view, but also other related matters. Some people will always perceive such development as a form of therapy.

In our use of *reflective teams*, the mission is closely tied to educational work with people. Since the concept of empowerment is a key feature in the process, it means that this tool helps creating change and positive attitude towards one's own work and mission. This is especially true when working with vulnerable groups such as children with special needs. The attention is given to professional situation, not the personal development of an individual participant, even though everyone is affected by the situation.

Conclusions

In this paper we have shown how working in *reflecting teams* can be used as a tool in preparing for difficult conversations. Rela-

tions and cooperation between different parties are important in learning processes (Eide and Eide 2017). There is often little time left for solid, pedagogical reasoning when planning, executing and working together in the teaching processes. Parents are responsible for children learning, therefore collaboration between school and home is important. Situations may arise, for different reasons, where disagreement and concerns in relation to child development can cause problems and challenges for teacher's mission and work. All parties are vulnerable in such situations, and it is paramount that the teacher has skills and confidence that challenges can be solved for the good of the child. By using a *reflecting team* as a tool in this project, we have shown that awareness of educational challenges can be increased and can also develop empowerment in teachers. This requires some knowledge and skills about the tool, as well as communication and reflection skills. Some time and resources are also required.

On the other hand, project participants report that this way of working decreases the stress level and helps individuals to identify elements potentially difficult to improve. Participants recognize a *reflecting team* to be useful, a tool helping them make a difference for children in need of special attention and assistance. Challenges in a difficult conversation may vary. Solid preparations through peer structures may help the teacher take a firmer stance both when working with children with special needs and in creating cooperation and understanding among colleagues, parents, and the school management.

In order to make this tool sustainable, it is necessary to have endorsement, support and responsibility from the school management. Also, the teacher needs to be comfortable working in such a way and aware of his or her own development.

In light of previous projects, we see that *reflecting team* can be used in different ways and in many contexts, but always with a critical view of the process and the results. The goal is that strong pedagogical reasoning and deliberate choices of actions will help pave the way for good teaching and social development for each individual child.

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Perceptions of School Administrators Related to the Contribution of Their Completed Postgraduate Education to School Management Duties

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This research aims to reveal the contribution of completed postgraduate education to school management duties. Research was designed as a case study model. The study sample consists of 48 school administrators working in İzmir, having completed postgraduate education programs. Data were subjected to content analysis. According to findings, school administrators found some courses beneficial in scientific thinking and research, data collection and analysis, science literacy and critical thinking skills, as well as in system analysis and school problem-solving skills. A few school administrators found the courses not beneficial. Practice-oriented activities (student presentations, discussions etc.) were found more effective than lectures presented by academicians.

Keywords: postgraduate education, school administrator training

Introduction

In recent years, many studies dealing with the relationship between effective school and the school management have shown that the school administrator plays a key role in effectiveness and development of a school (Yasseen 2010; Toprakçı and Altunay 2015).

Rapid changes are taking place in all areas of life nowadays and school administrators are expected to understand and adapt them to processes in the school. Individuals who are expected to undertake such an important function and fulfill it properly should be equipped with qualifications required for the job. Therefore, school administrator training should not be left to chance, indiscriminate practices and inexperienced units and environments. Different applications are practiced in different countries. For instance, selection and appointment of school administrators in Germany is performed under the responsibility of the state Ministry

of Education, and practices may vary according to states. Legal criteria for the selection of candidates are merit, competence and performance (Huber and Pashiardis 2008). Candidates are required to have adequate education at the school level they apply for (such as graduate education) and several years of teaching experience (EURYDICE 2010). In the UK, NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) program is applied in order to provide vocational skills to those who want to become school administrators (Çınkır 2002). In addition to having completed the NPQH program, it is necessary to have sufficient teaching experience, management knowledge and skills that applicants should have for school administration. Moreover, methods such as interviewing candidates, conducting an introductory presentation, psychological tests, and obtaining parents' opinions are used (Huber and Pashiardis 2008). In Singapore, the 'select and educate' model is applied in the selection of school heads (Bakioğlu and Göçmen 2013). Selected candidates get to receive top-level management training and become part of school leadership team after their training is completed. Prior to this position, candidates undergo interviews and screening processes, and those selected would undergo extensive training (Levent and Yazıcı 2014).

In Turkey, as for the history of training school administrators, some researchers as Şimşek (2004) and Balcı (2008) divided its stages into an apprenticeship model until the 1970s, an educational science model in the 1970s, and an examination model in 1999. This regulation in 1999 highlights a two-stage examination system. The school administrator candidates who passed the first stage exam were subjected to an in-service training course covering 120 hours, the field of education management included. At the end of training, a test was held again and those who passed it successfully were given certificates. After the regulation dated June 10, 2014, additional points are given to those having master and doctorate in the management field. According to the regulation dated June 21, 2018, in the school administrator assignment process, a candidate having a postgraduate degree in management and in other fields has priority. In this context, in addition to in-service training practices, graduate education is also important for the training of school administrators. In the 2023 education vision report, postgraduate education is shown as a prerequisite (see https://2023vizyonu.meb.gov.tr). Therefore, graduates of these programs are expected to do their jobs better, besides having an academic career. The content of postgraduate education programs,

especially non-thesis master's programs in the field of educational management, is structured to support the practices in schools in Turkey. The majority of school administrators who have completed postgraduate education continue to work in schools rather than academies. It is important for them to have postgraduate education in the field of education management in order to make them more functional in performing their administrative duties. The content of these programs and the manner of conducting the courses are also expected to be related to duties of school administrators. Therefore, these programs should be examined from this aspect.

