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Leadership in Educational Contexts in Finland

Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives

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Volume 23

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⬦ Springer

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Raisa Ahtiainen, Eija Hanhimäki, Jaana Leinonen, Mika Risku, and Ann-Sofie Smeds-Nylund

Abstract This volume provides a comprehensive overview and in-depth coverage of contemporary aspects of leadership in the field of education. It brings together scholars to explore critically and discuss leadership in education in the Finnish education system in relation to international discourses around the topic. The aim is to unravel the nature of the Finnish approach to educational leadership regarding theory and practice and to discuss the theme in various educational contexts; how the Finnish educational success and wellbeing of children, youngsters and educational communities can be supported and enhanced through leadership. Moreover, this volume sheds light on the national characteristics and composition of leadership, policy and governance in education, and at the same time bridges the Finnish and international discussions. The purpose is to increase the knowledge concerning existing variations between countries in terms of the development and position of leadership within educational policy and governance and to provide a reflection surface for both Finnish and international readers to examine their national educational leadership arrangements.

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Leadership in Educational Contexts

The questions around the leadership practices and construction of leadership in different educational systems have been of interest to many scholars over the past few decades (Bush & Glover, 2014: Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017; Harris & Jones, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020). For example, the nature of leadership and a leader's role in education (Drysdale et al., 2016; James et al., 2020) and the connection between the practice of leadership and the immediate organisational working environment (Goddard et al., 2015; Leithwood et al., 2020; Spillane & Healey, 2010) or a larger structure of educational governance as well as the relationship between leadership and educational policy (Pont, 2021) have been themes of inspiration for many researchers. Consequently, the literature concerning leadership in education introduces several conceptualisations created for depicting the phenomena, putting forward a variety of toolkits, models and approaches, yet the empirical support for them could be stronger (Harris & Jones, 2021).

Research on educational leadership in Finland has focused on change in the operational environment affecting education, educational organisations and educational staff (e.g. Risku & Kanervio, 2010). Evidently, the operational environment is being transformed into an increasingly complex and dynamic one, which is constantly off balance (Risku & Tian, 2020; Simola et al., 2017). How educational organisations and staff interpret, translate and enact transnational and national policies is transforming itself in several ways (Ball et al., 2012). Furthermore, the role of globalisation and the increased influence of supranational organisations are significantly affecting educational reforms and policymaking (Pont, 2021; Rinne, 2021). The phenomena and mechanisms of the Finnish policy and governance transformation are of international interest and significance because Finland has been in the role of the OECD's 'model pupil' in applying neoliberal innovations in education, especially through technical and incremental policy (e.g. Rinne, 2021).

During the past few years, many researchers have analysed the Finnish educational system and its success. One of them is Risto Rinne (2021) who examined the Finnish educational success through six explanatory factors of which one is sustainable political and educational leadership (Rinne, 2021, 57). Even if Finland has been the late comer in the family of Nordic countries in terms of industrialisation and urbanisation, the changes have taken place rapidly, and Finland has become one of the best educational achievers amongst OECD and Nordic countries during the past few decades. One of the main reasons for this is Finnish educational policy, which has emphasised the idea of raising the educational level of the entire population and importance of coherence creation instead of competition (Eisenschmidt et al., 2021; Sahlberg, 2014, 26–29). There are still many challenges, which must be solved, such as youth unemployment and the polarisation of young people into those who are coping well and into those who are at serious risk of social exclusion. In addition, the strong faith in national solidarity and educational equality has been challenged by the attitude to climate change regarding education in terms of economic investment and efficiency (Rinne, 2021).

If we look at the concept of educational leadership from the Finnish point of view, we can simply define it as studying, developing and educating the phenomenon of leadership in education (Risku & Alava, 2021). Both in educational leadership and in the educational system in Finland, certain values and ethical principles are present throughout. First, the fundamental ethical principle is striving for equality based on the Nordic welfare state ideology on all levels of our educational and societal system. Second, it is a characteristic of our system to take care of all individuals in their educational and life paths in accordance with their own needs and goals. Third, we have a long tradition of multi-professional collaboration to support the well-being and development of people of all ages in the Finnish educational system (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021).

The Aims of the Volume

This volume, *Leadership in educational contexts in Finland: Theoretical and empirical perspectives,* provides a comprehensive overview and in-depth coverage of contemporary aspects of leadership in the field of education. It brings together scholars to explore and discuss leadership in education in the context of the Finnish education system in relation to international discourses around the topic. This volume is an outlier amongst books on Finnish education for two main reasons. First, it looks at education in Finland from the perspective of leadership, which has been a neglected scope in the country regarding educational research. It does this by positioning educational leadership from the perspective of educational policy and governance. Second, this volume examines the key changes, strengths and challenges in terms of the conceptualisation and practice of leadership in the field of education and illustrates the present and future complex organisational, practical and social conditions educational leaders and teaching staff are coping with. This has been done by linking the Finnish understanding about the phenomenon with international theorising and research emerging through Finnish theoretical and empirical academic work.

One of the main aims in this volume is to perceive the nature of the Finnish approach to educational leadership in theory and in practice to uncover what leadership in various educational contexts in Finland is, and how it can support, enhance and sustain the Finnish educational success and wellbeing of children, youngsters and educational communities. Furthermore, this volume sheds light on the national characteristics and composition of leadership, policy and governance in education, and at the same time bridges the Finnish and international discussions. The purpose is to increase the knowledge concerning existing variation in transnational contexts in terms of the development and position of leadership within educational policy and governance and to provide a reflection surface for both Finnish and international readers to examine their national educational leadership arrangements.

While leadership within education has been a field of interest for decades, there have been very few publications of the specifics of educational leadership with a wide-ranging perspective for the radically evolving operational environment written by researchers in educational leadership and governance. Due to the Finnish success in international evaluations (e.g. PISA), there is a rich literature in English on several aspects of the Finnish education system. However, leadership in educational contexts has almost been neglected. In addition, leadership within the system has been discussed internationally mainly by educators without a background in research on leadership in education. Moreover, the field has been largely ignored in Finland as well. Therefore, this volume conceptualises and describes the nature of Finnish educational leadership for international and Finnish audiences. Furthermore, this volume reflects on and discusses the solutions and ways to develop the field of educational leadership in the future.

Overview of Sections

The volume is divided into four main sections with 17 individual chapters integrating three dimensions of educational governance through which leadership is reflected: *macro and policy dimensions* discuss international and especially national policy levels, *local and organisational dimensions* focus on municipal and school levels, and *a micro dimension* covers the individual level with demands for development of professional capacity and practices.

The four sections are organised to look at leadership theoretically and empirically through the perspectives of educational context, conceptual approaches, leadership profession, and educational organisation community and collaboration. The authors present a variety of theoretical conceptualisations and empirical findings around leadership and through that they bring out the polyphony in the scholarly approaches. After these four sections, there is a concluding chapter in which the editors of the volume sum up insights and conclusions based on the sections and chapters. The theoretical and empirical perspectives of leadership in education of this volume can be depicted through perspectives that are both separate and contained in each other (Fig. 1.1). That is, all these perspectives together compose an overarching overview of leadership in education.

The first section places the whole volume in a wider *context* both internationally and within Finland. A lot has been written on the Finnish PISA success. Typically, curricular elements and well-educated teachers are named as explanatory factors for the success. However, looking from the perspective of educational leadership, Finnish educational policy, governance and leadership stand up as significant enablers for students' learning outcomes and wellbeing. Through this lens, Finland does not appear to be as uniform as the image of Finland is typically presented. On the contrary, we see that Finland can also be described as a national experimental laboratory with a lot of diversity just below the surface. The first section of the volume starts by positioning and conceptualising the context of Finnish educational
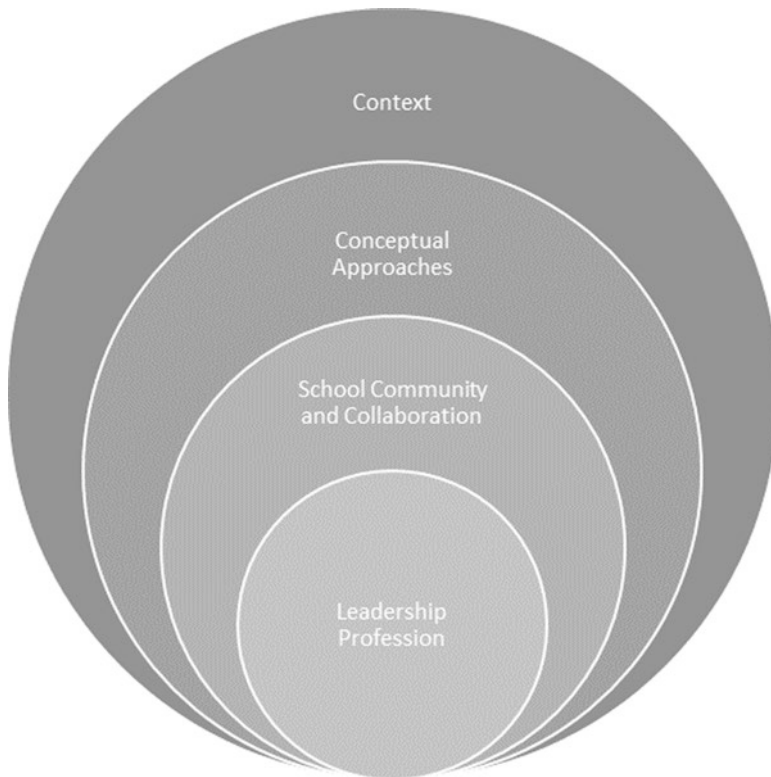
Fig. 1.1 Theoretical and empirical perspectives of leadership in education

policy, governance and leadership in the international setting. This includes looking at policy, governance and leadership at the conceptual level, separately and as the systemic entity. Furthermore, the section focuses on defining Finnish principalship and how Finland is developing a multi-form professional development for educational leaders as a joint national effort and research-based experiment. In addition, this section provides another example of experimental Finnish education culture how service design-thinking method can help educational leaders to solve common challenges. These chapters, too, include the international comparison, so that the volume serves the international readership purposefully.

The second section presents *conceptual approaches* to leadership in educational contexts. First, international educational leadership conceptions and models with reference to the Finnish context of educational leadership and management are considered in a literature review-based study. This section also conceptualises pedagogical leadership in the Finnish setting by positioning pedagogical leadership amongst other international approaches on developing educational leadership. Furthermore, the historical evolvement of pedagogical leadership is examined and linked to the educational policy and governance in Finland. In addition, the section deepens the understanding of pedagogical leadership in international education and

its meaning for high-quality education based on Finnish and international research. Also, the second section critically reflects and discusses a systemic approach of how school leadership needs to be theoretically based on education theory.

The third section works from the premise that educational leadership is not just educational administration, management or delivering school services. Instead, the chapters focus on *leadership profession* and dynamic, interactive and value-based aspects on educational leadership. In addition, this section emphasises interactive, communal and inter-organisational perspectives in solving complex problems. This section views educational leadership from moral, attitudinal and affective perspectives emphasising the experience-based view of leadership and micro-level action, yet at the same time examining educational leadership as a part of the collaborative governance. Theoretically, the section views educational leadership as social, relational and contextual governance. Empirically, the section forms a rich and multidimensional entity. The content of the section has an empirical foundation based on both quantitative and qualitative methodology and data collected from educational leaders, school principals and students studying educational leadership.

Finally, the fourth section continues with the theme of interactive processes initiated in the previous section and focuses on *school community and collaboration*. The discourse of collaboration is seen as an overarching and central element in educational leadership and governance, and this perspective emphasises practices around that theme and looks for further developmental steps of educational leadership profession. Thus, along with the theme of collaboration and organisational community, this section is connected to the perspective of leadership profession (Fig. 1.1). The authors of this section bring out structural solutions for organising collective practices and discuss goals, values and perceptions that stem from the contexts of schools and the wider communities around them. These approaches enlighten the education governance from the perspective of schools and municipal educational administrators. The focus is on various practices and professionals in various positions working in education. At the level of practices, the section discusses the means for sharing responsibilities and duties. Collaboration and opportunities for participation and interaction are examined through the perspectives of teachers, principals and municipal education administrators. The section shares the premise that working towards shared aims and common good requires the capacity of many, and people may have distinct roles depending on the task and their expertise. Furthermore, this section directs us to see student teachers as potential future leaders. Authors draw both from survey and focus group, thematic and semi-structured interview data to examine and discuss leadership distribution, multi-agency collaboration and student teachers' conceptions of leadership.

In the concluding chapter of the volume, we present the challenges and reflections for developing leadership in educational contexts in the future. We employed three main concepts – *sustainability, professional agency* and *holistic understanding* – that evolved from the chapters. We see these concepts as uniting signposts for the future and as ways to develop educational leadership. The educational leader has traditionally been a rule-oriented administrator following educational policies, rules and regulations and responsible for executing certain, addressed administrative

tasks. Today, the educational leader is first and foremost a collaborator and an enabler operating in a context of local governance solving various wicked problems in different networks and collaborative groups. In the preparing for the future and our work in development of leadership, we need to strengthen sustainability, professional agency and holistic understanding as the signposts of it at different levels from macro to micro dimensions and in relation to the educational policy and ideals.

Target Audience of the Volume

This volume provides both theory-based understanding and empirical points of view to investigate and develop educational leadership for the future. The focus is on internationally timely issues around leadership in educational contexts with a Finnish twist. As stated above, our aim is to provide comprehensive understanding about the present and future complex conditions educational practitioners are coping with. Hence, the volume has been designed and written for a wide audience. First, the issues discussed in this volume will be of relevance to professionals in education. The volume will help all educational staff and leaders, teachers, day-care centre directors, school leaders, principals and administrators working in education to understand the specifics of the changing macro- and micro-level environments and its effects on leadership and school practices. Second, the volume is an essential textbook for all students on undergraduate and postgraduate courses in education and educational leadership. Third, the volume will be of interest to academics and researchers who are looking for new insights and ideas for their research.

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The first section of this book places leadership in educational contexts in a wider framework both internationally and within Finland. What kind of educational leadership can be found in Finland? How has it evolved and developed over the years? How have international educational trends affected the national educational leadership? What educational policies are leading the development of the educational leadership in Finland of today? The multilevel educational leadership from transnational organisations to the strong central national institutions and further to autonomous municipalities, organisations and individual educational leaders represent a diverse context that is important to investigate, define and describe.

Chapter 2 looks at Finnish educational policy, governance and leadership as a significant reason for Finnish success in the PISA tests. Through this lens, we see a Finland that can well be described as a national experimental laboratory with a lot of diversity lurking below the surface. The chapter positions and conceptualises Finnish educational leadership in the international setting, as well as providing a concise description of its recent evolvement. Chapter 3 focuses on principalship in the light of dissertations on school leadership from 2000 to 2020, thus positioning and conceptualising Finnish principalship in the setting presented in Chap. 2. The positioning and conceptualisation include an international perspective allowing international readers to compare principalship in their own national setting with that of Finland. Chapter 4 presents an example of research-based experiments to develop multiform professional educational leadership implemented in the Finnish context. The chapter describes the aspects, support and elements of leadership development in education. These results can help both national and international audiences in the corresponding professional development experiments taking place in their countries and educational systems. Chapter 5 takes a deep look into innovative co-creation processes, especially the service design thinking method to solve common challenges faced by educational leaders. Design thinking has been implemented widely in management education, but it has rarely been applied to educational leadership. The chapter includes both a literature review on the utilisation of service design in educational leadership and an empirical study on applying design thinking in educational leadership.

Chapter 2
Educational Policy, Governance, and Leadership

Jukka Alava, Pia Kola-Torvinen, and Mika Risku

Abstract This chapter investigates the educational policy and governance, and also leadership in educational contexts in Finland from the 1950s into today's on-going reforms. The investigation continues the debates of several Finnish researchers on past Finnish educational policy and administration. In addition, it follows the recent research on how school keeping has evolved into the present educational leadership in Finland. This research also presented the general definition for Finnish educational leadership applied in this chapter. As to the description and definition of educational policy and governance, the handling will follow research on the development of Finnish educational policy and governance in the Finnish complex and dynamic operational environment during the 2000s. Finally, the chapter investigates how Finland appears to be directing and developing its educational policy, governance, and leadership into the future. This includes the analysis of the Finnish government Education Policy Account 2021, which maps Finnish educational policy, governance, and leadership into 2040, and of other relevant topical education policy documents. With the analysis, we present both future aspirations and educational policy mechanisms, efforts, and experimentation to reach the aspired education policy goals.

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Introduction

It is widely accepted that education is one of the key drivers in societal development. There are several examples where the efforts in improving education have made a significant impact on the overall well-being of citizens. The role and forms of educational solutions vary a lot depending on the status of the nation in question. Some countries are talking about nation building and some others about future creation. The aim of this chapter is to describe this development in Finland.

The development of education is determined by the educational policy and governance of the nation. These, as we know, change radically because of different assumptions and practices. Therefore, it is essential to get to know the various paradigms that guide different models and study their impact in the various fields of education – from national and local policy and governance to school-level leadership and management solutions, and to teacher education and teaching practices. This chapter takes a closer look in their development in Finland and analyses the impact of different policy and governance solutions. Additional focus is on the present situation which gives the foundation for developmental trajectories.

The analyses and discussions in this chapter are based on an intensive literature review of Finnish education policy and governance, especially in mind of the changing role of educational leaders and staff in general in the altering operational environment. The description of the change and development process also includes the publications and personal experiences of the writers of this chapter lasting jointly over 50 years as educators, principals, educational administrators, and researchers starting from the early 1970s up to today.

As an illustrative framework and analytical tool, a metaphor of pendulum is used developed by Jukka Alava and both presented and applied in Alava et al. (2012) to describe the paradigmatic changes of educational administration from the extreme autocratic, top-down government to the almost opposite, democratic, bottom-up governance where most decisions were delegated, and how there has been a turn towards a more regulated system again. Figure 2.1 presents the pendulum metaphor used in this chapter in an arbitrary point for the symbolic description of change in the paradigm of educational governance.
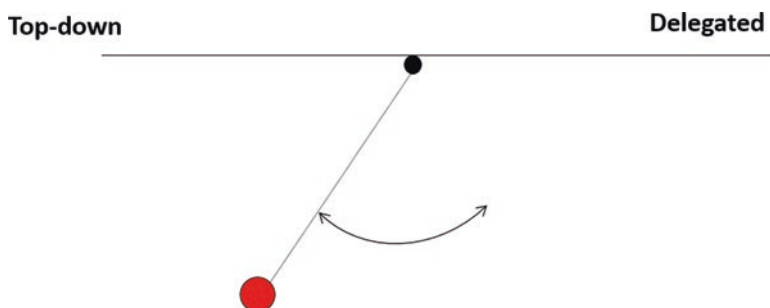
Fig. 2.1 Pendulum at an arbitrary point of governance evolvement

Figure 2.1 presents the pendulum metaphor used in this chapter, just as an example, in an arbitrary point, for the symbolic description of change in the paradigm of educational governance.

Conceptualisation of Educational Policy, Governance, and Leadership in Finland

As the heading implies, we will here focus on how Finns conceptualise educational policy, governance, and leadership. Special emphasis is given to provide a foundation to interpret the historical and topical description of Finnish educational policy, governance, and leadership in this chapter and book.

Seek (2008) claims that Finland has not been able to develop internationally adopted leadership theories, models, and practices. In addition, she argues that Finnish ways of organisation and leadership have not been identified or recognised internationally, nor domestically really. Furthermore, she states that global leadership paradigms have been adopted late in Finland, and in ways peculiar for Finland. The last notion can be extended to apply also to global policy and governance trends (e.g., Risku et al., 2016; Risku & Tian, 2020; Simola et al., 2017). Hence, we consider it not surprising how the conceptions of educational policy, governance, and leadership have been evolving in ways peculiar to Finland, too. In fact, following contingency theory, we would anticipate that there is no universal uniform understanding of the concepts.

Of the three concepts of educational policy, governance, and leadership, we regard educational policy the most consistently conceived by Finns. According to the fundamental work on the concept of educational policy in Finland by Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999), Finnish educational policy refers to the will society expresses for education. Education, they define as society's formal arrangements for learning. Policy, in turn, they relate with how various actors construct, determine, and enact the societal will for the educational goals and for the arrangements to achieve them. Furthermore, they position Finnish educational policy within the general societal decision-making and regard it as one of the means to enact overall social policy. This is also the conception we apply in this chapter,

Furthermore, Finnish educational policy reflects the societal aspirations to proactively meet the changes in the operational environment (Hellström, 2008). For example, Tian and Risku (2019) identified a strong connection between the socioeconomic and ideological status of Finnish society and the goals set in the national core curriculums throughout the independence of Finland.

Finnish educational policy is both contextual and dynamic. It also contains its own special characteristics. For example, as earlier noted, Risku et al. (2016) learnt that Finnish education policy follows international ideological trends somewhat delayed and, when following, enacts them at an intensive pace, unlike the other Nordic countries (Simola et al., 2017).

As earlier noted, in the same way as educational policy follows overall societal policy, how the legal activities of the state and of other public actors enact their tasks and functions, including their administrative organisations and authorities, educational governance appears to follow overall societal governance in Finland (Risku & Tian, 2020). In this chapter, we will try to describe how government has evolved into governance in the Finnish educational setting and what Finnish educational governance looks like today.

As for educational leadership, there was no concept for it until 2013 in the Finnish language. Either people referred to the various formal leadership positions in education, as to principals, or to general leadership concepts, such as shared leadership. The introduction of the concept of school leadership was a significant step forward towards a more comprehensive understanding of leadership in the field of education. However, as the operational environment evolved altering educational organisations and their leadership, neither referring to formal leadership positions, to general leadership concepts, or to schools was enough to serve the research, education, and development of leadership in the field of education (Risku & Alava, 2021).

In 2013, the University of Jyväskylä opened a vacancy for a professorship to focus on the phenomenon of leadership in the field of education. There were several options for the Finnish concept for the discipline due to the English concept of education having several possible counterparts in the Finnish language, all of them containing their own special connotations. Following the taxonomy of educational policy concepts in Finland, the discipline was named educational leadership (Risku & Alava, 2021). Today, it also includes emphasizing that it comprises also early childhood education.

In this chapter, we try to describe how the view on leadership in the field of education has evolved from being narrowed to formal leadership positions and managing schools into the diversity, collaboration, and dynamism of today's educational leadership, and what it is like in present-day Finland.

Development of Finnish Educational Policy, Governance, and Leadership

To understand changes in Finnish society, Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999) and Lampinen (2000) used the theories of long cycles in societal development. They studied a period of almost 100 years starting from the period of autonomy (1809–1919) until the end of the last millennium. They divided the development in five major cycles out of which the two latest are of great interest in this chapter because the changes of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s are of utmost importance in understanding the development of educational leadership in Finland.

The fourth long cycle in their analyses can be seen started after the war lasting to the end of the 1980s. There can be two distinct phases located in this cycle: the 1950 to the 1960s often called Nation-building characterised by the expansion of

schooling, and the 1970s to the 1980s characterised by the turn towards decentralisation. Since the work of Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999), also other researchers have utilised the framework of long cycles (Temmes, 2008; Uljens & Nyman, 2013). Temmes (2008) considered that the year 1966 was a major turning point. During the rule of several left-centre governments, the building of the welfare state accelerated, and the administrative structures and culture were renewed, and planning and managerialism increased.

The cycle starting in the 1980s meant new changes. The economic development was significant. Market-driven economy started to replace the earlier strongly state-driven and regulated economy. Freedom and individualism became main drivers for society, with less emphasis on equality, which had been one of the core issues for decades. The new postmodern era liberated the society from conformity into individualism and freedom of choice (Lehtisalo & Raivola, 1999). Securing the national competitiveness became one of the key arguments and doctrines also in developing education. Schooling was seen as a path towards material wealth. The economic aspects of education were emphasised with focus in the quality of education leading to the 1990s with an emphasis on results-based education continuing to present millennium.

As we can see from the studies of the long cycles mentioned above, the educational policy and governance of Finland have been fluctuating from a highly autocratic and hierarchical system via a decentralised period into a widely delegated administration, and then returning somewhat back towards centralisation. This fluctuation can be called 'the pendulum effect', described earlier, and it reflects the overall development of the Finnish society, and we use it below to explain the changes that took place.

In the 1950s, which is the starting pointing for our investigation, the pendulum was at its extreme on one side of the pendulum swing – let us say the left – practically having the pendulum in a vertical position for the highly autocratic and top-down government. The reasons for this can be traced to Finnish history. The traditions from the Swedish and Russian eras of Finland have had long-lasting effects in all administration in Finland with a strong central guidance and control in all aspects of society manifesting a rather weak civil society (Risku, 2014).

Just after the Second World War, Finland was in a bad shape. As Finns express it, Finland became second in the war but stayed independent. It was a beaten, poor, agrarian society. The educational policy in Finland in the early 1950s was, according to Lampinen (2000), strongly reactive to the changes in the operational environment. First, the large war indemnities caused a sudden demand of skilled workers in the respective industries. Second, the significantly risen birth rate resulted in a growing demand for all-round education. The third major factor that changed the education was the fast transformation from an agricultural society into an industrial one, which typical of Finland took place internationally viewed rather late. The number of primary schools grew rapidly, especially in rural areas. Also, several vocational schools were founded in the 1950s. Most importantly, Finns saw the first phases of continuous educational renewal in the country (Aho et al., 2006).

Post–Second World War Finland has had two main education policy eras. Both eras correspond to the general societal development in Finland. In fact, one could say that they were formed to meet the challenges the Finnish society encountered during the period. The first era, 1944–1980, comprises of the final stage in the state's aspiration to transform the class society deriving from the Middle Ages into an egalitarian democracy and welfare state through a centralised, norm-based, and system-oriented government. The second one starting in the 1980s involved the preservation and advancement of social justice, and also the development of local autonomy in an economically and demographically challenging context through a decentralised governance (Risku, 2014).

The National Board of Education guided the schoolwork in primary schools with statues from 1952 and 1957. Despite the state guidance, the schools had a significant amount of autonomy in conducting education. The structure of educational governance, however, remained hierarchical. The curriculum was planned by the teachers, approved by the local school board, and confirmed by the primary school inspector. The decision-making in primary schools was very different from that of curriculum planning. The educational administration was in the hands of the state, but schools had considerable autonomy in their own curriculum work (Risku, 2014).

The function of educational planning was, according to Lampinen (2000), one of the key means of Finnish social policy. There are other views, too. Kivinen (1988) argued that the educational policy in Finland in the 1950s and the 1960s did not regard education as a force for change and development but as a force to dampen the underlying societal change forces. The educational doctrine emphasised comprehensiveness, long-term focus, and integration with overall societal planning. The state regulated education through government subsides, inspections, and the obligation to have all major decisions confirmed by the state. For example, the local school boards elected the headmasters and teachers, but the decisions had to be confirmed by the inspectors (Sarjala, 1982).

The status of the headmaster in the primary school was defined in legislation in 1957. The headmaster was appointed by the local school board for a four-year period. The position was not very much wished for; teachers were appointed as headmasters even against their will particularly in small rural schools. The status or the salary of the headmaster was not high. The position was practically not the position of the headmaster, but that of the teacher with somewhat reduced teaching duties added with the duties of the headmaster. Only in larger cities the position began to resemble 'real' principalship (Isosomppi, 1996). No official statutes for the eligibility of the headmaster existed nor significant organised training for the task.

The years after the Second World War meant a major development both economically, technologically, and socially changing the context dramatically. Education was one of the drivers for this change, but it was also under pressure to change and develop itself (Alava, 2007).

The educational policy and administration were strongly in the hands of the government and the National of the Board of Education. The limited resources of local authorities called for a strongly centralised system. The post-war period was characterised by a strong centrally guided educational policy with the focus on

effectiveness. The educational doctrine emphasised comprehensiveness, long-term focus, and integration with overall societal planning. The state regulated education through government subsides, inspections, and requiring all major decisions to be confirmed by the state. The local school boards elected the headmasters and teachers, but the decisions had to be confirmed by the inspectors.

As presented in Fig. 2.2, the pendulum had its peak in the early 1970s, when the role of the Ministry of Education was strengthened reflecting the hierarchical, centre-oriented planning philosophy in education. Special planning departments were founded in the Ministry of Education, in the National Board of Education, and in the Provincial State Offices. Many inspectors oversaw everything that took place in schools (Nikki, 2000; Varjo, 2007). It has been argued that schoolwork in the 1970s presupposed teachers working closely following the very detailed legislature. Everything was managed top-down, and the quality of competence of highly qualified teachers was heavily undermined (Alava, 2007).

The tight top-down administration was, however, needed so that the next important renewal could take place. Up until the 1970s, compulsory education was provided in the folk school system. After its fourth form, students could apply to grammar school, which was divided into the five-year lower and three-year upper secondary school. Others continued in the folk school for 2–4 years more, and then possibly continued in vocational education (Alava, 2007).

A major renewal took place in the 1970s. Then, a nine-year compulsory school common to the entire age group, i.e., the comprehensive school was created based on the earlier folk and lower secondary school (Ministry of Education, 1999), forming the foundation for the present education system as presented later in Fig. 2.6. The first curriculum for the new comprehensive school continued to reflect the tight governmental control of the time (Alava, 2007).

The 1968 Act on the Foundations of the Education System (1968/467) mandated local authorities to establish a separate office for the director or secretary of the local provision of education, i.e., the office of the municipal director of education. They were to aid the local school board in the preparation, supervision, and execution of local educational issues. The municipality-level school boards appointed the headmasters of the comprehensive schools after consulting with the teachers. (Risku, 2014).

As discussed earlier, there was not much room in real educational leadership or management in the schools because of the tight legislature. The tasks of the headmaster changed significantly towards a government official, a civil servant, and a
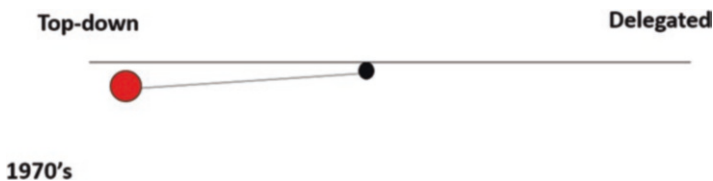
Fig. 2.2 Pendulum at its extreme point of centralised government in the 1970s

school advisory board secretary with the focus in collecting information (Isosomppi, 1969). Although the legislature talked about leading and guiding schoolwork, the real possibilities of the headmaster to affect the work of the school were limited due to the weak status of the school advisory boards. However, the role of instructional leadership was mentioned in the statues stronger than earlier. The means of management were the norms for schoolwork and for the overall administrative collection of rules and regulations. The focus of the work of the headmaster was passing administrative information amongst the hierarchical levels in the educational administration. The state-centred aim was securing the structural reform in education (Alava, 2007).

The central government had a strict control over local authorities. The school head was the local representative of the state's school administration at the school level (Mustonen, 2003). During the 1960s and 1970s, the authoritarian top-down school administration was emphasised – and culminated – in the work of principals and school heads, until it started to unravel in around 1972 and 1973 due to the growing social pressure (Alava, 2007).

The Role of Teachers and Principals

Educational policy decisions for teacher education have been of outmost importance for Finland. Finnish teacher education started in 1863 in the city of Jyväskylä, in a seminary, which became a university in 1966. The first teacher training programme took three years to complete. In 1974, teacher training was renewed in Finland, transformed and offered at four other universities, too, and extended to five years of education, with the aim of obtaining a master's degree upon completion. And, as argued by Alava (2016), this policy, linked with the popularity of the teacher's profession in Finland, has been recognised as one of the key factors behind the good PISA results in Finland.

In 1978, individual principals' status changed considerably due to a so-called principal decision, which introduced overall working hours for principals in general education for secondary and for large primary education schools. According to Alava et al. (2012), this reform realised the objective of permanent posts for principals, advocated by individual principals and the Finnish Association of Principals since the 1950s. The recognition of the principal's occupation as a specific profession made considerable progress.

New Perspectives for Administration

The economic development in Finland in the 1980s was significant. Market-driven economy started to replace the earlier strongly state-driven and regulated economy. Freedom and individualism became main drivers for society, with diminished

emphasis on equality, which had been the core goal for decades (Alava, 2007; Risku, 2014). The new postmodern era liberated society from conformity into individualism and freedom of choice (Lehtisalo & Raivola, 1999). Securing the national competitiveness became one of the key arguments and doctrines also in developing education. At the school level, teachers started to criticise the tight curriculum, and a 'silent revolution' started in the late 1970s (Alava et al., 2012). The pendulum started to move from its extreme position towards a more democratic way as presented in Fig. 2.3. This change was inevitable, but it needed major reforms in society and many years to be completed.

The changes were materialised in the amendments of educational legislation in 1983/1985 emphasising decentralisation and internal development of schools. According to Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999), this new legislation was the largest school reform yet in the history of Finnish educational administration. The ultimate reform was prepared under six different Ministers of Education. The legislation implied a new strategy to develop schools demanding action at the school level (Isosomppi, 1996). The ruling focused on improving the overall effectiveness of education and the results of individual schools. Responsibility was significantly transferred to local authorities and schools. The legislation of 1983 also stated that each municipality must have its own director of educational affairs – the municipal director of education (Risku, 2014).

The curriculum renewal in 1985 was another step towards more delegation in educational governance. It had some national elements, but it also left space for municipal-level applications. Individual schools could be more independent and innovative. Some schools started to focus more on sports and others in languages. The earlier uniform school culture began to diversify and have new school-based nuances. The metaphor of the pendulum used in this chapter can be seen moved to its mid-point in administration and still moving towards a more delegated and bottom-up position, as presented in Fig. 2.4 (Alava, 2007).

The 1990s was the final step in the long process of decentralising educational administration and transformation into the results-oriented educational policy
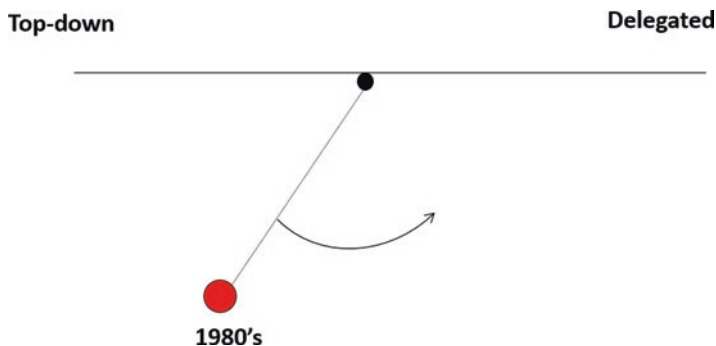
Fig. 2.3 Pendulum starting to move in the early 1970s towards a more democratic way reaching the mid-point of this evolvement in the late-1980s

Top-down   **Delegated**
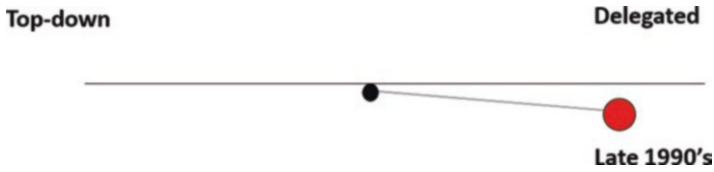
Late 1990's

Fig. 2.4 Pendulum starting to reach its peak in the bottom-up paradigm in the late 1990s

(Lampinen, 2000). Several changes in the external environment of the nation and its educational system forced it into reorientations. Finland was transforming from the industrial society into the service and information one with a strong new demand for knowledge work and for high technology (Kivinen, 1988), In addition, international cooperation increased, globalisation took wide steps, and the geopolitical situation of Finland changed radically, when it joined the European Union in 1995 (Simola et al., 2017) and the next major wave of change was clearly on the way, often called the period of sustainable development (Uljens & Nyman, 2013). It was not a smooth period, though. A deep recession in early 1990s shook up the society thoroughly (Risku, 2014).

Simultaneously with the new legislation, a new effort was made to improve educational leadership education and preparation for principals. The first official statute regarding principal eligibility was set in 1992. The law of 1992 stated that a special examination of educational administration was a prerequisite for an appointment to the principalship. The examination focused on administrative issues, the legislature, and the finances of the school; no elements of educational leadership were included.

Looking to the Future

The mid-1990s meant the rise of strategic thinking in the development of educational policy and educational governance in Finland. It is also the decade during which several Finnish scholars (e.g., Anttiroiko et al., 2007; Varjo, 2007; Salminen, 2008) argue Finland moved from government into governance thinking. The centralised state government system no longer corresponded to the needs of the evolving operational environment and to the altering value climate of Finland. The centralised, norm-based, and system-oriented government had become inflexible, undemocratic, and outworn. It was no longer able to meet with the requirements of the changing operational environment and with the altering value climate of Finland. It was replaced by a new approach to meet local authorities' demands for more autonomy with fewer regulations and less control (Committee Report, 1986; Niemelä, 2008; Risku, 2014).

In 1993, the Ministry of Education prepared a National Strategy for Education and Culture. The document also included the strategy for continuous learning. It was followed by the National Strategy for education in 1994 and the Knowledge strategy for Education and Research in 1996, renewed in 1999. The parliament also

agreed that the success factors for Finland in the future would be conscious participation in globalisation, full utilisation of knowledge and technology, humanity and innovations, and personal control of life. All the previous are, according to Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999), issues of learning. Thus, learning, know-how, and life-long-learning became the main strategies for the whole country towards the new millennium (Alava, 2016; Risku, 2014).

In 1999, Finland completed a major reform of educational legislation, which was preceded by earlier reforms in 1985, 1991, and 1993. The 1985 reform for comprehensive schools and general upper secondary schools introduced the lesson framework system significantly ensuring and increasing school-based decision-making. The changes in 1991 legislature abolished the task lists of school heads and principals from both the Comprehensive Schools Decree and the General Upper Secondary Schools Decree. In addition, the 1992 Act on the Administration in the Local Provision of Education (1992/706) did no longer require the municipalities to have a separate office of the municipal director of education introduced to guarantee the implementation of the comprehensive education reform in 1968.

The legislation of 1999 was significant in many ways. The main issue in the legislation was the system of regulating education. The new doctrine in this cycle was a totally different perspective on regulation. Instead of ruling and guiding the work in individual educational institutions, as it had been for over 100 years, the ruling now focused on education as a function in society. The ruling thus covered issues as goals of education, content of education, quality of education, evaluation of educational results, forms, and levels of education, and the right and duties of students (Lehtisalo & Raivola, 1999).

There are no more rulings about the rights and duties of teachers nor specifications for the appointment procedures of teachers in educational legislation. In the new system, all those are determined in general legislation, and in the local ordinances of municipalities and other education providers. Local authorities and other education providers thus have strong autonomy in deciding education. They can independently decide what teaching positions schools have and what are the duties of teachers, as well as of other educational staff and leaders (Risku, 2014, see also Souri, 2009). The pendulum of educational administration had moved to the other extreme position, as presented in Fig. 2.4.