Jacobson, Johansson, and Day (2011) expressed some acquisitions and school administrator standards for the management candidates being educated in postgraduate educational management programs. First of all, postgraduate education programs aimed at educating school administrators, supporting candidates to explain and clarify educational values, beliefs and visions. These programs facilitate school development and address the different needs of society to implement and manage a learning vision shared and developed by all school stakeholders. They promote risk taking and flexibility, and encourage accepting differences and caring for equality. They teach the management candidates to systematically question and take action with awareness of moral consequences. These programs help school administrators in adopting school culture and curriculum that will ensure staff development and student learning and, last but not the least, they help administrator candidates develop abilities to understand, react and influence the political, economic, legal and cultural context. Similarly, Huber (2010) stated that many factors need to be taken into consideration, from the structure dimension of school administrator training practices, program diversity, inter-institutional coordination and cooperation, contents to be taught, training philosophy, training practices and evaluation. It can be said that educational management programs should be effective in preparing school administrator candidates for school management in every aspects. It is understood that due to the nature of the education management field, it should cover three basic dimensions: practical knowledge, professional knowledge and academic knowledge. Brooks and Normore (2010 cited in Balcı 2011) underline that contemporary school leaders should be globally literate in the following nine areas: political literacy, economic literacy, cultural literacy, moral literacy, pedagogical liter-

acy, information literacy, organizational literacy, spiritual literacy, organizational literacy, religious literacy and temporal literacy, while Şişman (2011) states that school administrators are mainly trained as managers rather than leaders, and that programs aimed at training school administrators do not sufficiently emphasize the leadership behavior of candidates. Therefore, postgraduate education programs for school administrator training should be interdisciplinary based on concepts, principles and theories of social sciences, humanities and behavioral sciences, which are generally performance-based and practice-based. These programs should provide candidates with qualifications for their practical duties, contribute to their training as training leaders, ensure that they are extensively prepared, and it is expected that teachers and administrators studying at postgraduate level will be able to synthesize and use the knowledge acquired in their fields through the analysis process. To realize these objectives, Karstanje and Webber (2008) suggested that group work, case studies, problem solving studies, transforming theory into practice, creating theory through application analysis, reflection, discovery and collaboration activities should be included in programs aiming to educate school administrators. Such practices are considered to be important in educating school administrators who are capable of scientific thinking and have research skills in solving the problems of the schools they manage. There is also some criticism related to the education management programs. Leithwood et al. (1996) state that postgraduate education programs are not associated with daily work problems of school administrators, but rather performed in almost purely theoretical content, and they add that in schools, there is an understanding of meeting the legal expectations and procedures that do not focus on the realities in practice, but there is little understanding of cultural differences and ethnic dimension of leadership. As for the contents of courses, course contents are not sufficiently related to situations and problems encountered in practice (Sezgin, Kavgacı, and Kılınç 2011; Şimşek 2002; Şişman and Turan 2003). Selection of managers, practices of education ministries for in-service training support make it difficult to say that there is an understanding of professional management (Bredeson 1996). The learning outcomes of management programs are at the knowledge and comprehension stages of the cognitive field, and the acquisitions towards the practice (skills development) and evaluation stages are not enough (Özdemir, Köse, and Kavgacı 2014). Research findings indicate that the emphas-

is on leadership, capacity building and work-oriented emphasis is less on ECTS program objectives, while the emphasis on improving student qualifications is almost non-existent (Tonbul, Akduman Yetim, and Ölmez Ceylan 2012).

There are some related studies about the contribution of postgraduate education to their profession. Turhan and Yaraş' (2013) and Yılmaz, Tonga, and Çakır' (2017) studies show that school administrators accept the contribution of postgraduate programs to their professional development, but this contribution cannot be turned into practice sufficiently. Therefore, it is important to train school administrators and ensure their professional development by means of a postgraduate education program. And school administrators should be equipped with the qualifications required by the job. With this research, we aim at revealing the contribution of completed postgraduate education to school management duties and at developing recommendations for researchers and practitioners in the light of the findings. For this reason, the following questions are asked:

- Which postgraduate education programs have the participants completed?
- What are the academic and professional activities of the participants during or after the postgraduate education?
- What is the percentage of participants to follow scientific publications in the field of educational management?
- What are the publishing rates of theses and how they are published?
- According to participants, what is their opinion about the benefits of the courses taken in the postgraduate education process distributed according to their themes?
- Which teaching practices were found effective?
- What competences did the thesis develop in school administrators?
- What are the problems faced related to the course content, processing, variety, qualifications of academicians and related institutions while developing postgraduate education programs?

Methodology

Model of the Study. The research was conducted in the form of a case study model. Case studies are a way of looking at what is

TABLE 1 Features of Study Group

Features	Category	*f*	%
Duty	Administrator	28	58.3
	Vice-principal	18	37.5
	Administrator in Provincial/District National Education Directorate	1	2.0
	Unspecified	1	2.0
School level	Primary	9	18.7
	Secondary	15	31.2
	General High School	14	29.1
	Vocational High School	9	18.7
	Unspecified	1	2.0
Branch	Primary School Teachers	9	18.7
	Maths, Science, Physics etc. Teachers	12	25.0
	Literature, Social Studies etc. Teachers	19	39.5
	Vocational Teachers	3	6.2
	Unspecified	5	10.4
Completed Postgraduate Program Level	Masters with thesis	30	62.5
	Non-Thesis	8	16.6
	Doctorate	7	14.5
	Unspecified	3	6.2

actually happening in the environment, collecting, analyzing data systematically and presenting the results. The resulting product is a sharp understanding of why the event is taking place and what needs to be focused on in more detail for future research (Davey 1991).

Study Group. The research is focused on 226 school administrators having completed postgraduate education program and working in Izmir. None of the sampling techniques was used. Questionnaire was sent to all participants. The sample of the research consists of 48 school administrators. Working sample is classified according to duty, school level, branch and completed postgraduate degree.

According to duty, the sample mostly consists of 28 administrators (58.3%). According to level of the school that they work in, 15 (31.2%) administrators are working at Secondary School, 14 (29.1%) administrators are working at General High School. According to branch, before they were appointed as an administrator, the majority, 12 (25%) administrators were working as Mathematics, Science, Physics etc. teachers and 19 (39.5%) administrators were Literature, Social Studies etc. teachers. According to com-

pleted postgraduate degree, most of the administrators 30 (62.5%) completed masters with thesis.

Data Collection Tool. As data collection tool, the 'Contribution of Completed Postgraduate Education to Performing School Management Duties' questionnaire developed by the researchers was used. The questionnaire consists of two parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, personal and professional information of school administrators is given. In the second part of the questionnaire, there are 5 questions about the contribution of postgraduate education to school management duties.

Validity and Reliability. The internal validity of the study (credibility) was increased by sharing the results with the participants in informational meetings and obtaining their confirmations about the findings. For descriptive validity, the study group and process were reported in detail. In order to increase external validity, raw data was stored in case it would be demanded or intended to be used in future studies. Moreover, the diversification of data was conducted by collecting data from a large number of administrators of different types and levels. In the literature, it is stated that expert opinion giving direct examples of data and diversification of working sample can increase the reliability of the research (Shenton 2004). Responses to interview questions were categorized and themes were created. For re-encoding, these themes were given to two academicians with experiences in qualitative research. The intercoder reliability is 0.86. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), an inter-rater reliability of 0.70 and above is considered to be adequate for internal reliability. Finally, the raw data and analysis were kept for further researches.

Findings

1. Sub-Problem: Which postgraduate education programs have the participants completed? As shown in table 2, more than half of the administrators completed postgraduate programs other than the faculty of education. Just one third of the administrators completed postgraduate education in the field of educational management.

2. Sub-Problem: What are the academic and professional activities of the participants during or after the postgraduate education? In table 3, more than half of the administrators attended congress as audience, that was followed by paper or poster presentation, article writing, conference participation, book writing and book

TABLE 2 Postgraduate Education Programs the Participants Completed

Item	*f*	%
Department of education management	16	33.3
Faculty of Education Departments (Primary School Teaching, Turkish Language Teaching, Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Special Education and etc.)	7	14.5
Departments Other than Faculty of Education (Department of Business, Basic Islamic Sciences, Sociology of Religion, Microbiology, Nuclear Physics and etc.)	25	52.0

TABLE 3 Academic and Professional Activities of the Participants during or after the Postgraduate Education

Item	*f*	%
Attending the Congress (as an audience)	32	66.6
Attending the Congress (Paper-Poster Presentation)	10	20.8
Article Writing in Refereed Journals	9	18.7
Giving Conferences, Becoming a Panelist	9	18.7
Book Writing	7	14.5
Book Chapter Writing	5	10.4
Participation in Professional Interviews on Radio and TV	1	2.0

TABLE 4 The Percentage of Participants Following Scientific Publications in the Field of Educational Management

Item	*f*	%
Journals Only on Educational Management	1	2.08
Journals on Educational Management and Other journals	4	8.30
Only Other Journals	9	18.75
Not following-up	34	70.83

chapter writing, as well as participating in professional interviews on the radio and TV respectively. Administrators having written a book stated that those books were not about school administration topics and they were more related to their interests.

3. Sub-Problem: What is the percentage of participants that follow scientific publications in the field of educational management?