The Changing Roles of the Relationship Between the State and the Municipalities

It is important to notice that Finland is divided into municipalities whose autonomy is ensured in the constitution. The primary task of local authorities is to enhance the well-being of their inhabitants and the sustainable progress of themselves. Local authorities have the responsibility to fulfil the tasks which are mandated to them; in several education forms, they are the main local education providers with an

educational administrator as a chief officer. Local authorities have a wide autonomy how they carry out their tasks (Risku, 2014).

The concept of the fourth way introduced by Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) as a perspective to describe the relationship between the state and local authorities well corresponds with the Finnish education system. Accordingly, the education system is steered from the top, built from the bottom and supported from the sides. One example of the guidance and support functions of the National Board of Education was publishing the quality criteria for basic education in 2012. The aim was to give concrete guidelines for schools to help their self-evaluation processes. It consisted of several 'quality cards' in areas of leadership, personnel, finances, and evaluation. The use of these quality criteria was voluntary, and there is no data describing how many schools really utilised them in practice, but the general opinion is that their effect was short term.

In vocational education, the National Board of Education published in 2009 a recommendation of quality criteria based on the (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQARF) framework) including different phases in quality assurance: planning, execution, evaluation, and verifying. There are specific quality criteria and indicators to support the utilisation of the framework in practice.

A more recent effort starting in 2019 is an initiative called 'Varda' which is a major project collecting various data, first on early childhood institutions' operational practices and then to be utilised in overall quality work of these institutions. There is also a plan to widen this concept to basic education.

Although international research had showed a long time ago the importance of principals' leadership competencies in schools, university-level qualification education for principals was enabled as late as in 1998 in the Teaching Qualifications Decree (986/1998). The possibility initiated by the Institute of Educational Leadership at the University of Jyväskylä marks the beginning of systematic academic research, education, and development of educational leadership in Finland and is regarded as a necessary qualifying education by, for example, most Finnish municipal directors of education (Alava et al., 2021; Kanervio & Risku, 2009).

According to the Decree, which is still in force, a person is qualified as a principal, when he or she has a higher university degree; the teaching qualifications in the relevant form of education; sufficient work experience in teaching assignments; and a completed qualification in educational administration in accordance with requirements adopted by the Finnish National Board of Education, or studies in educational administration with no less than 25 ECTS credits organised by a university, or otherwise obtained sufficient knowledge of educational administration.

Already in 1996, the importance of principals' training was realised in the University of Jyväskylä, when the university president Sallinen founded the Institute of Educational leadership and gave it a significant task: to develop studies beyond the minimum of 25 ECTS credits, develop the path to doctoral studies, launch the first cohort of PhD students, and develop international contacts. This all has taken place, and later several other universities in Finland have also launched similar programmes.

New Supportive National Institutions

At present, the general steering of the educational system is still decided by the Ministry of Education. However, several matters have been entrusted to education providers. Their operations are steered through the core curricula, and their objectives are laid down in legislation. Feedback concerning operations of the educational system and of individual schools is collected by means of statistics and evaluation reports. According to the Ministry of Education (1999), these provide the basis of information to steer education. This transformation to self-evaluation meant a total paradigm shift in educational administration. The shift was possible mainly because of the trusting culture in the entire education system in Finland – people trust teachers, principals, and decision-makers. In practice, many elements were left unsolved to ensure education providers autonomy to establish and develop their evaluation practices. The objectivity of self-evaluations remained a question, and the lack of feedback and support from the municipal education provider based on the evaluation was a major drawback (Lapiolahti, 2007). In addition to trust, a resource-based cause for the drawback can be found, too. The number of people in educational administration outside schools faced a 40% drop during 1990–1995 (Hirvi, 1996). As a result of the drop, the size of administrative staff supporting the work of educational staff and leaders is mostly very small in both Finnish municipalities and schools (Kanervio & Risku, 2009; Risku, 2014).

An important step further was the foundation of the Finnish Education Evaluation Council at the University of Jyväskylä, which was later transformed into the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FEEC) operating both in Helsinki and in Jyväskylä, and today attached to the Finnish National Agency for Education. Its evaluation activities comprise national learning outcome assessments, thematic and system evaluations, and evaluations of quality systems, including audits of higher education institutions.

Another highly important institute supporting education was the foundation of the Finnish Institute for Educational Research already in 1968, attached at the University of Jyväskylä. Its aim is to support teachers, educational establishments, and decision-makers in the promotion of learning and development of education. The research and development activities have opened different views to educational phenomena and produced reliable information to support both national-level and educational establishment policies (see Fig. 2.6).

A major reform to enhance education in Finland was the renewal of vocational education in 2018. The education for young people and adults was consolidated, forming a single entity with its own steering and regulation system, and financing model. The earlier supply-oriented approach was refocused into a demand-driven approach. Education is competence-based and customer-oriented: Each student is offered the possibility to design an individually appropriate path to finish an entire qualification or a supplementary skill set. The primary importance is on what the student learns and can do (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).

Linked to these rapid changes and developments in society and industry, the system of polytechnics, also called universities of applied sciences, was created in the 1990s. As explained by Alava (2016), these colleges are tertiary-level institutions, but they are not universities; rather they are linked to practical professions mainly in the industrial sector (see Fig. 2.1). So, we can see that the development of education and that of society have been walking together on the path of our national development.

Special Aspects of Finnish Education Reforms

Continuity has been of great importance in the Finnish education policy. After the Second World War, the field of education enjoyed remarkable national appreciation. Everyone, including politicians, practitioners, university professors, and the media, valued education highly. Debates on education have mainly had a very positive sound, too. In addition, there has been broad unison on the main goals of Finnish education policy (Alava, 2016).

Even if local political decision-makers have changed during elections (every 4 years), the main education resolutions have remained unchanged. This has laid a solid foundation for managing and leading local, municipal-level education policies, and practices at the school level. Administrators and school heads have been able to plan several years ahead. In many other countries, such as England and the United States, radical changes for the better could have occurred had there been no major policy change after the election of a new political party.

Another noticeable element in the new way of educational administration was the planning of the new curriculum in comprehensive education in 2014. It was a lengthy process initiated by the director of the National Board of Education with a planning process involving many educators and professionals with two rounds of public commentary open for everyone. This transparent and participatory process was a key element in the wide commitment to the renewal (Tian & Risku, 2019).

The bottom-up administrative system created a new situation. Because the municipalities and schools now had the power to make their own decisions and models for local education administration, several different arrangements also took place. Municipalities made decisions that best suited their needs, and schools made novel and innovative practices. The schools both had to, and were able to, make these. This, on the other hand, created new demand for principals' leadership competencies and new challenges for institutions of educational leadership.

In addition to the change of the guiding paradigm – from top-down into bottom-up – there have been several important policy changes in education. In 2013, early childhood education was moved from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health into the Ministry of Education. This had significant effects on the local level because both schools and day-care centres are now part of educational governance. Furthermore, the health and social services reform of 2021 moved health and social

services from the local to the new regional level at the beginning of 2023, which has increased the importance of education in all municipalities.

Another important reform concerns special education services. It now begins already in early childhood education and comprises also comprehensive and secondary education. The key factor is the early recognition of learning difficulties and problems, followed by immediate support. There are three tiers of support – general, intensified, and special. The needed support may vary from temporary to continuous, from minor to major, or from one to several forms of support. This reform, however, has not taken place without problems. The new system of three tiers is developed further to meet with students' increasingly diverse needs with the main concern of the inadequate funding at school level. The demand for special education teachers is more than municipalities can provide to schools, which increases the pressure on all teachers significantly.

Also, vocational education has been radically transformed in 2018 following the changes at workplaces and amid shrinking financial possibilities. The aim was to make studies more flexible and individual for students, to move a significant part of learning to workplaces, and to introduce competence demonstrations to earn the degrees. Somewhat conflicting with the goals of this reform is the cut of funding in vocational education leading, for example, to an increased amount of distant learning, which is a big challenge in many areas of getting practical work experience.

The Finnish Education System and Its Governance

Education in Finland is steered by legislation, economy, national and local strategies, and educational evaluation (Varjo et al., 2016) following global ideological and policy trends typical of Finland (Risku & Tian, 2020). In the operations of educational institutions, particularly legislation and curriculums have significance (Eisenschmidt et al., 2021). Policy affects educational institutions through various steering systems that direct local provisions of public services nationally (normative, financial, and information steering) (Rinkinen, 2020).

The end result of the development of the educational system in Finland as described above is presented in Fig. 2.5. The present system consists of early childhood education and care, pre-primary, comprehensive (basic) and general upper secondary education, vocational education and training, higher education, as well as of basic education in the arts and liberal adult education.

According to the present education policy, every child under 6 years old has a subjective right to attend early childhood education and care (ECEC). This can take place at day-care centres or in smaller family day-care groups in private homes. ECEC services can be provided both by local authorities and by private education providers. The fees are moderate and based on parents' incomes. This principle applies to all education forms in the Finnish education system; compulsory education is totally free of charge, and other forms are heavily subsidised by the government. The parents of the child decide whether their child participates in early

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND
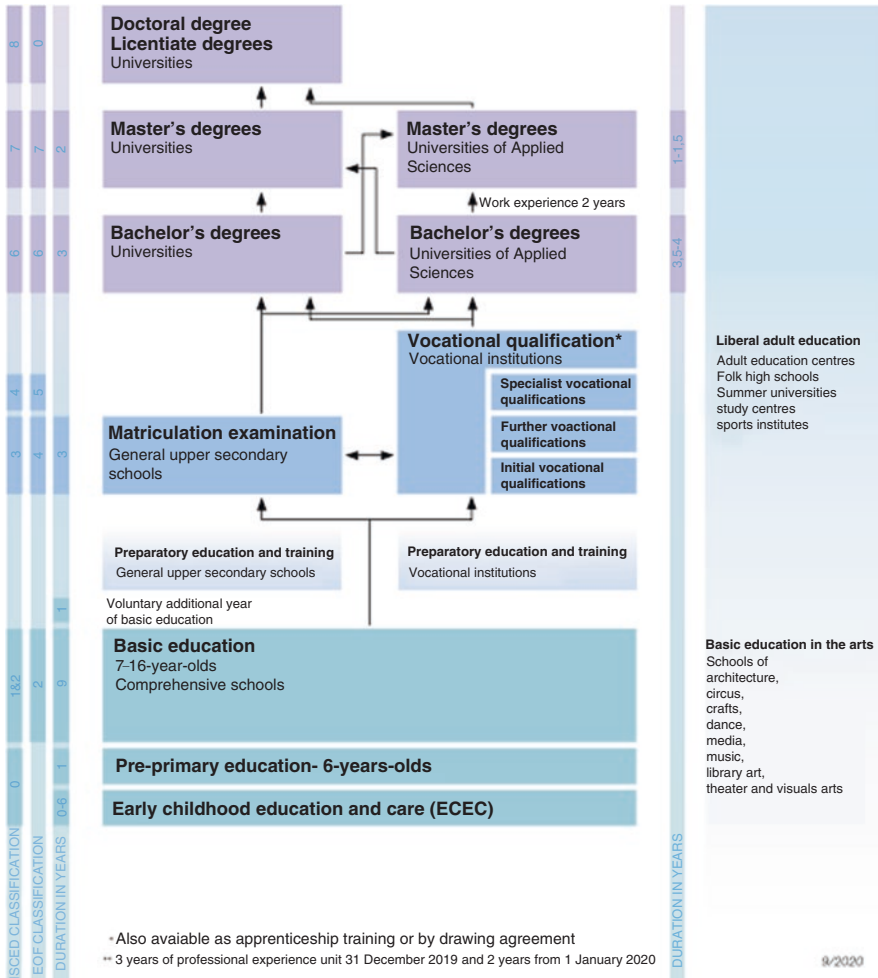
Fig. 2.5 Finnish education system. (Finnish Government, 2021, p. 11)

childhood education and care. It is also possible to care for the child at home until the child turns 6 years. For the three first years of home care, families can receive home care allowance. Pre-primary education is compulsory for children of the age of 6. Pre-primary education is provided both at kindergartens and at schools.

Comprehensive education starts in the year when the child turns 7 and lasts for 9 years. General and vocational upper secondary education was given the status of compulsory education in 2021. Completion of upper secondary education, both general and vocational, gives students eligibility to continue to higher education. Higher education institutions offer lower, upper, and doctoral higher education degrees, as well as specialist education and continual learning.
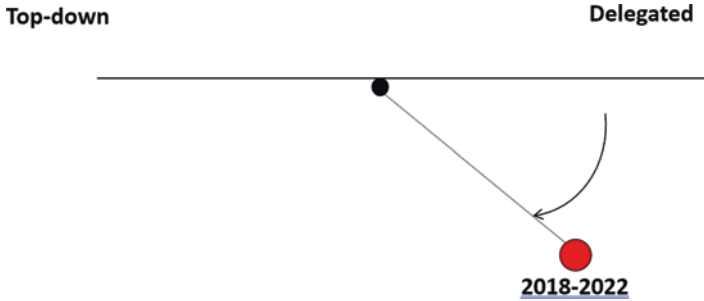
Fig. 2.6 Pendulum starting to move back towards more regulation in late 2010s and looking for an optimum position

In basic education for arts, students study architecture, visual arts, handicrafts, media arts, music, word art, circus arts, dance, and theatre arts. Liberal adult education offers non-formal studies promoting personal growth, health, and well-being by offering courses relating to citizenship skills and society and in different crafts and subjects on a recreational basis.

Parallel to overall societal development and to the evolvement of the education system, the ruling of the education system has evolved correspondingly. In the pendulum metaphor we have used, the pendulum, describing the paradigm of educational governance first moved from the extreme left of centralised government to the right of almost full autonomy, and then has started to return towards the more state-controlled position, as presented in Fig. 2.6. It seems to be in flux trying to locate an optimal position finding its way in the concept of the fourth way discussed earlier.

Figure 2.7 presents the Finnish education governance system, as it is today. It comprises of four governance lines: the state, local authorities, labour market organisations, and civic organisations. (Risku & Tian, 2020). In the system, whatever actor in whichever governance line on whatever tier of the hierarchy can contact whatever actor for interaction and cooperation. The system corresponds explicitly to how educational government in Finland has transformed into an open, dynamic, and complex educational governance.

The parliament makes decisions on legislation, funding and policies concerning the education system. The Finnish government, with the Ministry of Education and Culture under it, oversees the planning and execution of education policies. In Finland, the national administration of education and training has a two-tier structure. First, the Ministry of Education and Culture outlines the general lines and strategy of education, science, culture, sport, and youth policies, and also those for international cooperation in these fields. The Ministry of Education and Culture is also responsible for preparing educational legislation and all publicly funded education in Finland. Second, the Finnish National Agency for Education is the national development agency responsible for early childhood education and care, pre-primary, basic, general, and vocational upper secondary education as well as for adult education and training. Higher education is the responsibility of the Ministry

EDUFI= Finnish National Agency for Education
AFLRA= Association for Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
FINEEC=Finnish National Education Evaluation Council
MEB=Matriculation Examination Board
FIER= Finnish Institute for Educational Research
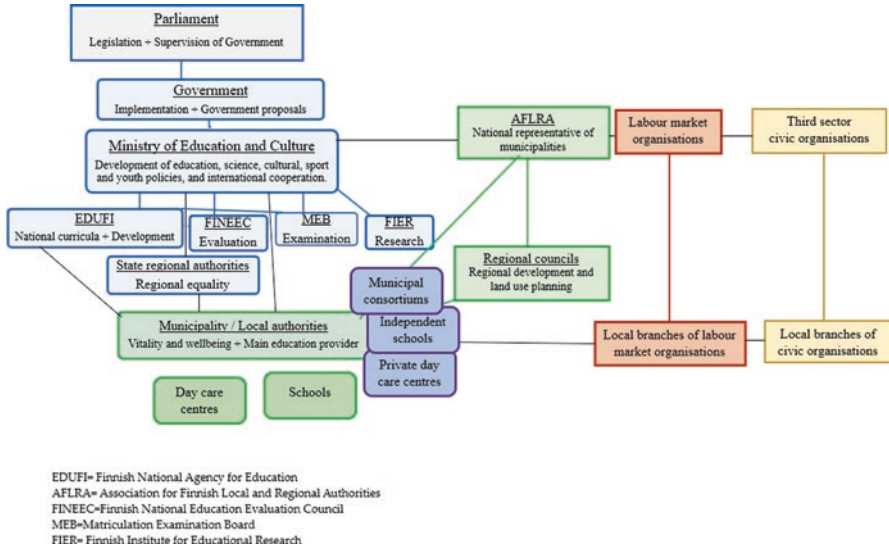
Fig. 2.7 Finnish education governance system. (Modified from Risku & Tian, 2020)

of Education and Culture. Research in higher education institutions is overseen by the Academy of Finland.

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) and the Matriculation Examination Board (MEB) are attached to the National Agency for Education as independent governmental agencies. The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) answers for the national evaluation of education. The Matriculation Examination Board (MEB) is a governmental bureau responsible for administering, arranging, and executing the national high-stake examination for upper secondary students.

At the regional level, state governance is presently divided into six State Regional Administrative Agencies. The Regional State Administrative Agencies promote the legal protection of pupils and students by handling complaints and assessment rectification requests. Regional councils conduct planning and development projects regionally under the authority of Finnish municipalities.

Local authorities are responsible for providing pre-primary, basic education, and early childhood education for all children in their area. Upper secondary education and vocational training can be organised by municipalities, joint municipal authorities, (private) registered communities, or foundations. In some cases, vocational training is also offered by the government or state-owned enterprises.

The provision of Finnish education is often presented as uniform and solely consisting of municipal educational institutions. However, as the latest government education policy report (2021) states, the overall situation is much more diverse. In pre-primary and comprehensive education, other education providers than local authorities are exceptions. In early childhood education, there are large numbers of private education providers, too. Most general education upper secondary schools

are municipal, but the separation from lower secondary education schools and the obligation to cooperate with vocational upper secondary education is changing the situation. As for vocational education, only the largest cities can operate vocational education as sole education providers. Typically, local authorities combine their forces into municipal consortia or other legal entities to provide vocational education. Institutions for liberal adult education and for basic education in arts, as well as universities have various legal forms. Universities have their own autonomy and form of public legal entities.

Present Status of Finnish Educational Policy, Governance, and Leadership

During the past decade, the pace of educational reform processes has accelerated, partly through political guidance, but also due to the influence of social changes. In Finland, the local governance reform in addition to demographic changes, the health and social services reform, the increased cultural diversity, globalisation, as well as economic challenges have been causing functional and structural changes to the education system and its governance.

The effects of the global pandemic have reflected in almost all areas of life, and education is no exception. Distance education in Finnish schools and educational institutions were highly successful considering the circumstances. This is attributed to the high professional skills of teachers and society's investments in education and digitalisation (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2020). The present time challenges educational staff and leaders to reflect how to provide education that is building a sense of community and supporting each child's and student's well-being. Learning takes place everywhere and learning based only on formal curricula has changed. The transformation of learning is explained and described by the fact that a large part of learning has moved outside the school building and classroom. New technologies also offer a new context for learning.

The health and social services reform is also having an impact on Finnish education. The responsibility for organising public health and social services is transferred from municipalities to the well-being services counties from 2023. The key objective of the reform is to improve the availability and quality of basic public services throughout Finland. The effectiveness of cooperation between municipalities and welfare services counties is very important, especially on the connecting surfaces of services. For example, cooperation between comprehensive education and student welfare is essential for the well-being of pupils. Comprehensive education is the responsibility mainly of the municipalities and student welfare of the well-being service counties. The reform will have a significant impact on the operations and finances of municipalities. In its strategic planning, the municipality must set targets for promoting well-being and health and define measures to support the objectives.

Education Policy Report 2021

The Finnish government published an education policy report on 5.4.2021 with the aim of providing a long-term policy and guidelines for the Finnish education system. The previous report was produced more than a decade ago. The new report provides an analysis of the current state of education and presents the goals for the Finnish education, training, and research up until the 2040s. The main goal is to have a strong cultural and educational foundation built on effective and high-quality education, research, and culture. This is achieved by providing all pupils and students the right to learn and grow, and also to receive the support and guidance they need in their learning paths. Further goals include halting educational inequality, providing competent and committed teaching staff all over Finland, and taking into use new technology in all learning (Finnish Government, 2021).

The impacts of the global pandemic have mainly left the objectives and contents of the Government Programme unchanged. The government has realised the planned reforms, including the 2-year pre-primary education experiment and extending compulsory education to general secondary and vocational youth education.

Compulsory education was enacted in 1921 in Finland, as one of the last European countries, and was extended in 1957 and in 1970. The present government has continued the extensions further to raise the level of competence and prevent inequality. Legislation was reformed in 2020, extending the compulsory learning path both at the beginning and at the end. At the end, the compulsory school age was raised from 16 to 18. Compulsory education was extended, because it is increasingly hard to cope in the work-life without secondary education and higher qualifications. The extension of compulsory education aims to raise Finland's level of education and competence, reduce learning gaps, and increase equality and non-discrimination in education. The extension of compulsory education is expected to also increase the employment rate (Finnish Government, 2021).

Raising the age of compulsory education to 18 years and extending compulsory education to upper secondary education requires ensuring that all those who complete compulsory education have the knowledge, skills, and competence required for upper secondary education. Providers of comprehensive school education have the duty to intensify student guidance in compulsory education with the focus on preparing students for the next phase of studies. With this extension, all young people who have completed primary and lower secondary school (comprehensive/basic education) are obliged to apply for further studies.

The extension of compulsory education, like comprehensive education, is free for pupils and students. In addition to the education and school meals that are already free of charge, things like textbooks, school transport, supplies, and other materials needed in learning, as well as final tests are all free of charge. Applying this reform is, however, not without criticism. Opponents argue that it is too expensive for the education providers, the municipalities, which already are struggling with decreased budgets. Others argue that more support is needed in comprehensive

education to help students in need as early as possible. In a few years' time, we can see real impacts of this reform.

In addition to extending the compulsory education, a two-year pre-primary education experiment was also adopted in December 2020. Pre-primary education is usually attended for one year before the start of compulsory education, i.e., at the age of six. In the two-year pre-primary education experiment, pre-primary education is given for two years before the start of compulsory education. The experiment is free of charge for families. Only part of the children aged five and six participate in this experiment between the years 2021 and 2024. The goal of this experiment is to enhance educational equity and develop the quality and impact of the pre-primary education. The two-year pre-primary education experiment aims to increase the number of five-year-old children to participate in early childhood and pre-primary education. Furthermore, it provides insights on the impact of the five-year pre-primary education on children's development and learning competences and social skills.

The basics of the two-year pre-primary education curriculum emphasise child-centred pedagogy based on play and explorative observation, as well as taking care of children's well-being. The curriculum has strengthened competences related to a sustainable lifestyle, and to the objectives of teaching for the development of multi-literacy and linguistic and mathematical thinking. The two years are expected to offer educational staff better opportunities to reach the targets of pre-primary education. The curriculum has been drawn up in such a way that the activities and teaching according to it constitute a continuum from early childhood education and care to comprehensive education. Each child's learning path should continue flexibly from one form of education to the next, and it should be based on children's individual needs.

The strategies and goals of pre-primary education described above are very ambitious and, unfortunately, in many cases come short to be materialised. The main reasons for that are the lack of funding in municipalities and the shortage of qualified personnel in the day-care centres. Linked to the overall economic downturn, this will be one of the most serious challenges for the governments and local school boards to come.

Importance of Educational Leaders and Leadership Education

The Finnish education system gives a lot of responsibility and autonomy to education providers. The success of education reforms depends to a large extent on the enactment of local work and its management. Curricula and the basics of degrees guide the contents of the education. Based on studies, the curriculum brings to practice the latest concepts of learning and teaching, and therefore aims to reform and develop the pedagogical thinking and practices of educational leaders and staff.

In such a far-reaching change as the present reforms or experiments in Finland are, the role of educational leaders in all tiers – schools, day-care centres, and provisions of education providers – is critical. The success of the reforms depends to a great extent on how they are enacted on the local level. The leading principle of education policy is that qualified and skilled staff and educational leaders are the guarantee for good education and learning in Finland. To ensure this, the government education policy report has several goals for the development of teacher and educational leader education. An important goal is also that educational leadership competence and education should be developed systematically and based on research. In fact, the present Government Programme (Finnish Government, 2019) and Government Education Policy Report (Finnish Government, 2021) are the first of their kind in Finland mentioning educational leadership as an essential key for the quality, well-being, and development of educational institutions.

Pedagogical competence, which promotes the realisation of educational values and basic tasks and equal conditions for learning and teaching, can be considered the most important competence of educational leaders and institutions. In building the pedagogical well-being, the participation and action of pupils, students and educational staff is to be strengthened. Educational leadership is to consist of reinforcing individual and communal cooperation. Through competent educational leaders, schools and day-care centres become learning organisations, which is also to improve the quality of education (Fonsén et. al., 2021).

Educational leaders' and staff's professional learning is supported by various school-, district-, and national-level projects or activities. At the school level, teachers are developers of the school community and school culture. Higher education institutions take part in the development work by having research and development projects where educational leaders' and staff's professional learning is supported through research-practice-partnership networks.

The Finnish Teacher Education Forum (2016–2022; all the universities and universities of applied sciences, which educate educational leaders and staff, are members of the forum) has been involved creating a Teacher Education Development Programme (TEDP). The design of the programme has been based on the latest research on learning.

The programme has been prepared in broad cooperation with almost one hundred representatives from teacher and educational leader education, the Trade Union of Education in Finland, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, and the Teacher Student Union of Finland, as well as various researchers and practitioners. One of the objectives of the Teacher Education Development Programme is related to teachers' new creative skills. This also includes teachers' competence to take into use and benefit from new pedagogical innovations, such as digital learning environments. Finnish teachers are future-oriented and broad-based experts who create new pedagogical innovations and diversely utilise new learning environments and digital tools. Teachers should be able to develop, in addition to their own competence, their own working communities.

The main themes of the Teacher Education Development Programmes development process are as follows:

- Attractive teacher education with well-functioning structures, forecast, and successful student admissions
- Teachers' competence, and continuous and life-long professional learning.
- Strengthening teacher education through collaboration and networks.
- Developing educational institutions and communities with professional management and leadership.

As for educational leadership, there were four Ministry of Education key projects developing research-based educational leadership programmes 2019–2022, as presented in Chap. 4 of this book. In addition, the Ministry of Education launched a national educational leadership education development process to construct an educational entity and its curriculum for the systematic development of educational leadership education for Finland with a roadmap reaching to year 2035. The plan considers the systemic nature of the education system, the competences that educational leaders are required to have in various education forms and positions, and the continuation of the career paths of educational staff. The forthcoming educational leadership education concentrates on increasing overall leadership competencies, for example, pedagogical leadership as discussed in Chaps. 7 and 8. Special focus is set on strengthening educational equality, inclusion, gender awareness and sensitivity, and multi-professional collaboration. To achieve this, both the structures and funding models of educational leadership education are to be revised, too.

Changes in educational administration in the 1990s and 2000s have significantly affected educational leadership and job descriptions, competences, education, and qualifications of educational leaders. During this time, steering with norms was transformed into information steering expanding educational leaders' responsibilities and increasing the variation in their working environments both in relation to educational provider and unit level (Alava et al., 2012). These, in turn, have strengthened collaborative leadership in educational institutions. Collaborative leadership may be considered as one of the core characteristics of Finnish educational leadership (Jäppinen & Ciussi, 2016; Hellström et al., 2015).

Discussion

As we know from several countries, the solutions of educational administration have been rather contextual, bound to the historical situation and culture of each country. We also know that educational solutions do not travel well from one country to another. But we can learn a lot by following the different ways other countries have tried to solve the multifaceted problems in educational policy, governance, and leadership.

This chapter covers the changes and development that have taken place in Finland. What might be the most significant aspect here is the dramatic overhaul of the educational administration from top-down to bottom-up and then towards a more balanced administration.

The shift is described with the metaphor of the pendulum, which has moved from one extreme to the other and then backwards to its present state. The main lessons to learn from this change is to understand how profound the change has been and what radical modifications it has caused to the entire sector of educational policy, governance, and leadership.

According to Tian and Risku (2019), Finnish education policy has been following the overall societal policy throughout the independence of Finland. What has particularly advanced is how the various stakeholders in society are involved and included in the decision-making processes. This illustrates explicitly how ruling education in Finland has moved from government into governance both allowing the broad participation and having renewed the structures, processes, and practices for the participation. Finally, the latest Government Programme (Finnish Government, 2019) and Government Education Policy report (Finnish Government, 2021) recognise the nature and importance of educational leadership for Finnish education.

As rapid changes in the operating environment challenge the leadership and management of educational institutions, we consider it high time to recognise the collaborative nature and increasing importance of educational leadership for Finnish education. According to the leadership survey of the Finnish National Agency for Education, Finnish Education Employers, and Association of Finnish Municipalities (2020), three out of four leaders in the field of education feel that there have been a lot of changes in the operating environment over the past five years. Changes have been caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, by the increased use of digitalisation, as well as by educational reforms and changes at the local level in the organisation of education.

Only reforms that are perceived to be meaningful will succeed. The management of reform is not just a decision, but a process at different levels of the education system. It has been said that the Finnish education system is based on trust, and now this trust and leadership have been challenged during the pandemic at different levels of the system. In exceptional circumstances, the management of the crisis has become familiar to every educational leader.

The importance of information flow and communication has increased even further. Situations may have been changing daily, and anticipation and preparedness for changes have been difficult to foresee in advance. The relationship between well-being and learning has also taken on a major role during the pandemic. How is well-being managed in educational communities? We have inevitably had to learn new things and operating models by experimenting. According to the experience of educational leaders, strong and clear leadership has helped us to succeed.

The modern concept of learning challenges teachers and educational leaders to consider the dimensions of educational leadership, the construction of well-being and communality, and the support for the well-being of every child, pupil, and student. The leadership systems of Finnish educational institutions should be developed to meet the needs of modern educational institutions. It also remains to be considered how national objectives and reforms, as well as changes in society,

coincide with the current concept of educational leadership. All in all, education and educational leaders need strong support for their leadership work.

Related to the previous, we also need to rethink new roles for educational staff and leaders. We can argue that the role of educational staff and leaders is facing a major change all over the world: we can term this a paradigm change. Like argued by Alava et al. (2012), Kovalainen (2020), and Alava et al. (2021), the role of the teacher is more and more linked to the future; teachers must be viewed as creators of the future. In addition, the Finnish government Education Policy Account (2021) and the well-being services counties are renewing the mission of educational institutions in Finland. They will carry increasing responsibility for the well-being of their local communities, and their staff will all be educational leaders leading multi-professional teams for this purpose. These new challenges mean much more than the traditional role of the teacher – teaching a class or a subject for a certain number of hours per week. This leads to the need to evaluate the entire work contract and salary system of teachers, and other educational staff and leaders.

And, if the work of teachers is shaping the future, then the teacher education departments and programmes at universities need to change. According to Alava (2016), these institutions need to be the educators and builders of future creators. This, in turn, is a great challenge for university professors and lecturers, because this has not been their orientation. Also, if the teachers are creators of the future, then at the day-care centre and at the school level, day-care centre and school leaders are people who lead the creation of the future, and at the education provider, regional, and national level, other educational leaders support those working in the day-care centres and schools. This calls for a major change in the orientation of educational staff and leaders, as well as a change in their competencies and skills (Alava, 2016). The next challenge, then, is to all those responsible for university programmes educating educational leaders; they need to transform their programmes so that they educate educational leaders who are creators of the future. And, finally, the ministries that guide and fund universities need to realise all the previous and support this renewal.

There remains one more final notion to include in this chapter. It is about how to meet the future in educational policy, governance, and leadership. The Finnish way at least since the national core curriculum in 1994 has been that of experimenting and not knowing the results of the experiments in advance. In their introduction for the investigation for the future municipality in Finland, Nyholm et al. (2017) present this research- and experiment-based future orientation of Finnish education policy, governance, and leadership from various perspectives. In their chapter in the same book, Pakarinen and Erkkilä (2017) argue that we must abandon planning culture and replace it with an experimenting one. That Finland is no longer uniform but diverse attempting to meet the dynamic and complex operational environment proactively with research and experiments resulting in a variety of contextual solutions forming the overall Finnish education policy, governance, and leadership. This research, experimenting and diversity, we also hope this book can present.

PostScript

As a final remark in this chapter – using the notion of inadequacies – we can state that there is a main problem in the Finnish society that deals with all the main areas of society: public policy, social policy, educational policy and governance, and educational leadership, all seem to operate rather isolated from each other. There is a need to synchronise all of them.

Second, at the time of finalizing this chapter, a new and dramatic change was occurring. The war in Ukraine, the economic downturn in the whole Europe and the uncertainty all over the world had an effect in all aspects of societies and people's lives. The next period in the chain of long cycles is clearly on the way with no clear trajectory at sight. However, the writers of this chapter firmly believe that whatever the results and conclusions of the present turmoil will be, education in all its forms will be a solid base and foundation for societies to come.

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Chapter 3
In Quest of Principalship

Petri Salo and Siv Saarukka

Abstract The chapter uses a scoping literature review of Finnish school research to make sense of the task and practice of principalship in the Finnish educational context. The data consists of 20 doctoral dissertations from Finnish universities, year 2000 to 2020, in which acting and former principals study various aspects of their own professional practice.

The study aims of conceptualizing and comprehending principalship using a two-step process of analysis, with two intertwined analytical frameworks. As a result, principalship is firstly described as consisting of three intertwined practices: being a principal, doing principalship and contextualising principalship. In the second step of the analysis, a framework consisting of two basic dimensions for situating the research interests in the dissertation is constructed. The first dimension consists of school leadership understood as *an individual undertaking* or as *a shared, social and cultural practice*. The second dimension either locates principalship in its *organisational, cultural and operational context* or focus on professional ambitions *for strategic development or change*. In summary, principalship consists of tasks and duties, capacities and leadership styles, or can be constructed as a contextual social practice, for enhancing collaborative school development.

Keywords Principalship · Leadership practices · School culture · Development · Scoping review

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Introduction

Although Finnish principals have a firm professional basis for leading and developing teaching and learning, as they are teachers themselves, research on school leadership in Finland confirms that administrative responsibilities and tasks occupy an increasing part of their time and energy. Principals have become more like managers and administrators, but they repeatedly express a desire for engagement in pedagogy and instruction (e.g. Kovalainen, 2020, p. 196). The role and tasks of principals, in Finland as elsewhere, have become more complex and demanding. The quantity and diversity of their work have increased, often resulting in a feeling of insuffiency and growing stress levels (Elomaa et al., 2021, pp. 1–2).

The aim of this chapter is to make sense of the task and practice of acting as and being a principal in the Finnish educational context from the principal's point of view. The method used is a scoping literature review of Finnish research on principalship conducted by acting or former principals during the last two decades. The data consist of doctoral disserations from Finnish universities. Risku and Kanervio (2011) note that research on school leadership in Finland has been scarce. Only 4% of a total of 661 dissertations within educational research during the first decade of the 2000s studied principalship. Alava et al. (2012) characterised Finnish research on school leadership during the same period as being small-scale, methodologically diverse and often conducted in a local municipal setting. Moreover, the research seems to have focused on change, development and distributed leadership. Our hypothesis, based partly on our own research on school leadership (Saarukka, 2017; Salo & Sandén, 2015, 2016), is as follows: (a) a significant proportion of Finnish research on principalship has been conducted by principals researching their own professional practice, with the aims of (b) mapping out and clarifying what they actually do when they act as principals and (c) developing their leadership practices and their schools with regard to future needs and challenges. We can relate to the research on school leadership performed by principals as a means of professional meaning-making and development. We aim to answer the question, *How do principals conceptualise and comprehend principalship*? by studying the research interests, aims and questions in their dissertations. We will focus on principalship, that is, the formal assignment of acting as a leader in a school, within basic education (grades 1–9) and general upper secondary education.

We use the concept of 'principalship' to enable a comprehensive and systematic still reflective analysis and synthesis of the object of the study. The process of the professionalisation of principalship was initiated in the late 1970s, when the first schools within basic education got their first full-time appointed principals (Alava et al., 2012). The title 'principal' (*rehtori,* or *rector* in Finnish) was taken as the title for all school leaders in the educational legislation and union agreement formed in 1998. The eligibility criteria were provided in the same year (Decree on Qualifications for Personnel in the Provision of Education Act, 1998). During the last two decades, principalship has truly become and been developed as a profession, as various functions of school leadership have been developed and researched. The national

legislation in Finland formulates the tasks and duties of principals within compulsory and general upper secondary education in a concise manner: 'Every school must have a principal who is responsible for the operations of the school' (Basic Education Act, 1998). The content of this formulation is interpreted unambiguously, even to the extent that it is not deemed necessary to define the principal's tasks in the curriculum or in other national governing documents. This ambiguity enables principals to create a personal–professional platform for school leadership on the basis of principles and guidelines formulated by local education providers, that is, municipalities. The absence of detailed overall instructions implies both the possibility of developing school leadership according to local and contextual needs and professional degrees of freedom in practicing and developing the leadership role. It contains the potential for developing and refining personal skills and leadership strategies, as well as insights into how to develop qualities in the profession and position of acting as a principal (Saarukka, 2017).

The concept of 'pedagogical leadership' has been characteristic of Finnish research on school leadership since the mid-1980s. It relates loosely to, but contains much more than, for example, curriculum leadership and school development (Hämäläinen, 1986). Like other contemporary leadership concepts, pedagogical leadership is a complex and ambiguous concept and phenomenon, both constrained and enabled by intertwined organisational, cultural and professional aims, ambitions and practices. Still, pedagogical leadership seems to express a professional intention and desire that are often expressed by Finnish principals (e.g. Juusenaho, 2004, pp. 61–66). The concept of 'pedagogical leadership' has been used throughout the years to focus and explicate the characteristics and essence of principalship in Finland (Lahtero & Laasonen, 2021). To handle and make sense of this concept and the leadership practices related to it, we will, later on in this chapter, use the distinction between 'direct leadership' and 'indirect leadership' (Kleine-Kracht, 1993).