4. Sub-Problem: What are the publishing rates of the thesis and how are they published? As shown in table 5, more than half of the administrators did not publish their thesis in any way. One fifth of administrators published their thesis as articles. This was followed by papers, books and book chapters respectively. Some of the participants published their thesis both as an article and as a paper.

5. Sub-Problem: According to the participants, how are the opinions about the benefits of the courses taken in the postgraduate

TABLE 5 Publishing Rates of the Thesis and How They are Published

Item	*f*	%
Published	24	45.20
Article	10	20.80
Paper	8	16.60
Book	2	4.10
Book Chapter	1	2.00
Unspecified	3	6.25
Unpublished	29	54.80

TABLE 6 The Benefits of the Courses

Courses	Benefits
Science and Research	Scientific thinking and research
Statistics	Data collection and analysis
Assessment and Evaluation	Science literacy
Critical Approach	Critical thinking skills
Speech Analysis	
Philosophy of Education	
Education Management	System analysis
Education System Analysis	Thinking with concepts
Planning lessons	Skills for solving school problems
Leadership in Education	
Conflict Management	
Education Systems	

education process distributed according to their themes? School administrators found the courses taken in postgraduate education process, such as science and research, statistics, assessment and evaluation, critical approach, speech analysis and philosophy of education beneficial in scientific thinking and research, data collection and analysis, science literacy and critical thinking skills. In addition to these courses, they found courses such as Education Management, Education System Analysis, Leadership in Education, Conflict Management and Education Systems beneficial in terms of system analysis and skills for solving school problems. Five administrators not mastering in educational management program stated that they would not get any benefit from the courses. Two postgraduates in educational management program also stated that education they accomplished did not have any benefit in expressing academic information, that practices in educational institutions did not meet each other and that because of the lack of coordination and compromise between the University and the Ministry of Education, courses were not beneficial.

TABLE 7 Teaching Practices, Which Were Found Effective

Item	*f*	%
Presentations by students	16	33.30
Discussions	13	27.00
Case study and Current issue	12	25.00
Research assignments	11	22.90
Problem solving sessions	8	16.60
Examination of research texts and reports	7	14.50
Application-oriented activities	4	8.30
Question and answer	3	6.25
Academicians giving lectures	3	6.25
I didn't see any benefit	3	6.25
All methods	2	4.10
Others (Student coaching, Drama, Peer education,...)	4	8.30

6. Sub-Problem: Which teaching practices were found effective? As shown in table 7, most school administrators found presentations by students effective, followed by discussions, case study and current issue, research assignments, problem solving sessions, examination of research texts and reports, application-oriented activities, question and answer and academicians giving lectures respectively. There are 3 administrators having stated that they did not find teaching practices effective.

7. Sub-Problem: What competences did thesis topic develop in school administrators? In table 8, competences that the thesis topics developed in school administrators are divided into general and specific competences. As for competences that their thesis developed in school administrators in general, almost all of the administrators stated working and discipline, researcher qualifications, communication skills and human relations, and help in becoming goal-oriented, solution-oriented and provided with self-improvement. Seven school administrators having stated their thesis topics confirmed that their competences, such as teaching literacy, knowledge about water pollution and quality, ability to establish relationship between philosophy and education, development of occupational health and safety systems at school, consideration of stakeholder views and provision of publicity for the professions in vocational education developed specifically related to the subjects they studied.

8. Sub-Problem: What are the problems faced related to the content of the courses, processing of the courses, course variety, qualific-

TABLE 8 Competences That the Thesis Topic Developed in School Administrators

General competences not related to the thesis topic (f = 46, 95.8%)	Specific competences related to the thesis topic (f = 7, 14.5%)
Working and discipline	Teaching literacy
Researcher qualifications	Water pollution and quality
Communication skills/human relations	Ability to establish the relationship between philosophy and education
Self-improvement	Developing occupational health and safety systems at school
Awareness	Considering stakeholder viewsPublicity of the professions in vocational education
Being goal oriented	
Solution-oriented/decision-making	

TABLE 9 The Problems Faced While Developing Postgraduate Education Programs

Problem areas	Items	Quotations stated
Content of the courses	Lack of theory-practice balance. Not being based on real problems. Excess in the number of courses, lack of deepening. Failure to fulfill student needs.	The content of the courses does not include real problems in the field and solutions to these problems.
Processing of courses	Lack of practical courses. Having difficulty in understanding and solving the problems encountered in practice. Not having courses to develop research ability.	A person equipped with theoretical pure knowledge is neither a teacher nor an administrator.
Course variety	Lack of variety in research courses. Courses related to school management not meeting the needs to manage the school perfectly.	The biggest problem seen in graduate students is that they do not know how to do scientific research and that they are lacking in different methods. The number of scientific research techniques and courses are very few.
Qualifications of academicians	Not having the Experience of Working in Schools. To be stranger to the problems of the close environment and not to study these topics.	First of all, the biggest problem I have seen in this field is; academicians do not know the school, students and teachers. They don't know what is happening in schools. They are doing research by asking 3 questions to 10 students or 10 teachers and they say this is a scientific research.
Institutions (Ministry of National Education, University)	Lack of inter-institutional interaction.	I believe that academic courses do not contribute much to our duties in our schools. Since there is lack of communication between universities and the Ministry of National Education.

ations of academicians and related institutions while developing postgraduate education programs? School administrators stated the problems faced while developing postgraduate education pro-

grams. They confirmed problems related to the content of the courses, such as lack of theory-practice balance, courses not being based on real problems, excess in the number of courses, lack of deepening and failure to fulfill student needs. As for the problems related to processing of courses, they stated that there was a lack of practical courses and difficulties in understanding and solving the problems encountered in practice and they also stated that there were no courses for developing research ability. School administrators declared that there was a problem related to course variety, that there was a lack of variety in research courses and courses related to school management did not meet the needs to manage the school perfectly. As for qualifications of academicians, administrators complained about them not having the experience of working in schools and being unaware of the problems of the close environment, and not studying these topics. Moreover, school administrators stated some problems related to institutions such as Ministry of National Education and University. They stated that there was a lack of inter-institutional interaction and postgraduate education made no sense.

Results and Discussion

According to results of the research, more than half of the administrators completed postgraduate programs other than the faculty of education. The rates of attendance at scientific congresses in educational administration and following management journals by school administrators were too low. School administrators found the courses taken in postgraduate education process beneficial. However, there are some problems related to the content of the courses, processing of courses, course variety, qualifications of academicians and the cooperation of institutions.

School administrators found the courses taken in postgraduate education process generally beneficial. Balcı and Çınkır (2002) emphasize that educational management programs should be based on performance and practice, and interdisciplinary with concepts, principles and theories of social sciences, humanities and behavioral sciences. These programs should provide candidates with qualifications for their practical tasks and contribute to their training as an educational leader, as well as ensure that they are generally prepared. However, it is generally seen that the learned knowledge remains in the theoretical dimension. It is expected that teachers and administrators studying at postgraduate

level will be able to synthesize and use the knowledge acquired in their fields through the analysis process. In this respect, it is important to determine the level at which the postgraduate education process meets these expectations and to achieve the targeted objectives. In the process of training school administrators, courses/subjects, such as curriculum development, evaluation, teaching expertise, assessment and evaluation, material development can be suggested. These courses should be handled with content and approach to manage the teaching processes of the school administrators in school, not with the content and understanding of the postgraduate programs. In other words, courses should provide benefits in schools. The approach that schools are open systems and their survival depends on changing environmental factors in this context (Hoy and Miskel 2010) requires school administrators to monitor and manage the internal and external factors affecting the school. School administrators are therefore responsible for getting all the support of the environment, sharing the opportunities and activities of the school with the environment, making use of the opportunities of the near and distant environment in the education and training processes and transforming the environment. Some of the courses and subjects can also be structured to cover these subjects. As for teaching practices, practices necessitating active participation, such as presentations by students, discussions, case studies, research assignments and problem solving sessions are found effective. Similarly, Karstanje and Webber (2008) suggested that group programs, case studies, problem solving studies, transforming theory into practice, creating theory through application analysis, reflecting, exploring and collaborating activities should be included in these programs aiming to educate school administrators.

Moreover, school administrators stated that there was a lack of theory-practice balance and deepening and that there was excess in the number of courses, that the course content was not based on real problems and that they fail to fulfill student needs. As for the problems related to processing of courses, they stated that there was a lack of practical courses and a difficulty in understanding and solving the problems encountered in practice. The results show a lack of variety in research courses and courses related to school management did not meet the needs to manage the school perfectly. In line with all these results, as a solution, Bredeson (1996) stated that an application-oriented approach to education would lead to a shift away from traditional postgraduate educa-

tion and would contribute positively to the research culture (research areas, collaborations, research designs, etc.) of the teaching staff. When the literature is examined, it is understood that different and successful practices are employed in a holistic manner in order to educate school administrators, such as implementing different strategies and employing technology, employing rich course contents, benefiting from experienced administrators and internship practices can be used as examples (Bush and Jackson 2002). Moreover, in the programs, practices such as teamwork, case studies, problem solving studies, transforming theory into practice (Karstanje and Webber 2008), discovering alternatives for solving educational problems (Aydın and Pehlivan 2002), problem-based learning, narration and ethnography research, multi-media simulations, improvisation and design studios, reflective coaching and intensive internship practices (Bredeson 1996) are more appropriate to train school administrators. When the contents of postgraduate programs within the scope of Education Management are examined, there is some criticism that the programs are shaped in line with the expertise areas of faculty members within the faculties (Celep 2008).