Research on School Leadership

Contemporary research on school leadership illuminates and confirms the complexity of the object of our study. Daniëls et al. (2019, p. 110) note, as researchers often do, the growing importance of school leadership and its impact on school effectiveness. They also propose that the research is characterised by numerous theories, approaches and models that both complement and defy each other. They (Daniëls et al., 2019, p. 111) define leadership in education 'as a process of influencing teachers and other stakeholders and not necessarily limited to a single person'. This process of influence is expected to keep the school organisation running smoothly, result in an effective learning climate and create an experience of added value. After presenting an overview of four school leadership theories (instructional, situational, transformational and distributed), they introduce *Leadership for Learning* (LfL) as an integrative conceptualisation of the phenomenon at hand (Daniëls et al., 2019,

p. 117). This refers to school-wide and multilevel leadership, acknowledges a wide range of leadership sources and is collective and collaborative by its nature. Furthermore, it pays attention to the organisational and environmental context of school leadership. Martínez Ruiz and Hernández-Amorós (2020, pp. 271–272) look at the different leadership models as positions on a continuum. At one end of the continuum, they identify an individualist managerial model. With this model comes a lonely superprincipal, working hard, aiming at ensuring the daily functioning of the school without the time and energy to reflect and communicate a vision for the school. At the other end of the continuum, school leadership is distributed within the professional community through a process of mutual influence. Positioning on the continuum is dependent on 'who exercises leadership, how goals are set and how the leader works to achieve them'.

Within the context of Nordic countries, regarding educational policies, Moos et al. (2020, pp. 3–6) identify two discourses affecting and defining school leadership as a profession and practice. The *Democratic Bildung* discourse relies on professional trust and responsibility, focusing on relationships and collective practices. Schools are understood as inclusive, locally attached communities, open for discussions, negotiations, creative and critical interpretations and collaborative meaning-making. The *Learning Outcomes* discourse is instrumental, focused on the effective implementation of leadership and teaching practices and aimed at reaching goals and standards given and defined far beyond the individual school and its local context. School leadership is determined by accountability, formed top-down as a charismatic individual management task.

According to Kemmis et al. (2014, pp. 157–158), research on school leadership has unproblematically equated the phenomenon with 'doing' the principalship, focusing on the traits and capabilities of sovereign individuals capable of handling various management and leadership actions. As an alternative, they urge researchers to study the practices of leading as interconnected to a nexus of other practices that both form (e.g., local educational policies) and are formed by leadership practices (e.g., teachers' professional development). Focusing on the practices of leading draws attention to situated knowledge and action and emphasises the various interconnected conditions under which practices of leading are shaped, reshaped and transformed.

Characteristics and Research on Principalship in Finland

School leadership in Finland has been described by external observers (Hargreaves et al., 2007) as systemic leadership based on moral, professional grounds. The educational system is embedded in a particular kind of culture, reflecting a social and professional commitment to inclusive, equitable and innovative social values. It is characterised by a culture of clear and common purpose (competitiveness, creativity and social justice) based on a commitment to in-depth and in-breadth learning. The politics of subsidiarity and participation enhance and interact with a culture

characterised by trust, cooperation and responsibility. Reliance on intelligent accountability and a trust-based professionalism and school culture result in high degrees of professional discretion and autonomy (Salo & Sandén, 2016, p. 109). In Finland, reliance on and functioning within the *Democratic Bildung* discourse seems to have resulted in reaching the aims of the *Learning Outcomes* discourse (Moos et al., 2020, pp. 3–6). Basic education has been performing well without focusing on performing well (Sahlberg, 2011).

The Finnish education system and school leadership within it are, in our understanding, reflected in a wider context. As in other Nordic countries, the research on school leadership has focused on formal, individual leadership, the contents and essence of leadership and leadership practices from principals' perspectives, often in relation to strategies for school development within a local and national context. Unlike in the other Nordic countries, issues of accountability or the effects of local and national steering have not been of interest in Finland. The same applies to research on the historical and social construction of the position and professional role of the principal. This is due to both historical (the role of education in nation-building and the formation of citizenship) and political reasons (Finland is a welfare state built on social democratic ideals). In the Nordic context, principals have often been framed as 'firsts among equals' or 'teachers in charge', having the overall responsibility of administrative tasks. They carry out their leadership duties within a policy context infused by democratic values, shared leadership practices and teacher autonomy. Furthermore, school leadership has been anchored in and of organic interest within the local community, understood as a shared responsibility of school administrators and local politicians (Johansson & Bredeson, 2011; Salo et al., 2014, pp. 4–5).

Research on school leadership in Finland has a quite recent history, often inspired by leadership research in general. In the 1980s, the research focused on principals' understanding and orientation regarding their work, role and responsibilities for school development. In the 1990s, the concept and phenomenon of pedagogical leadership, partly related to the challenges of understanding the principal's role and its constraints, was established on the research agenda. From 2000 onwards, the research has assumed various approaches to and models of school leadership (Pesonen, 2009, pp. 3–4, 185–186). Risku and Kanervio (2011) identify two overall research interests: the complex and overlapping contexts of doing school leadership and the very character of, challenges in and development of, principals' work. In an overview of the dissertations on school leadership for the period of 2000 to 2010, they characterise the body of research as versatile, multifaceted and unambiguous. It includes, for example, studies on themes such as principals' professional identity in relation to the complexity of their work. Some of the research has focused on specific perspectives and themes, such as principals' gender, self-image, well-being and survival. Further themes related to the school community, such as collegiality, collaboration, a futural orientation and knowledge management, have been on the research agenda. The complexity of school leadership is reflected in research that has the aim of handling the various and contradictory contexts of principals' work in relation to change and strategic development, developmental projects, local

implementation of the Basic Education Act, local evaluation and regional collaboration. Saarukka (2017, pp. 31–34) concludes, based on her summary, that principalship is formed in various manners in differing local contexts with regard to strong professional autonomy. The formation of principals' formal status and work is an outcome of professional autonomy, and the professional practices are formed within and by various and differing local contexts. Principals' professional-pedagogical orientation and ambitions are formed by a positive self-image and professional self-trust, enabling them to act for and serve both teachers and pupils.

Contexts and Conditions for Principalship in Finland

To understand the aims, functioning and impacts of practices of school leadership in Finland, some points of departure for the formation of the task and professional practices have to be clarified. These include the *professional background and qualifications for becoming and acting as a principal, the size and character of the school* and the *content of tasks and duties signed by the local educational authorities*, that is, municipalities.

In Finland, principals are required to have a master's degree, teacher qualification and sufficient work experience as teachers. As principals, they continue to be engaged in teaching. This affects and forms, in various manners, the professional identities of principals and their practices of acting as leaders and developing the school community. Teaching obligations lend principals credibility amongst teachers, keep them engaged in classroom practices and maintain their close connection to both children and parents (Hargreaves et al., 2007). Their leadership engagement is based on continuous first-person experience and hands-on engagement in teaching. Besides teaching qualifications, principals need a certificate in educational administration (25 ECTS, European Credit Transfer System) comprising courses in organisation, legislation, administration, management, school finance, strategic planning and curriculum requirements. There are no comprehensive systems or formal practices for principals' professional development. It contains various themes and subjects, often related to national or local educational development or changes in the national educational system.

The conditions and resources for acting as principal vary widely, depending on the municipality and school size. Finnish compulsory schools are public. Finland used to have a vast network of small comprehensive schools – so-called village schools with under 50 pupils. During the last two decades, due to school closures, especially in rural areas, the number of comprehensive schools has been almost halved. Still, Finnish schools are relatively small (with an average of about 240 pupils) and the number of large schools is still small, with about 100 schools with more than 700 pupils (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2020). Municipalities, as local educational providers, decide on the character of principals' positions based on available resources and school size. In small schools (with under 200 pupils), principalship is a confidential post. Class teachers acting as school heads (with a

small compensation) mainly teach and have only a few hours per week appointed to school leadership tasks. In larger schools, a principalship is a full-time appointment to be applied for. Their teaching obligation contains some hours per week according to teacher union regulations. A full-time principal can also have a vice principal. Over the last decade, bigger cities have established district principals with an overall leadership responsibility for monitoring several schools in the municipality and assisting leaders of smaller schools because the organisation of the school structure is an internal municipality matter (Act on Service Holders in Municipalities and Welfare Areas, 2003).

The national educational legislation leaves the job description open for local educational authorities to determine. The National Curriculum provides principals with an orientation to the overall aims and a characterisation of the nature of organising the schoolwork. School leadership is thereby a task to be handled in a municipal organisation managed by a superintendent, board of education and local politicians. Principals' job descriptions, as formulated by municipal educational authorities, vary quite a lot. They often contain administrative and pedagogical duties, such as preparing work plans for teachers for the school year, deciding on the use of textbooks and teaching material, and evaluating students' wellbeing. Some tasks can be delegated to the vice-principal. Neither national nor local job descriptions specify what kinds of pedagogical principles should be practiced and furthered. Structures and practices for school leadership can be said to rest on trust-based local responsibility and autonomy. Still, due to the lack of detailed national descriptions of principals' duties, the formation and development of leadership practices are left to individual principals. The construction of acting principals' identities is a professional challenge that must be continuously handled and tackled in relation to local conditions and within the individual school community. (For municipal job descriptions, see, for example, Helsingfors stad, 2022; Jakobstads stad, 2021; Raseborgs stad, 2021.)

Pedagogical Leadership

Pedagogical leadership has, since 1980s, been used in Finnish research as an overall concept referring both to leadership practices in their entirety and to specific skills and capacities defining the principals' ways of relating to and handling a comprehensive set of tasks and duties. The concept is ambiguous, and its expressions in professional practice have been interpreted in various ways. Pedagogical leadership operates in relation to bundles of concurrent practices. It is formed by organisational structures, school culture, teaching staff and their professional ambitions. Uljens (2015, p. 9) notes that pedagogical leadership operates at different levels and is expressed in various forms. It is formed by, and thereby has to be studied in its, organisational and societal context. Pedagogical leadership influences the formation of principals' self-understanding, professional expectations, future orientation and ways of acting and collaborating, and subsequently affects their

understanding of and relation to change and development. Anglo-American concepts and practices, such as instructional, situational, transformational, distributed and shared leadership, have been used by Finnish researchers to illuminate certain aspects of pedagogical leadership. In Mäkelä's (2007) interpretation, pedagogical leadership coincides with instructional leadership. Even if the Anglo-American conceptualisation of instructional leadership has evolved throughout the years, it still reflects an orientation towards principals' hands-on supervision and evaluation of teachers' work in classrooms. In our understanding, these factors do not apply to school leadership in Finland. According to other interpretations, pedagogical leadership explicates a sense of professionally shared, distributed and collegial leadership practices in which the principal is engaged in collaborative professional practices and co-producing leadership together with teachers (Salo et al., 2014, pp. 4–5; Raasumaa, 2010, pp. 153–164).

Mäkelä (2007, p. 66) refers to Kleine-Kracht (1993, pp. 189, 209), who in the beginning of the 1990s used the concept of 'indirect instructional leadership' to describe principals' professional practices related to the internal and external environment of the school, the physical and cultural context of teaching and the meanings of principal's actions for the teachers. This conceptualisation is useful when relating to Finnish principals' pedagogical leadership (Lahtero & Laasonen, 2021). Pedagogical leadership, in its indirect form, substantiates and creates favourable conditions for teachers' work, professional ambitions and development. It touches on teachers' work in classrooms without interfering with teaching as such. Indirect pedagogical leadership relies on professional trust in teachers' expertise and experience. Principals' own background and engagement in teaching and closeness to and understanding of teachers' concerns result in professional legitimacy.

Principalship in Light of Dissertations on School Leadership from 2000 to 2020

In the following, we will study principalship in Finland based on research on school leadership performed by acting or former principals themselves. The study covers a 20-year period from 2000 to 2020. This is appropriate for several reasons. Until the late 1990s, Finnish principals were mere administrators handling administrative routines. By the reform of 1998, they had become autonomous school leaders with a mandate to handle the practices and routines of their schools according to their professional ambitions. The reform was foregrounded by an overall educational policy transformation from centralised, norm-based and system-oriented governance to decentralised, information-based and results-oriented leadership. Municipalities obtained constitutional autonomy, responsibility and freedom for organising comprehensive education and general upper secondary education at the local level. Regarding principalship, this resulted in an extended professionalism, accompanied by greater responsibilities and an increased workload. The tasks to be

taken care of expanded and became more diverse (Lahtero & Risku, 2012, pp. 524–525; Risku & Tain, 2020, pp. 49–50; Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016, pp. 1270–1272).

As suggested above, our aim is to study how principals conceptualise and comprehend principalship, that is, how they make sense of the task, position and practice of acting as and being a principal. As the method for our study, we used a scoping literature review. A scoping review is often used to examine the extent and nature of research activities in a certain domain and map the research without having to explore, summarise and report the findings in detail. In a scoping review, the research questions are often broad syntheses; reporting is more qualitative and is used to identify either gaps or main focuses in the domain of research at hand. Based on existing methodological frameworks for scoping reviews (Armstrong et al., 2011, pp. 147–150; Arksey & O'Malley, 2005, pp. 19–23; Booth et al., 2021, pp. 74–80), we describe the stages in our scoping review as follows: (a) elaborating the research questions, (b) searching and selecting relevant studies, (c) identifying the nature and extent of the research and (d) charting, collating and summarising the data and reporting the results.

As set out in a quite lengthy manner above, (a) the overall research question and its components were elaborated based on international research on school leadership, characterisations of school leadership in Finland as well as existing Finnish overviews of the research within the field. In order (b) to identify and select research on school leadership done by principals in Finland, a search was conducted in the Melinda database (the National Metadata Repository in Finland) on the second and third of October 2021. This database allows search results to be limited to doctoral dissertations. The period covered in the search was 2000–2020. The search strings (Basic and Boolean) used were 'principal', 'principal and leadership', 'school and leadership' and 'pedagogical leadership' (in English, Finnish and Swedish). These searches resulted in 63 dissertations. In the first step of narrowing down the search, dissertations outside the field of education (19 dissertations) were excluded. In the second step, dissertations not studying school leadership in elementary schools (within basic education for grades 1–9) and general upper secondary education were identified and excluded (23 dissertations). The studies excluded focused on leadership within early childhood education and vocational and higher education. The last step in narrowing down the search was to identify the dissertations composed by acting or former principals. This was quite easily done by reading the forewords and introductions to the dissertations (another three dissertations were excluded). As a result of these three steps of narrowing down the search, 20 dissertations form the basis of this study (see Appendix). It is noteworthy that 45% of research on leadership within the field of education in Finland during the last two decades consists of principals within basic and general upper secondary education researching their work as principals.

In the third stage, (c) identifying the nature and extent of the research, we focused on the research object, aims and questions and the contexts of the 20 studies identified in the previous stage. As is common in scoping reviews, our intention was to (d) collate and chart the research rather than analyse and report it in detail. Because of

the complexity and multidimensionality of the phenomenon at hand, this is done in two steps, with two intertwined overall analytical frameworks. The first step can be described as an overall, inductive and thematic qualitative analysis, with the aim of identifying the main aims, focuses and research interests of the studies. This analysis resulted in identifying and describing the data with the help of three overlapping and intertwined themes: **being a** principal, **doing** principalship and **contextualising** principalship.

The studies in the first theme, **being a principal**, focus on principalship from a personal–professional point of view. The research interests relate, for example, to *the gender and identity* of the principal, their *leadership characteristics* and *the capacities* required in of principals. In some studies, the focus *is on coping* with doing principalship or *on the professional well-being* of the principal. Principals' professional learning and development are also included in this theme. Being a principal is exemplified by the following two dissertations.

> The purpose of this study is to describe how leadership in educational institution settings is constructed, and to characterise leader identity as narrated by headmasters. The key questions of the study focus on two areas: How do headmasters narrate leadership in educational institutions and their own leader identity? This is a leadership study, and it belongs specifically to the research field of socially constructed leadership. Secondly, this is an identity study, because it examines headmasters' narratives of leader identity. (Ahonen, 2008, *Leadership and leader identity as narrated by headmasters*).
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>   This thesis examines desire and disillusion in the professional role of a head teacher. The overall aim of the study is to capture the determinants and circumstances that increase and decrease a head teacher's incentive to lead and produce desired results […] Leadership is perceived to be constructed and reconstructed at the intersection of three different arenas: the individual, the professional and the interactive. The individual arena and understanding of the head teacher's motivation are scrutinised. (Sandén, 2007, *Desire and disillusion in school leadership. Head teachers and their work at a time of change*).

Within the theme of **doing principalship**, the focus is on principals' *everyday professional acting* in their schools. We interpret the purpose of these studies as making sense of *what* principalship *is* and *how to do* principalship. Describing and reflecting on *the tasks and responsibilities*, as they are uncovered in everyday doing within the context of one's own school, constitute the focus and the lens in these studies. Principalship is *about engaging and collaborating with and leading teachers*; moreover, it is about *sharing and distributing leadership*. Doing principalship *also includes developing, evaluating and coaching, at times strategically and in a future-oriented way, according to certain aims and visions*. In some of these studies, the aim is to capture the doing of principalship in its complex entirety. Doing principalship can be exemplified by the purposes and aims of two studies.

> The purpose of this study was to clarify the principal's tasks in the twenty-first century comprehensive school. On the other hand, the principal's task domains were to be clarified, and also, whether the domains that were established in the 1990s are still valid in post-modern comprehensive school, these domains being administrative-economic leadership, staff management and pedagogical leadership. […] Furthermore, my task was to find out if the principal's duties are different in the autumn and in the spring terms. (Mäkelä, 2007, *What principals really do. An ethnographic case study on leadership and on principal's tasks in comprehensive school*).

The main aim of the research was to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of shared leadership in culturally different school contexts. Another aim was to find out how school leaders understand their part in sharing leadership. The very essence of school leadership implies a high degree of multifacetedness and multilayeredness due to the versatile character of the phenomenon itself. (Paukkuri, 2015, *How is the phenomenon of shared leadership understood in the theory and practice of school leadership? A case study conducted in four European schools*).

The focus in the third group of studies, **contextualising principalship**, is on *the organisational and cultural context* of doing principalship and being a principal, often with the aim of *developing the school and its central function*. Studies in acting as a leader in and *developing the practices of a learning organisation* might be an outcome of national steering, as the latest National Curriculum for basic education (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016) intends. Studies in knowledge management and shared leadership are included in this group of studies and exemplified in the aims of the following two studies.

This research aims to study the perceptions of the basic school principals in leading the education staff and the school towards learning organisation. It researches the crossings of school development and pedagogical wellbeing. (Liusvaara, 2014, *If only the principal has the ears open – Pedagogical wellbeing through school development*).

The aim of this qualitative study is to chart the operational context of the upper-secondary school principals and the historical, cultural and structural factors that steer their day-to-day work. The concepts regarding the study environment and operational culture are defined and analysed in terms of how they are interrelated. Furthermore, it is explained why the upper-secondary schools must describe their operational culture within the curriculum. (Kunnari, 2008, *Towards the outer boundaries. The description of the operational culture in the upper secondary school from the view of steering and leading*).

For the second step of the analysis, we constructed a framework consisting of two basic dimensions or continuums in which the dissertations on principalship could be situated. This was done with reference to both research on school leadership and the themes identified above.

The first dimension consists of school leadership understood either as an *individual undertaking of a single responsible person with certain characteristics and competencies* or *as a collective, collaborative, cultural and organisational practice – a social phenomenon*. The latter understanding can be related both to the concepts of 'shared' or 'distributed leadership' (Lahtero et al., 2019) and to a practice theory perspective in which leadership is conceptualised as 'leading', a complex practice taking place in a set of interrelated practices (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015).

The second dimension deals with the organisational, cultural and operational context of principalship, including local and national educational frameworks and the process of professionalisation. At one end of the continuum, principalship is constructed as a reciprocal process of influence between principals' professional actions and the operational culture within the school (Fig. 3.1).

Principalship is formed by a *conscious process of relating to* and *taking the organisational and cultural context into account*. At the other end of this continuum, principalship includes *a professional ambition and striving for strategic*

School leadership in an organizational-cultural context

Principals´ tasks and duties
Mustonen (2003). Why do we need a principal? The importance and realization of the
duties of the principals in Finnish comprehensive and upper secondary schools
Vuohijoki (2006). You just have to cope. the work and professional well-being of
principals researched in relation to their sex and official position of authority
Mäkelä (2007). What principals really do? An etnographic case study on leadership
and on principal´s task in comprehensive school
Karikoski (2009). Good enough as a principal. —how to survive leading a school.

Leadership in it´s context
Pennanen (2006). Leadership in comprehensive school. From modern
towards transmodern leading in basic education.
Kunnari (2008). Towards the outer boundaries The description of the operational culture
in the upper secondary school from the view of steering and leading
Lahtero (2011). Leadership culture in unified comprehensive school
- symbolic-interpretative approach.

Principals´ capacities and competencies
Haapa (2016). Finnish principal as the user of the school's computer-based administration system.
Isotalo (2014). Pedagogical synchronizing – the difficulty junior high principals experience
in making decisions.
Sanden (2007). Desire and disillusion in school leadership

Leadership as contextual social practice
Ahonen (2008). Leadership and leader identity as narrated by headmasters
Pesonen, J. (2009). Comprehensive school leadership – phenomenon of its time.
Kangaslahti, J. (2007). Mapping the strategic leadership practices and dilemmas
of a municipal educational organization.

**School leadership
as an individual
undertaking**

Leadership styles
Juusenaho (2004). Differences in comprehensive school leadership
and management. A gender-based approach
Pulkkinen (2011). The significance of coaching background in principals work .

**School leadership
as a social
and cultural practice**

Taipale (2000). Peer-Assisted leadership – a method in the
training of principals.

Collaborative school development
Liusvaara (2014). If only the principal has the ears open - Pedagogical
wellbeing through school development
Paukkuri (2015). How is the Phenomenon of Shared Leadership Understood
in the Theory and Practice of School Leadership? A case study conducted in four
European schools.
Raasumaa (2010). Knowledge management functions of a principal in basic education.
Kovalainen (2020). Pedagogical leadership and its inadequacy in organizational
and systemic change in basic education.

School leadership for development and change

Fig. 3.1 A map of Finnish principals' dissertations on principalship

development or change regarding the functioning of the school as a community of
professionals, with various new challenging tasks and duties. Both 'knowledge
management' and 'pedagogical leadership' relate to this latter aspect (Alava
et al., 2012).

As suggested in the beginning, we focus on the research interests, aims and questions in the dissertations and use them to cluster and position these studies on a map
constructed by the two dimensions described above. The clusters, with short headings to describe the contents and focuses of the studies, are often overlapping and
intertwined. The studies in the first cluster focus on, intend to both scrutinise and
clarify, **principals' tasks and duties.** This is done by observing principals' work
and use of time on different tasks and duties, in Mäkelä's (2007) case by an auto-
ethnographic method and in Karikoski's (2009) study by shadowing colleagues. In
Mustonen's (2003) comparative study (principals from Finland, Germany and the
Netherlands), the aim was to clarify the importance and realisation of the duties of
a principal, concerning both actions and experiences, by interviews and question-
naires. Vuohijoki (2006) studied principals' understanding of their duties and repon-
sibilites from the point of view of gender and formal position in relation to their
professional well-being.

In the second cluster, the dissertations focus on principals' handling of rather
specific tasks on the basis of their personal–professional **capacities and competen-
cies.** Haapa (2016) focused on principals' perceptions of their capacity to use a
computer-based administration system for pedagogic and administrative purposes,
and also their understanding of the usefulness of these systems in their administra-
tive work. Isotalo (2014) used narrative interviews to scrutinise the most demand-
ing, time- and energy-consuming decisions that principals have to make regarding
their overall responsibilty for their schools. Sandén (2007) examined the desire and
disillusion in the professional role of a principal to capture both the determinants

and circumstances that increase and decrease their incentives for a leadership aiming at desired results.

Both Juusennaho (2004) and Pulkkinen (2011) discuss **leadership styles** in their dissertations. In the first case, they do so with the aim of studying possible differences in leadership and management styles on the basis of the gender of principals. The purpose of the second dissertation is to study leadership styles and possible transferences between sports and school by interviewing principals who have functioned as top-level team sport coaches.

The dissertations under the heading **leadership in its context** are anchored in principals' everyday leadership practices, which are studied and given meaning in relation to and in terms of their operational environment, that is, the local organisational and cultural context. Lahtero (2011) observed leadership practices in a case study school and described them as reciprocal interactional processes. His aim was to describe the leadership culture and its subcultures in terms of various artefacts in the cultural and organisational context. Pennanen's (2006) intention was to describe school leadership in its local, municipal context, based on principals' conceptions of the situation at hand as well as the changes in their work related to its operational environment. Kunnari (2008) used national and local steering documents and interviews with principals to study and clarify the operational context of upper-secondary school principals' day-to-day work. This was done in relation to and in terms of the historical, cultural and structural factors that affect and form it.

The studies under the heading **leadership as contextual social practice** study school leadership from principals' points of view but construct it as a contextual, social and interactional practice. Ahonen's (2008) narrative study looks at leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon and aims to describe principals' ways of narrating their leadership identity in its institutional context, which is understood as a social space. Pesonen (2009) studied school leadership as a multidimensional professional practice by studying principals' experiences and views of school leadership and development as well as the challenges they face at various stages of their careers. The focus of Kangaslahti's (2007) dissertation is on the development of strategic leadership practices in a local educational organisation. However, it includes an interview study on principals' understanding of how to enact and develop strategic leadership by enhancing professional trust through constructive interaction.

The last cluster of principals' leadership studies, **collaborative school development**, focuses on leadership for school development in terms of collaborative concepts and practices, that is, knowledge management, shared leadership and learning organisation. The aim of Paukkuri's (2015) comparative ethnographic case study was to study principal's understanding of their function and role in realising shared leadership, and further to deepen the understanding of shared leadership in culturally different school contexts. Liusvaara's (2014) 4-year study in a municipal context focused on principals' leadership practices regarding school development and their quest for enhancing pedagogical well-being and developing their schools as learning organisations. Raasumaa (2010) studied principals' leadership practices in relation to teachers work in basic education in terms of knowledge management,

focusing on how knowledge is understood and how it can be developed through intentional and unintentional knowledge management. Kovalainen's (2020) dissertation on pedagogical leadership has two intertwined aims: to explore and define pedagogical leadership in basic education in relation to the concepts of 'pedagogical' and 'learning community', and to study, through interviews with principals, the assumed inadequacy of pedagogical leadership in relation to change at the organisational and systemic levels.

Finally, the last of the 20 dissertations differs from the others regarding its theme and focus and was not related to any of the clusters described above. Taipale's (2000) case study examines the peer-assisted leadership method as a means and formal procedure for the professional development of principals. This procedure, which consists of principals working in pairs, shadowing and interviewing each other during their workdays, can be classified as a professional and collegial sense-making practice.

Conclusions

Why do (some) principals engage in researching their own professional practice? It is because acting as a principal has become more complex, demanding and stressful, and the professional assignment as such is both all-inclusive and open-ended. In our understanding, based on our scoping literature review of 20 dissertations by Finnish principals (within basic education grades 1–9 and general upper secondary education) engaged in researching their own leadership, the answer lies in the hypothetical title of this chapter – in quest of principalship. Based on the scoping review presented above, the principals in this study have made meaning of their principalship by scrutinising their tasks and duties, capacities and competencies and leadership styles within their immediate context and, at times, as a social and shared practice. By doing this, they have become agents in a process of further professionalisation within an educational system and culture characterised by professional autonomy and trust-based professionalism. The principals in our study have relied on their firm professional platform, with a master's degree and teaching qualification, for orientating themselves and initiating various forms of practices regarding organisational, pedagogical and educational development. They have responded to the research question *How do principals conceptualise and comprehend principalship?* as a starting point and means of professional development. As we note above, these 20 dissertations constitute almost half of the total amount of dissertations on school leadership during the last two decades.

To be able to relate to the title of the chapter – in quest of principalship – we used a scoping literature review to identify and organise, synthesise and report, from an overall perspective, the research interests, aims and questions in 20 dissertations conducted by nine female and eleven male principals. To chart and map the studies, we designed a two-step process with two intertwined analytical frameworks. In the first step, three overlapping themes were identified: *being a* principal, *doing*

principalship and *contextualising* principalship. We exemplified the contents of the themes by briefly referring to the purposes, aims and themes of two representative studies in each of the themes. In the second step, based on overviews of contemporary research on school leadership, we constructed a four-field framework. It consists of two continuums, the first relating to the conceptualisation of leadership (from being an individual undertaking to being understood as a social practice – *what is*?) and the second focusing on the essence of leadership (from making sense of leadership in its context to the function of initiating change and development – *for what*?). The dissertations were thereafter clustered regarding their research interest and focus and organised in relation to the two continuums. To summarise the result of the second step, about half of the dissertations focus on principals' tasks and duties, capacities and competencies and leadership styles, and consequently the other half highlight school leadership as a contextual phenomenon and a social practice, at times for enhancing collaborative school development.

In quest of principalship – what images and contents do we get of principalship in Finnish schools with reference to these 20 dissertations? We provide a concentrated summary: principals have examined what tasks and duties belong to a school leader. Furthermore, they have reflected on what leadership capacities and competencies are needed and how to develop them. Analyses of particular aspects and development areas of leadership styles have been interesting research objects. Other broad subjects in the research gallery are leadership in its context, leadership as a social practice and leadership as a contextual social practice. A separate group amongst the research themes comprises topics about collaborative school development. Here, we can find research results about principals' interest in shared leadership, knowledge management and development of pedagogical leadership.

Our overall, two-step scoping analysis of the research interests and aims of doctoral dissertations on principalship in Finland aligns largely with the earlier research and findings. The body of research on school leadership is versatile and multifaceted; consequently, principalship as a formal position and professional practice is complex and dynamic. The complex and overlapping contexts both constrain and enable various forms of being a principal or doing principalship. The same applies for making sense of principalship, both by reflecting on the very character of principalship as well as seizing the challenges and possibilities of developing principalship as a compelling and momentous profession.

Appendix: The Dissertations Included in the Scoping Literature Review

Ahonen. (2008). *Rehtoreiden kertoma johtajuus ja johtajaidentiteetti* [Leadership and leader identity as narrated by headmasters]. University of Jyväskylä.
Haapa, P. (2016). *Suomalainen peruskoulun rehtori koulun tietokonepohjaisen hallinto- ohjelman käyttäjänä* [Finnish principal as the user of the school's computer-based administration system]. University of Eastern Finland.

Isotalo, K. (2014). *Pedagoginen synkronointi. Vaikeus johtamispäätöksissä yläkou-lunrehtorien kokemana* [Pedagogical synchronizing – The difficulty junior high principals experience in making decisions]. University of Jyväskylä

Juusenaho, R. (2004). *Peruskoulun rehtoreiden johtamisen eroja. Sukupuolinen näkökulma* [Differences in comprehensive school leadership and management. A gender-based approach]. University of Jyväskylä.

Kangaslahti, J. (2007). *Opetustoimen johtamisen dilemmoja kartoittamassa* [Mapping the strategic leadership practices and dilemmas of a municipal educational organization]. University of Turku.

Karikoski, A. (2009). *Aika hyvä rehtoriksi. Selviääkö koulun johtamisesta hengissä?* [Good enough as a principal—How to survive leading a school]. University of Helsinki.

Kovalainen, M. T. (2020). *Pedagoginen johtajuus ja sen vaje yleissivistävän perusopetuksen järjestelmä- ja systeemitason muutoksessa* [Pedagogical leadership and its inadequacy in organizational and systemic change in basic education]. University of Jyväskylä.

Kunnari, E. (2008). *Kohti ulkorajoja. Lukion toimintakulttuurikuvaus ohjauksen ja johtamisen näkökulmasta* [Towards the outer boundaries: The description of the operational culture in the upper secondary school]. University of Helsinki.

Lahtero, T. (2011). *Yhtenäiskoulun johtamiskulttuuri – symbolis-tutkinnallinen näkökulma* [Leadership culture in unified comprehensive school, symbolic-interpretative approach]. University of Jyväskylä.

Liusvaara, L. (2014). *Kun vaan rehtori on korvat auki. Koulun kehittämisellä pedagogista hyvinvointia* [If only the principal has the ears open – Pedagogical well-being through school development]. University of Turku.

Mustonen, K. (2003). *Mihin rehtoria tarvitaan? Rehtorin tehtävät ja niiden toteutuminen Pohjois-Savon yleissivistävissä kouluissa* [Why do we need a principal? The importance and realization of the duties of the principals in Finnish comprehensive and upper secondary schools]. University of Oulu.

Mäkelä, A. (2007). *Mitä rehtorit todella tekevät? Etnografinen tapaustutkimus johtamisesta ja rehtorin tehtävistä peruskoulussa* [What principals really do. An etnographic case study on leadership and on principal's task in comprehensive school]. University of Jyväskylä.

Paukkuri, E. (2015). *How is the phenomenon of shared leadership understood in the theory and practice of school leadership? A case study conducted in four European schools.* University of Tampere.

Pennanen, A. (2006). *Peruskoulun johtaminen. Modernista kohti transmodernia johtamista* [From modern towards transmodern leading in basic education]. University of Oulu.

Pesonen, J. (2009). *Peruskoulun johtaminen – aikansa ilmiö.* [Comprehensive school leadership – Phenomenon of its time]. University of Joensuu.

Pulkkinen, S. (2011). *Valmentajataustan merkitys rehtorin työssä* [The significance of coaching background in principal's work]. University of Jyväskylä.

Raasumaa, V. 2010. *Perusopetuksen rehtori opettajien osaamisen johtajana* [Knowledge management functions of a principal in basic education]. University of Jyväskylä.

Sandén, T. (2007). *Lust att leda i lust och leda: om rektorers arbete under en tid av. förändring* [Desire and disillusion in school leadership. Head teachers and their work at a time of change]. University of Åbo Akademi.

Taipale, A. (2000). *Peer-assisted Leadership -menetelmä rehtorikoulutuksessa. Erään koulutusprosessin taustakontekstin kuvaus, teoreettiset perusteet sekä toteutuksen ja vaikuttavuuden arviointi* [Peer-assisted Leadership – A method for the training of principals]. University of Helsinki.

Vuohijoki, T. (2006). *Pitää vain selviytyä. Tutkimus rehtorin työstä ja työssä jaksamisesta sukupuolen ja virka-aseman suhteen tarkasteltuna* [You just have to cope: the work and professional well-being of principals researched in relation to their sex and official position of authority]. University of Turku.

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Chapter 4
Towards a Multi-form Professional Development of Educational Leadership

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Abstract This chapter aims to investigate the professional development of educational leadership based on the need to define and develop leadership in educational organisations that are in the middle of complex challenges and changing operational environments. The data of this study were collected through interviews and project descriptions of the key actors of the four key projects of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland. The data were analysed using problem-driven qualitative content analysis with inductive reasoning. The main results included both the common aspects, such as the development of education in educational leadership, and more project-specific aspects, such as an emphasis on the specific context, in these projects. Furthermore, it was found that the professional development of educational leadership could be supported when, for example, the need for flexibility and supportive networks are recognised. In addition, when describing the holistic development of the professional leadership in education, it is crucial to provide multi-form and equal development opportunities to individuals and communities at every level and in all leadership positions during their entire careers. The results of these development experiments can help both national and international audiences in the professional development of educational leadership in their educational systems.

Keywords Educational leadership · Education · Professional development · Competence

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Introduction

At present, educational organisations are faced with complex challenges at different levels and from various directions – locally, nationally and internationally. For example, top-down policies can increase competing pressure in educational contexts without making real changes (Normand et al., 2021). In the face of these challenges, both the expansion of learning, such as acting and learning as a collective effort to build and achieve a common purpose, and goal and personal authority, such as individual efforts in the process towards achieving the common goal, are needed (cf. Jäppinen & Taajamo, 2022). The reciprocal influence of the aforementioned issues is also significant. The diffusion of the educational leadership process in a natural way throughout the organisation becomes possible when learning is expanded. With this, the organisation has better opportunities to respond to unexpected and continuous societal changes taking place in the twenty-first century, such as the COVID-19 pandemic situation, increased use and development of technology and the influence of various factors related to cultural diversity (Jäppinen & Taajamo, 2022).

In the process of educational organisations and actors pursuing learning and development as described above, there is a crucial need of professional leadership in these organisations. In the process of developing professional leadership, it is important to ask and investigate what kind of leadership is professional in the educational organisations of these days and to be able to respond to various challenges that these organisations are currently facing within their rapidly and constantly changing operational environments (e.g. Alava et al., 2012; Finnish National Agency for Education, 2013; Kumpulainen, 2017; Risku & Tian, 2017, 2020). In this regard, how professional leadership could be developed and supported nationally and internationally should be investigated.

In response to this need to investigate and develop professional educational leadership, four key projects of the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018–2022) concentrated on developing educational leadership in Finland. They included

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ArkTORI, EduLeaders, KOPETI JO and DAWN (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022a). These projects were part of a broader development entity initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Culture appointed the Comprehensive School Forum. The aim of this forum was to develop and reform the Finnish comprehensive school system. As part of the new comprehensive education, pre- and in-service teacher education was renewed. In cooperation with teachers and stakeholders, the Teacher Education Forum prepared the Teacher Education Development Programme that strategically determined the direction of teacher education and the development of competence during the teaching career. One of the strategic guidelines of this programme emphasised leadership development to create schools to fulfil the communities' learning and development needs. In practice, the ministry awarded nearly 28 million euros in grants for projects to develop research-based teacher education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022b). These projects included four projects for educational leadership development coordinated by four Finnish universities and one university of applied sciences.

This chapter aims to investigate the professional development of educational leadership in Finland with the help of the data gathered during these four projects. The study contains an examination of the multi-form professional development of educational leadership at organisational, regional and national levels. Furthermore, this chapter provides an example of how research-based experiments develop professional educational leadership implemented in the Finnish context. The research questions were as follows:

1. What aspects of educational leadership have been developed?
2. How can the professional development of leadership in education be supported?
3. With what kind of holistic development can leadership in education be developed?

Professional Development of Educational Leadership

Educational leadership is a broad concept basically referring to any leadership in education (Elo & Uljens, 2022; Risku & Alava, 2021) despite variance in its conceptualisations (e.g. Adams et al., 2017). Educational leadership occurs in global (e.g. comparative standardised assessment), national (e.g. governmental decisions on national core curricula) and local contexts, such as in organisations and individual classrooms (cf. Elo & Uljens, 2022). In an educational organisation, educational leadership includes both management and administrative work (Nivala, 1998). The goal of educational leadership is, either directly or indirectly, to ensure that education fulfils its core mission and goal: student learning. However, if we try to reach this goal, there is a real need for support, professional development, social recognition and community engagement so that these bottom-up processes can be long-lasting and connected to global developments crucial for student learning (Normand et al., 2021).