Also, it is seen that the basic functional standards for school administration programs are not defined when achievements of the courses taught in educational management programs are examined (Özdemir, Köse, and Kavgacı 2014). Balcı (2011) states that the contents of educational management postgraduate programs should be reviewed as a result of emerging forces and trends and that the programs should include lessons or courses such as Knowledge Management, Strategic Planning, Strategic Management, Marketing, Market Economy, Moral Education, Cultural Leadership and Intercultural Leadership. As for the course process, in the literature, Karstanje and Webber (2008) stated that the learning principles and habits of adults in the education programs should be taken into consideration and that the activities to be organized should include features such as creating educational situations through real problems, utilizing theory for possible solutions, encouraging solutions to produce, generating information that can be used and translated into other problems. Hale and Moorman (2003) state that schools which are the best learning environment of school administrators, should be considered as a field of application in the process of raising school administrators through postgraduate programs. These support the findings. In this research, school administrators complained about academ-

icians not having the experience of working in schools and being strangers to problems of the close environment, not even studying these topics. In addition to academicians having suitable academic background in the field (having field studies and working experience), they should be interested in different disciplines and fields, which may provide interdisciplinary and interactive execution of these programs (Huber 2010). However, it is obvious that a significant portion of academicians working in postgraduate programs do not sufficiently participate in school activities, and consequently school administrators have difficulty in adapting acquirements in these programs to the real problems in schools (Murphy and Vrieseng 2006). Actually, it can be said that better results will be achieved if the postgraduate education program is implemented by considering social network theory and stakeholder theory since it necessitates the cooperation and compromise between the Ministry of Education and University and also cooperation between academicians and school administrators.

Conclusion

It is obvious that many factors play a role in the success of postgraduate programs: Application conditions, selection of candidates, standards, variety of programs (type of school, task level, etc.), courses taught, course contents, instructional practices, assessment and evaluation, internal factors such as the quality of academicians as well as the expectations of the Ministry of Education from the administrators, assignment style, cooperation tendency, continuity of staff development activities, authority and responsibility areas of school administrators, the way schools are organized, working conditions of administrators and the quality of teacher training system. Regardless of these factors, the impact of structural and contextual arrangements on postgraduate programs would be limited. First of all, the question which features we want to train administrators should be answered. It is important to identify the 'minimum' qualification standards to establish the most effective practices (acquisitions, contents, activities, tools, etc.), to introduce these practices in higher education institutions, to develop models, and to bring effective academicians together. This can be considered as a problem in terms of the Social Capital Theory, which addresses the competencies of corporative employees, and the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which addresses the change capacity of the human capital in the hands of the in-

stitution. School management should be regarded as a profession requiring different qualifications than teaching in its field.

Suggestions

1. School administrators should complete postgraduate education in educational management program. When appointing a school administrator, authorized institutions should require the completion of postgraduate education in education management programs.
2. The active participation of school administrators or candidates in academic environments (congresses, symposiums, etc.) should be encouraged during the postgraduate education process.
3. Publication of theses should be encouraged and in the appointment of the school administrators, a high score should be given to those who publish their thesis.
4. The number of research courses should be increased and courses should be conducted in practice.
5. Courses should be practiced mostly by mean of student presentations, discussions, case study and current issues, and problem solving sessions.
6. Cooperation and interaction between the University and the Ministry of Education should be increased for the purpose of school administrators training.
7. Academicians should be aware of the school practices and pay attention to the needs of school administrators.

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Sultan Uçar-Altun in Mualla Aksu

Študija povezovanja srednjih šol na osnovi raznovrstnih, z uspehom povezanih spremenljivk

V prispevku so predstavljeni rezultati relacijske, opisne študije. Glavni namen je preučevanje spremenljivk, ki določajo posamezne kategorije uspeha v srednjih šolah. Vzorec sestavlja 80 javnih srednjih šol v Antaliji. Podatki so zbrani s pomočjo informacijskih obrazcev, ki smo jih razvili raziskovalci sami, na podlagi ustrezne literature in razpoložljivih podatkov za posamezne šole. Učni dosežki, družbeni, kulturni in umetniški dosežki ter športni dosežki so osnove posameznih kategorij, rezultat analize pa so štiri osnovne skupine: akademsko uspešne šole, šole, kjer je prisotna potreba po izboljšavah, šole, uspešne na športnem področju in šole, uspešne na družbenem, kulturnem in umetniškem področju. Glede na rezultate so akademsko uspešne šole najboljše na področju učnih dosežkov, šole, kjer je prisotna potreba po izboljšavah, so v glavnem manj uspešne – z izjemo učnih dosežkov, šole, uspešne na športnem področju so najboljše le v športnih dosežkih, šole, uspešne na družbenem, kulturnem in umetniškem področju pa najboljše le v družbenih, kulturnih in umetniških dosežkih. Vse naravoslovno usmerjene srednje šole so uvrščene v skupino akademsko uspešnih šol. Anatolske srednje šole je moč najti v različnih skupinah, od tega v skupini šol, kjer je prisotna potreba po izboljšavah. Poklicne in tehnične srednje šole se nahajajo v treh različnih skupinah, od tega več kot polovica v skupini šol s potrebo po izboljšavah, nobena pa v skupini akademsko uspešnih šol. Anatolske imamske in pridigarske srednje šole so uvrščene v dve različni skupini, le tretjina v skupino šol, uspešnih na družbenem, kulturnem in umetniškem področju, ostali dve tretjini pa v skupino šol s potrebo po izboljšavah. Tudi srednje šole z več programi je moč najti izključno v skupini šol s potrebo po izboljšavah. V raziskavi so med nekaterimi izbranimi z uspehom povezanimi spremenljivkami ugotovljeni pomembni korelacijski koeficienti.