During recent decades, theoretical and empirical approaches perceiving educational leadership as a socially constructed and contextual phenomenon have been emerging (e.g. Jäppinen & Taajamo, 2022; Uhl-Bien, 2006). For example, Jäppinen and Taajamo (2022) defined educational leadership as a multifaceted process (cf. Jäppinen, 2020) where there is continuous co-growth. It involves motivating efforts to achieve together something that individual members of a community or network could not accomplish alone. The underlying idea here is to achieve the common good jointly by individuals, groups and teams of educational organisations. In this process, new ways of thinking are formed, thus leading to creative development in the form of a common opinion and goal. This, in turn, becomes apparent as purposeful and goal-oriented activities (Jäppinen & Taajamo, 2022). Bush (2007), on the other hand, suggests that leadership is an influence process based on clear values and beliefs, and this leads to the school's vision. Even though principals and other formal leaders in educational organisations have certain specific leadership responsibilities tied to their positions (Catano & Stronge, 2007), perceiving educational leadership as a shared, collective and socially constructed phenomenon recognises the diverse members of the professional communities of an educational organisation, such as teachers, as leaders.

One stream of change during recent decades has been that conceptions of education and teaching have moved in a more professional than vocational direction (Carr, 2000). There are, for example, legitimate concerns about educational accountability to the practical needs and interests of parents, employers and the wider community behind this development. Furthermore, teachers and educational leaders have to think of the values that they are transmitting and their own neutrality in a multicultural and pluralistic world. Professionality and professionalism describe the requirements of a particular class or category of occupation, such as teachers and educational leaders (Carr, 2000; Hanhimäki, 2011). For example, principals enact their educational leadership by mediating between several societal praxises, such as pedagogics, politics, ethics and law (Smeds-Nylund & Autio, 2021). However, a rearranged labour division between state and local authorities with a lot of space for ethical educational leadership in the Finnish context challenges every educational professional's agency and autonomy. In addition, this demands that our educational system supports educators and educational leaders in their professional development (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021).

At the core of educational leadership as a socially constructed, shared and collective process, there is a professional learning community (PLC) of an educational organisation. There is no complete agreement on PLC's definition, but it is usually agreed that the primary purpose of these communities is to improve student learning and teacher practices (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). A PLC consists of the members of a school's work community with diverse expertise and competence (Sai & Siraj, 2015). It is central in a PLC that its members share together what they have learnt, learn together as a collective and build shared understanding (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Sai & Siraj, 2015). To effectively support these kinds of actions and to build collective competence, it is important that the leadership enacted in a PLC is shared, collective and synergetic in nature (Morrissey, 2000, pp. 5–6). This kind of leadership

and the related competence and capacity means, for example, understanding leadership as a collective responsibility, promotion of de-privatised leadership practice and competence in reflective dialogue (Vanblaere & Devos, 2016). These competencies are required and can be developed on both the individual and collective levels of a PLC. In educational organisations, formal leaders, such as principals, play a significant role in facilitating the kind of leadership and culture that support a PLC to function in an ideal way (Johnson & Voelkel, 2021; Sai & Siraj, 2015). For this reason, it is highly important that formal leaders of educational organisations develop their competence to act as facilitators in their communities.

In addition to leading a PLC, educational leaders act as part of broader multidisciplinary networks consist of various professional sectors and actors, such as social and healthcare services. According to (social) network theories, leaders, as representatives of organisations, have an important role as builders and sustainers of (inter)organisational linkages and relationships (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006). Furthermore, leaders of educational organisations are required to consider the characteristics of the context in which they are functioning, such as local, cultural and societal factors (e.g. Khalifa et al., 2016). In this regard, many competencies, such as understanding diversity and seeing it as a strength (Barakat et al., 2021), as well as being able to act in an inclusive way (cf. Roberson & Perry, 2022), are required.

Furthermore, when we see the leadership of learning as a core duty, pedagogical leadership is a significant part of educational leadership (Elo & Uljens, 2022). There are various ways to approach and define the concept of pedagogical leadership (e.g. Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020). A rather broad consensus exists that pedagogical leadership aims at leading learning by enhancing and developing pedagogical practice (Heikka, 2014), a culture supporting continuous learning and (professional) development (cf. Elo & Uljens, 2022) and the human capital of a school, referring to both the teaching personnel and students (Sergiovanni, 1998). According to the broad-based approach to pedagogical leadership (see Chap. 8), it includes both direct and indirect pedagogical leadership, the former referring to the process of learning and teaching and the latter to the context and environment in which this process occurs. Central competencies related to pedagogical leadership contain various kinds of professional knowledge, such as content knowledge, (content specific) pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge and knowledge of learners, as well as competence in the related administrative decision-making (Robinson, 2010).

In this chapter, we investigate the professional development of educational leadership in the Finnish context based on the definition of educational leadership as studying, developing and educating the phenomenon of leadership in education (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021; Risku, 2020; Risku & Alava, 2021). Leadership can be seen not just as a domain of an individual or role but also found everywhere in the actions and interactions amongst all of an organisation's actors (Spillane, 2012). Leaders work in the 'between' space, and with the help of this point, they can integrate and influence knowledge and ideas passing in all directions throughout their educational ecosystems. For example, they are policy navigators between policy as a more rational side of educational systems and practice as a more human

side of schools (Supovitz, 2021). This special space and point demand continuous professional development in educational leadership.

When we develop education in educational leadership, we try to respond to the needs of the professional development so that current and future educational leaders can be flexible and able to cope with consistent challenges and continuous changes. For example, one of the main learning theories used in education by the Institute of Educational Leadership is integrative pedagogy as a model for expertise development (Heikkinen et al., 2012). This model combines theoretical and conceptual knowledge, practical and experiential knowledge, self-regulative knowledge and socio-cultural knowledge in learning situations (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021; cf. Lyons & Bandura, 2020; Tynjälä, 2013). All four components mentioned above should be present in the learning environment (Lyons & Bandura, 2020). The purpose of the integrative pedagogy model is to provide tools for creating learning environments that serve learning more systematically than informal learning. In integrative pedagogy, it is important to focus not only on individual expertise but also on collective and collaborative expertise (Tynjälä, 2013).

Changes in Educational Policy Towards Educational Leadership Development

In the Finnish education policy and governance system, the state steers education and collaborates with other actors. Even if the legislation and other regulations mandate education providers, such as municipalities and local authorities, via local decision-making, they have a lot of autonomy to organise their provisions of education. In the context of educational organisations, educational leaders and teachers respond to education providers (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021; Risku & Tian, 2020). Development and the system of Finnish educational policy, governance and leadership are presented and considered in more detail in Chap. 2.

During the 2010s and 2020s, educational leadership in Finland was in the middle of many changes on all education fronts in the Finnish education system. The first example of these educational policy changes has happened in Finnish Early Childhood Education (ECE), which has undergone several structural and fundamental changes in recent years. An administrative shift from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the Ministry of Education and Culture was implemented in 2013. The ECE Act (2018) was also renewed in 2018, replacing the old Day Care Act of 1973. Through these reforms, ECE has moved into the education and teaching sector, constituting the first phase in children's schooling path instead of providing the earlier focus on the social services provided to parents (Finnish National Agency for Education [FNAE], 2018, 2022; Fonsén & Vlasov, 2017). Because of these reforms, the need to renew leadership and competence to lead ECE has been topical. In particular, pedagogical leadership has been an essential approach to developing leadership in ECE (Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020).

The second example of the remarkable educational changes was the reform in vocational upper secondary education in 2018, which updated the entire Vocational Education and Training (VET) and consolidated VET for young people and adults. The core aim of this reform was to create competence-based and customer-oriented education and to increase learning in the workplace (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022c). The third example of these changes was the extension of compulsory education in 2021. This means that all students gain an upper secondary qualification, as the minimum school-leaving age was raised to 18 years (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022d).

At the same time, with these educational policy changes, there has been a continuous discussion about how to define educational leadership in the Finnish context and practice. For example, school leadership can be understood in various ways and according to different discourses. If one wants to improve a school according to the Learning Outcomes Discourse, the focus has to be on the correct and effective implementation goals set on a national level. National and transnational tests are important. On the other hand, in the Democratic Bildung Discourse, the focus has to be on empowering professionals and students to learn as much as possible and develop non-affirmative, critical and creative interpretations and negotiating competence (Moos et al., 2020). The Finnish school leadership discourse follows the latter in a culture of trust in school professionals and without national accountability measures (cf. Simola et al., 2017).

One example of this culture of trust is that even if the Ministry of Education and Culture has the power to use key policy instruments of legislation, financing and information-based steering, the actors have been trusted and have an autonomous status in Finland (Finnish Government, 2021). For example, the Ministry of Education and Culture summoned the universities to self-activity to be part of the development of principals' educational leadership, recognising their ability to answer the invitation (see Chap. 9). At the same time, autonomy and responsibility in the dynamic and complex governance system challenge educational leaders, their ethical leadership and their competence. Thus, there is a real need to develop education in educational leadership so that it can better respond to the needs of the professional development and help leaders cope with consistent challenges and continuous changes (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021).

Data and Methods

The data of this study were gathered from four focus group interviews and one individual interview conducted to investigate and develop educational leadership. The interviewees were the main actors of the four Ministry of Education and Culture key projects described in detail in Table 4.1. In addition, the general project descriptions made by the projects' staff were utilised in the data analysis.

Fifteen people, including three to five actors from each of these four projects, participated in the interviews. The research assistant conducted the interviews with

Table 4.1 Description of the four Ministry of Education and Culture key projects

Project names and coordinators	Why was the project implemented?	What was the aim of the project?	What was developed in the project?
ArkTORI – School Leadership in the Arctic University of Lapland	To support the professional development and leadership skills of principals in comprehensive education, with a special emphasis on the regional specificities of Northern Finland	To plan an educational leadership education for the University of Lapland, develop practices and tools, such as a peer-mentoring model and a digital tool for principals to support their professional development	Planning and development of many educational and the training opportunities, such as the launch of the qualifying educational leadership study module for the degree students at the University of Lapland
EduLeaders – Development and Research Project for Basic and Subject Studies in Educational Leadership University of Helsinki	The need for educational leadership studies has been evident amongst comprehensive education and ECE leaders in the capital area. In addition, many ECE centres suffer from a lack of qualified personnel, and the staff needs strong pedagogical leadership	To develop basic studies of Educational Leadership (25 credits) at the University of Helsinki, further studies based on evaluation and research data collected by the LeadEd scholars, and develop and pilot the advanced studies in Educational Leadership (35 credits)	The basic studies curriculum was developed, and the advanced studies (35 credits) were piloted and evaluated
KOPETI JO – School Pedagogical Leadership Åbo Akademi University	Before this project, qualifying studies to become qualified principals were offered as only continuing education for qualified teachers. Thus, the formation of teacher–students as a target group of the project was a new phenomenon, and both the content and the structure of the studies needed constant evaluation	To develop and pilot a principal education programme, in particular, adapted for teacher–students in Swedish in Finland according to F986 / 1998 at Åbo Akademi University in Vasa	Five separate courses were created, and a study programme called Educational Leadership (25 credits) was formed for teacher–students within their studies to become teachers

Table 4.1 (continued)

Project names and coordinators	Why was the project implemented?	What was the aim of the project?	What was developed in the project?
DAWN – Strengthening Leadership Skills of Personnel in the Field of Education University of Jyväskylä and Jamk University of Applied Sciences	The project was based on the need to develop leadership competence in education in all education tiers in the Finnish education system	To develop a multi-form and coherent holistic development for education in educational leadership	The main idea of the entity for education in educational leadership was developed, which is need-based concerning the needs of many levels (individual, organisation, region and society) and has individual paths in collaborative environments in a societally appropriate way

the web application Zoom in the spring of 2021. The permission to conduct the research was sought from the interviewees. The interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended questions. The themes of the questions concerned the participants' views of the current state of educational leadership in Finland, its ideal development and the nature of a potential multi-form nationally cohesive entity for its development. The participants answered the questions in any order they wanted, and the nature of the interviews was interactive. The interviews included features of an in-depth interview because the topics were often pondered and discussed by the participants in a highly profound manner. The interviews lasted from 38 minutes to 1 hour and 13 minutes, and they were transcribed literally.

The main research questions that were investigated with the help of this data were as follows: (1) What aspects of educational leadership have been developed? (2) How can the professional development of leadership in education be supported? (3) With what kind of holistic development can leadership in education be developed? The data were analysed with problem-driven (e.g. Krippendorff, 2013) qualitative content analysis with inductive reasoning (e.g. Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The transcriptions of the interviews and project descriptions were read many times to identify the contents related to the research questions. First, the main aspects of educational leadership development were listed. Second, the contents related to the second research question on supporting the professional development of leadership in education were gathered on a coding sheet. Third, the contents related to the third research question on holistic development entity for developing leadership in education were gathered on a coding sheet. In this chapter, the straight interview quotations are marked with a code P, which means project, and numbers 1 to 4, which indicate four projects (e.g. P1 indicates project one). However, these numbers are not in the same order as they are in Table 4.1 because of the anonymity of the projects' staff.

Results

Aspects of Educational Leadership Development

When we analysed the aspects of educational leadership development, it was found that the common aspect for all four projects was to *investigate and support the educational leaders' professional development,* and thus the leaders' skills and competence. In addition, they all wanted to investigate the state of education and start their first or new education processes and studies in educational leadership. Furthermore, they all conducted mixed-method research and included various datasets, such as surveys, interviews and learning materials, in their studies. The target groups represented all education tiers of the Finnish education system, such as principals and educational leaders from early childhood education and care to higher education. In addition, both faculty–student groups and continuing education students participated in education and research.

The projects mainly focused on developing (future) principals' leadership competence, but concurrently perceived *educational leadership as a phenomenon enacted by multiple and various actors.* These actors included those working in educational organisations, such as teachers, and those collaborating with educational organisations, such as researchers and municipal actors.

Moreover, *education in educational leadership* was developed in all four projects. For example, one of the projects created a programme worth 25 credits, even if the resources were limited, with lower numbers of staff and teachers hired on an hourly basis to cover all aspects of school leadership. All courses were created together with the field, with experts from education, such as superintendents and juridical experts. The exchange with the field was deemed particularly important. As for the development work in another project, this project could use a broad network and a long history of education in educational leadership and pilot new ways to enhance educational leadership with various groups.

In addition to the common aspects, we identified other aspects of educational leadership that were developed and investigated in more than one of these projects. In three of the four projects, the development of educational leadership emphasised *a specific context* that consisted of, for example, regional and cultural specificities of the community and the educational organisation, with its specific purpose and goals. It was recognised in the development work conducted through the projects that educational leaders need competence to identify the special features and conditions of the context in which they work and lead, as well as to navigate and act successfully in their specific contexts. For example, it was emphasised as the starting point in one of these projects that the principal has the overall responsibility for administration, leadership and development work in the educational institutions in all school forms. Thus, principals need to understand the specific conditions of their own units concerning the diversity of local, cultural and societal circumstances, traditions, school cultures, student and child groups, staff and guardians.

In two of the four projects, *the activity of the educational leader as a part of wide and multi-professional networks* was emphasised. Educational leaders often work in multifaceted cooperation to promote the overall growth, development and well-being of pupils and students. This competence to successfully act and lead various regional and professional networks, actors and sectors was recognised in all projects. In one project, the research results showed that the role of schools should be strengthened at the municipal level and made more visible, for example, in welfare strategies. Principals were seen as key players in how schools participate in building and maintaining networks to promote well-being (see Chap. 15).

In two of the four projects, educational leaders' *competence development in pedagogical leadership* was underlined. For example, one project included sub-studies on educational leaders' understanding and enactment of pedagogical leadership at different levels of education. The researchers of this project investigated early childhood education leaders' perceptions of pedagogical leadership and their capacity to lead the implementation of the curriculum. The results indicated that leaders are highly capable of leading implementation, but more coherent guidance and instruments for assessment are needed (Ahtiainen et al., 2021). Furthermore, the researchers of this project employed the framework of broad-based pedagogical leadership to investigate principals' and teachers' understandings of the elements of leadership that will promote the implementation of the national core curriculum in schools. According to the principals, strategic leadership, interaction and competence management contributed to the implementation of the curriculum. The teachers emphasised interaction, being goal-oriented and a general understanding of everyday schooling (Lahtero et al., 2021).

Another project approached the *development of pedagogical leadership by developing its framework.* The main idea was that because of understanding and developing pedagogical leadership, a theory of the object is needed, such as objectives, tasks and activities in an educational institution and its pedagogical work, as well as an idea of the pedagogical aspects found in pedagogical leadership. Principals were seen as actors in a multilevel system, with leadership and responsibilities distributed across levels and actors. The theoretical framework can be viewed as a foundation from which an understanding of school leadership programmes can be developed continuously. In framing their approach, the project actors considered Nordic models for principal education and current pedagogical development lines in educational institutions.

In three of the four projects, it was emphasised that educational leaders should be *competent of leading a PLC.* This may include such areas as involving teachers in school development work (Eisenschmidt et al., 2021) and principals leading a multilevel system by distributing leadership, as well as building the education system's multidisciplinary pedagogical culture. One central area of PLC leadership is human resource leadership. In one project, it was found that educational leaders' competence in human resource leadership was strong, but the area concurrently caused challenges for them.

There were also *project-specific aspects in these four projects.* For example, one project aimed at the themes and development work of well-being, welfare work, a

broad network of municipalities, a multidisciplinary approach, a mobile application, a service design process, peer-mentoring and cooperation practices. Another project had a national and broad aim of establishing a multi-form and coherent holistic development for education in educational leadership. When building this entity, cooperation with three other key projects was essential and remarkable. Furthermore, a large network outside of the projects' staff was invited to discuss and create a holistic entity for education in educational leadership. For example, other universities, universities of applied sciences, trade unions, the Association of Finnish Municipalities, the Finnish National Agency for Education, and the Ministry of Education and Culture were members of this network, which will continue the discussion and development work in the future.

Support for the Professional Development of Educational Leadership

With the help of the second research question, it was analysed how to support the professional development of leadership in education. The key findings from the data included emphasising the importance of *flexibility* in supporting and acquiring leadership competence: It should be possible to develop one's leadership through both education and learning through work. The competence acquired in either of these ways should be acknowledged and supported:

> Education must, of course, be highly adaptable and, in a way, always stick to those current themes and contents. Everyone would also have an opportunity to develop and strengthen their skills during their careers. (P2)

> Every university that offers teacher education should also have leadership education. (P4)

In addition to flexibility, the interviewees emphasised that education should be *diverse, context-based, continuous and research-based*. Other central elements that support leadership development were *networks, mentoring and peer support*:

> It should be based on needs considering organisations and the national level, but also individual needs to develop one's competence. We must have a very flexible model or system that pays attention to diversity. (P3)

> Education should be carried out in continuous collaboration with the development work of one's own organisation or school at the local level. Individuals should not be taken out of their contexts. (P1)

> It has to be done with the help of research broad enough so that we can get a more holistic picture of where we are going and to what direction. (P4)

> Mentoring and peer support would be entrenched and seen as goal-oriented and work-related. (P2)

Thus, the interviewees saw that the professional development of educational leadership should be *needs-oriented* and consider the needs of different levels, including individual, organisation, region and society levels:

> When we talk about this school development and management as a shared activity, it also means that teachers are closely involved in it. And that, in turn, means that we need to ask how teacher education needs to be organised in order to prepare for such shared leadership and school development. (P1)

> We would like to have a continuum from basic studies to on-the-job learning. Also, regional specificities would be strongly involved in this. (P2)

> All kinds of leadership skills and the development of leadership skills are needed. Then it is essential to be able to identify the needs of people, organisations and society. And then the structures, processes and practices of development support should be created for it; whatever the situations of the organisation and the person are, then the support would be appropriately offered to the precise situation where we are. (P3)

Thus, it was considered important to hear teachers and leaders who are working at these levels every day so that the professional development of educational leadership can support them as well as possible during their careers.

Towards a Multi-form Professional Development of Leadership in Education

Based on the analysis with the help of the third research question (with what kind of holistic development leadership in education could be developed), Fig. 4.1 was compiled. Figure 4.1 presents what kind of entity and what elements were identified as crucial for leadership development in education by the actors in four key projects. The figure illustrates how the actors in the four key projects perceived the professional development of educational leadership.

In the middle of the figure, there is an educational leader pursuing to develop his/her leadership competence. However, it is important to note that leadership should not be developed solely on the individual level but also, for example, on the level of a professional community or an organisation. The three partly overlapping circles in the middle of the figure (formal education in educational leadership, learning through work and flexible identification and acknowledgement of competence) illustrate the importance of building flexible bridges between formal education and informal competence development.

The arrows on the left side of the figure illustrate that formal education in educational leadership should be diverse and flexible, context-based, continuous and research-based. Three circles on the right side of the figure (peer support, mentoring and networks) illustrate three central supportive elements for leadership development. These elements can be, although not necessarily, related to learning through work. For example, an opportunity to be part of networks beyond one's own organisation is important for the professional development of an individual or a broader community: participating in networks and collaborating with them offers insights into differing practices, solutions, cultures and contexts of leadership.

Moreover, legislation and alignments (at the bottom) concerning competence and qualification requirements for educational leaders and financing made on
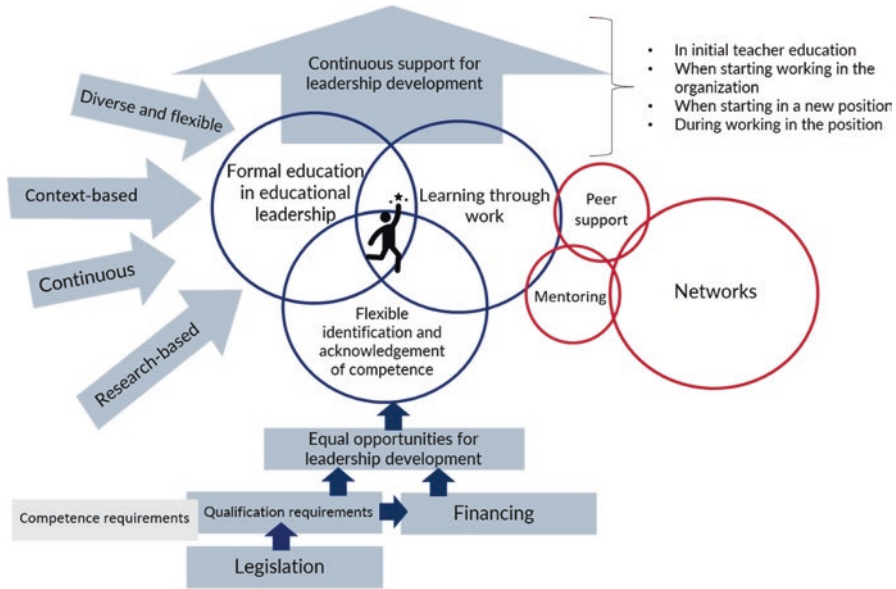
Fig. 4.1 Professional development of educational leadership

national and governmental levels regulate the structures, practices and opportunities for developing professional educational leadership. The aim is to create equal opportunities for leadership development at every level and in all leadership positions. Finally, the support for leadership development on both the individual and organisational levels should be continuous (at the top). In an individual educational leader's case, this means that support should begin in the initial (teacher) education and continue when he/she is starting to work in the organisation or in a new position and during working in position.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter, we investigated the professional development of educational leadership. The data of this chapter consisted of interviews with the main actors in the four Ministry of Education and Culture key projects and the general project descriptions made by the projects' staff. First, we analysed aspects of educational leadership development. It was found that the common aspects of these projects were to investigate and support the educational leaders' professional development, perceive educational leadership as a phenomenon enacted by various actors and develop education in educational leadership. However, there were other aspects that occurred in more than one of these projects: emphasis on the specific context, the activity of

the educational leader in multi-professional networks, competence development and development of the framework in pedagogical leadership, competence in leading PLC and project-specific aspects.

Second, we investigated how the professional development of leadership in education could be supported. We found that the professional development of leadership in education could be supported with the help of certain characteristics and components. First, it was considered important to take into account the need for flexibility in support. Second, it was recognised that education should be diverse, context-based, continuous and research-based. Third, it was realised that we need networks, mentoring and peer support in professional leadership development. Fourth, it was understood that the professional development of educational leadership could be supported best when it is needs-oriented, considering and hearing the needs of various actors working on different levels in the education system.

Third, we considered with what kind of holistic development leadership in education could be developed. Here, the importance of building flexible bridges between formal education and informal competence development was recognised. Furthermore, formal education should be diverse, context-based, continuous and research-based, and leadership development could be supported, for example, with the help of peer support, mentoring and networks. However, the actors on the national and governmental levels regulate the structures, practices and opportunities for developing professional educational leadership. Nevertheless, the aim is to provide equal opportunities for individuals and communities at every level and in all leadership positions during the entire career, from initial (teacher) education to working in different positions. Furthermore, the holistic development entity should consider the synergy between various levels (e.g. governmental, local, organisational and individual) regarding the relationship of connectedness and autonomy between these levels as well as the various needs for leadership (development) occurring on these levels.

In summary, the development achievements of education in educational leadership and empirical results of these projects have responded in various ways to the needs of both educational research (e.g. Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020; Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021) and national educational governance (e.g. Alava et al., 2012; Finnish National Agency for Education, 2013; Kumpulainen, 2017). For example, the research results and development work of these projects have provided both theoretical frameworks and practical examples for the need to define and develop professional leadership in educational organisations confronting complex challenges and constantly changing operational environments. Furthermore, this kind of national and local research-based development work has modelled an experimental culture that is supported by national educational governance. However, this work is also regulated and guided from there, which also challenges the longevity and efficiency of the development work.

In this chapter, educational leadership was perceived as a phenomenon involving multiple and various actors (cf. Elo & Uljens, 2022; Spillane, 2012; Supovitz, 2021). Although the projects mainly focused on developing the leadership competence of the educational leaders, it was recognised that leadership is enacted

in cooperation and collaboration with PLC members, such as teachers, and the actors and sectors of the networks of educational organisations, such as various municipal actors. Thus, it was recognised that (formal) educational leaders need competence in leading in a PLC (e.g. Johnson & Voelkel, 2021) and broader communities and networks, for example, to build a multidisciplinary pedagogical culture together. Here, leadership occurs as a shared process and aims at expanding learning in educational organisations (Jäppinen & Taajamo, 2022), which, on its behalf, helps to achieve the improvement in collective leadership and the collective as the enactor of leadership (cf. Morrissey, 2000, pp. 5–6). Collective leadership can help educational organisations to function effectively and successfully conduct their core task in the middle of the changes and development of their operational environments (cf. Jäppinen & Taajamo, 2022; Risku & Tian, 2017, 2020). Thus, work for enhancing the development of leadership in education, conducted in the projects aimed at responding to the current (leadership) development needs of educational organisations (cf. Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021), including the need for supporting shared meaning-making, flexibility, resilience and innovativeness.

The area of pedagogical leadership, which was one of the aims to develop in the projects, is also topical. Competent pedagogical leadership supports educational organisations in fulfilling their core task, which is student learning (Elo & Uljens, 2022), by helping them to respond to the challenges and transitions of society, such as the digitalisation-related changes in (teaching and learning) practices and the recent increase in learning differences between students and weaker students' performance. Additionally, the emphasis on pedagogical leadership development in the projects is associated with the recent and current educational policy changes in education in Finland (e.g. in ECE and VET sectors) that have resulted in the need for improving educational leaders' pedagogical leadership competence (Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020).

One central aspect of the projects was to pursue developing educational leadership based on considering the needs of the context (cf. Khalifa et al., 2016). For example, regional and organisational specificities were seen as an important part of the contextuality of leadership. When developed in alignment with its context, leadership increases its capacity to respond to the needs of this specific context, resulting in higher effectiveness and success (e.g. Khalifa et al., 2016). The fact that the perspective of contextuality was highlighted in the projects was associated with the high autonomy of Finnish educational organisations (cf. Simola et al., 2017). This autonomy concerns both the leaders' organisations and training conducted in the projects, as well as the universities as the conductors of this education and training. As a whole, the fact that the support for leadership development in the projects was designed and conducted based on the needs of the local educational organisations speaks about the Democratic Bildung Discourse and the related culture of trust (Moos et al., 2020) characteristic for education in Finland.

When we think about what we have learnt in practice during these project processes, we emphasise the meaning of our cooperation. The limited resources in Finland have been gathered through the cooperation of these key projects, which is a tradition worth developing continuously. In the future, we aim to deepen this

cooperation and widen it with the networks involved in educational leadership. This is like the common supervision of postgraduate students between universities and the development and start of education in educational leadership in collaboration. In addition, this cooperation helps us to ensure that there is a continuum and possibilities to provide enough resources for developing education in educational leadership. In the future, it will be important to further develop education in educational leadership, for example, for the heads of local education and culture departments.

Through this kind of cooperation and community, it is possible to strengthen the development of educational leadership, nationally and internationally. This kind of cooperation was not amongst the initial aims of the projects, but it has added remarkable value to the process in terms of the future development of educational leadership in Finland. Furthermore, we hope that the descriptions of our processes and results can help both national and international audiences in the corresponding professional development projects and experiments taking place in their countries and educational systems.

The following analyses were conducted to determine the quality and credibility of the present study. In the content analysis, the two researchers conducted independent analyses. Subsequently, common conclusions were drawn from discussions. This adds reliability to the analysis. In a consensus-based theory of truth, people can create truth by arriving at a consensus (Patton, 2015). In addition, the use of multiple coders in the analysis phase can be seen as a form of triangulation. The interview method is repeatable because it is described in as much detail as possible, so it also increases the reliability of the study.

The limitation of this study is the small target group of interviewees. On the other hand, the interviews brought out a deeper picture of the studied phenomenon in relation to the professional development of leadership in education, and the interviewees were specialists in educational leadership. The interviews were mainly carried out as focus group interviews. The challenges of group interviews are adaptive answers, but they can also elicit deeper answers than individual interviews. The theoretical framework of the study reflects the studied phenomenon and thus supports the research findings. Despite the limitations of generalisability, this study provides important and remarkable aspects and views on the professional development of educational leadership.

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Chapter 5
Service Design Thinking Method for Educational Leaders

Mari Suoheimo and Kaarina Määttä

Abstract Leading educational work can be a challenge as it includes guiding many different stakeholder groups. This study presents the service design process used to develop a service mobile application aimed at supporting the work of school principals in Finnish Lapland. Design thinking and Double Diamond are co-creative processes used by service designers to approach problems. In these processes, users play a central role in co-designing the service together with the service designers and other relevant stakeholders. This chapter describes the design thinking and Double Diamond methods in more detail and suggests how they can be utilised in the field of educational leadership by using participatory approaches to deal with complex social issues. While design thinking has been implemented widely in management education, it has rarely been applied to educational leadership. However, schools can be viewed as services where several interactions take place and where value is co-created. This study investigates how service design thinking can be applied in educational leadership. The data are based on focus groups and a research diary with field notes. A detailed literature review on how service design has been utilised in educational leadership is also included.

Keywords Service design · Co-design · Design thinking and double diamond · Educational leadership · Social complexities

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Introduction

Today, the educational field faces many challenges that are often considered to be complex social issues. Society changes, and so does education. In an educational organisation, many challenges exist, such as inclusion policies that lack guidance for implementation, increased immigrant and refugee student populations, multidisciplinary cooperation, as well as occasional unexpected phenomena, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. For many educational institutions, it can be difficult to continuously evolve and keep up with demands. Design thinking (DT) used in service design aims to create innovative solutions to the challenges encountered (Stickdorn et al., 2011).

This study will present the service DT and Double Diamond (DD) methods in detail and make suggestions for how these methods can be utilised in the field of educational leadership in Finland through participatory approaches to co-developing solutions to social issues. These approaches or methods are one way of sharing power. For example, Lehkonen (2009, p. 205) studied the phenomenon in Finland, where 'talking about power and using it do not seem to be allowed in the school culture for principals'. Northern Europe and Finland have practised participatory development for a long time, so it is often taken for granted, as it is practised in contexts where hierarchies are flat (Suoheimo, 2020). In Finland, shared leadership is emphasised in the Basic Education Curriculum (Hyvärinen et al., 2017). Finnish researchers have pointed out that distributed leadership is quite similar to participatory development, with interaction and mutual respect as their foundation (Määttä & Köngäs, 2021). Directors need leadership skills, and they are responsible for the functionality of an organisation. In addition, the educational system in Finland is highly decentralised, as most education-related decisions are made at the municipal or institutional level, with good stakeholder participation (Pont et al., 2020).

DT has been implemented in management education (Kimbell, 2011b), but it has not yet been applied with much depth to educational leadership. Schools can be viewed as services, where several interactions take place and value is co-created (Smeds et al., 2010). 'Service design' refers to an approach that was developed from the art and design fields and which emerged around 10 years ago as a separate discipline from interaction design and cognitive psychology (Rytilahti et al., 2015; Sun, 2020). Design itself can be seen as 'courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones' (Simon, 1969, p. 130), making anyone who has this aim into a designer. This study aims to answer the following research questions:

- How can service DT be applied in educational leadership?
- How can service DT and the DD model support shared/distributed leadership interactions in educational organisations?

The first part of the chapter will concentrate on describing service design and educational leadership (shared/distributed). Then, the DT and DD models will be

outlined, and their application in the educational field to date will be discussed by investigating the current literature. The subsequent sections will present a practical example of a case study of the service DT process, in which both DT and the DD models were implemented to develop a mobile application designed to support the work of school principals in Finnish Lapland. Stickdorn et al. (2011) would most probably call this process 'service design thinking'. The case study presented here is one example, but the process is transferrable and can be used to address leadership problems through creative thinking and co-creational practices that automatically result in shared leadership. The chapter's contribution to the field is to introduce the DT and DD models as tools for educational leaders to practise a bottom-up style of shared/distributed leadership in Finland, where participatory practices already exist; these approaches can nevertheless tighten leadership practices and provide tools to address everyday challenges.

Service Design

Service design as a discipline is widely recognised as being built upon five principles: (1) user-centeredness, or placing the user at the centre; (2) co-creativeness, or creating things together with end users and relevant stakeholders; (3) sequencing, or forming an image of the entire process and its sequences; (4) evidencing, or making parts of the system visual; and (5) holism, or drawing knowledge from different stakeholders and participants (Stickdorn et al., 2011). Intangible services are made visible through various visualisations that often show sequencing using maps. Service design traditionally uses blueprints or customer journeys to understand the service process and improve customers' experiences of it (Vink, 2019). The overall aim is to first build empathy by getting to know the customers, and then later making them part of the design process. Sanders and Stappers (2008, p. 6) view co-creation as 'designers and people not trained in design working together in the design development process'. Service design crosses social design, where everyone or the community designs for themselves solutions for the problems they encounter (Manzini, 2015). It has also been noted that designers often have difficulties working with or getting the desired results from those in positions of hierarchical power because designers may come to challenge the hierarchical thinking and power in organisations (Johansson & Woodilla, 2008).

Value is also co-created through intangible offerings (Vink, 2019), including in educational contexts (Smeds et al., 2010). When designing services, one might need to consider the entire ecosystem involved as well as the legacies of the organisation under construction (Vink, 2019). This means zooming in and out to look at the bigger picture as well as focus on the details (Vink, 2019). Recent service research has been focused on the relationship between services and organisations (Suoheimo, 2019, 2020; Vink, 2019). When designing systems, a more longitudinal understanding is needed (Hillgren et al., 2011).

Service design inquiry is constructivist or interpretivist, which means that the truth is socially constructed through various perspectives during interactions with others (Munkvold & Bygstad, 2016; Sun, 2020). Constructivism or interpretivism is more concerned with relevance than rigor (Ponelis, 2015). The researchers' own values, actions, interpretations and beliefs will shape the research process (Munkvold & Bygstad, 2016). Sun (2020) acknowledged that this is the most prevalent epistemology within service design, and accordingly, it provides the basis for this study as well. Patomäki (2020, p. 455) explained that the '(…) processual and changing nature of being should be an explicit feature of social ontology'. Social ontology is intertwined with complexity and bound in time, but also, 'social ontology raises fundamental questions about emergence, causation, mind, agency, structure, and such like (…)' (Patomäki, 2020, p. 455).

Educational Leadership: Shared/Distributed Leadership

In this chapter, we delimit 'education' as referring to the teaching–learning process in formal education. It includes both instructional strategies and pedagogical approaches in a hierarchically structured social system, and it leads to formal recognition (diplomas, certificates) (Määttä & Köngäs, 2021). Consequently, non-formal and informal educations are excluded from the review (Melnic & Botez, 2014).

The principles of the Basic Education Curriculum (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014) followed in Finland emphasises the importance of shared leadership. This type of leadership focuses on cultivating favourable learning conditions. Leadership is reflected in the way the school creates a positive atmosphere that supports the diverse skills and resources of both teachers and students. The Basic Education Curriculum offers excellent opportunities for innovative work, collaboration and the management of well-being (Hyvärinen et al., 2017).

Fonsén (2013) distinguished the following dimensions of school management: the context (contextual leadership model), the organisational culture (distributed leadership), the professionalism of directors (transformational leadership) and the management of substance (educational leadership). The context is the primary determinant of leadership. Clearly defined core tasks can support the enactment of pedagogical leadership, and the structure of the organisation can either prevent or promote it. Distributed leadership emphasises respectful and appreciative interactions within the school community (see Määttä & Uusiautti, 2014).

Sergiovanni (2001, p. 54) used the term 'ideal-based leadership' to denote value-based and shared leadership. Leaders' professionalism and the way in which they adhere to their role and authority are manifested in pedagogical leadership. We can define the concept of 'educational leadership' as an umbrella term that encompasses the various levels of leadership activity. It includes administrative work (administration or management) as well as teaching and interpersonal care

(leadership). The educational leadership of principals includes the management and development of the school and the teaching that takes place there.

Educational leadership includes shared leadership and is similar to the concepts of 'caring leadership' (Uusiautti & Määttä, 2014) and 'love-based leadership' (Uusiautti & Määttä, 2013), where the leader is able to create and develop teaching and learning relationships that take people's individual needs into account and use empowerment, engagement, productivity and outcomes to increase efficiency. In this chapter, we will use the term 'shared or distributed leadership' as it is similar to the approach practised in service design, which is generally a bottom-up approach within which the power is distributed (Suoheimo, 2020).

DT for Educational Leaders as Collaborative Agency/Endeavours

This chapter aims to target the wider use of the DT and DD models for educators as tools to implement innovation and change with regard to socially oriented matters (e.g. Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Kimbell, 2011a). This process enables societies to make change happen through innovation (Kimbell, 2011a). In recent years, design has become an important part of policymaking and public services and in organisations where user centeredness is required (Kimbell, 2011a). Kimbell (2011a, p. 293) emphasised Sam Ladner's (2009, n.p.) idea that 'design is attractive to management because it is a de-politicized version of the well-known socio-cultural critique of managerial practices'.

DT has been well developed and practised in the Stanford University tradition (Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Stickdorn et al., 2011) and in the DD model promoted by Britain's Design Council (2019). Both are processes used by service designers to approach problems in a co-creative manner. The users play a central role in co-designing the service with the service designers and other relevant stakeholders. Many other methods, models and variations of these two models still exist within the design discipline, but these two are probably the most popular and widely implemented. The models are very similar but still have some slight differences. The processes become service design oriented when they apply the principles of service design (Stickdorn et al., 2011).

Today, the DT or DD model is commonly taught to future leaders in the management and engineering fields as a method for solving problems (Kimbell, 2011b). Service design can be seen as a management style or a type of shared leadership in which a user-centric approach is applied (Stickdorn et al., 2011). In service design philosophy, the service designer is not a leader, but more of a listener or facilitator, where the aim is to understand (often through ethnography) what the needs of the users are. The user or customer can be defined in various ways depending on who the service is designed for. In the educational field, this may be principals, teachers,

students or the community. Both models begin with a challenge or a problem and end with the delivery of an outcome.

The DD model has four phases: discover, define, develop and deliver (Vink, 2019). It is built on the divergent and convergent phases of the thinking and developing process. One needs to know first what the problem or challenge is (opening phase) by creating empathy towards it, and then they need to define what the challenge is (closing phase). Subsequently, the process continues to develop ideas (another opening phase) and then selects some ideas to deliver by prototyping and testing them (closing phase). These two divergent and convergent phases are illustrated in the form of two diamonds. Figure 5.1 shows these two models joined together, and the DT process is shown inside of the two diamonds.

The DT model has five stages (illustrated as hexagons in Fig. 5.1): empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). Different kinds of design or strategic tools may be applied in the different stages to open or close the data. More practical examples of the tools will be provided throughout the case study described later in the chapter. Often, the process begins with a brief, but it is common to redefine or check its accuracy after the discover and define stages, when the challenge has become more familiar. The process is not linear or read from left to right, but rather it is an iterative process, where a multi- or cross-disciplinary team may go back and forth until a satisfactory consensus is reached. The aim is to fail early on, especially during the prototyping stage, when the ideas are being tested (Henriksen et al., 2017). This reduces the cost of the development process, as the example of the case study provided later will show how it reduced costs in creating an app. The outcomes generally engender change and create value for the 'user' (Kimbell, 2011a). Kimbell (2011b, p. 129) even showed how the process 'de-centres the designer as the main agent in designing'.
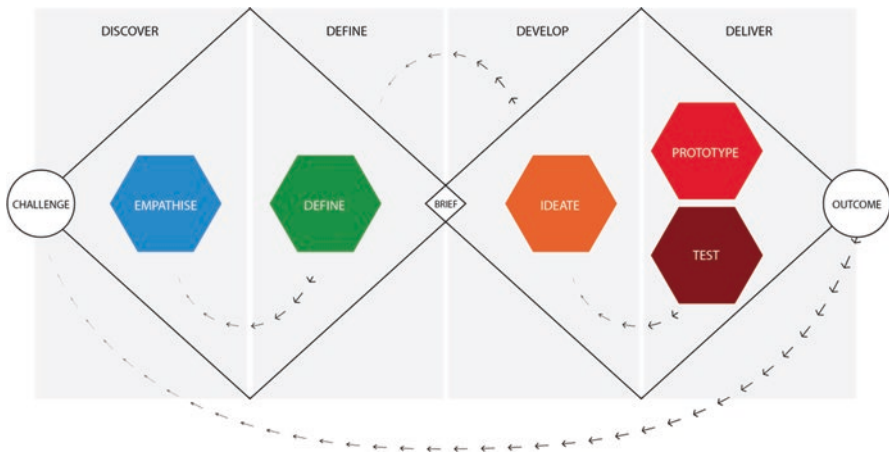
Fig. 5.1 A joined model of the DT and DD processes. (Adapted from Plattner (2009) and the Design Council (2019))

In terms of leadership, the DT or DD process requires a collaborative and participatory leadership approach, since it is based on dialogue and considers various stakeholders' perspectives on the issue at hand. In this sense, the process can serve not only as a tool for development and problem solving, but also as an instrument to increase leadership interaction and distribute leadership during the process. Lahtero et al. (2019) has critically viewed how Finnish educational organisations, current management systems with their management teams, working groups and development projects all allow for the distribution of leadership and responsibility, but in reality, distributed leadership does not necessarily mean true leadership interactions; instead, it can involve more of a delegation of tasks. The position of the principal as the head of an educational organisation and bearer of responsibility has been strengthened since the law was changed in the 1990s (*Basic Education Act 628/*1998), which again can make leadership depend more on the style of the leader of the specific organisation, despite the ideals of distributing or sharing leadership. However, in practice, a principal cannot solve complex problems or develop a community alone and instead relies on interaction and cooperation, which is where service design tools can be helpful.

In the DT or DD process, leadership can be viewed intrinsically as collaborative agency (Raelin, 2016). Ontologically, it can be seen as an on-going process that is formed through a continuous flow of interactions embedded in the specific cultural context of the educational organisation within which the development process takes place (Crevani & Endrissat, 2016). Understood in this way, leadership is transferred, or can be transferred, at different stages of the process, depending on, for example, who has the expertise needed at a given time.

Previous Studies of Service Design and DT in Educational Leadership

A Scopus search performed in April 2020 based on 'design thinking,' and 'education' yielded about 1000 results, with around 100 results from the field of humanities (101). This presented some limitations in terms of selecting and reading the articles. When analysing the results in the art and humanities fields, some relevant articles were found, and these were selected for further reading. Using the term 'double diamond' instead of 'design thinking' gave a total of eight results. A new search that included 'design thinking' and 'education', and 'service design' only identified 15 academic publications. Different combinations of the words were used, and additionally, a desktop search was made to find more relevant publications.

Although the results are not extensive, there are still some novel and interesting examples of how DT, DD and service design have been applied as an approach for educational leadership as a form of sharing and distributing leadership and perhaps questioning hierarchical power structures. Some practical examples can be found for how service design has been applied in the educational context, as Jhaj (2020)

reports how service design and DT were used to shape the academic career paths in a university. Stanford University regularly offers DT courses for K-12 educators to 'build creative confidence and equity awareness that can be applied upon return to their local contexts' (Raz, 2017, n.p.).

Still, we can find examples of how service design is applied as a form of shared leadership and power, as Kuzmina et al. (2012) proposed an alternative view of education as a public service by empowering citizens in the process of making it, which benefits the service itself and its users, especially in the sustainability context. When designing education based on the idea of a sustainable service, they included the students as active participants in the process by making complex issues more manageable. This can be a powerful form of sharing the decision making in educational leadership. It means that educational leaders will need to roll up their sleeves and make the community and students part of decision-making processes by making them part of making sense of the problem and how provide solutions to it. The positive side of this process is that it can help students to take ownership when making decisions and then consequently take new actions towards new sustainable development. On the other hand, it can also undermine the top-down power structures inside an organisation or educational environment, which not all leaders are trained to deal with.

Several authors have proposed using design as a theoretical perspective in the education field (e.g. Henriksen et al., 2017). Henriksen et al. (2017) described how educational players (policymakers, principals, teachers and coordinators) face difficult leadership challenges that might require non-linear and creative solutions. DT is tool for creative problem solving and creates innovations for the problems encountered. More practical examples can be drawn from the use of the DT and DD models in education. Daly-Smith et al. (2020) applied the DD model to incorporate around 50 stakeholders (including policymakers) when co-developing the Active Schools Framework in Great Britain. Including stakeholders as part of the decision-making process is also sharing the power and leadership in this specific context of investigation. A leader will always base their decisions on knowledge, and incorporating the community as way to increase this knowledge is one method of inclusion. In this study, the schools were understood as complex adaptive systems when identifying how to improve children's inadequate rates of physical activity (Daly-Smith et al., 2020).

Henriksen et al. (2017) illustrated, through different cases, how a DT course implemented in the educational field gave educators on-the-ground solutions. Their students reported that using the empathy-building tools had changed their perceptions of other students. Henriksen et al. (2017, p. 146) saw a connection between the empathising approaches used in design and educational philosophy (such as Dewey's), where one needs to 'make learning relate to the experiences of the student'. Service design is essentially about designing experiences and creating empathy (Kimbell, 2011a). During the course, participants learned how to see a problem from different perspectives by examining new angles. Empathy building is an essential quality and can be used as a tool for sharing leadership. Here, the aforementioned concepts of 'caring leadership' (Uusiautti & Määttä, 2014) or

'love-based leadership' (Uusiautti & Määttä, 2013) are of value, as they consider individual needs and aim to achieve empowerment and engagement. Regardless of the context, empathy building may be key to the practice of these kinds of leadership styles, recognising that empathy building is the foundational building block of service design. The 'leader', often called a facilitator in service design, takes on the role of the 'other' that can be the user, the student, parent or an actor in the ecosystem.

By analysing the literature on the use of the DT and DD models in education and educational leadership, we can conclude that there are several ways that these methods have been or could be applied. The examples show that it has been applied in policymaking, but on a more practical level, in educational leadership as well. Not many studies concentrate on this type of leadership in practice, but more on the context of how these methods can be applied in terms of understanding challenges.

We wish to fill the gap in the literature related to the use of service design as an approach in educational contexts, using the DD and DT models, from the perspective of shared/distributed leadership. The Scopus search performed with the terms 'shared leadership' and 'service design' yielded a total of two results. One was about providing services for elderly people from a shared leadership perspective (Brocklehurst et al., 2018) and the other was about ecosystems and concluded that 'shared leadership has the potential to be an institutional arrangement that facilitates service-dominant logic and the value co-creation process' (Johansson & Woodilla, 2008, p. 159). The Scopus search with the terms 'distributed leadership' and 'service design' did not yield any results. We see that our study is quite novel, as our intention is to incorporate service design as a perspective and facilitation method for educational leaders to share leadership in the field of educational leadership.

Case Study of Designing a Mobile Service for Principals to Enhance Their Work as Leaders

This single case study was situated within the project called School Leadership in the Arctic (ArkTORI). The aim of the project was to support principals in developing schools from the perspective of strategic competence management and leadership. One deliverable involved creating a mobile application to strengthen principals' professional development by using service design facilitation. The process of developing the mobile service applied a shared/distributed leadership approach.

Research Design and Data

The research for this case study was carried out using the methodology of 'research through design' (Zimmerman et al., 2007), a common methodology in service design or design research that applies the DD and DT models. The data were collected from the different points of the DT and DD models, illustrated in Figure 5.2. The process follows DT and DD methods, and different tools were

Discover
insights to the problems

Define
areas to focus upon

Develop
potential solutions

Deliver
solutions that work

Problem

Solution

Proto-
type

Alfa

Beta

Final
product

Benchmarking

Principals' costumer journey

Stakeholder mapping

User persona forms

Idea Napkin

Refining the costumer
journey

Marvel prototype (Alfa)

User testing

Coding
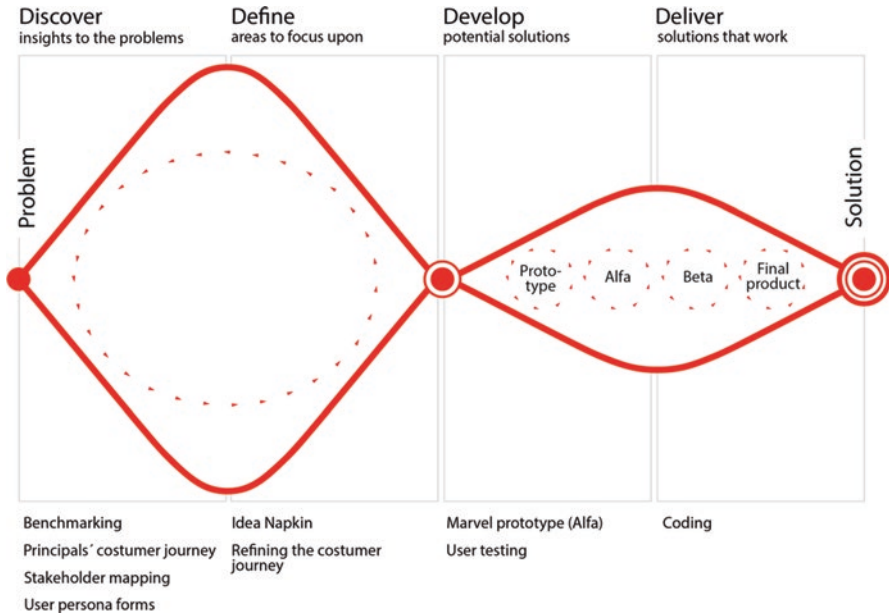
Fig. 5.2 The case study's joined DT and DD process and some of the tools used

applied in each of the four stages: (1) discover, (2) define, (3) develop and (4) deliver. The qualitative data consist of focus groups and a research diary with field notes made by the first author, who participated in the project in its second year. In total, six focus groups with school principals took place up until the delivery phase, and five separate online interviews were used to validate the data and the planned direction of the study.

Several team meetings were held to outline and discuss the content of the focus groups and interviews with the school principals. In the meantime, there were multiple phone calls and emails to discuss some of the issues in greater detail. As the dataset was large, in this chapter we report the parts that were essential in taking the project further and reaching its goals in designing an application to help the school principals' work. The process has had a strong cross-disciplinary focus, as the researchers and developers came together as a team to work collaboratively through shared/distributed leadership. The main collaborators, in addition to the school principals, were education and design researchers, as well as software engineers.

Limitations of the Study

The study is qualitative in nature, and certain research limitations should be considered when applying it to other contexts. As researchers, we may have experienced prejudice or bias when carrying out the research, and these could have influenced

the results (Long & Godfrey, 2004). The study was conducted in a specific geo-graphical setting (Long & Godfrey, 2004) and involved principals from the Finnish Lapland. A different set of stakeholders could bring different kinds of results (Long & Godfrey, 2004). Generally, qualitative research is hard to replicate, although case studies can bring results that 'give insight into problems that reach beyond the indi-vidual case' (Buchanan, 2001, p. 18).

The Service DT/DD Process

Discover and Empathise

The whole process began by empathising with the focus group: the principals. The participants each filled in a 'persona' form. This form contained questions about what each principal's motivations or goals were and defining the problems they would like to solve. Using the information gathered, as well as complementary information gathered later on, such as statistics on consumer behaviour, an overall image was formed of the group. In the same focus group, the principals completed an activity that involved filling in a journey of the school year of the issues they had faced during the year (Fig. 5.3). The first row describes the activities, and the second gives different indicators. The third row illustrates the principals' feelings, and the last reveals the needs that the principals identified each month.

Another activity was to make a stakeholder map, which included global, national and local actors and those that they were in close contact with. This activity gave our team a good general picture of whom the principals were in contact with during their daily activities.
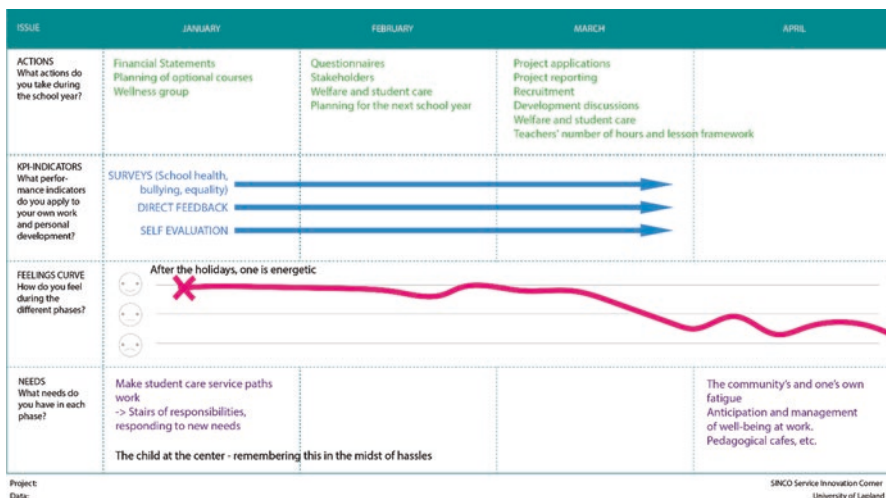
Fig. 5.3 Template of the first 4 months of the principals' year in the form of a journey

Define

In one of the focus groups, the principals expressed how the application would be more useful for them if it had more features, rather than just a development plan for personal progress, which was the initial idea for the project's deliverable. An Idea Napkin (Ely, 2018) was used to identify the ideas and needs that the principals had. From this exercise, five different areas were raised as topics for further development. One central need that was identified was a year clock or a way of planning work. The application features that the principals had requested were filtered accordingly, keeping in mind the budget and the focus of the ArkTORI project and using minimum viable product principles (Moogk, 2012), which means using the minimum required resources to make the app functional.

Develop and Deliver

Based on the results of the first two focus groups, the internal team planned a third focus group, where the ideas were presented in a wireframe to illustrate the preliminary contents of the application. This visual form helped the internal team to discuss and further develop the application. Figure 5.4 shows some screen shots of the contents. Using a fourth focus group followed by some follow-up meetings with the principals, the internal team and the researchers, the prototype was refined further. Each application feature, such as the mentoring section, had its own round of editing. The process included many iterations to perfect the contents. Usability testing also played a a role in making the navigation of the application smoother. As Henriksen et al. (2017) wrote, the idea of prototyping and testing is to fail early on, which prevents the use of more resources in later stages.
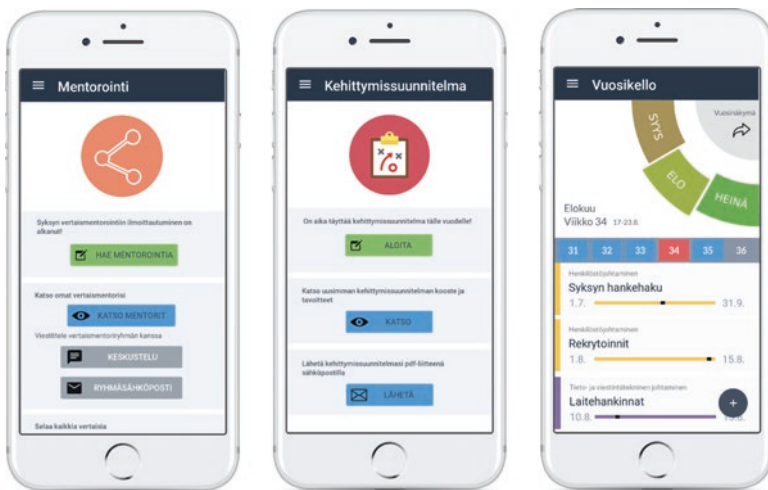
Fig. 5.4 Screenshots of the interactive prototype in Marvel

Results

The process of making a mobile application for principals was designed using the DT and DD models. Essentially, the process and service design helped to answer the questions of why a mobile application is needed and what needs the principals have that the application could address. Here, we have provided some examples of tools that can be applied in the opening and closing phases of the process, but which could be used in other leadership challenges as well. Many of the visual data were gathered through templates. The notes and observations from the focus groups and the research diary helped to keep the focus on the principals' needs during the process.

The focus groups and interviews were the main ways of making the principals part of the process. The COVID-19 situation at the time of the study created some challenges related to meeting in person; thus, some online interviews were conducted as well. The principals were busy facing the new challenges of the pandemic, and the short interviews were a way of confirming what had already been done and identifying a new direction for the development process. The focus groups were also carried out online, as travelling had become more difficult, and public health authorities had recommended against making unnecessary journeys. Adapting collaboration and co-design techniques to the process was also a way of listening and creating empathy towards the needs of the school principals in this situation.

Currently, the process is in the prototyping alpha phase. Later, more specific user studies will be conducted to test the different versions. During the design process, the first step was to empathise with the users in order to get to know them and their needs. Next, these needs were refined in the 'define' stage and then developed through the first prototypes. Ideas were generated, prototyped and tested. Marvel's online application serves as an easy way to test the first drafts that have been refined into alpha versions before the beta and final versions are completed. Four iterations will be presented in the final stage. The users (the principals) were involved in close collaboration when performing each step of the process to ensure that the service would meet the school leaders' and principals' requirements and needs. The process was not linear, as we went back and forth through the stages, depending on which part of the application was being designed.

Findings and Discussion

This study began by investigating how service DT can be applied to educational shared/distributed leadership. This was illustrated through the literature review showing applications of the DT and DD models in the educational sector. This chapter also provides a practical example of a service process, where principals took part in the ArkTORI project. The same principles of making development can be applied to other leadership challenges in the educational field. Collaborative workshops, interviews and other creative methods can help direct educational

leaders towards participatory leadership styles, as we see that shared/distributed leadership resonates a great deal with service DT, where a bottom-up approach is practised.

The process applied in the case study shows how power has been distributed at various stages of the process, especially to the end users, namely, the school principals. Their involvement has been essential to discovering their needs and how to meet them. Initially, the application was designed to help principals follow and improve their leadership skills by performing self-evaluations based on answering a questionnaire. In the early focus groups, the principals sincerely expressed how they thought that they would not download the application and use it based on one feature alone. This made the project team re-evaluate the purpose of the application to make it more inclusive of the general needs that principals have. Features were added, such as the principals' year clock and the peer-mentoring section, suggestions that the principals offered themselves to make the application more valid for their everyday life. Service design thus provides tools for listening, creating empathy and directing a project's strategy towards the end users' needs. In this way, the decision-making power was given to or shared with school principals.

One practical example involved deciding when to start peer mentoring and send messages to the school principals to participate in it. The team logically thought that this could take place twice a year and that the application could send a request when the school year starts in August and then a second one in January, when the second semester starts in Finland. However, the principals were asked about this, and the results were surprising. Based on interviews with three principals, they were unanimous in their opinion that the worst time would be August (the beginning of the school year) because it is the busiest time of year. They thought that September would be a better month for the mobile application to send a request for peer mentoring. This example shows how service design emphasises the users' perspective, does not allow the team to make the decisions for the principals and always aims to receive final confirmation from the users themselves. In this manner, we see that the service design philosophy and the DT and DD methods can be helpful in sharing decision making and not making prejudicial assumptions.

Uljens and Nyman (2013, p. 43) wrote that in Finland '(…) principals today are expected to work more actively as educational developers and leaders in all schools, they may be differently prepared for the task due to the differences in their studies in education'. As we saw in the case of Henriksen et al. (2017), offering a course in DT could be one way of capacitating the future educational leaders in Finland as well. As Pont et al. (2013) recognised that power is already shared in decision making in the educational system in Finland, service DT is one method for strengthening the on-going good work already being done. Additionally, the ArkTORI project's use of service design as a guiding principle for development work shows how the educational field is working holistically and in a transdisciplinary way (Suoheimo et al., 2022).

The process has taken a long time, and without the participatory approach and development, the whole process would have been quicker. Nevertheless, it is still estimated that the time invested in the early design phases is less costly than the time

that it would take to remake the design later on (Bragança et al., 2014). We believe that this can also be the case for educational leaders. If one leader makes the decisions alone, it is much faster to proceed and move forward, but it can become a costly and lengthy process at the end if the direction was not right from the start. Taking the stakeholders, whoever they may be, into account as part of the process in addressing educational leadership challenges can save educational resources in the end. The DT model has been proposed to handle the wicked problems (Pyykkö et al., 2021; Suoheimo, 2020) that are common in educational leadership challenges in Finland (Korva et al., 2021).

In service design, there has been some criticism of the literature for having a 'sales' tone (Vink, 2019). However, not all services directly aim to create economic value. Value can be defined in various ways and in the short or long term, especially when designing in public service contexts, of which education is one example. In education, value can be defined as the value of learning for the students (Smeds et al., 2010) or the experience of learning. A school or a nationwide educational network is a large ecosystem to design. The ecosystem can also include subservices such as the matriculation and enrolment of new students and services for teachers to orientate their career paths, and it can foster interactions with the community, amongst other things. Without understanding the basic principles of service design, it might create some challenges to manage, develop and lead services in the educational field.

Using service DT is one way of practising shared/distributed leadership. Service design is about distributing power. The epistemology departs from the view that truth is constructed together through social interaction (Sun, 2020). Historically, participatory design and co-design have had a great deal of influence on design and service design practices in which power is given to the community or the user (Sanders & Stappers, 2008). It would be interesting to observe future studies on defining the similarities and differences between participatory design, co-design and shared/distributed leadership. In the design process, the service designer is viewed as a facilitator or mediator of the process, similar to the role of a shared or distributed leadership. As Hoch (2012) defined shared leadership, it seems to have similarities with service DT, as the decision making, as well as responsibility for the outcome, is shared. This kind of approach aids in creating more agency.

The case study described here explains how the process of developing a mobile service for principals has been a cross-disciplinary undertaking that has included various stakeholders in the process. This is also a similar need or requirement for leaders in the educational field, as the problems are complex and wicked. The educational field could use the DT and DD models as methods for teaching future educational leaders how to tackle challenges through creative-thinking processes. Such techniques could also help to deal with many educational challenges, from the political to practical levels of implementation. The educational field could implement the design and management field practices of DT and DD, as those in this field have a longer history of applying these methods. As the literature pointed out, these methods have been applied in the educational field but to a lesser extent, and their use still seems to be novel. More future studies should be carried out to investigate,

through case studies, how service DT could be used to add value and share decision-making power through distributed/shared leadership.

Often, social challenges are unique, and existing tools and methods need to be adapted to them. Service design has many method banks, and the service designer–facilitator often uses these tools according to the challenge at hand. The transferability potential of the methods and tools is large, as they can be used for micro-, meso- or even macro-planning as in the case of wicked problems (Korva et al., 2021; Suoheimo et al., 2020). Wicked problems are policy-level problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973). This specific case study is limited to one very specific development example on a micro-level.

Service design and its way of understanding social complexities through its constructivist epistemology enables it to define the fuzzy social ontology of the being. The first stage of the DD/DT process is designed to create a shared understanding of a complex, often social, situation. It is not in vain that the first stage is defined or understood through a 'Fuzzy Front End' process (Alhonsuo, 2021). In this manner, service design and the DD/DT model can serve as a tool for educational leaders to create a shared understanding independently of what the situation in the greater educational world may be. Through DT, one can ask what the key dimensions and strategies are for guiding culturally responsive and socially just school leadership praxis.

Conclusions

As Stickdorn et al. (2011) have pointed out, the service design work in terms of creating the application has been essentially holistic and user-centred, and the value has been co-created. These are values and principles that are also essential for shared and distributed leadership styles. Creating empathy towards the challenge and the people in question is the key to creating creative solutions. During the process, many visual tools can be used to show sequencing, such as the principals' year clock in this case study. Many stakeholders have been involved in the cross-disciplinary development process. The chapter presented service DT/DD principles and methods that we believe could aid future educational leaders as they work on a daily basis in the midst of many educational services.

We recommend courses on service DT for future educational leaders. We believe that service DT could be seen as an approach for sharing/distributing power within decision-making practices. This may also influence the ownership of the decisions taken, which is often a challenge for principals or other stakeholders involved in educational leadership. It can also save resources in the long term, as the methodology includes a variety of stakeholders as part of the co-creation process, thus ensuring that the right issues, or the "why," will be answered. The costs are higher at the start, but this will be paid back at the end of the process, as it ensures the fuzziness of the process is handled in the beginning and not at the end.

Service DT can be implemented in various ways, such as through designing nationwide, community-level or school-sized services that may be digital or non-digital in nature. Service design tools can create practical ways to involve parents, students and communities in core decision making, thus sharing/distributing educational leadership in Finland, which already has a history of holistic shared decision practices.

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Part II
Conceptual Approaches

The main focus of the second section is the conceptual approaches to leadership in educational contexts, as follows. First, the concepts and models of international educational leadership with reference to the Finnish context of educational leadership and management are considered in a literature review-based study. Second, pedagogical leadership is conceptualised in the Finnish setting by positioning pedagogical leadership among international approaches on developing educational leadership and examining the historical evolvement of pedagogical leadership including the educational policy and governance in Finland. Third, the understanding of pedagogical leadership is deepened in an international educational context, and its meaning for high-quality education is investigated based on Finnish research and reflecting international research. Fourth, the section critically reflects on and presents a systemic approach of how educational leadership is based on education theory.

Chapter 6 examines educational leadership conceptions and models with a particular reference to the Finnish context of educational leadership and management in a literature review-based study. The study analyses the content of the models and the ontological-epistemic conceptions of leadership on which they are based. Chapter 7 conceptualises pedagogical leadership as a concept in the Finnish setting by positioning pedagogical leadership among internationally approaches on educational leadership and by examining the historical evolvement of pedagogical leadership from the perspectives of educational policy and governance in Finland. Chapter 8 examines the Finnish early childhood education and comprehensive education and models the definition of pedagogical leadership in Finnish education by examining value, context, organisational culture, professionalism and management of substance, i.e. leadership culture. Chapter 9 theorises the second section of the book arguing for a systemic approach through which educational leadership is theoretically based on education theory for two reasons. First, education theory is needed to grasp which societal activity is led (the 'what' of leadership). Second, all educational leadership (that requires a wide variety of competencies) also include pedagogical dimensions (the 'how' of leadership).

Chapter 6
Understanding Leadership in Educational Leadership Research in Finland

Saana Korva and Pikka-Maaria Laine

Abstract This systematic literature review focuses on previous academic research on leadership in the context of the Finnish education system for minors, including early childhood education and care through the secondary level. The aim is to examine how leadership is understood in the focal studies. This is accomplished by acknowledging the leadership concepts of the studies, identifying the locus of leadership in them and ontologically differentiating their understandings of collective. According to the results, leadership was mostly defined as a collective, social phenomenon in nature. Most of these studies drew from an entity-based ontology, meaning that collective forms of leadership were seen as different types of leadership the characteristics of which were studied. Only a few studies drew from process ontology examining collective to be constituted within a flow of relations. The results are discussed in light of international educational leadership research and from the perspective of leadership research approaches in management and organisation studies. Based on our study, we encourage the future research on educational leadership to draw from various ontoepistemological approaches to strengthen the understanding of educational leadership.

Keywords Educational leadership · Systematic literature review · Early childhood education and care · Compulsory education · Finland

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Introduction

In the context of the Finnish education system, research on educational leadership has increased over the past decade, and especially the research on social and collective forms of leadership, such as distributed leadership, has seemed to flourish (e.g. Tian et al., 2016). However, there is diversity of ontological understandings of collective leadership, either as an entity or as a processual phenomenon. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the understanding of leadership in the educational leadership research in Finland. Our study focuses on empirical research in the context of the Finnish education system for minors. We approach our research task by first acknowledging the concepts used in the literature; second, by identifying the locus of leadership; and third, by examining how *collective* is ontologically understood in the research. Within collective leadership studies, we distinguish the ontological differences by drawing on the matrix of Ospina et al. (2020), in which the authors position the studies on collective leadership to different categories, depending on whether the collective is understood as drawing from an entity-based ontology or process ontology. As our result, we distinguish the most commonly used concepts in the literature, as well as position the previous research based on the locus of leadership – whether it resides in individual, group or system – and based on the ontological understanding of collective as a 'type' or 'process'. Our study enables us to link educational leadership within the historical trajectory and theoretical multidimensionality of leadership studies in the social sciences, such as management and organisation studies. By bringing out the different ontological approaches towards leadership, we can increase the understanding of different forms of collective leadership to encourage more explicit and consistent ontoepistemological and methodological approaches within the field of educational leadership.

This study is accomplished via a systematic literature review focusing on empirical research in the areas of educational leadership, educational management and educational administration in the context of the Finnish education system excluding higher education from 2000 to 2020. Because there is still relatively little research published in English, all articles that deal with leadership in the Finnish education system[1] for minors, that is, under the age of 18, including early childhood education

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[1] In Finland, according to the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018), early childhood education and care (ECEC) refers to the entirety of the child's planned and goal-oriented upbringing, teaching and care, with a particular emphasis on pedagogy. Every child has the right to ECEC. At 6 years old, children participate in a one-year pre-primary education that became mandatory in 2015, as set by the Basic Education Act (1998/628). After that, 7 years of age starts a compulsory education, which ends when the young person has reached the age of 18 or completed secondary education (general upper secondary education or vocational education and training). The Compulsory Education Act (1214/2020), which extends compulsory education to secondary education as well, entered into force in August 2021. Secondary education is free for young people, stated by the law. Education at all these levels, in ECEC, pre-primary education and compulsory education, are guided by the national core curriculums determined by the Finnish National Agency for Education. The system forms an educational continuum from childhood until adulthood, that is, up to the age of 18.

and care (ECEC), pre-primary education, comprehensive school, general upper secondary education/school and vocational education and training (VET), were taken into account. Finally, along with the established criteria for the systematic literature review, 32 peer-reviewed empirical journal articles published between 2010 and 2020 were selected for the final analysis. No previous literature review has been conducted focusing specifically on Finnish educational leadership at the different levels of the education system for minors (see, e.g. Alava et al., 2012; Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015; Risku & Kanervio, 2011). In the research on educational leadership, the importance of context is essential because it has implications for how leadership is conceptualised and how it is practiced in educational institutions and their societal context (Hallinger, 2018).

The special features of Finnish educational leadership stem from the historical development of the national education system, education policy, management practices and leadership culture at the municipal and local levels (see, e.g. Risku & Kanervio, 2011). Educational leadership is characterised by strong confidence in the competence of education professionals, which allows great degrees of freedom for leading educational organisations in practice (Uljens & Nyman, 2013). Even though organisations or unit-level management systems differ at different levels of the education system, education activities must be led by highly educated professionals who have the qualifications of a teacher. Organisationally, early childhood education and care is carried out in centres managed by an ECEC centre director. ECEC centre directors often lead several units, usually two to three centres. Pre-primary education is organised in accordance with the municipality's decision in an ECEC centre, in a comprehensive school or at another suitable location. The designated leader of a comprehensive school or general upper secondary school is the principal. VET, on the other hand, is often organised in regional consortia that include several units. In VET, the management system is multilevel; the vocational institution is managed by a person called the principal or director, and under the principal, there are administration and managers of the VET fields and subfields. At every level, teachers are responsible for (their own) teaching. In addition, teachers are involved in leadership processes and can take on various formal and informal leadership roles, such as team leader in ECEC and vice principal in comprehensive schools. ECEC teachers and childcare nurses work in teams; at other levels, teachers' educational collaborations are linked to specific educational subjects or fields.

Educational leadership can be seen as having specific features compared with leadership in other fields. Educational organisations play a role in sustaining society by providing cultural and educational continuity (Parsons, 1960, as cited in Seeck, 2008, p. 20). The growing number of leadership models and different concepts reflect researchers' efforts to define and develop effective educational leadership from different perspectives (Gumus et al., 2018). Because of societal, political, institutional and cultural differences in different countries, educational leadership can be related to different meanings and practices – even if it is described with similar concepts (Moos, 2013). In international research, different concepts, models and perspectives have been attached to educational leadership at the different levels of education. According to Gumus et al. (2018), the most studied educational leadership concepts in

international research have been *distributed leadership, instructional leadership* and *teacher leadership. Distributed leadership* is argued as representing 'one of the most influential ideas to emerge in the field of educational leadership in the past decade' (Harris, 2010, 55). However, in the context of educational organisations, distributing leadership does not necessarily mean a weakening of the formal leadership positions (see, e.g. Tian et al., 2016). *Instructional leadership*, which is also referred to by terms such as *pedagogical leadership, curriculum leadership* or *leadership for learning* (see, e.g. Bush, 2019) is 'one of the most commonly studied' models in educational leadership (Gumus et al., 2018, p. 29). The model was originally very principal centred because it is based on the idea that the principal's role is to guide and supervise teaching and learning (Gumus et al., 2018; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). *Teacher leadership* is also based on the idea of the distribution of leadership with the particular focus on teachers' informal leadership roles (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In addition to these, the following concepts, amongst others, have also been used within educational leadership in the literature: *transformational leadership*, *technology leadership, transactional leadership, ethical/moral leadership, charismatic leadership, administrative/managerial leadership, strategic leadership, authentic leadership, visionary leadership* and *servant leadership* (Bush, 2019; Bush & Glover, 2014; Gumus et al., 2018).

Leadership is a diverse and multidimensional phenomenon; there is not just one definition of leadership, but many, which calls for research from different perspectives (Crevani et al., 2010; Yukl, 2006). Still, educational leadership research has been accused of conceptual fragmentation and is seen as theoretically fragile (Niesche, 2018; Oplatka, 2008). The roots of many of the models or concepts mentioned above are not in the educational sciences; only some of them, such as instructional leadership and teacher leadership, have been developed in the field (Wang, 2018). Since the development of the research field of educational leadership in the 1950s, scholars have borrowed concepts and theories from the social and behavioural sciences (Oplatka, 2008; Heck & Hallinger, 2005). According to Wang (2018), one of the top five 'dominant framings' for concepts in educational leadership research is organisation theory. However, as Wang notes (2018, p. 335), 'building linkages to the concepts on leadership and organisation studies is still in process'.

In the current study, we analyse previous research based on whether it is more traditional leader-centric research focusing on the actions and perspective of the manager/management or whether the research object is collective leadership. Then, to explore the boundaries of the research on collective leadership, we benefited from the categorisation of Ospina et al. (2020), who demonstrate that collective forms of leadership can ontologically be divided into entity-based ontological understanding of a collective or process ontological understanding of a collective (see Table 6.1 in Ospina et al., 2020, p. 443). When the collective is seen more as an entity, collective leadership is seen as a 'leadership type' or model, which can be found in interpersonal relationships (such as shared leadership or team leadership) or in system dynamics (such as distributed leadership). The entity-based research focuses on the characteristics, influences and/or dynamics of collective leadership. A process ontological understanding of collective leadership, in turn, understands leadership as being constituted within the relations in a continuous process of relating. This means that moments of leadership, such as directing, can be captured in the

Table 6.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the searched publications

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Peer-reviewed journal article	Book chapter, academic dissertation, project report
In English	In Finnish or in Swedish (or in other languages)
Published 2010–2021 (before October)	Published before 2010
Leadership in organisation as a main or one of the research object(s) of the study	Object of the study, e.g. leaders' well-being
Focuses on Finnish educational leadership	Comparative study including data from other countries as well
Empirical study	Theoretical study

momentarily stabilisation of relations. It is important to acknowledge that leader-centric forms of leadership studies can also draw from process ontology. A study that draws from process ontology requires methods that allow the researcher to study how meanings are co-created within the flow of relational dynamics in situational interactions or in relation to system-level sociohistorical relations. In addition to different ontological understandings of the term collective, the other axis on the matrix by Ospina et al. (2020) describes the locus of leadership, which means whether leadership resides in a group or a system.

Inspired by Ospina et al. (2020), we created a framework that distinguishes studies based on the locus of leadership and ontology of the collective. We have extended the locus of leadership dimension to consist also of a leader-centric view and labelled the differences in collective ontology as 'Collective leadership as a type' and 'Collective leadership as a process'. We have further divided the category of 'Collective leadership as a type' into two subcategories, such as 'Leader's view on leadership' and 'Community's view on leadership'. This distinction is made because, even though leadership is understood as a collective phenomenon, a lot of research is done from the leaders' perspective. Even though it is well justified to understand the viewpoints of the leader(s), we would also like to notice that carrying out research only amongst leader(s) can be seen as strengthening leader centricity within collective forms of leadership.