Ključne besede: z uspehom povezane spremenljivke, srednja šola, analiza skupin, korelacijski koeficient

VODENJE 3|2019: 3–24

Esen Altunay in Kübra Nur Özerten

Koordinatorji izboljšav v šolah – njihov pogled na sodelavce in šolsko okolje

Namen raziskave je ugotoviti, kako koordinatorji izboljšav dojemajo ostale zaposlene in samo šolo, ter razviti ustrezna priporočila. Izvedena je na osnovi študije primera oblikovanja kvalitativne raziskave. Za sodelovanje je izbranih devetnajst koordinatorjev, ki so zaposleni kot učitelji. Podatki za študijo so pridobljeni s pomočjo polstrukturiranih intervjujev. Glede na rezultate udeleženci izpostavljajo določene teme, kot na primer: »organizacijske ugodnosti, ugodnosti za učitelje,

socialne ugodnosti, ugodnosti za opazovalce«. Udeleženci se soočajo s »težavami, izhajajočimi iz opazovalnega procesa samega in s strani opazovanih učiteljev, pa tudi z organizacijskimi težavami«. Podanih je veliko predlogov na temo strokovnega razvoja, zagotavljanja kontinuitete opazovanja, upravljanja postopka opazovanja in ocenjevanja procesa izboljšanja šole na podlagi zbranih podatkov.

Ključne besede: opazovanje šole, opazovanje sodelavcev, izboljšanje šole, učitelj koordinator

VODENJE 3|2019: 25–41

Linda Devlin et al.

Zavzemanje za več vodstvenega izobraževanja v povezanem izobraževalnem sistemu

Cilj projekta LeLeNeT je omogočiti učiteljem boljši izkoristek potenciala poklicnih učnih omrežij s pomočjo šolskih vodstvenih kadrov. Zasnova izobraževalnih modulov za razvoj vodstva se osredotoča na znanje in veščine, potrebne za vzpostavitev poklicnih učnih omrežij in na razumevanje, kako lahko vodje podpirajo zaposlene pri doseganju skupnih ciljev v nenehno spreminjajočem se okolju. Mreženje lahko podpira kolektivno poklicno učenje v šolah, v povezavi s spreminjajočimi se in vse bolj raznolikimi skupnostmi. Prispevek predstavlja teoretično, okvirno in raziskovalno podlago, ter hkrati tudi osnovo za oblikovanje načel vodstvenega programa v povezavi s to kompleksno agendo.

Ključne besede: omrežja, vodstvena sposobnost, oblikovanje programov

VODENJE 3|2019: 43–60

Božena Freund

Načini upravljanja programov duševnega zdravja otrok in mladostnikov po vzoru iz šol na Poljskem

Psihiatri na Poljskem so vse bolj zaskrbljeni zaradi poslabšanja duševnega zdravja otrok in mladostnikov. Temelj za gradnjo in razvoj psihosocialnega zdravja otrok in mladostnikov je družinsko okolje, vendar pa se je potrebno zavedati, da je pomemben del tega okolja tudi šola. Zato bi se morale izobraževalne ustanove ukvarjati s celovitimi ukrepi za zaščito duševnega zdravja otrok in mladostnikov, pri čemer bi morali v proces vključiti vse člane organizacije. Duševno zdravje je treba prepoznati kot pomemben dejavnik pri razvoju učencev. Prav tako je treba zgraditi kulturo odprtosti in razumevanja, pa tudi spodbujati zdravju prijazna stališča in vedenja, ter vzpodbujati izobraževanje na področju duševnega zdravja. Zato se je vredno poglobiti v način, na katerega se vodilni s področja izobraževanja na Poljskem spopadajo z naraščajočimi duševnimi težavami med svojimi učenci. Kako

upravljajo šolski program duševnega zdravja za otroke in mlade? V ta namen je bila izvedena teoretična raziskava z iskanjem državnih programov za zaščito duševnega zdravja otrok in mladostnikov, med ravnatelji pa je bila izvedena anketa o izvedbi posebnih ukrepov zaščite in izobraževanja na področju duševnega zdravja. Rezultati izvedene raziskave kažejo, da tako izobraževanje kot zaščita na področju duševnega zdravja otrok in mladine na Poljskem nista zadovoljiva. Zato je treba dejavnost povečati in okrepiti. Rezultati in sklepi so lahko koristni za oblikovalce politike programov zaščite duševnega zdravja za otroke in mladostnike, pa tudi za vodstva posameznih šol. Poleg tega rezultati zagotavljajo odlično osnovo za nadaljnje raziskave in so zaradi tega zanimivi za raziskovalce. Ta članek je namenjen tudi vsem, ki jih zanima preprečevanje duševnih težav pri otrocih in mladostnikih.