This categorisation provides also the possibility to position research on educational leadership within the historical trajectory and theoretical multidimensionality of leadership studies in the social sciences, such as management and organisation studies. In this field, leadership research has evolved from traditional leader-centric perspectives to post-heroic ones, in which leadership is seen as a collective phenomenon that actualises in social interaction (Alvehus & Crevani, 2022; Carroll et al., 2008; Denis et al., 2012). As demonstrated above, leadership models that emphasise forms of collective leadership, such as distributed leadership, are amongst the most studied in the field of educational leadership (Gumus et al., 2018; Wang, 2018). This differs from leadership studies in the field of management and organisation studies, where the traditional understanding of leadership as residing in the leader still remains strong, even though collective/plural forms of leadership have appeared in the field to a stronger extent.

The collective understanding of leadership has meant a shift from realistic and post-positivistic science philosophical approaches to constructionist, processual and practice-based approaches (Crevani et al., 2010). For example, within practice-based theorising, leadership is understood as collective and process-like by nature; it is actualised in the constant flow of interpersonal relationships within daily practices and in relation to sociohistorical practices, and the research can demonstrate how the instant stabilisation of the interactional flow produces shifts in direction that manifest a leadership moment (Crevani et al., 2010; Raelin, 2016). However, despite the rise of constructionist, processual and practice-based approaches to leadership research, many of the leadership studies in management and organisation studies, as well as the research on educational leadership, is based on realistic and post-positivistic science philosophy and is accomplished using quantitative research methods. According to Gumus et al. (2018), quantitative methods have recently been favoured in the quest to measure the effectiveness and impact of education.

Our research task is to examine how leadership is understood in the empirical educational leadership research accomplished in Finnish educational organisations for minors. With the systematic literature review, we approach the current study with the following research questions: *What kinds of leadership concepts are used in the research? What is the locus of the leadership in the research? How is 'collective' ontologically understood in the studies?* For the purpose of the present literature review, the term 'educational leadership research' (*koulutusjohtamisen tutkimus* in Finnish) is used to refer to all the research accomplished in the field of educational sciences dealing with educational leadership, educational management and educational administration. Furthermore, the concepts and phenomena of 'people leadership' and 'management of issues' are not distinguished but are considered part of the leadership phenomenon. Although bundling various concepts might erase specifications (e.g. Oplatka, 2008; Bush, 2008), in the present research, the phenomenon of 'educational leadership' is considered to consist of these various aspects of leadership.

Next, the systematic review process is explained, and the results are presented based on the research questions.

Systematic Literature Review Method

Search and Selection of the Data

A systematic literature review was accomplished by the first author to focus on selecting materials based on well-defined criteria to synthesise those materials (Hallinger, 2014; Tranfield et al., 2003). The aim was to find out what kind of research has been done in the field of educational sciences that deals with educational leadership, educational management and educational administration in the context of the Finnish education system for minors, from ECEC to upper secondary education.

The research data were collected in October 2021. The university library's information specialist helped with the selection of online databases and search phrases. The following databases were selected: EBSCO (ERIC and Academic Search Elite), ProQuest (ERIC and Education Collection), Scopus and the Finnish database Finna. fi. Relevant publications were searched using the following search phrases: *education, leadership, management, administration, early childhood education, basic education, upper secondary education, vocational school, principal, director* and *Finland* or *Finnish*.

Before the literature search, it was assumed that there would be relatively few publications altogether, so the search criteria were initially broad: (a) peer-reviewed journal article, (b) peer-reviewed book chapter, (c) written in English or Finnish, (d) published in 2000–2021 (before October) and (e) an empirical or a theoretical study dealing with educational leadership. However, because the searches yielded a moderate number of publications, the criteria were specified to align with the interests of this review. The inclusion/exclusion criteria are summarised in Table 6.1 and justified below.

To review academic research publications that contribute to the international scientific discussion on educational leadership, and thus are more widely available, it was decided to include only peer-reviewed, English-language journal articles. Book chapters were excluded because the peer review processes for books vary widely. Academic dissertations, mostly written in Finnish, were excluded because of uncertainty about their quality and because of being written in the Finnish language.

The original publication period, 2000–2021, was chosen because research and publications on educational leadership in Finland began to increase after the turn of the millennium because of education reforms (see, e.g. Alava et al., 2012). However, with changes in legislation, especially in the field of ECEC and VET, taking place in the 2010s, the operating environment for pre-2010 research can be seen as significantly different. Probably because of these changes and the growing interest in the phenomenon of leadership, most of the journal articles were published after 2010. Therefore, it was decided to specifically focus on studies published in the past 10 years. In addition, previous literature reviews have already covered the research conducted in the first decade of the twenty-first century, though the focus and scope of these reviews do not correspond to that of this study (see Alava et al., 2012; Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015; Risku & Kanervio, 2011; Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016).

The systematic literature review included studies from all levels of the Finnish education system for minors, that is, ECEC, pre-primary education, comprehensive school and secondary education, including general upper secondary education and VET. In these levels of the education system, the participants are minors, at least until secondary education, and the guidance system is based on the national guidance by the Finnish National Agency for Education through the national core curricula for each level – for ECEC, for pre-primary education, for basic education, for upper secondary school and the degree criteria for VET.

Higher education was not included because it is adult education and differs administratively and in its leadership perspective because universities and universities of applied sciences are autonomous within the relevant legal and regulatory framework, and their social status is different from that of compulsory education organisations or ECEC organisations. Of course, in practice, leadership in ECEC centres, schools, general upper secondary schools and vocational institutes also differs considerably. However, these all organise education for minors, children and young people. Second, the main focus of the current systematic literature review was not to address the differences regarding research on different educational-level organisations per se but to look at how leadership as a phenomenon under study has been approached altogether. For this purpose, the review included only empirical studies. Theoretical studies have a lot of variations regarding the leadership as a phenomenon and an object of study.

The data collection and selection phases are presented in Table 6.2. The literature search yielded approximately 400 peer-reviewed journal articles. In the initial screening of the articles, duplicates and clearly non-relevant articles were first removed, after which 265 publications remained (see phase 1. of screening in Table 6.2). In the second phase of the screening, book chapters, the articles written in Finnish or other languages, international comparative studies in which Finland was one of the contexts and articles whose perspective was historical were excluded.

In the third phase of screening, these 114 articles were reviewed, here in terms of whether their abstracts and keywords matched the inclusion criteria. After the three phases of screening, 61 articles remained. Next, the articles were coded using a data-extraction table that included the following categories: (1) bibliographical information (author, title, publication year, journal), (2) participants or data (e.g. documents), (3) research methodology and (4) concept of leadership (or leadership model). In addition to these categories, the *aim of the study* and *research questions* were also checked in case leadership was not the object of the empirical study. In this coding phase, 29 non-relevant articles that did not meet the criteria were found and excluded. The articles excluded in this phase were conceptual in nature,

Table 6.2 Data collection and selection phases

| Database | Source | Search results | Screening of the data | | | Final data for analysis |
			1. Phase	2. Phase	3. Phase	
Finna.fi	Peer-reviewed journal article, search results for 'Text' or 'Other unspecified'	96	64	114	61	32
EBSCO; ERIC, Academic Search Elite	Peer-reviewed journal article	352	201			
ProQuest; ERIC and Education Collection		303				
Scopus		301				
Total			265	114	61	32

including studies in which leadership in an educational organisation was not the actual object of the research or studies in which data were not collected in or only in a Finnish educational organisation. Hence, after the screening and coding phases 32 peer-reviewed articles remained for the final analysis. The list of these selected articles is presented in Appendix.

Analysis of the Articles

To answer the main research question – *How is leadership understood in the empirical educational leadership research accomplished in Finnish educational organisations for minors?* – the following subquestions were posed:

1. *What kinds of leadership concepts are used in the research?*
2. *What is the locus of leadership in the research?*
3. *How is 'collective' ontologically understood in the studies?*

The analysis of the selected articles (*n* = 32) included the following two steps: First, to answer the first and second subquestions, the analysis began by using a data-extraction table supplemented with a fifth category: (1) bibliographical information, (2) participants or data (e.g. documents), (3) research methodology, (4) concept of leadership (or leadership model) and (5) articulations of leadership. A summary table and a synthesis of the concepts used in the previous research are presented in the results section. Second, to answer the third subquestion, we used the framework based on Ospina et al. (2020) to explore the ontology of the collective within the studies that had different forms of collective leadership. The classification, including examples of articles representing the different approaches to collective leadership – 'Collective leadership as type', including the subcategories of 'Leaders' view of collective' and 'Community's view of collective' and 'Collective leadership as a process' – is presented in the results section. The analysis was performed in a deductive manner as previous conceptualisations of leadership research have guided it. In the next section, the results of the analysis are presented to answer the research question.

Findings

Leadership Concepts and Models in Finnish Educational Leadership Research

Of the 32 articles analysed, 15 examined educational leadership in ECEC organisations, 13 in comprehensive school and 4 in VET. None of the articles focused on the context of general upper secondary education/school.

Based on the articles included in this literature review, the most used educational leadership concepts in the research concerning ECEC organisations and compulsory education organisations were *distributed leadership* and *pedagogical leadership*, as well as the combinations of these concepts, such as *distributed pedagogical leadership* (see Table 6.3.). In relation to distributed leadership, concepts or models of *joint leadership* (Keski-Rauska et al., 2016) and *moral leadership* (Paulsen et al., 2016) were used. *Teacher leadership* was a focus of studies specifically in ECEC, and none of the articles examined teacher leadership in the comprehensive school context, in contrast to an international study of teacher leadership in which the concept was examined specifically in the school context (Heikka et al., 2016).

In addition to these concepts, educational leadership was also approached from the perspectives of culture (Lahtero & Risku, 2014; Weckström et al., 2020), diverse worldviews in schools (Lipiäinen et al., 2021), the professional learning community (e.g. Antinluoma et al., 2018) and a broader systemic, education theoretical perspective (Uljens et al., 2016). In some of the studies, the focus was specifically on leadership in educational reforms and change (Pulkkinen et al., 2019; Pyhältö et al., 2016; Soini et al., 2016) and models, such as *knowledge management* (Syysnummi & Laihonen, 2014) and *strategic leadership* (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2013). Few studies applied concepts such as *symbolic leadership* (Lahtero & Risku, 2012, see also 2014) and *relational leadership* (Mäntyjärvi & Puroila, 2019), which refer to a theoretical approach close to 'Collective leadership as a process' (Ospina et al., 2020).

Table 6.3 Leadership concepts in educational leadership research in the contexts of Finnish education organisations for minors

Distributed leadership
  Joint leadership
  Moral leadership
	Halttunen (2016), Heikka et al. (2021), Heikka and Suhonen (2019), Heikka and Hujala (2013), Kangas et al. (2016), Keski-Rauska et al. (2016), Lahtero et al. (2019, 2017), Paulsen et al. (2016), Varpanen (2021)

Pedagogical leadership
  Distributed pedagogical leadership
  Broad pedagogical leadership sustainable (pedagogical) leadership
	Ahtiainen et al. (2021), Fonsen and Soukainen (2020), Harju-Luukkainen et al. (2014), Heikka et al. (2020), Jäppinen and Maunonen-Eskelinen (2012), Jäppinen and Sarja (2012)

Teacher leadership	Halttunen et al. (2019), Heikka et al. (2016, 2018)
Relational leadership	Mäntyjärvi and Puroila (2019)
Leadership culture Symbolic leadership	Lahtero and Risku (2014), Lahtero and Risku (2012), Weckström et al. (2020)

Educational leadership
  School leadership
  Professional learning community
	Antinluoma et al. (2018), Lipiäinen et al. (2021), Pyhältö et al. (2016), Uljens et al. (2016)

Leadership for change	Pulkkinen et al. (2019), Soini et al. (2016)
Strategic leadership	Lahtero and Kuusilehto-Awale (2013)
Knowledge management	Syysnummi and Laihonen (2014)

A summary of the leadership concepts used in the articles is presented in Table 6.3. It should be noted that the classification is based on the concept/model of leadership that the study focused most on, even though the article might have referred to the other concepts as well. In this sense, the studies could have been positioned into several categories at the same time. In the table, the concepts have been divided into groups according to how they are linked to each other in the articles. For example, in the same category as *pedagogical leadership* are the concepts *distributed pedagogical leadership* and *broad pedagogical leadership*.

In most of these studies, leadership was articulated as a collective phenomenon in nature and that leadership also belongs to others than just the formal leader. However, there were some studies in which leadership was examined mainly from the manager's point of view or as a manager's task. Even if these articles also referred to the distribution of leadership, the main focus was the leader's perspective and action. Overall, however, *distributed leadership*, together with *pedagogical leadership*, was considered the most crucial concept in examining leadership in research on Finnish education organisations for minors. The concept was used at all levels of the education system for minors, though it might be articulated a bit differently because of the characteristics of the levels of education.

In the context of ECEC, the organisation itself was often distributed (Halttunen, 2016). ECEC centre directors typically were found to have several (two to three) units to lead, which, in turn, worked in teams pedagogically led by early childhood education (ECE) teachers. In addition, if ECEC was provided by the municipality, leadership was also distributed between municipal stakeholders, who, in turn, would then be guided by state-level steering and policies (e.g. Heikka et al., 2021). In their study, Heikka et al. (2021, p. 335) referred to the five dimensions of *distributed pedagogical leadership* in the ECE organisation: '(1) enhancing the shared consciousness of visions and strategies between the stakeholders', (2) 'distributing responsibilities for pedagogical leadership', (3) 'distributing and clarifying power relationships between the stakeholders', (4) 'distributing the enactment of pedagogical improvement within centres', and (5) 'developing a strategy for distributed pedagogical leadership'. How *distributed leadership* has been determined in the studies regarding Finnish ECEC is examined in more detail below in reviewing the concept of *teacher leadership*.

In comprehensive schools, *distributed leadership* was considered a way to involve teachers in leadership processes and share and decentralise responsibilities. The tasks of principals have increased, and the work has been complicated in many ways, so distributed leadership has also been seen as one solution (Lahtero et al., 2017). However, distributed leadership does not always reduce the workload of the principal because it also requires 'a strong core coordination' of how tasks and responsibilities are shared and how teachers and the other staff are involved in decision making (Paulsen et al., 2016, p. 759). In addition, because the principal is the formal head of the school, leadership was ultimately seen as her/his responsibility (Lahtero et al., 2019).

In VET, distributed leadership is scrutinised in relation to pedagogical leadership and called *distributed pedagogical leadership* (Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2012; Jäppinen & Sarja, 2012). In her article on supporting student transitions, Jäppinen (2012, p. 24) defined distributed pedagogical leadership (DPL) as concerning everyone in a school community and approaches leadership as collective – the 'innermost substance of a professional learning community'. Theoretically, Jäppinen defined DPL through three concepts: *distributed leadership* because of its roots in shared cognition and understanding; *leaderful practices,* based on Raelin's (2003) conceptualisation of leadership practices as a collective endeavour; and *managing without leadership*, based on Lakomski's (e.g. 2005) thinking on the distributed nature of human cognition and the context-specific nature of organisational processes. According to Jäppinen and Sarja (2012, p. 65), 'In DPL, at its best, educational practices are collaboratively "led" in jointly agreed ways and in a jointly agreed direction by each member in the community on the basis of accumulative collective cognition and understanding'.

In Finnish educational leadership research, *pedagogical leadership* has referred to 'all the actions taken to enhance the implementation of the curriculum' (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014, p. 338), which constructs a broader meaning than what is meant by *instructional leadership*, which is a parallel concept in mainstream Anglo-American research. Pedagogical leadership was most often considered in the context of distributed leadership, as 'a form of distributed leadership' (Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020, p. 213) and also in ECEC in connection with *teacher leadership*. In their article on the differences in leadership between a Finnish- and Swedish-speaking school in Finland, Harju-Luukkainen et al. (2014) used the concept of *broad pedagogical leadership* and referred to the broad pedagogical leadership theory created by Alava et al. (2012). According to this theory, for a school to be a learning community, principals should lead processes in which mission, vision and strategies, organisational culture and curriculum are developed. Leadership can have direct and indirect influencing, and from the principal's view, it is interactive, a resource that the principal also distributes by empowering teachers. Broad pedagogical leadership is also associated with an ethical and progressive perspective, in which education is understood as a means of strengthening equality in society (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014, p. 338–340). In this case, *pedagogical leadership* has been considered a dimension of principal leadership.

According to this systematic literature review, *teacher leadership* has been studied mainly in the context of ECEC and does not appear to be examined at other levels of minors' education in Finland. Of the articles selected for review, three focused on teacher leadership. Research conducted by the same research team examined the enactment of teacher leadership in ECEC centres (Heikka et al., 2016), the perceptions of ECEC professionals themselves (Heikka et al., 2018) and the repertoires of teacher leadership in the context of team meetings (Halttunen et al., 2019). These studies have suggested that the concept of teacher leadership is still evolving. The concept has also been intertwined with the concepts of

pedagogical leadership and *distributed leadership*. According to Halttunen et al. (2019, p. 144–145), in order to understand the broader concept of pedagogical leadership, the concept of teacher leadership is central. They stated that as a form of distributed leadership, teacher leadership helps to achieve the goals set for ECE by enhancing the development of personnel and organisation as well as curriculum work. In the context of ECEC, teachers lead pedagogy at the team level and centre directors at the centre level. However, if a centre director has more centres to manage, as is usually the case, the director is not necessarily present in the day-to-day work, so the responsibility of the teachers grows. In Finland, the role of teachers as leaders has been emphasised, but leadership positions are unclear, and at the national level, no guidance on ECEC teacher leadership has been offered (Heikka et al., 2018).

Leadership Based on Its Locus and Different Ontologies of Collective

Most of the 32 studies included in the present review were qualitative in nature, while 12 (38%) were quantitative. The research related to comprehensive school (13/32) was almost equally qualitative and quantitative, while the research related to ECEC (15/32) was more often qualitative. In most of the studies, the research participants included the leaders – principals or heads of ECEC centres – and the teachers. In the context of ECEC, the teachers participated in the research almost as often as the leaders did.

To answer the second and third subquestions, we analysed the locus of leadership – whether leadership resided in a leader, a group or a system – as well as the ontological understanding of collective in the collective forms of leadership in the studies. According to the analysis, 5 out of 32 (16%) studies were considered to be representing a more traditional leader-centric research approach. These studies focused on the management perspective or management activities and were positioned in the categories of (1) 'Leader-centric approach' and 'Leadership residing in individuals.' In this category, the studies used both quantitative and qualitative methods (surveys or interviews) to gather data.

The rest of the studies – 27 out of 32 (84%) – focused on different forms of collective leadership or defined leadership as such. They were positioned under the category (2) 'Collective leadership approach', in which there were different categories based on whether the leadership resided in a *group* or *system* and whether the collective was ontologically seen as (2.1) a type or (2.2) process. Furthermore, in the category (2.1) 'Collective as a type', the studies were divided between two subcategories based on the research participants: (2.1.1) 'Leader's view of leadership' and (2.1.2) 'Community's view of leadership'.

The number of studies fell into the following categories:

(1) *Leader-centric research approach*: 5 out of 32 studies (16%)
(2) *Collective leadership research*: 27 out of 32 studies (84%)

(2.1) *Collective leadership as type*: 20 out of 32 studies (63%)

    (2.1.1) Leaders' views on leadership: 5 out of 32 studies (16%)
    (2.1.2) Community's view of leadership: 15 out of 32 studies (47%)

(2.2) *Collective leadership as a process*: 7 out of 32 studies (22%)

In leader-centric research, leadership was mainly defined and approached from the perspective of the leader's activities, responsibilities and competencies, but the collective dimension of leadership was, without an exception, also referred to, at least to some extent. The distinction between different forms of collective leadership was made based on the different ontological understandings of the collective. Category 2.1 consisted of studies examining collective forms of leadership as an 'entity'. Thus, collective forms of leadership are seen as 'types of leadership' whose characteristics and consequences are examined. In turn, Category 2.2 consists of studies within which leadership is based on process ontology. This means that leadership is seen as constituted within relations in a process in which meanings of leadership are created or the researcher can stabilise certain moments in which leadership occurs, for example, as decisions and changes in direction. Furthermore, we have divided category 2.1 into two subcategories: (2.2.1) 'Leaders' view of leadership', which includes studies in which the research participants were the leader(s), whereas in the second subcategory, (2.2.2) 'Community's view on leadership', the respondents were diverse and held various roles within the educational organisation. Hence, even though leadership was seen as a collective, the articles in the first subcategory (2.2.1) seemed to rely on the perspectives of the leaders in examining collective leadership in the educational context.

    Below, we provide an exemplary study, if there can be said to be one, for each category as representative of the research (see Table 6.4). We accomplished the categorisation based on our understanding of whether the leadership was based more on an entity-based ontology or process ontology.

1. *Leader-centric approach.* The studies in this category did not focus on the forms of collective leadership, but instead, they represented a more traditional leader-centred approach. The studies drew from entity-based ontological understandings of leadership residing in individual(s) whose characteristics and behaviours were studied. Five out of the 32 studies (16%) were identified as representing the leader-centric approach, and these studies also fell into the category of *leadership residing in the individuals*. Furthermore, the studies focused on the leader(s) viewpoint of leadership. As an example of this category, Syysnummi and Laihonen (2014) focused on *knowledge management* in vocational education and training organisations (VET) from the perspective of management team members ($n = 8$) via e-mail enquiry and a group interview; the aim was to discover the management challenges and explore the knowledge management processes that support the teachers' work (Syysnummi & Laihonen, 2014, p. 54). The authors defined knowledge management as an 'integral part of education management', which is 'seen as an essential task for producing high-quality education services' (p. 63). They pointed out the collective dimension of knowledge management in management teams by stating

Table 6.4 Leadership based on its locus and ontology of collective in educational leadership studies in the context of Finnish education organisations for minors (framework modified from the original four-field matrix of Ospina et al., 2020, p. 433)

Locus of leadership	Leadership approaches based on different ontological underpinnings			
	(1) Leader-centric approach	(2) Collective leadership approach		
		(2.1) Collective leadership as type		(2.2) Collective leadership as process
		(2.1.1) Leaders' view of leadership	(2.1.2) Community's view of leadership	
Leadership residing in the group.		Ahtiainen et al. (2021), *Pedagogical leadership*	Weckström et al. (2020), *Leadership culture*	Halttunen et al. (2019), *Teacher leadership*
Leadership residing in the system.		Uljens et al. (2016), *Educational leadership / Non-affirmative theory*		Varpanen (2021) *Distributed leadership*
Leadership residing in the individual(s).	Syysnummi and Laihonen (2014), *Knowledge management*			
All studies (32)	5/32	5/32	15/32	7/32
	Harju-Luukkainen et al. (2014), Lipiäinen et al. (2021), Pulkkinen et al. (2019); Soini et al. (2016); Syysnummi & Laihonen (2014)	Ahtiainen et al. (2021), Heikka et al. (2020), Lahtero et al. (2019), Pyhältö et al. (2011), Uljens et al. (2016)	Antinluoma et al. (2018), Fonsén & Soukainen (2020), Halttunen (2016), Heikka and Hujala (2013), Heikka and Suhonen 2019), Heikka et al. (2018, 2021), Jäppinen (2012), Jäppinen and Maunonen-Eskelinen (2012), Keski-Rauska et al. (2016), Lahtero and Kuusilehto-Awale (2013), Lahtero et al. (2017), Mäntyjärvi and Puroila (2019), Paulsen et al. (2016), Weckström et al. (2020)	Halttunen et al. (2019), Heikka et al. (2016), Kangas et al. (2016), Jäppinen and Sarja (2012), Lahtero and Risku (2012, 2014), Varpanen (2021), Uljens et al. (2016)

that 'knowledge-intensive activities rely heavily on group problem solving and decision making' (p. 56); however, the study approached knowledge management primarily as a management task.

The other articles that were interpreted as belonging to the category of (1) 'Leader-centric approach' studied leadership from the view of principals in the context of leading change (Pulkkinen et al., 2019; Soini et al., 2016) and principals' perceptions of Finnish and Swedish-speaking schools (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014). In addition, a study on the principals' perceptions of diverse worldviews in leading schools (Lipiäinen et al., 2021) was included because the study focused on the topic from the principals' point of view, pointing out the principal's role and competences.

2. *Collective leadership approach.* The studies in this category focused on forms of collective leadership and different approaches to it. Most of the analysed studies – 27 out of 32 (84%) – were included in this category, drawing from either an entity-based or process ontological understanding of leadership as a collective: (2.1) 'Collective leadership as a type' or (2.2) 'Collective leadership as a 'process' (2.2). Next, the classification of the studies based on this division is presented.

2.1. *Collective leadership as a type.* This category was divided into two subcategories – (2.1.1) 'Leader's view on leadership' and (2.1.2) 'Community's view on leadership' – based on whether the research participants were designated leaders or if other members of the work community, such as teachers, were included. Below, we present two exemplary studies from both of these two subcategories – a study in which the locus of leadership resided in a group and one in which leadership resided in a system (see Table 6.4).

2.1.1. *Leader's view of leadership.* An exemplary study representing a (2.1.1) 'Leader's view on leadership' and 'Leadership residing in a group' is that of Ahtiainen et al. (2021), which focused on ECEC leaders' perceptions of pedagogical leadership and an assessment of the implementation of the National Core Curriculum for ECEC. The research material was collected with the help of a survey and comprised of 41 ECEC leaders' answers to the open-ended questions on the electronic questionnaire. The leaders' described the pedagogical practices of their own centre in open-ended questions. The survey material was analysed using a content analysis, and the results were reflected regarding the theoretical framework of the study: the human capital of pedagogical leadership and models of educational change. Regarding these lenses, the authors refer to their previous studies (e.g. Fonsén and Ukkonen-Mikkola, 2019) and to the theories of Fullan (2015) and Hargreaves and Shirley (2012), amongst others.

In the study, the researchers articulated leadership, here considering the ECEC context, including changed legislation, curriculum and employee qualification requirements, along with the concepts of pedagogical leadership and distributed leadership. Referring to Heikka (2014), the authors stated that leadership is 'a distributed phenome-

non, in which leadership is a collective commitment and process for all participants' (Ahtiainen et al., 2021, p. 128). In conclusion, the authors presented a model of leadership competence for leading pedagogy and curriculum implementation (see Fig. 1 in Ahtiainen et al., 2021, p. 136).

A study by Uljens et al. (2016) is our other exemplary study of the subcategory (2.1.1.) 'Leader's view on leadership', and it represents the category of 'Leadership residing in a system'. Furthermore, the study can also be seen as an example crossing the boundaries of the upper categories of (2.1) 'Collective leadership as type' and (2.2) 'Collective leadership as process'. Uljens et al. (2016) perceived leadership as residing in a broader system than, for example, within a management team inside the school. The study was based on two theories: discursive institutionalism, which was used to explore Finnish educational policy culture, and non-affirmative general education theory, by which institutionalised education could be perceived in a system-wide manner, assuming the non-hierarchical nature of the relationships within a system. According to non-affirmative theory, educational leadership and school development and teaching can be understood as the 'mediating' activities between epistemic practices, such as the theory of teaching and values in society. In addition, educational leadership was understood as influencing others in a non-hierarchical and ethical way. The data consisted of focus group interviews with professionals from the district administration of Åland, a Swedish-speaking region in Southwest Finland, and the schools there ($N = 20$), as well as policy documents including, amongst others, national and regional curricula. The materials were analysed through hermeneutic content analysis, which linked the analysis of the interviews with the policy documents to create a temporal and multilevel picture of school development in the region.

As a result, Uljens et al. (2016, p. 103) produced three periods of 'a successful ten-year multilevel and district-led school regional developmental turnaround process'. The study also demonstrated strong characteristics of leadership across the different levels, such as a shared commitment to evaluation and the development of teaching. Hence, the study provided an example of a leadership type with characteristics. Simultaneously, the study can be positioned in the second class, (2) 'Collective leadership as a process', because leadership was approached in terms of activities operating at all levels of the system, where 'strength' was also found in 'leadership practices distributed across levels and professional groups, where different professionals own the initiative' (p. 119; see also Crevani et al., 2010).

In addition to these two examples, the other studies in the (2.1.) 'Collective leadership as type' subcategory of (2.1.1) 'Leader's view on leadership' focused on the content of pedagogical leadership plans

formed by the ECEC leaders (Heikka et al., 2020) and, in the context of comprehensive school, principals' training and their views on distributed leadership (Lahtero et al., 2019) and principals' and chief education officers' views on school development (Pyhältö et al., 2011).

2.1.2. *Community's view of leadership.* The studies that examined (2.2.) 'Collective leadership as a type' from the perspective of a larger community (2.1.2 'Community's view of leadership') represented all the category of 'Leadership residing in a group'. Weckström et al. (2020) provided an exemplary study that examined the creation of participative culture in ECEC and identified leadership as part of that. A larger community of educational professionals participated in the study. More specifically, the researchers investigated participative culture and the critical factors in its development, from which leadership was one. The study was carried out as a critical participatory study in the context of a private ECEC unit in Finland. The data consisted of group conversations, one stimulated recall conversation, diary notes and the field notes of the leader, and it was analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis revealed a powerful community discourse, which the researchers named the 'we-narrative'. According to the results, the we-narrative was at the centre of inclusive culture development, and 'relational and reciprocal leadership' was one of the three critical culture factors (see Fig. 3, p. 509). The study can be seen to demonstrate the difference between the categories of (2.1) 'Collective leadership as type' and (2.2) 'Collective leadership as process': if leadership would have been examined as constituted within the 'we-narrative', the research could have been seen based on a process ontology, but now, because leadership was one of the factors of a participatory culture, it was considered ontologically as an entity.

Other studies in this largest category of (2.1.2) 'Community's view on leadership' included studies on pedagogical leadership (Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020), teacher leadership (Heikka et al., 2018), the joint leadership model (Keski-Rauska et al., 2016), distributed leadership (Heikka & Hujala, 2013; Lahtero et al., 2017), distributed pedagogical leadership (Heikka et al., 2021; Heikka & Suhonen, 2019; Halttunen, 2016; Jäppinen, 2012; Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2012), relational leadership (Mäntyjärvi & Puroila, 2019), strategic leadership (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2013) and a study in which (distributing) leadership was studied as a 'one of the key factors in implementing a PLC [professional learning community]' (Antinluoma et al., 2018, p. 78) and another study regarding teacher empowerment in the Finnish policy culture (Paulsen et al., 2016).

2.2. *Collective leadership as a process.* The studies exploring (2.2.) 'Collective leadership as a process' strived to understand leadership from a completely different ontological perspective than entity-based ontology, focusing on the continuous process of relational interactions within which leadership can be seen

to emerge. Theoretically, the studies may have drawn, for example, on social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 2005) or practice theory (Raelin, 2016), which invites a reflection on the ontological nature of leadership and epistemological commitments to how this phenomenon can be understood as emerging within a process of actions rather than focusing on how collective forms of leadership operate. Hence, the research drew on written and spoken language, various texts and discourses, interaction processes, material objects and practices and processes (Ospina et al., 2020). According to the analysis, only 7 out of 32 studies (22%) could be interpreted as representing this approach. From this category, we can offer an example of both types of research in which leadership resided in a group and in a system.

The exemplary study in the category 'Leadership residing in a group' is that by Halttunen et al. (2019), who explored how teacher leadership is formulated in the discussions of six ECE teams. The teams were comprised of one to two ECE teachers and one to two childcare nurses. The research was based on social constructivism, in which language was understood as a social practice. The study investigated teacher leadership repertoires at weekly ECE team meetings, utilising critical discourse analysis to elucidate the functions of talk and subject positions in relation to functions and repertoires. As a result, four repertoires of talk describing 'how teacher leadership occurs in the talk' were identified: the repertoires of collaborative teacher leadership, supportive teacher leadership, professional expertise and legitimation. In addition, several subject positions were recognised: 'teachers as reflection enhancers, decision-makers, interpreters, guides and agents of compliance in team decision making within ECE settings' (Halttunen et al., 2019, p. 149). Even though repertoires can be seen as sociohistorical system level configurations constituting leadership, we interpreted that in this study leadership resided in a group. The repertoires were constructed in the situational interaction between team members, and the study provided agency for the individuals in constructing the repertoires as well as utilising them by stating that 'informal leadership positioning constructed by discursive means can influence how the teacher utilises daily encounters to promote pedagogy' (p. 156).

Another example of research in the (2.2) 'Collective leadership as process' category, where 'Leadership resided in a system', was Varpainen's (2021) qualitative study on ECE leadership in relation to Gronn's (2000) idea about the polarisation of leadership theory regarding individual agency and structural power. The aim was to investigate whether this polarisation would also apply to ECE leadership. The research material was collected from three focus group interviews of ECEC unit leaders', which the author analysed using post-structural discourse analysis. The study provided an example of the relational dynamics of linguistic acts in and through which the meaning of leadership and leader could be cocreated. The author drew from practice theory to examine the co-constitution of structure and agency in the flow of ECE leaders' talk, which reconstructed existing discourses of leadership and subtly transformed them. Because he demonstrated how the leaders of ECEs

drew from frames that could be seen as moments of sociocultural discourse, we interpret leadership as residing in a system. This positioning was strengthened when the author demonstrated the difficulty of changing existing institutional practices, even though this empirical result would not legitimate the positioning of the study into this category. Still, Varpainen's study can also serve as an example of leaders as study participants in a study drawing from process ontological understanding of the collective.

The other studies positioned in the category of (2.2) 'Collective leadership as process' were those on distributed leadership (Kangas et al., 2016), distributed pedagogical leadership (Jäppinen & Sarja, 2012) and teacher leadership in the ECEC context (Heikka et al., 2016), along with studies approaching leadership from the perspective of culture (Lahtero & Risku, 2014) and symbolic leadership (Lahtero & Risku, 2012). These studies relied mostly on qualitative methods, such as linguistic analysis and observation. When it came to the participants, the focus was on the entire working community, including leaders, management teams' members and teachers, excluding the exemplary studies of Varpainen (2021) and Uljens et al. (2016).

Conclusions and Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to increase understanding about the various approaches to leadership, especially collective leadership, in previous empirical research that has focused on Finnish educational organisations for minors. The literature was examined through a systematic literature review that focused on the years 2010–2020.

The results have emphasised the extensive use of concepts such as *distributed leadership* and *pedagogical leadership*, which have also been noted in previous literature reviews (Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015; Risku & Pulkkinen, 2016; see also Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016). The results demonstrated the conceptual integration of distributed leadership and pedagogical leadership in *distributing pedagogical leadership* at different levels of education – in ECEC and pre-primary education, in comprehensive school and at the upper secondary level in VET.

The majority of the studies examined some forms of collective leadership, and there were only a few studies representing a more traditional leader-centred approach. Most of the studies on collective forms of leadership drew from an entity-based ontological understanding of collective leadership as a type, the characteristics and consequences of which can be studied. The study participants were mainly the leader(s) and personnel. However, there were a few studies that focused only on the leader(s) perspective. Even though it is important to understand the viewpoints of the leader(s), we would like to notice that this kind of a research setting might – on its part – dilute the understanding of collective within the collective forms of leadership.

Studies representing the category of (2.2.) 'Collective leadership as a process' were less common because these should be based on a fundamentally different ontological understanding of leadership as emerging within a process of relations. This echoes the leadership studies in the field of management and organisation studies, within which this approach has also been relatively rare (Ospina et al., 2020). In different disciplines and fields of research, things and phenomena have been viewed from different perspectives. When a management and organisational scholar draws from management and organisation theory, the educational leadership researcher focuses on educational theories and the activities with their related aspects and dimensions. There may be inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of the concepts in leadership research in the field of management and organisation, in general, and in educational leadership, in particular. The ontological commitments of the research are not always easy to interpret. Furthermore, educational leadership scholars have been less explicit about the ontoepistemological underpinnings of their study than leadership scholars in the field of management and organisation studies, where discussions on the different ontoepistemological approaches are lively within the constructionist, processual and practice-based leadership research (e.g. Crevani et al., 2010; Ospina et al., 2020; Raelin, 2016). Along with the advocates of pluralism in advancing science (e.g. Cunliffe, 2018; Reed & Burrell, 2019), we want to emphasise that, to understand leadership as multidimensional, it is important to understand and advance the different ontoepistemological approaches of the research. This also enhances consistency between ontoepistemological approaches and methods, whether qualitative or quantitative. Overall, this enables researchers and practitioners alike to better perceive the various aspects and dimensions of leadership manifestation in leadership studies, in general, and in educational leadership research, in particular.

Limitations Because there is not yet much academic research on Finnish educational leadership, national surveys and dissertations are a crucial part of constructing a knowledge base for Finnish educational leadership research. Therefore, the results of the present review would have looked a bit different if all the project reports, academic dissertations and book chapters excluded were considered as well. In addition, the literature search focused on databases that included publications in the field of educational sciences; therefore, for example, studies published in the field of psychology could have been left out.

Appendix: Summary of the Reviewed Articles

1. Ahtiainen, Fonsén & Kiuru	2021	Finnish early childhood education and care leaders' perceptions of pedagogical leadership and assessment of the implementation of the national core curriculum in times of change	*Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*

2. Antinluoma, Ilomäki, Lahti-Nuuttila & Toom	2018	Schools as professional learning communities	*Journal of Education and Learning*
3. Fonsén & Soukainen	2020	Sustainable pedagogical leadership in Finnish early childhood education (ECE): An evaluation by ECE professionals	*Early Childhood Education Journal*
4. Halttunen	2016	Distributing leadership in a day-care setting	*Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*
5. Halttunen, Waniganayake & Heikka	2019	Teacher leadership repertoires in the context of early childhood education team meetings in Finland	*Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*
6. Harju-Luukkainen, Vettenranta, Kanervio & Pulkkinen	2014	Principals' perceptions for Finnish- and Swedish-language schools in Finland: An analysis of school-level indices from programme for International Student Assessment 2009	*Leadership and Policy in Schools*
7. Heikka & Hujala	2013	Early childhood leadership through the lens of distributed leadership	*European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*
8. Heikka & Suhonen	2019	Distributed pedagogical leadership functions in early childhood education settings in Finland	*Southeast Asia Early Childhood Journal*
9. Heikka, Halttunen & Waniganayake	2016	Investigating teacher leadership in ECE centres in Finland	*Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*
10. Heikka, Halttunen & Waniganayake	2018	Perceptions of early childhood education professionals on teacher leadership in Finland	*Early Child Development and Care*
11. Heikka, Kahila & Suhonen	2020	A study of pedagogical leadership plans in early childhood education settings in Finland	*South African Journal of Childhood Education*
12. Heikka, Pitkäniemi, Kettukangas & Hyttinen	2021	Distributed pedagogical leadership and teacher leadership in early childhood education contexts	*International Journal of Leadership in Education*
13. Jäppinen	2012	Distributed pedagogical leadership in support of student transitions	*Improving Schools*
14. Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen	2012	Organisational transition challenges in the Finnish vocational education: perspective of distributed pedagogical leadership	*Educational Studies*
15. Jäppinen & Sarja	2012	Distributed pedagogical leadership and generative dialogue in educational nodes	*Management in Education*
16. Kangas, Venninen & Ojala	2016	Distributed leadership as administrative practice in Finnish early childhood education and care	*Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*
17. Keski-Rauska, Fonsén, Aronen & Riekkola	2016	Research on a joint leadership model for early childhood education in Finland	*Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*

18. Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale	2013	Realisation of strategic leadership in leadership teams' work as experienced by the leadership team members of basic education schools	*School Leadership & Management*
19. Lahtero & Risku	2012	Symbolic leadership and leadership culture in one unified comprehensive school in Finland	*School Leadership & Management*
20. Lahtero & Risku	2014	Symbolic leadership culture and its subcultures in one unified comprehensive school in Finland	*International Journal of Educational Management*
21. Lahtero, Ahtiainen & Lång	2019	Finnish principals: Leadership training and views on distributed leadership	*Educational Research and Reviews*
22. Lahtero, Lång & Alava	2017	Distributed leadership in practice in Finnish schools	*School Leadership & Management*
23. Lipiäinen, Jantunen & Kallioniemi	2021	Leading school with diverse worldviews: Finnish principals' perceptions	*Journal of Beliefs & Values*
24. Mäntyjärvi & Puroila	2019	Has something changed? Leaders', practitioners' and parents' interpretations after renewed early childhood education and care legislation in Finnish private centres	*Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*
25. Paulsen, Hjerto & Tihveräinen	2016	Exploring the moral and distributive levers for teacher empowerment in the Finnish policy culture	*International Journal of Educational Management*
26. Pulkkinen, Räikkönen, Pirttimaa & Janhukainen	2019	Principals' views on changes in the provision of support for learning and schooling in Finland after educational reform	*Journal of Educational Change*
27. Pyhältö, Soini & Pietarinen	2011	A systemic perspective on school reform. Principals' and chief education officers' perspectives on school development	*Journal of Educational Administration*
28. Soini, Pietarinen & Pyhältö	2016	Leading a school through change – principals' hands-on leadership strategies in school reform	*School Leadership & Management*
29. Syysnummi & Laihonen	2014	Top management's perception of knowledge management in a vocational education and training organisation in Finland	*International Journal of Educational Management*
30. Uljens, Sundqvist & Smeds-Nylund	2016	Educational leadership for sustained multi-level school development in Finland – A non-affirmative approach	*Nordic Studies in Education*
31. Varpanen	2021	Early childhood education leadership in Finland through the lens of structure and agency	*Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*
32. Weckström, Karlsson, Pöllänen & Lastikka	2020	Creating a culture of participation: Early childhood education and care educators in the face of change	*Children and Society*

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Chapter 7
Positioning and Conceptualising Finnish Pedagogical Leadership in the International Setting

Jukka Alava, Marja Terttu Kovalainen, and Mika Risku

Abstract This chapter presents the conceptual evolvement of Finnish pedagogical leadership in the international setting. There are three main scopes. First, we discuss the historical evolvement of school leadership in Finland. This started in the 1950s with the first initiatives towards pedagogical leadership. Then, we describe the findings of the studies of several researchers to identify various aspects and nuances of pedagogical leadership till today. Second, we discuss the findings of one of the latest theorising studies on Finnish pedagogical leadership, present its four axioms of pedagogical leadership and connect these with various international studies ending with a new understanding of the core of Finnish pedagogical leadership. Third, we combine the findings of the historical scope, and several recent Finnish studies in pedagogical leadership. Finally, we present the novel understanding of Finnish pedagogical leadership in more detail, its core, its orientations, its goals and its processes. Last, we make a proposal for a paradigm shift for teachers, day-care centre and school leaders, and educational leader educating organisations.

Keywords Pedagogical leadership · Educational leadership · Deficit · Community of learners · Finland

Introduction

In 2010, the Finnish National Agency for Education's (EDUFI) – earlier the National Board of Education – asked the Institute of Educational Leadership in the University of Jyväskylä to conduct a meta-analysis and synthesis of the doctoral theses published so far in Finland on school leadership and school development (Alava et al., 2012; see also Risku & Kanervio, 2011). The aim was to synthesise the theoretical aspects but also to locate empirical findings that practicing principals could utilise

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in their everyday work at schools. One key finding in the report was the fundamental changes taking place in educational leadership: the increase of knowledge in leadership, the changing role of principals, and the changes in the operational environment and in the municipalities. Several studies also focused on the principal him-/herself.

Another key finding in the report was the evolvement of broad pedagogical leadership. According to the analysed doctoral studies 2000–2010, it was a new central approach in educational leadership. The report summarised that pedagogical leadership consisted of four interrelated processes, each of which needed to be led: building the curriculum, developing the school culture, creating the school vision and defining the core mission of the school. In addition to these, three key leadership competencies were identified: ethical leadership, leading people in change and shared leadership.

Since the publication of the report (Alava et al., 2012), the debate and theory development of pedagogical leadership has taken several significant steps in Finland. The book edited by Holappa et al. (2012) included several significant papers investigating pedagogical leadership and its relationship with educational leadership (Alava et al., 2021; Lahtero & Laasonen, 2021; Smeds-Nylund & Autio, 2021).

This chapter continues this development focusing on pedagogical leadership as it is conceived in Finland in the light of both the new studies in Finland, and internationally.

Conceptualisation of Pedagogical Leadership

In this chapter, we will base the initial conceptualisation of pedagogical leadership on the articles by Risku and Alava (2021) on educational leadership and by Alava et al. (2021) on pedagogical leadership in the system-level change.

Based on the former article, we will refer with educational leadership to the phenomenon of leadership in the field of education. Hence, it is a broad concept comprising of everything in the field of education that one can connect with leadership. In this conceptualisation, we consider pedagogical leadership as one area of educational leadership, amongst several others.

Following the latter article, we will investigate pedagogical leadership as the area of educational leadership focusing on leading the well-being, learning and development of educational organisations and their members. As the reader will learn, pedagogical leadership has not always been the hot topic in Finland it is today. Hence, we will investigate the historical evolvement of Finnish educational leadership locating the first moments of the concept of pedagogical leadership and follow the evolvement of it till present time.

Internationally, we will position pedagogical leadership in relation to the various theories that have been reforming how we conceive educational leadership in Finland. These, according to our investigation, have influenced the evolvement of

Finnish pedagogical leadership more than many of the international educational leadership theories focusing on the same areas as pedagogical leadership, for example, curriculum leadership (and management), instructional leadership, knowledge management and leadership for learning.

Methodology

To describe and analyse the historical evolvement of school leadership in Finland towards the present understanding of pedagogical leadership, qualitative research synthesis methods were used. This first phase of our study utilised systematic reviews, thematic analyses and narrative syntheses. In the second phase, we synthesised the results of the first phase with existing theoretical literature to theorise towards a present-day perspective on Finnish pedagogical leadership. The core of the data comprised previous school leadership studies. Additional data sources were various policy documents and national curriculum publications. Table 7.1 lists those researchers who have addressed and analysed the work of school principals towards pedagogical leadership.

As described, the first phase of our study followed the systematic literature review approach. The adjective 'systematic' points to the selection of studies for inclusion in the review and is contrasted with 'haphazard study selection procedures' or even 'arbitrary study selection procedures'. In this approach, relevance criteria must be specified, and the available literature must be searched exhaustively (Hammersley, 2001). We aimed at selecting those studies that focused on school leadership and school development and produced results that increased the knowledge about the development of pedagogical leadership in Finland. Our analyses revealed several key constructs and discussion themes relevant for this study.

Linked to the goal of our study, the need for research synthesis could only be realised when the theory building was cumulatively connecting past and future research. The systematic review, in contrast to a traditional review includes a clear statement of the purpose of the review, a comprehensive search and the retrieval of relevant research, explicit selection criteria, critical appraisal of primary studies, and reproducible decisions regarding relevance, selection, and methodological rigor of the primary research (Denyer & Tranfield, 2006).

We used narrative syntheses to support the thematic analyses. Narrative syntheses focus on how studies addressing different aspects of the same phenomenon can be narratively summarised and built up to provide a bigger picture of the phenomenon. Narrative synthesis is largely a process of compiling descriptive data and exemplars from individual studies and building them into a mosaic or map (Hammersley, 2001). Narrative synthesis and summary typically involve the selection, chronicling and ordering of evidence to produce an account of the evidence. Its form may vary from the simple recounting and description of findings through to more interpretive and explicitly reflexive accounts that include commentary and

Table 7.1 Chronological list of researchers in Finland who have addressed, analysed and increased understanding of school principal's leadership efforts towards broad pedagogical leadership

Author	Year	Themes and most significant emphasis
Haahtela	1953	Supervision of teachers, developing school culture
Toivonen and Andersson	1976	Scheduling, monitoring, evaluating results; principal as a pedagogical leader
Vaherva	1984	Guidance and evaluation, developing school community
Hämäläinen	1986	Emphasis on curriculum, rationality at schoolwork
Lonkila	1990	Guiding and supporting teachers, contextualisation
Erätuuli and Leino	1992	Guidance and evaluation, emphasis on curriculum, outcomes in secondary schools
Kurki	1993	Leadership includes both administration and education, collaboration, dialogue
Their	1994	Shared learning process, interaction, feedback, increasing competence
Hellström	2004	School change with projects, clear goals, positive atmosphere
Helakorpi	2001	Contextualisation, meeting the challenges in learning environments
Vulkko	2001	School as learning organisation, committing to vision, principal as learner
Mustonen	2003	Realisation of curriculum, vision leads teaching, participation and commitment Teacher leadership, shared leadership, leadership training
Kirveskari	2003	Vision, culture of trust, responsibility, developing teachers
Taipale	2004	Focus on change, shared visions, mutual understanding, positive openness, team leadership, empowerment
Pennanen	2006	Future orientation and vision, contextualisation
Johnson	2006	Good planning and coordination, wide participation, continuous training
Halttunen	2009	Wide dialogue about content of work and of wider pedagogical issues
Kunnari	2008	Importance of school culture in attaining goals, developing school culture
Ahonen	2008	Shared leadership, teachers' own responsibility of pedagogical leadership, developing school culture, own professional development, contextualisation
Hänninen	2009	Creating the pedagogical foundation of the school, culture of caring
Kanervio and Risku	2009	Responding to change and challenges, pedagogical leadership links to strategy and municipal educational administration and leadership
Karikoski	2009	Innovativeness, quality of teaching and learning, collaboration, shared leadership, emotional intelligence
Nykänen	2010	Shared leadership, multidisciplinary student care, participation, caring, networking

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Author	Year	Themes and most significant emphasis
Raasumaa	2010	Positive attitude, quality of interaction, collaborating with parents, broad pedagogical leadership (BPL) is qualitative development of knowledge and learning, contextual development of competencies, developing professional competencies
Pulkkinen	2011	Everything that supports realisation of curriculum is pedagogical leadership, evaluation, development, leading collaboration
Lahtero	2011	Symbolic leadership part of other school leadership, leading development of culture
Alava, Halttunen & Risku	2012	Pedagogic leadership is leading four core processes in schools: curriculum, culture, vision and core purpose, including ethical leadership, leading people in change and two-way communication
Paukkuri	2015	Shared vision, joint values discussion, principal co-learner, creating culture where change is materialised via learning and communal participation, shared leadership and pedagogical leadership are contextual and culture bound
Isotalo	2014	Pedagogical leadership is the ability to guide all workers towards a common goal, mutual visions and strategies, positive communication, broad interpretation of pedagogical leadership (with a list of tasks)
Sahlstedt	2015	Pedagogically sound school including leadership, organising, wide collaboration
Lahtero and Kuusilehto-Awale	2015	Broad pedagogical leadership (BPL) consists of 5 forces: technical, human, symbolic, educational and pedagogic; BPL materialises when teachers interpret principal's leadership actions, strategic leadership
Uljens	2015	Future orientation, contextualisation, pedagogical leadership has many forms and materialises in many levels
Kovalainen	2020	Established four axioms of pedagogical leadership: (1) learning, the learner and learning conditions, (2) pedagogical values, (3) school is a learning community and (4) pedagogical leadership leads people in change, explores the deficiencies of pedagogical leadership
Alava	2019	Redefining leadership; leadership is part of pedagogy; superintendents and educational administrators' important job is to support principals; principals' important job is to support teachers; shared leadership can be enforced in many ways; leading through team structures.
Lahtero and Laasonen	2021	In BPL, direct pedagogical leadership focuses on learning processes, indirect focuses in the context where learning takes place, essential in leadership is giving meaning to events and actions
Alava, Kovalainen and Risku	2021	Pedagogical leadership in the systems theoretical view in a complex and dynamic environment, leading developmental processes, direct and indirect influence, manifold leadership is emerged in both the formal and informal in leadership structures, processes and practises, and they all should be aligned
Mäntyjärvi & Parria	2021	Pedagogic leadership is a process aiming to common understanding in school community when all its members can trust and work guided by mutual knowledge

higher levels of abstraction (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005). Our study followed the chronological development of the constructs forming a narrative approach in addition to the themes found.

According to Denyer and Tranfield (2006), narrative approaches are particularly valuable when studies – like ours – include qualitative contributions, which are chosen to provide a strong sense of context. Narrative reviews provide deep and 'rich' information and enable the wholeness or integrity of the studies to be maintained, thus preserving the idiosyncratic nature of individual studies.

As seen in many recent studies, the disconnection between academic research and practice is a phenomenon common in many sciences, in educational and social science disciplines especially. To overcome this challenge, an evidence-based approach can be used, which puts synthesised findings from systematic literature reviews at the service of further theory building and experienced professionals. Novel systematic literature review methodologies have been developed to locate, appraise and synthesise existing research evidence to ensure that the outputs are more relevant for theory building, policy and practice (Denyer & Tranfield, 2006).

Historical Development of Pedagogical Leadership in Finland

International educational leadership research literature indicates that school leaders have both been active educational leadership researchers and written a lot on educational leadership. Similarly, also in Finland, the comprehensive education reform established the need to have a broader understanding of leading and managing schools. In the 1970s, principals wrote about leading and managing schools based on their own experiences, for example, Toivonen and Andersson (1976). In the 2000s, principals turned into researchers of their own, like Mäkelä (2007), Raasumaa (2010) and Pulkkinen (2011).

In this historical description, we focus on the development of educational leadership in Finland from it comprising of pure administration into having in its core broad pedagogical leadership. We investigate several writers and researchers defining various themes and domains which have evolved into the present pedagogical leadership.

Initiatives Forgotten

One of the first to promote the role of pedagogical leadership was principal Haahtela (1953), who later became a local educational manager and initiator of the comprehensive education reform. In his article in 1953, he considered the supervision of the school to belong solely to the principal and emphasised the principal's role in following teachers' teaching and the one-to-one dialogue based on this supervision. He also saw the importance of team spirit – first aspects of the importance of school

culture. In his speech in Alppila High School, he argued that there was a need for a special institute to promote pedagogical issues in Finland – being years ahead of his time (Malinen, 2010). Common to what we today understand with pedagogical leadership, he also emphasised dialogue with teachers on pedagogical issues.

Unfortunately, it took several years before the next concrete steps and initiatives for developing pedagogical leadership emerged. This consisted of the evolvement of the role of the principal from the earlier civil servant into the modern pedagogical leader.

Interest in Teachers' Work and Guidance, and Also in Students

Haahtela (1953) based his statements with the focus on the overall interest of the school. The 1970 legislation (Basic School Ordinance 443/1970) included these tasks in the official statues stating that principals' duties were to guide and supervise teaching and education. The same tasks can be found in Toivonen and Andersson's (1976) research on principals' experiences of their work. Toivonen and Andersson – maybe for the first time in Finland –identified the role of the principal as a pedagogical leader, as one who creates the schedules, and follows and evaluates teaching and educational outcomes. Research on the role of the principal as a pedagogical leader was continued by Vaherva (1984). He identified similar administrative tasks as previous researchers but also broadened the responsibilities of the principal to include school community development.

Again, the principal's role as a pedagogical leader was not developed further for a long time in Finland. Instead, there was a long debate about the duality between administrative and pedagogical leadership. Erätuuli and Leino (1992), unlike Vaherva (1984), argued that principals in comprehensive education focused on administrative work leaving all pedagogical issues to teachers. Kurki (1993) claimed that Finnish pedagogical leadership research was based to a great extent on the Anglo-American literature with an emphasis on management. In general, pedagogical leadership was understood narrowly as the practical actions that the leader uses to reach the pedagogical aims and goals in the curriculum. Curriculum had the role of a tool for instruction on several levels*:* state, municipalities, institutions and students.

Even though the roles, responsibilities and duties of principals have increased, the core role of following, evaluating and guiding teachers' work has not disappeared. For example, Pulkkinen (2011) in his PhD study on the transferences between leadership in school and sport worlds regarded all administrative tasks important in fostering the goals in the school curriculum.

One of the first researchers to address the inadequacies of pedagogical leadership in practice was Kovalainen (2020). In her PhD study, she could combine her extensive practical experience as a teacher and a school leader to the most recent theory development on pedagogical leadership. As a conclusion, she developed four

axioms, discussed later in more detail in this chapter, which both reveal the inadequacies and give guidelines how to fill the gaps in practice.

In her first axiom, Kovalainen (2020) states that the centre of pedagogical leadership consists of learning and of the learner whose learning conditions, growth and welfare are taken care of.

In sum, the basis for Finnish pedagogical leadership is rooted in teachers' work and students' learning.

Developing School and Leadership Culture

Haahtela (1953) emphasised taking care of team spirit amongst teachers, thus, being a pioneer in discussing the importance of school culture in Finland. Vaherva (1984) can be seen as a similar pioneer for the concept of the school community. However, it took several years before school culture and community were seen as key elements both in the well-being of everyone in the school and in effecting directly to student learning outcomes in Finland.

The Finnish National Board of Education Aquarium project in 1995–1998 studied change and the implementation and success of pedagogical development in over 300 pedagogical projects in selected schools (Hellström, 2004). Amongst several aspects fostering change, positive school culture was recognised as an important factor and intertwined with several other aspects in developing the school. If not properly developed, it was found to be a major obstacle for school development. The importance of the culture of trust in accomplishing goals was later identified by Kirveskari (2003) in her PhD study.

The National Core Curriculum in 2004 included the role of school culture. It stressed that school culture is an essential element of the learning environment, and thus has a significant role for teaching and student learning. Accordingly, the curriculum obligated school's educational goals and values to be manifested in the school culture.

During the first two decades of the millennium, the importance of school culture was recognised in several studies. In a study focusing on principal's identity, Ahonen (2008) identified the importance developing the school culture as a key element in leadership. In her PhD study, Kunnari (2008) studied the operational context of general upper-secondary schools and the historical, cultural and structural factors that steered their day-to-day work. The study showed that the change and renewal of the school structure is a historically and culturally mediated way of thinking and acting of school leaders, thus emphasising their role as pedagogical leaders.

The doctoral work of Raasumaa (2010) was a significant turning point in understanding about the connection of knowledge management and pedagogical leadership in Finland. As a result of his study, he also widened the concept of pedagogical leadership into broad pedagogical leadership. This consisted of leading by learning, competence leadership, self-regulation and dynamic interaction. The dynamic interaction included creating a new innovative learning culture, mutual understanding, a

new pedagogical infrastructure and the long-term developing of the school. He argued that collaborative learning and team learning are essential in developing the school's internal culture.

In her PhD work, Paukkuri (2015) conducted a three-year-long European Union project in four case schools in Germany, Greece, Estonia and Finland. She found out that pedagogical leadership can be the starting point for shared meaning building in practice which, in turn, can lead to more cooperation between school leaders and teachers. She also argued that school leadership needed a deeper analysis of the context and of the individual school cultures. A still more comprehensive investigation into the importance of school culture was given by Lahtero (2011) in his qualitative case study focusing on leadership culture and its subcultures. School culture was defined as a web of meanings by the members of the school community. In a later article, Lahtero and Kuusilehto-Awale (2015) defined broad pedagogical leadership based on technical, human and pedagogical leadership in combination with symbolic leadership turning via a web of meanings into cultural leadership.

As part of renewing leadership culture, shared leadership got more ground in the first decade of the millennium. Several writers considered it linked with pedagogical leadership (Tukiainen, 1999; Mustonen, 2003; Ahonen, 2008; Karikoski, 2009; Nykänen, 2010; Raasumaa, 2010; Alava et al., 2012; Isotalo, 2014). Pedagogical leadership was mentioned and linked to school culture also in the National Core Curriculum of 2014; it stated that the importance of pedagogical and shared leadership is to be emphasised and that it should focus on taking care of the conditions for learning. Kovalainen (2020) emphasises in her third axiom the confidentiality in a school's operational culture and considers the learning atmosphere of the community to have a significant role in encouraging active information acquisition and action, respecting every member of one's community, valuing one's work and providing a positive view of the future.

In sum, starting around 2010, developing school culture has become an essential part of Finnish pedagogical leadership.

Change, Development and Future Orientation

As we argued earlier based on Haahtela (1953), change and development have been identified as the main orientations of Finnish pedagogical leaders. Developing school community was stated also by Vaherva (1984) and later by Helakorpi (2001), who stressed the importance of responding to the challenges in the learning environment. But it was not until the Aquarium project (Hellström, 2004) that pedagogical leadership was considered as the key method for action, way of change and development. One of the first to strongly emphasise future orientation and school visions was Kirveskari (2003), who argued that the earlier understanding of pedagogical leadership was too narrow. Paukkuri (2015) included the importance of developing the school culture, making change possible, in pedagogical leadership, too. In the same avenue, Isotalo (2014) emphasised attaining common goals with mutual

visions and strategies. In his theoretical summation, Uljens (2015) as well saw school visions and change processes in the core of pedagogical leadership.

Clearly, as Kovalainen (2020) states in her fourth axiom, pedagogical leadership is leading in change; pedagogical leadership requires constant readiness for change and skills leading people in change. Conscious implementation of change requires careful planning and setting clear goals. Sustainable change requires a commitment and, in most cases, change in the thinking of the community (see Fullan, 2016).

Values and Ethics

Following the inclusion of change, development and future orientation as essential orientations for pedagogical leaders, many researchers in Finland in this millennium have emphasised the role of values and ethics to steer development and future orientation. Kirveskari (2003) emphasised the culture of trust, while Nykänen (2010) highlighted the ethics of care. Paukkuri (2015) stated that the very core in pedagogical leadership is creating a common understanding of school values. Several researchers have also argued for an in-depth dialogue concentrating on education, on the concept of the human being and on the future orientation (Komulainen & Rajakaltio, 2017; Rajakaltio, 2014; Uljens & Nyman, 2013). In this kind of dialogue, a mutual understanding is gained regardless of, and in honouring, different opinions and differences of the participants.

Kovalainen (2020) and Alava et al. (2021) argue that pedagogical leadership is ethical and has its basis on the core values jointly developed and accepted and continuously processed by the members of the school community. The core values of pedagogical leadership are, as also stated in the national core curricula of 2004 and 2014: humanity, Bildung, democracy and equality. The prerequisite to develop school culture is the open, mutual, participative and trust-building communication. Out of these values, equality has been the key guiding principle (Sahlberg, 2002, 2015). Equality relates to gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, conviction, freedom of speech and being handicapped (Uljens & Rajakaltio, 2017).

Towards a Learning Community

During the early years of school leadership, the development of teachers and principals was not eminent. One of the first, who strongly advocated it was Their (1994), who stressed knowledge sharing to increase competencies. She also saw the principal as a co-learner. When the international organisation theory started to develop from organisational learning (Senge, 1990) to learning organisation (Hord, 1997; Tsang, 1997) and beyond, Vulkko (2001) introduced it as a model for school development regarding the principal as a co-learner, as did also Paukkuri (2015). Kirveskari (2003), Taipale (2004), Johnson (2006) and Raasumaa (2010) all

emphasised the role of the principal's pedagogical leadership in the education, learning and participation of teachers.

In 2013, the theme of the learning community was also included in the report commissioned by the National Board of Education (2013). It stressed the learning of the whole school community and the development of the teaching profession per se. In the 2014 National Core Curriculum, the learning community had a central role, and it emphasised its development via dialogue. It stated that the meaning of pedagogical and shared leadership must be emphasised and that school leadership should focus on creating good learning conditions. In a longitudinal study in one municipality in Finland, Alava (2019) argued that if schools were to function as learning communities, they should develop a collaborative culture and network orientation.

Following the development of international organisation theory (Hord, 2003; DuFour, 2004; Morrow, 2010; DuFour & DuFour, 2012; Jäppinen, 2014; Nkengbeza, 2014; Antinluoma et al., 2021) about professional learning communities, Kovalainen (2020) included school as a learning community into her axioms as axiom three: the priorities of the pedagogically led learning community are mutual action, solidarity and dialogue. These are to create common understanding, generate new thinking, foster change, pass on tacit knowledge from one generation to the next, and peer work. All this, in turn, should reduce the culture of doing things alone.

Contextualisation

As we can see from many writers above, there can hardly be any uniform precise definition of pedagogical leadership, even if several writers have tried to do that. On the contrary, pedagogical leadership appears highly contextual, even situational. One of the first to state this was Lonkila (1990), who also emphasised the changes taking place in the external environment. Contextualisation was also seen as a key factor in the studies of Nivala (1999, 2002) on the work of leaders in early childhood institutes. In his study, Pennanen (2006) focused on changes in school leadership and emphasised its contextual nature. To begin with, he argued that temporal and locational contexts are essential because communities and schools had very different numbers of teachers and students. Several schools were being closed, others were being merged with each other and new ones were being built; there was continuous change.

Ahonen (2008) argued that leadership is constructed in a process of social interaction by the members of the school community and is affected by various stakeholders. In different circumstances, leadership is constructed differently. Therefore, she stated, there is no precise place or form of leadership, but leadership is constructed contextually and situationally in processes. In his study about knowledge management functions of principals, Raasumaa (2010), too, recognised that leadership and knowledge management are highly contextual and situational. Paukkuri (2015) argued that leadership practices differ a lot in culturally different schools.

Thus, she claimed that shared leadership and pedagogical leadership are culturally bound phenomena. The same conclusion was made by Uljens & Nyman (2015). In fact, Uljens (2002) stated that the adherence of education with culture makes it complex, but that we must live with it.

Leadership in Action

In the Finnish literature, we can locate two rather different avenues of understanding pedagogical leadership. The first is to try to define it distinctively and precise leading into an array of different definitions. This often creates rather broad concepts covering a multitude of principal's task that various researchers have pointed out to belong to pedagogical leadership. One such example is Mäkelä (2007) who in his autoethnographic study found 43 main categories of principals' work, which he then combined into five main areas: administration and economics, leading networks, leading personnel and pedagogical leadership. Isotalo (2014) provided a summation of the work of various studies presenting a model of 63 different tasks and responsibilities leading the analyses back to the roles and responsibilities of leaders, which, in turn, could be traced back to Minzberg (1971). These studies have a merit of their own showing how demanding and manifold the principals' work is.

The other avenue to understand pedagogical leadership can be found following the use of leading different work and development processes in schools. The Aquarium process (Hellström, 2004) reported significant success in principals' work in leading different processes in pedagogical school development. In their meta-study, Alava et al. (2012) examined the doctoral thesis made in Finland in 2000–2010 and concluded that pedagogical leadership is not a list of tasks, but a network of developmental processes which need to be led: creating school mission, developing strategy and its implementation, developing school culture and determining the curriculum. In addition to these, they defined ethical leadership, leading in change and shared leadership as key leadership competencies. Alava et al. (2021) later stated that the first one these, ethical leadership, should lead analyses of the external environment. Both Alava et al. (2012) and (2021) consider that the goal of pedagogical leadership is the creation of the school as a learning community (see Paananen, 2014).

Linking All Together

In his PhD work, Raasumaa (2010) combined different domains of school leadership. He stated that broad pedagogical leadership is manifested through two main components of leadership – knowledge management (professional development) and leading learning (learning processes, goals, practices and learning theory). He added that these two components are penetrated by two leadership dimensions with

several sub-elements. Self-regulation includes self-leadership, knowing the faculty, helping and guiding, sharing information and continuous education. Dynamic interaction includes common understanding, shared leadership, creative school culture, sustainable development, network learning, and the creation of a new pedagogical environment. Linking his findings to international research, he stated that knowledge management presupposes the utilisation of shared leadership. Liusvaara (2014) agreed with Raasumaa, stating that pedagogical leadership is a holistic approach in guiding people, and issues knowledge-utilising communality and innovation.

Furthermore, Raasumaa (2010) stated that teachers are leaders; they lead the learning processes of students. Teacher leadership and pedagogical leadership are based on open and collaborative school culture integrated by shared leadership. These findings by Raasumaa (2010) are in line with the arguments of Frost & Durrant (2002) and Paukkuri (2015), who state that the pedagogical leader works closely with others both as a teacher and a co-learner using rich communication, giving feedback, listening, adjusting, making questions, rewarding, etc. The key to this type of leadership is the shared process of learning.

The Debates of Relevant and Important Constructs in International Leadership Theories

Like the development of general leadership theory, the school and educational leadership also started in the United States. The latter is, however, much younger. Theory building in educational leadership has strong links to transactional, transformational and transformative leadership, which are built on Burns' 1978 general leadership theory. Therefore, it is essential to understand this theory development also for the evolvement of pedagogical leadership (Kovalainen, 2020).

At the beginning, educational leadership was mostly influenced by transactional leadership which was the dominant theory rooted from classical organisation theory aiming at stability in classical leadership theories. Later it paved the way to other leadership models and theories (Kovalainen, 2020; see Bass, 1985; Mitchell & Tucker, 1992; Shields, 2010; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017), but the various phenotypes of educational leadership at that time were also criticised and several new trends, models and buzzwords were forgotten (Juuti, 2013; Harris & DeFlaminis, 2016). The concept of transformation was quickly introduced in educational leadership (Berkovich, 2016; Shields, 2010; Stewart, 2006) with the first instructional educational leadership models at the beginning of the 1980s (Hallinger, 2003). During the next decades, educational leadership adopted models and theories from general leadership theory developing them to fit educational contexts (Kovalainen, 2020; see Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017).

Instructional, charismatic and transformational educational leadership approaches were hierarchical, but unlike transactional theory, favoured change (Kovalainen, 2020; Fullan, 2016). Over the years, also these theories have changed

and broadened their scope from individual school leaders into all staff and entire school communities, thus preserving their status amongst more recent theories (Kovalainen, 2020; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017).

At the turn of the millennia and amid radical and unpredictable changes in society, educational leadership faced new challenges. Hence, it was understood as more contextual, situational and complex. It became clear that one leader – or one management team – could no longer successfully cope with the increasing challenges and demanding situations (Gronn, 2000; Gunter et al., 2013; Hallinger 2003; Halttunen, 2016; Harris, 2009; Jäppinen, 2017; Jäppinen & Ciussi, 2016; Jäppinen et al., 2016; Knapp & Hopmann, 2017; Spillane et al., 2004). Sharing leadership became one of the most discussed leadership topics (Bush, 2013; Crawford, 2012; Gunter et al., 2013; Woods & Roberts, 2016), and distributed leadership was a popular research topic (Berkovich, 2018; Berkovich & Bogler, 2020; Mifsud, 2017), leading to a more spontaneous and vertical educational leadership culture (Harris, 2008).

In the changing context, communal, collaborative, goal-oriented and flexible leadership models were considered as solutions to the new challenges in schools (Kovalainen, 2020; see Jäppinen & Ciussi, 2016; Jäppinen et al., 2016). Principal's work was distributed to assistant principals and management teams; the research literature later emphasised sharing leadership as a means to combine the competencies in the school community, which was materialised in shared responsibility (Kovalainen, 2020).

In his thorough theoretical discussion on the relations between school and society, Uljens (2015) concluded that the theoretical perspectives of pedagogical leadership are as follows.

1. There are different types of pedagogical leadership and pedagogical leadership can be found on various levels.
2. Pedagogical leadership is linked with school leaders' self-knowledge, expectations and future orientation.
3. Pedagogical leadership is based on overarching policy levels in change processes in schools initiated by pedagogical leaders.
4. Pedagogical leadership is linked with the state of the school, context and societal aspects.

Theorising Pedagogical Leadership

If we look back to the various studies linked to pedagogical leadership and to its theory building presented in this chapter, we can follow how the construct of pedagogical leadership has developed. However, in most of the studies, the impacts and realisation of pedagogical leadership in practice was not addressed in more detail leaving open how and how well it is operationalised and utilised. This dilemma was

first noted by Kovalainen (2020), who found that there are several problems of pedagogical leadership in practice.

In her dissertation, Kovalainen (2020) studied the phenomenon of the deficit of pedagogical leadership with the help of four theoretical axioms. The axioms are rooted on the terms 'pedagogical' and 'learning community' and based on eight international theories and trends of educational leadership that emphasise pedagogy and positive attitude towards change. The theories and trends chosen for Kovalainen's study included charismatic, transactional, transformational, transformative, instructional, distributed, authentic and collaborative leadership.

The theoretical axioms describing pedagogical leadership are according to Kovalainen (2020) as follows.

1. The core of pedagogical leadership consists of learning and of the learner whose learning conditions, growth and welfare are taken care of.
2. The pedagogical values of pedagogical leadership are humanity, Bildung, democracy and equality.
3. School is a learning community that acts according to the principles of pedagogical values and of the learning community.
4. Pedagogical leadership leads people in change.

Linked with the first axiom, the focus on students and their well-being, learning and development learning and welfare is often considered self-evident in Finland, but this has not always been the case (Alava et al., 2021). According to several international researchers, e.g., Hallinger (1992, 2003), Larsen and Rieckhoff (2014), Marks and Printy (2003), Pietsch and Tulowitzki (2017) and Stewart (2006), schools with the emphasis on transactional, instructional, charismatic or transformational leadership, focused on school development to enhance student learning by influencing and improving the pedagogical and didactical skills of individual teachers. The focus of pedagogical leadership was on the teacher and teaching, similarly to Finland in the 1970s and 1980s.

Transformative leadership, on the other hand, stressed schoolwork for the best of the student, developing the entire school community and even society for this purpose. It emphasised social growth and encouraged students to become active citizens, independent searchers of information and constructive critics (Hewitt et al., 2014; Quantz et al., 1991; Shields, 2010; Weiner, 2003.) Authentic leadership aimed at enhancing both individual's and society's well-being (Kovalainen, 2020; see Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). Distributed leadership focused on changing the school and developing learning outcomes by supporting the work of school leaders by sharing leadership (Crawford, 2012; Harris, 2009; Mifsud 2017; Woods & Roberts, 2016), while collaborative leadership reaches for creating something new by creating synergy involving everyone in the school community (Jäppinen 2017; Jäppinen & Ciussi, 2016; Jäppinen et al., 2016, 2018).

The second axiom in Kovalainen's (2020) theory is linked with values. Because of their common origin, transactional, transformational and transformative educational leadership values correspond to those in Finnish pedagogical leadership, such as responsibility, freedom, equality, honesty and particularly justice which the

transformational view linked with the transformation of working places and society (Shields, 2010; van Oord, 2013). Banks et al. (2016) identified four components relevant with Finnish pedagogical leadership in authentic leadership: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalised moral perspective.

Transformative leadership encouraged independent acquisition of knowledge, challenged the status quo, oriented for the future and strove for active democratic action (Hewitt et al., 2014; Quantz et al., 1991; Shields, 2010; van Oord, 2013; Laininen, 2019). This can be seen rooted in Freire's (1998) notion of Bildung, where educating the entire nation is the means for the well-being of society (see, Shields, 2010).

Related to Kovalainen's (2020) third axiom, an instructional school leader was a strong and efficient supervisor in the 1980s, giving orders and having the ability to 'turn the school around'. It was a hierarchical, top-down approach strictly in the hands of the school leader (Hallinger 1992, 2005; Marks & Printy 2003; Stewart 2006). Transformational and charismatic leadership style could also be hierarchical, but it oriented for the bottom-up approach, and it included more interaction (McCarley et al., 2016; Stewart, 2006; Yukl, 1999). Leaders using this style recognise the wishes and needs of school staff. The equality in transformative leadership meant that the individual as a member in the school community was responsible for taking care of the well-being of the community, but the school community was also responsible for the individual (Alava et al., 2021, Hewitt et al., 2014; Quantz et al., 1991; Shields, 2010; van Oord, 2013; Weiner, 2003).

In the recent years, instructional leadership approach has developed towards the approaches of pedagogical leadership presented in this chapter, thus, changing its focus more towards the collaboration of teachers and creating opportunities for teachers' professional growth and towards creating learning communities. It has also new elements in the leadership for learning approach leading to a new line of study of shared instructional leadership. The five elements in this new approach of instructional leadership are: defining school's mission, securing the realisation of the curriculum, guiding teaching, following the learning outcomes and enhancing a good learning climate – all being closely linked to teachers' work (see Boyce & Bowers, 2018; Hallinger, 2011a, 2011b; Hallinger & Heck 2010; Marks & Printy, 2003; Murphy et al., 2007; Shatzer et al., 2014; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). Van Oord (2013) argued that transformative leadership is linked with person-centred learning communities and can be realised only in a true learning community linking the discussion with Kovalainen's (2020) third axiom.

As Kovalainen (2020) argues in her fourth axiom, international research on transformative leadership shows that it was more change-oriented than the leadership theories mentioned above. Affected by Freire's pedagogical perspectives, it focused on change on the individual level but also on change on the community and societal levels (Freire, 1998; Shields, 2010; van Oord, 2013). Transformative leadership can thus be a change-prone leadership approach relying on pedagogical methods (Hewitt et al., 2014; Shields, 2010; van Oord, 2013).

In addition to the theoretical foundations that Kovalainen (2020) laid on the construct of pedagogical leadership via her axioms, she also studied how they appear in

practice in Finland. She identified several deficits in each of them. Next, we will discuss these deficits and present ways to overcome them. As we have discussed above, pedagogical leadership is contextual and Kovalainen's findings are from Finland. However, we encourage the international audience to study and analyse their own situations using the four axioms and their possible deficits in their own work.

1. *School does not focus on learning and learners.*

In this first axiom, the most essential deficit was in the leadership for learning. The focus of the schools was not on the students and their learning but on teaching or on other actors, such as on the education provider (often the municipality). This was not a surprise, because for a long time – even in teacher education – the emphasis has been in teaching, not in learning, in Finland. Linked with international research, teacher-centred education did neither enhance students' independent work nor activate students. On the contrary, it could passivate students and expose their learning outcomes (Alava et al., 2021, Rajakaltio, 2014; Uljens & Rajakaltio, 2017; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017; van Manen, 1991; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017.) This was seen as a clear indication of the deficit in the leadership for learning (Kovalainen, 2020).