Ključne besede: izobraževalno vodstvo, upravljanje v izobraževanju, duševno zdravje, ravnatelj šole, družbeni razvoj

VODENJE 3|2019: 61–74

Dag Sormo in Dan Roger Sträng

Kako se pripraviti na težaven pogovor

V tem prispevku predstavljamo manjši raziskovalni in razvojni projekt skupine učiteljev v osnovni šoli, ki so se v soglasju s vodstvom šole usposabljali in izobraževali za izvajanje zahtevne naloge »težavnega pogovora«. Uporabljena je bila projektna metoda, pri kateri je raziskovalna ekipa podprla krepitev učiteljeve vloge kot priložnost za samostojno vodenje različnih procesov, ki predstavljajo del njegovih številnih nalog. Glavni cilj projekta je bil raziskati, ali lahko tak način izobraževanja privede do razvoja celotne šole. Želeli smo tudi preveriti, ali lahko raziskovalno ekipo uporabimo v mentorskem procesu učenja. V svojem poklicnem odnosu z otroki in njihovimi starši morajo biti učitelji mnogo več kot le vzgojitelji. Voditi morajo strokovne skupine in pri dialogu s starši sodelovati z drugimi strokovnjaki. Včasih mora učitelj sodelovati v težavnem pogovoru in pri tem pokazati tako vodstvene sposobnosti, kot tudi odgovornost. Številni učitelji to dojemajo kot čustveni izziv, ki zadeva njih same in njihove kolege. Osredotočenost na lastne učiteljske sposobnosti lahko olajša situacijo. Možna pot do uspeha vodi preko razvijanja sposobnosti učiteljevega poklicnega dela. Z uporabo raziskovalne ekipe v različnih situacijah učitelji izkusijo več moči kot podporo pri svojem vsakdanjem delu. Metoda raziskovalne skupine je bila prvotno uporabljena v terapiji, a kasneje preoblikovana in prilagojena izobraževalni metodi za mentorstvo, teambuilding, načrtovanje in reševanje problemov.

Ključne besede: težaven pogovor, raziskovalna skupina, opolnomočenje, mentorski proces učenja, vodje strokovnih ekip

VODENJE 3|2019: 75–91

Yılmaz Tonbul in Emine Çavdar

Spoznanja šolskega vodilnega kadra, povezana s prispevkom zaključenega podiplomskega izobraževanja pri obveznostih vodenja šole

Cilj te raziskave je razkriti prispevek zaključenega podiplomskega izobraževanja pri izvajanju vodstvenih nalog v šoli. Zasnovana je bila na modelu študije primera. Vzorec sestavlja 48 vodilnih zposlenih, ki delajo v Izmirju in so zaključili programe podiplomskega izobraževanja. Podatki so obdelani z vsebinsko analizo. Glede na rezultate so vodilni zaposleni ugotovili, da so nekateri predmeti koristni za znanstveno razmišljanje in raziskave, zbiranje in analizo podatkov, znanstveno pismenost in veščine kritičnega razmišljanja, pa tudi za sistemsko analizo in sposobnost reševanja težav. Nekaj pa jih je menilo, da pridobljeno znanje zanje nima nobenih koristi. Aktivnosti, usmerjene v prakso (študentske predstavitve, diskusije itd.) so se izkazale za bolj učinkovite od predavanj akademikov.

Ključne besede: podiplomsko izobraževanje, izobraževanje šolskih administratorjev

VODENJE 3|2019: 93–111

VODENJE v vzgoji in izobraževanju 3|2019 Volume 17

Revija *Vodenje v vzgoji in izobraževanju* je namenjena vodjem vzgojno-izobraževalnih organizacij in vsem ostalim, ki se pri delu v teh organizacijah srečujejo z nalogami, povezanimi z vodenjem. Osnovni namen revije je seznanjati to ciljno skupino s teoretičnimi pogledi na vodenje v izobraževanju, a hkrati odpreti prostor za praktične, strokovne članke, ki laho vodjem vzgojno-izobraževalnih organizacij neposredno pomagajo pri vsakdanjem delu. Revija ima tri vsebinske sklope:

- *Pogledi na vodenje,* kjer objavljamo teoretične prispevke o vodenju vzgojno-izobraževalnih organizacij. Prispevki v tej rubriki so klasificirani kot izvirni znanstveni prispevki ali pregledni znanstveni prispevki.
- *Izmenjave,* kjer so v prispevkih predstavljene novosti (spremembe) v organizaciji in financiranju v vzgoji in izobraževanju, projekti in primeri dobre prakse.
- *Zanimivosti,* kjer predstavljamo knjige in revije s področja vodenja v izobraževanju, zanimive osebnosti v vodenju v izobraževanju, vlogo in naloge ravnateljev v drugih državah in poročila s posvetov in konferenc.

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