The traditional culture of working alone limited teachers' collaboration and thus decreased the support which was intended to support students' learning paths, growth and well-being aimed to last throughout going to school. On the other hand, the schools preferred to support learning not to compete for advancement. Also, Finland adopted a sophisticated three-level support system for all students that need any kind of help and support. This approach, which has been further developed to meet the individual needs of students, is very different from many other countries in which external standard tests rank schools and teachers.

In sum, in the first axiom, the deficit in pedagogical leadership was in the conservative, even stagnant culture in schools and amongst education providers, the municipalities. To fill this gap, the most essential task is to change and develop the operating and leadership culture both in schools and amongst education providers.

2. *The lack of common values slows down the emergence of a collaborative culture.*

In the second axiom, the deficit was linked to the unclear or missing values either inside school or outside in the learning environment. Inside the schools, this was met especially when no values discussion had been conducted, or they had been superficial. Linked with the education providers, this problem focused on the morality and honesty of leadership particularly in cases when the cuts in funding were claimed to be a pedagogical solution. Inside the schools, this caused significant decrease in valuing the decision-makers, in change resistance, and in risking meeting agreed goals. The lack in leadership was also recognised in change processes where the reasons or consequences were not properly or not at all informed.

The discussions on schools' bylaws and rules were regarded as values discussions, even if they comprised only of students' actions, not those of the entire school. The principals expressed a strong concern for the students to be treated just and fair by the teachers (Kovalainen, 2020).

The core values in pedagogical leadership, identified in Kovalainen's (2020) research were humanity, Bildung, democracy, equality, fairness and honesty (See Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). The deficit in the values of the external learning environment could be met with a consistent process of interaction which crossed the various administrative levels for education (Alava et al., 2021). Inside the schools, a consistent values discussion leading to mutual values was found to be essential. Both the external and internal communication processes had to be led properly.

3. *Pedagogical leadership will not work unless the school leaders exercise their power to organise it.*

In the third axiom, the deficit in pedagogical leadership prevented the formation of the pedagogical learning community (Kovalainen, 2020). Leadership can be seen as a process based on the interactions amongst people (Burns, 2003; Starratt, 2007; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). In pedagogical leadership, this presupposes the creation and sustaining of a trusting climate amongst school community members (Alava et al., 2021). In addition to the internal connections of the multi-professional community on side the schools, also the schools' external local, national and international connections and networks – or lack of them – have a great impact on the deficits of pedagogical leadership (Kovalainen, 2020; Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

The findings in Kovalainen's (2020) study indicated that there were major professional contradictions amongst different teacher groups – particularly between primary and secondary education teachers. These rooted themselves to decisions made several years ago causing, for example, differences in salary systems creating feelings of unfairness. The work of the other teacher groups was not familiar nor valued, which was a major block for collaborative work and mutual responsibility for the learning, behaviours and well-being of students.

The deficits in pedagogical leadership were also the result of the old-fashioned and immature decision-making culture. This problem was increased by the traditional Finnish autonomy of teachers; teachers' right to choose their own teaching methods and materials. Unfortunately, this autonomy was often misunderstood to mean freedom not to commit oneself to jointly made decisions (Kovalainen, 2020; see Fullan, 2016).

The readiness of the principals to intervene the autonomy problem was decreased by the fact that many of them regarded themselves as teachers, not as real leaders. This was partly because the principals' work included teaching, and they liked teaching (Kovalainen, 2020; see Fullan, 2016; Rajakaltio, 2014; Taipale, 2005, 2012.) In the same vein, the principals said that they trusted the work morale of the teachers because of the high quality of Finnish teacher education. Therefore, the principals hardly ever followed the teaching practices of the teachers, as is customary in instructional and transformational leadership (Kovalainen, 2020; Komulainen & Rajakaltio, 2017).

Partly, avoiding intervention was also about the principals' well-being. Their workloads were heavy, their working hours had no limits, and the undone work caused a lot of stress. Working alone and autonomy was also part of their own leadership culture. Sharing their work was regarded difficult, because the overall

responsibility for the school was owned by the principal. Principals had a lot of power, but as typical Finnish principals they 'laid low' in the use of that power (Alava et al., 2021; Kovalainen, 2020).

To fill the deficit discussed above, the pedagogical leadership in these multi-professional learning communities called for a systematic and assertive way of action, as well as sharing leadership by empowering and creating high morale, trust, honesty, communication, networking, dialogue and negotiation. These arguments are aligned to what Alava (2019) found in his longitudinal study of one municipality in Finland. The role of municipal educational administrators was emphasised, and overall support was seen essential. This led him to re-define leadership: leadership is part of pedagogy; superintendents and educational administrators' important job is to support principals; principals' important job is to support teachers; shared leadership can be enforced in many ways, leading through team structures.

Because every school is different and because the deficits are contextually and situationally embedded in human interaction, the means to fill deficits identified for this axiom are to be decided individually in each school applying the findings and guidelines presented above (Alava et al., 2021. Kovalainen, 2020).

4. *If there is no commitment to change and the way of thinking in the community does not change, the change will not occur, will only be partial, or there is the risk that the change will not be permanent.*

The deficits for the fourth axiom were contextual (Kovalainen, 2020). In addition, the changes did not take place only in the individual schools, but at the same time they took place in the broader system-level change processes.

In Finland, changes in schools were meticulously steered by the central government in the 1970s. In the 1990s, municipalities and other education providers obtained remarkable autonomy how to develop their schools and school networks. This decentralisation was at its peak at the beginning of the 1990s and has been moving in the direction of deconcentration since the end of the 1990s, as presented in Chap. 2 of this book. The decentralisation in the 1990s made the guidance from the local education provider, the municipality, to the principals very different in various municipalities, and no uniform solutions have existed since that. The lack of proper resources has also increased the deficits, particularly, when municipalities have consistently been meeting with severe financial cuts. There have been many changes, and the pace of change has been rapid. Because of all this, most essential is a joint commitment, and to achieve that we need to secure involvement, participation, interaction and communication.

To manage the problems and deficits, the proper funding of schools is, naturally, a must. In addition to this, adequate time for changes and professional development are needed to change and develop the school culture to meet the changes. If the changes are not jointly planned, the commitment will be weak, and the change may not take place as planned. The lack of reflective dialogue was seen to increase change resistance, and there was no positive drive for change (Kovalainen, 2020). Leading people in change requires understanding the change, strong

self-knowledge, systematic work, long-term focus, as well as broad and constant communication and professional development.

In the light of pedagogical leadership, leading people in change requires the realisation of pedagogical leadership in the learning community. On every level of the educational administration, this calls for active and holistic pedagogical leadership (see, Schaefers, 2002). The complex and dynamic operational environment challenges educational organisations to develop themselves and their members in consistent change and deficit (Alava et al., 2021; Kovalainen, 2020).

Theorising: Towards the Axioms of Pedagogical Leadership

When linking together the analyses above in this article with the works of Uljens (2015), Alava (2016); Alava et al. (2012, 2021), Kovalainen (2020), we can conclude that for the Finnish broad pedagogical leadership we have the following axioms as presented in Fig. 7.1.

The main focus is on

1. Taking care of the learning, growth and well-being of students
2. Understanding its contextual nature

The main orientations are

1. Values and ethical leadership and
2. Future orientation and environmental scanning

Leading people in change comprises of
Involvement, participation, communication, interaction; collaborative leadership
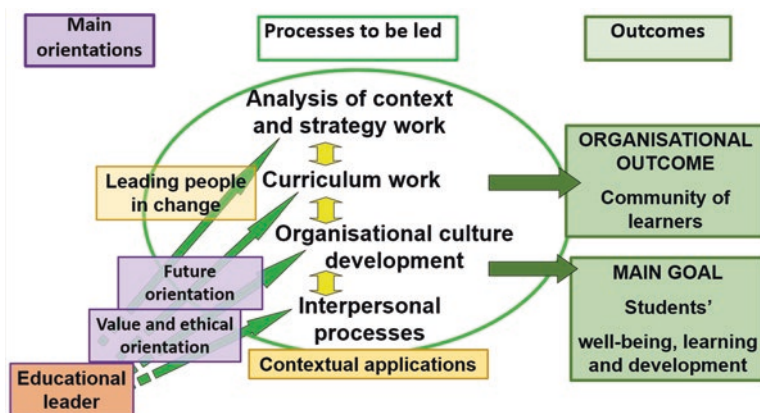*Organisational outcome and result* are

Fig. 7.1 Finnish broad pedagogical leadership

A school as a learning community with its new leadership orientations

In order for the axioms to realise, we argue that constructing communities of learners and meeting deficits in pedagogical leadership, we need to lead several processes in educational organisations – in every educational organisation in its own way utilising its contextual elements (see Fig. 7.1):

1. Leading future orientation, strategic development and their appropriate enactment
2. Leading the development of curriculum
3. Leading the development of organisational culture
4. Leading interpersonal processes

Discussion

Van Manen (2016) stated that the interest of educational sciences has more conventionally focused on separating the efficiency and inefficiency of teaching from each other. Instead, he emphasises it should concentrate on what is and is not good for the children and for the young. Both education and educational leadership should be arranged from the perspective of the child and the young, because children and young of our time live in a complex, fragmented, contradicting world which is full of conflicts and where reality is filled with consistently altering beliefs, values, religions and living conditions in a world of random events (Kovalainen, 2020; van Manen, 2016).

In conclusion, we cannot show or pinpoint one single right or wrong way to lead educational organisations. Rather we view a multifaceted spectrum of leadership approaches and practices, which need to be applied according to the need, situation, time and place. As we have seen above, defining pedagogical leadership, detecting its deficits and making change happen are contextual and situational. Therefore, the utmost responsibility lies with the individual educational leaders and the educational communities.

Traditionally, taking care of the well-being of citizens has been considered to be the responsibility of the government in Finland. Presently, we observe the citizens to have an increasing responsibility for it. The challenges in this major change emphasise the increased importance of pedagogical aspects in educational leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Robinson et al., 2008.) This system-wide change calls for a more flexible, contextual and independent leadership approach (Fullan, 2016; Hargreaves, 2010; Harris et al., 2006; Schaefers, 2002; Schratz, 2013).

Finally, we conclude following the arguments of Alava (2019) and debates above, that:

- *If schools are to improve*, staff – teachers and leaders – must develop the capacity to function as learning communities.
- *If schools are to function as learning communities*, they must develop a collaborative culture and network orientation.

- *If schools are to develop a collaborative culture*, they must overcome a tradition of teacher isolation and adopt new pedagogical leadership.
- *If schools are to overcome their tradition of teacher isolation*, teachers must learn to work in effective, high performing teams supported and encouraged by school leaders.

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Chapter 8
The Theory of Pedagogical Leadership: Enhancing High-Quality Education

Elina Fonsén and Tapio Lahtero

Abstract In this chapter, we introduce the pedagogical leadership theory of Finnish scholars Fonsén and Lahtero and provide ideas and tools to enhance understanding about the foundation of pedagogical leadership in the background of high-quality comprehensive education and early childhood education.

Dimensions that influence the success of pedagogical leadership are Value, Context, Organisational culture, Professionalism and Management of substance. From the viewpoint of the principal's work, it is also essential to examine one of the organisational culture's sub-cultures, leadership culture. The work of principal constitutes many tasks and duties, which can be defined as the indirect and direct pedagogical leadership using the idea of the broad-based pedagogical leadership. The four aspects of human capital that leaders need for pedagogical leadership are: The dimensions of increased knowledge, awareness of the quality of the implemented pedagogy, Skills to lead development, and Ability to argue for pedagogy.

In addition, we introduce Leadership competence model for leading pedagogy and curriculum implementation, and model for early childhood education teachers' professional development towards pedagogical leadership.

Keywords Early childhood education · Comprehensive education · Pedagogical leadership · Finnish education

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Introduction

Both comprehensive education and early childhood education are an important part of the lifelong learning path in the Finnish educational system. Under the Finnish Parliament, the Ministry of Education and Culture provides support and guidance by preparing the legislation, providing curricula and organising the state's funding of educational services. The directing system makes Finnish education rather equal for all children, and they have the subjective right to obtain early childhood education as well as comprehensive education with equal programmes.

Finnish educational system is considered high quality, yet development areas can be found. For example, leadership training is not well established, and the skills of principals and ECE centre directors vary (Finnish Government, 2021). In this chapter, our aim is to clarify the concept of pedagogical leadership which we consider the core function when leading an educational organisation. Based on our previous studies of pedagogical leadership, we introduce the dimensions on which pedagogical leadership is built (Fonsén, 2013, 2014), the structure and contents of broad understanding of pedagogical leadership (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015) and the cultural and symbolic aspect of leadership (Lahtero, 2011) and human capital that is needed for pedagogical leadership (Fonsén, 2014). Earlier studies have shown that pedagogical leadership and human management leadership are the most important tasks in leadership in the view of directors and principals (Fonsén, 2014; Lahtero et al., 2021).

Furthermore, recent studies in ECE leadership have provided evidence that leadership and the quality of pedagogy have connections. Pedagogical leadership seems to have an impact on children's involvement in learning, positive emotions, physical activity and participation. In addition, directors' assessment of process factors in the quality of early childhood education has connection to children's observed involvement in activities (Fonsén et al., 2022b; Ruohola et al., 2021).

The following paragraphs provide a condensed description of comprehensive and early childhood education in Finland.

Comprehensive Education in Finland

Every child permanently resident in Finland is obligated to achieve the goals of compulsory education. Compulsory education in pre-primary education begins one year before the child turns 7 and starts comprehensive education and ends when the child turns 18 or when he or she completes a secondary school qualification before that age. Completion of the comprehensive school curriculum is part of compulsory education. Comprehensive school covers grades 1–9 and is intended for 7–16-year-olds. In Finland, municipalities are obliged to provide comprehensive education in a local school so that a pupils' journeys to school are as safe and as short as possible

(Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). According to the Finnish National Agency of Education (2014,14), pupils in comprehensive education have the right to free education and the textbooks and other learning materials, tools and equipment required for it. In addition, pupils have the right to receive free student welfare services required for participation in education, as well as the social benefits and services defined by law. Pupils must also be provided with a full, free and appropriate meal every school day (Finnish National Agency for Education [FNAE], 2014, 14).

The system of comprehensive education is governed by the Comprehensive Education Act and Decree, Government decrees, curriculum criteria, local curricula and by the school yearly plans based on them. The various parts of the system are being reformed to ensure that education is organised in a way that takes account of changes in the world around schools and strengthens their role in building a sustainable future (FNAE, 2014, 9).

Every comprehensive school has a principal who is responsible for the school's activities, in accordance with educational legislation, and who leads, directs and supervises the teaching and educational work of the school. It is difficult to define and describe the job description in detail because of the diversity of school units, the type of education provider and the type of employment relationship. In addition, at local level, the job description is defined by the management regulations. However, the basic mission always includes, inter alia, pedagogical leadership (FNAE, 2013,14).

Early Childhood Education in Finland

Since 2013, early childhood education (ECE) governance has been under the Ministry of Education and Culture, moved from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The aims of ECE pedagogy are laid out in the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018) and the Finnish National core curriculum for early childhood education and care (Finnish National Agency for Education [FNAE], 2022). ECE teachers' bachelor's level university education provides a strong foundation to interpret these documents.

Municipalities are obligated to organise and provide ECE services, and traditionally they have been the main provider of ECE in Finland. However, currently there is strong growth in the private sector. The statistics from 2019 shows that 18.2% of children participate in ECE organised by private service providers, and further, 54% of Finnish municipalities provide private services (Finnish Education Evaluation Centre [FINEEC], 2019).

The ECE curriculum defines the ECE teacher's role as a pedagogical team leader, but the ECE centre leader has the main responsibility for the pedagogical quality in the ECE centre (FNAE, 2018). The model of distributed pedagogical leadership has

been under development recently. ECE leaders' workload has increased in recent years due to which Finnish municipalities have restructured and expanded the responsibilities of ECE centre directors according to the demands of new legislation and curriculum and because of expanded number of units and growing number of employees (Ahtiainen et al., 2021; Soukainen & Fonsén, 2018).

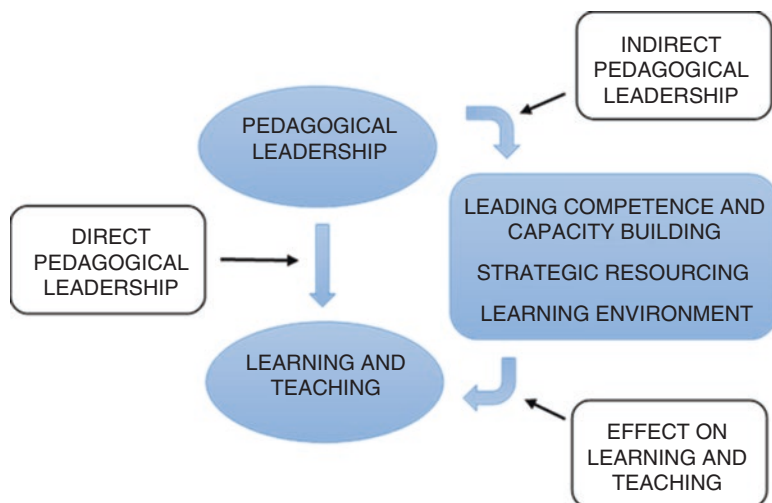## Broad-Based Pedagogical Leadership

In the Anglo-American research tradition, the term instructional leadership is commonly used to refer to leading teaching and learning in a school. In the Finnish research tradition, the corresponding term has been pedagogical leadership. The roots of instructional leadership can be traced back to the 1970s and 1980s, when U.S. principals became required to take a more active role in managing school performance and student learning outcomes. Graczewski et al. (2009) argue that the need for this new thinking was based mainly on the proliferation of neoliberal education policies and standardised tests. The assumption was that the principal was responsible for student learning outcomes. At the same time, research on school effectiveness and the impact of principals on school effectiveness became more widespread. Principals were required to have strong goal orientation, with a particular focus on improving student learning outcomes. The 1980s saw an emphasis on rational thinking in school leadership. It argued that the ability of the principal to create goals, to motivate staff and students, and to adapt the school's teaching to the goals set, is central to the school's development and effectiveness (Hallinger, 2005). Research on effective schools has mostly focused on schools at which a strong directive principal has been successful in making the necessary changes. A clear shortcoming is that due to the different circumstances, contexts and development needs of schools, the generalisation of instructional leadership models to all schools has generally had a negative impact.

The current view of instructional leadership is now more nuanced and broader than the view in the 1980s. The focus today is more on the role of the principal as a leader of excellence and enabler of teacher development (Plessis, 2013). Robinson et al. (2008) emphasise that principals influence student learning outcomes best by leading by example. It is therefore not enough for principals to organise and facilitate in-service teacher training. Above all, he or she must be involved in the learning process in formal and informal school forums. The instructional principal can also ensure the quality of teaching by visiting classrooms, supervising teachers and giving them feedback. Bendikson et al. (2012) have identified setting goals, ensuring a quality learning environment, strategic resourcing and problem solving, building a sense of shared responsibility, and ensuring quality teaching as key elements of instructional leadership. Plessis (2013) also combines several concepts to define instructional leadership from a broader perspective. This is primarily related to

learning and teaching, but also refers to all those activities that contribute to student learning, teacher professional development and the development of a positive school culture. Instructional leadership can no longer be seen as the task of the principal alone, but rather as a shared leadership role between principals and teachers. In this way, school leadership is seen as a shared effort to develop the school, based on collaboration between teachers and the principal. As teachers participate in school development, they contribute more fully to the success of the school (Graczewski et al., 2009; Hallinger, 2005; Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2014). Ultimately, the ability of the principal to create a positive school culture that supports learning at the school emerges as a key competence area of instructional leadership.

The current broader view of instructional leadership is closer in content to its Finnish counterpart, pedagogical leadership. At the same time, Finnish school leadership research has adopted the concept of broad-based pedagogical leadership, which looks at school leadership from a broader perspective than instructional leadership. As a concept, pedagogical leadership is not as well-known as instructional leadership, although it in principle refers to a similar task, particularly in relation to the leadership of an educational institution. Pedagogical leadership is generally accepted as a goal to which a Finnish principal should aspire in his or her institution. Alava et al. (2012) consider pedagogical leadership to include all leadership measures that support the achievement of the school's basic mission and contribute to the implementation of the curriculum. Curriculum implementation requires principals to lead teachers' competence and capacity building and learning, to support teachers in their daily teaching work and to lead community development processes. According to the National Board of Education (NBE) (2013), the principal's key role is to provide pedagogical leadership to ensure the learning of all members of the organisation and the achievement of the school's core mission.

Like instructional leadership, pedagogical leadership can be direct or indirect in nature; both have an impact on students' learning outcomes (Bendikson et al., 2012; Gurr et al., 2010; Larsen & Rieckhoff, 2014). Direct pedagogical leadership focuses directly on the process of learning and teaching. It is about developing curriculum, setting goals and ensuring the quality of teaching. Indirect pedagogical leadership, on the other hand, focuses on the context and environment in which the process of learning and teaching takes place. Indirect pedagogical leadership includes the provision of resources to support the implementation of strategy, the management of competences and the provision of a learning environment that supports learning and teaching (Bendikson et al., 2012; Larsen & Rieckhoff, 2014). In their Finnish study, Alava et al. (2012) define direct pedagogical leadership as the principal's leadership of teachers' competence and capacity building and development, and also daily support for schoolwork, for example through development discussions. In their view, the principal's indirect pedagogical leadership is manifested in how he or she leads development processes that support the competence and development of teaching staff. Raasumaa (2010) has also found that Finnish principals' pedagogical

Fig. 8.1 Direct and indirect pedagogical leadership

leadership is both direct and indirect. As it is impossible for principals to be present in all learning-related situations, most pedagogical leadership is indirect (Fig. 8.1).

This means that the essence of pedagogical leadership is above any active influence on objectives, organisational structures, social networks, staff and school culture.

Technical Leadership, Direct Pedagogical Leadership and Leading Human Resources: Competent Principal

The day-to-day leadership of a school can be divided into three areas: technical leadership, direct pedagogical leadership and leading human resources (Lahtero et al., 2021). Each of these three areas of leadership is necessary and contributes in its own way to the functioning and quality of the school. Direct pedagogical leadership focuses on the process of learning and teaching. Pedagogical leadership through technical and human resources is indirect and focuses on the context and environment in which learning and teaching take place. When principals are successful in leading the technical, direct pedagogical and human resources of their schools, they promote and sustain quality education (Table 8.1). In this case, we can speak of a principal who is competent in his/her task (Hämäläinen et al., 2002).

Technical leadership can be seen as a rational organisation characteristic of the management institutions of the twentieth century. Principals who emphasise the technical aspect of leadership focus their attention and action on facts and logic. They design and implement structures and processes appropriate to the prevailing circumstances. According to Sergiovanni (2006), technical

Table 8.1 A well-run school and a competent principal

Indirect pedagogical leadership via Leading structures	Direct pedagogical leadership	Indirect pedagogical leadership via Leading human resources
Good and competent principal		

leadership is characterised by planning, organising, coordinating and scheduling. Technical leadership is a basic prerequisite for the day-to-day running of any school, because without a functioning structure, the people working in the school will be unsure of their tasks and objectives. According to a Finnish study of principals (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015), the typical technical leadership tasks of primary school principals are: (1) routine administrative tasks, such as making various administrative decisions, (2) making school schedules and (3) financial management tasks, such as strategic resourcing. In the school context, the success of the technical dimension of leadership can be judged by its ability to support the context and environment in which the processes of learning and teaching take place.

Unlike technical leadership, direct pedagogical leadership focuses on leading the school's core mission of learning and teaching. Principals who emphasise pedagogical leadership focus their attention and action on improving teaching and learning. They focus their energies primarily on those aspects – learning, teaching and school development – that are relevant to the success of the school and pupils. According to a Finnish study of principals (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015), the typical pedagogical leadership tasks of primary school principals are: (1) setting goals and strategic leadership, (2) maintaining pedagogical dialogue between the principal and teachers and (3) setting pedagogical policies for the whole school.

The human aspect of leadership is the leadership of psychological factors such as needs, motivation and well-being. Principals who emphasise leading human resources see people as the core of the school organisation. Teachers and other staff will only engage with the school and its goals if they feel that the school meets their needs and supports their personal goals. According to Sergiovanni (2006), principals who emphasise human leadership in their work offer support and encouragement to teachers. This is relevant because high motivation to learn on the part of pupils and high motivation to teach on the part of teachers are fundamental prerequisites for good school leadership. According to a Finnish study of principals (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015), the most typical human leadership tasks of primary school principals are: (1) leading competence and capacity building, (2) maintaining the interaction between the principal and teachers and (3) providing support to teachers in challenging situations. In the school context, the success of human leadership can be judged by its ability to support the context and environment in which the processes of learning and teaching take place.

The technical, direct pedagogical and human dimensions of leadership can be compared to the different lenses through which the world looks different. A competent principal must be able to look at the school he or she leads through all these lenses. If the principal focuses only on technical leadership, while the human and pedagogical aspects are marginalised, the staff will not be motivated to do their job and the basic mission will be obscured. If the principal focuses only on human leadership, with technical and pedagogical leadership on the side-lines, the basic mission becomes blurred and the school falls into disarray. However, if the principal focuses only on pedagogical leadership, leaving technical and human leadership on the margins, the basic mission will not be achieved. The quality of learning and teaching processes can only be achieved if the school is well organised and staff are motivated and committed.

Symbolic and Cultural Leadership: Towards Excellent Principalship

Symbolic and cultural leadership go beyond technical, pedagogical and human leadership. At the same time, they enable access to excellent levels of engagement and performance. According to Hämäläinen et al. (2002), a principal can be considered excellent when he or she performs well not only in technical, pedagogical and human leadership but also in symbolic and cultural leadership (Table 8.2). The distinction drawn by Hämäläinen et al. (2002) between competent and excellent principals is like the distinction drawn by Schein (2005) between leadership and management: managers live within the organisational culture, but leaders can create and shape it.

The basic principle of symbolic leadership is that the meanings given to events and their interpretation are more important than what happens in the organisation (Lahtero, 2011). It is therefore the giving of meaning that becomes the most important task of leadership. By giving meaning and dealing with symbols, the principal can strengthen the experience of the community and provide the desired image of what the school organisation represents to its members. Since it is often not possible to change things directly, dealing with the school's symbolic system provides an effective means of changing behaviour. Above all, symbolic leadership is about building commitment and trust. Because using the school's symbolic system

Table 8.2 An excellent school and an excellent principal

Indirect pedagogical leadership via	Direct pedagogical leadership	Indirect pedagogical leadership via
Leading structures		Leading human resources
Symbolic and cultural leadership		
Excellent principal		

appropriately requires considerable self-awareness and sensitivity to others, symbolic leadership is not easy.

It should be remembered that the same message will not produce the same reaction in all listeners (Lahtero & Risku, 2012, 2013). Like the principal, other members of the school organisation sometimes find themselves in situations where they recognise their inability to communicate in a way that is understood in the way they want. Principals should therefore be careful not to misinterpret the reactions of their audiences, because they can easily perceive their own and their audiences' views as being more similar than they are. This bias may be due to overly positive self-perceptions, unrealistic optimism, stereotypes about the audience or illusions of control. The principal has considerable control over the design and presentation of the visible and belonging elements of his or her leadership. In contrast, the symbolic message with which these elements are associated is much more difficult to control. Many symbolic associations are unpredictable. According to Sergiovanni (2006), to understand symbolic leadership, one must look behind the principal's actions and understand, above all, the meaning of those actions. What matters is what the principal stands for and what his or her words and actions communicate to others. In contrast, the official and public symbols of the school – such as logos and missions – may have little to do with how individual members of the organisation describe their school.

Cultural leadership in a school is a deliberate attempt by the principal to structure the meanings that members of the organisation give to their work and to their organisation. In other words, cultural leadership is about influencing the construction of reality and clarifying the deepest meaning of work. The principal's task is to develop and lead the culture of his or her school to promote the fundamental mission of student learning (Barth, 2007). Developing and leading the culture is one of the principal's more important tasks, because a culture that supports the core mission is also a key instrument for the school's other strategic development and for achieving its future vision. Successful cultural change requires that the principal has the courage to give space to the creativity and expertise of the teachers. Only then will it be possible to find genuinely new solutions to problems that are already known or even unknown. An essential part of leading cultural change is therefore to strengthen the capacity for the constant search for new ideas and practises and their selective introduction.

Cultural change must always involve both the creation of the new and the destruction of the old (Schlechty, 2007). In changing the culture of their school, principals must destroy parts of the old culture. This is done by eliminating the symbols that support the old culture of the school. At the same time, existing symbols must be modified to fit the desired culture, and new symbols must be created to support the desired culture. However, Yukl (2006) points out that the influence of the leader on culture varies depending on the stage of development of the organisation. The founder of a new organisation has a strong influence on its culture. As an organisation ages, the culture becomes more unconscious and less stable. Changing the culture of older organisations is therefore much more difficult than creating a new

organisation. One reason for this is that many of the underlying beliefs and assumptions that people share are implicit and unconscious. Changing cultural assumptions is also difficult when they give legitimacy to the past and are a source of pride. In older, relatively prosperous organisations – as schools often are – the culture has more influence on the leader than the leader has on the culture. They are unlikely to change dramatically unless a crisis threatens their well-being and survival. Even then, understanding the culture and leading its change requires considerable insight and ability on the part of the leader. In the school context, the success of cultural leadership can be judged by the extent to which the interpretations and cultural assumptions made by the work community support the success of the basic mission of learning and teaching and the delivery of the curriculum (Lahtero, 2011).

Aiming for Broad-Based Pedagogical Leadership

Broad-based pedagogical leadership consists of technical, pedagogical, human resource, symbolic and cultural leadership (Fig. 8.2). Of the above, technical, pedagogical and human leadership can be considered as a normal leadership activity of the principal, without which it is impossible to lead the school adequately in
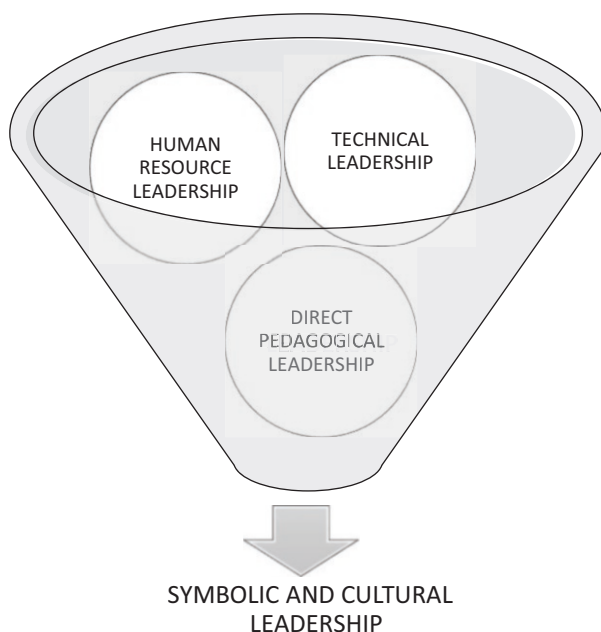
Fig. 8.2 Broad-based pedagogical leadership. (Modified from Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015)

general. The principal's normal leadership activities demonstrate to the school's teaching staff what is important and valued at school. The symbolic and cultural aspects of school leadership consist of the meanings given by the teaching staff to the principal's normal leadership activities and to the network of these meanings – the school's leadership culture. When the principal's normal leadership activities are successful and when the leadership culture supports the school's basic mission – student learning – the principal's broad-based pedagogical leadership is excellent (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015).

This means that the essence of pedagogical leadership is above any active influence on objectives, organisational structures, social networks, staff and school culture.

Dimensions of Pedagogical Leadership

Fonsén (2014) has analysed the construction of pedagogical leadership and found the four dimensions on which it is built (Table 8.3). The first is Value that also passes through the other dimensions. In Fonsén's (2013) earlier study, the Value dimension was missing, and value was understood to be implied within the other dimension. After a careful reflection of the results of the study and deepening understanding, Fonsén (2014) brought up the Value dimension as it proved to be a key factor for successful pedagogical leadership.

Table 8.3 Dimensions of pedagogical leadership

Dimensions of pedagogical leadership	
Value	An umbrella construction that includes other dimensions
The context	Micro level, structure of organisation, definition of core task/purpose Municipality's resources and structure of ECE organisation Macro level, national government intent, situation, place, time, the values and attitudes in society
Organisational culture	Interaction and work community Organisation's cultural structure Distributed leadership
Professionalism	Management skills, Leadership role and style Managing work tasks Time management
Management of substance	Pedagogical competence Management and development of core task of organisation Theoretical and practical knowledge about ECE The desire to develop oneself and develop a pedagogy

Value dimension builds on understanding the pedagogy to be the main value which influences any decisions as a work of leaders. Often, economic efficiency competes alongside pedagogical values in decision-making. The leader's responsibility areas are wide, and they have many administrative and management duties that take a lot of time. Still, they consider pedagogical leadership and human resource management to be the most important task in their profession and at the same time they say that they do not have enough time to perform these tasks (Siippainen et al., 2021). This may also imply that the concept of pedagogical leadership is still unclear (Fonsén et al., 2022a).

The context of educational organisation varies even the curriculum states the guidelines for pedagogical work. The Finnish municipalities have wide autonomy to decide how they provide the education within the government's regulations. That means the structures of leadership systems in municipalities differ in rural and urban areas as the municipalities sizes also differ. Pedagogical leadership is realised in many ways in these various structures. Extensive responsibilities and the simultaneous management of several units weaken the effort that leaders could use for pedagogical leadership (Fonsén, 2014). Globally, we can investigate the leadership system of education as a leadership structure at the national level but also at the local organisational level.

*Organisational cultur*e is based on the quality of communality, values and interaction between organisation's members. Collaborative atmosphere in work supports personnel's work wellbeing and if the leadership is distributed, it empowers teachers towards professional development. (Fonsén & Ukkonen-Mikkola, 2019). Sergiovanni (1998) states that pedagogical leadership enhances the social capital of the work community, and it is an alternative for bureaucratic and entrepreneurial leadership. In the next section, the theory of human capital needed for pedagogical leadership is explained (Fonsén, 2013, 2014).

One of the pedagogical leadership dimensions is *professionalism*. Without sufficient professional skills for management, it is impossible to master the leadership skills for leading the pedagogy. Leaders need to enable organisations to function, which includes human resources management, budgeting, administrative tasks and so on (see Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015). When the external and internal conditions of the organisation are in order, the leader can also focus on pedagogical leadership. Even if the leadership is distributed, leaders must fulfil the leadership role and take the responsibility of the leader. The leaders always have the main responsibility for the organisation, and the distributed nature of leadership does not exclude professional liability.

Management of substance means the need to manage educational knowledge. Leaders need to know the direction in which to lead the pedagogy, and for that they need educational knowledge, and they are expected to act as interpreters of the curriculum. At the centre level, leaders evaluate the pedagogical quality and use the curriculum and their own knowledge about education as refers to what it bases (Ahtiainen et al., 2021). High-level initial training in education is needed but also continuing learning and interest in new research (Fonsén, 2013, 2014). As well as

being leaders, teachers must have educational knowledge and also be interested in developing their professionalism and educational knowledge.

These dimensions are strongly connected and interrelated with each other and together they model the entity of pedagogical leadership. They can also be well applied to teachers' pedagogical leadership.

Human Capital Needed for Pedagogical Leadership

After finding the dimension of pedagogical leadership, Fonsén (2014) developed the model of human capital needed for pedagogical leadership by applying Sergiovanni's (1998) ideas of human capital. As Sergiovanni argues, through pedagogical leadership, leaders develop social and academic capital for students, and also intellectual and professional capital for teachers. Thus, the instruments needed for pedagogical leadership can be described through the human capital needed for pedagogical leadership (Table 8.4).

Educational knowledge is a crucial aspect of pedagogical leadership competence for leaders. The leaders' own professional background should be derived from education because it is necessary to know what good pedagogy is and how it can lead pedagogy towards high quality. In addition, the desire to acquire new professional knowledge seems to be important. New research knowledge may change the pedagogical thinking and old habits, and methods may prove inappropriate for the time and for the aims of the current curriculum. Sergiovanni (1998) has also written about academic capital that deepens learning and teaching culture while the focus of leadership is pedagogy and educational knowledge, in which all decisions are made by considering children's or students' learning and well-being.

Knowledge about the implemented pedagogy in practice requires leaders' time to observe teachers' work or other tools for evaluating teaching. While leaders have knowledge based on educational theory and the content of the curriculum, they are competent for evaluating pedagogical practices. If leaders have several units to lead and limited time to evaluate by themselves, they need evaluation tools and structures for pedagogical reflection and discussion with teachers. In addition, teachers as team leaders need tools for reflection to promote pedagogical practices and support teachers and the other educators' professional agency (Melasalmi & Husu, 2019).

Table 8.4 Human capital needed for pedagogical leadership	Knowledge about high-quality pedagogy
	Knowledge about implementing pedagogy in practice
	Skills to lead the staff to promote pedagogy
	Ability to argue for pedagogy in all organisational levels

Skills to lead the staff to promote pedagogy are needed as human capital for pedagogical leadership. Leaders need to lead reflection, development work and evaluate the learning needs of teachers as well as to provide in-service training, when needed. Furthermore, critical reflection is the key issue for teachers to develop their own work. In a supportive and acceptable atmosphere, reflection is encouraging, not negative and enhances learning of the whole work community.

Ability to argumentation for pedagogy in all organisational levels is the fourth part of human capital needed for pedagogical leadership. It is not enough to have knowledge about high-quality pedagogy but also the skills to use this knowledge and argue for high-quality pedagogy. That argument is needed in all situations in which leaders need to make decisions concerning educational organisation and its management. Especially important is the ability to argue when financial and efficiency interests compete alongside pedagogical interests. Moos (2017) argues that neo-liberal governance forces educational leaders to make decisions based on efficiency requirements instead of pedagogical quality. Leaders need strong pedagogical leadership, knowledge of pedagogy and argumentation skills to justify their decisions.

In a subsequent study (Ahtiainen et al., 2021), the theory of human capital for pedagogical leadership (Fonsén, 2014) and the process of educational change (Ahtiainen, 2017) were merged into a leadership competence model for leading pedagogy and curriculum implementation (Ahtiainen et al., 2021) (Fig. 8.3). Human capital for pedagogical leadership proved to be a fruitful definition of the

Increased knowledge

Awareness of the quality of implemented pedagogy

Skills to lead development

Ability to argue for ECEC pedagogy

HUMAN CAPITAL FOR PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP

Entry

Dissemination

Objectives

Impact

PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP AND CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION
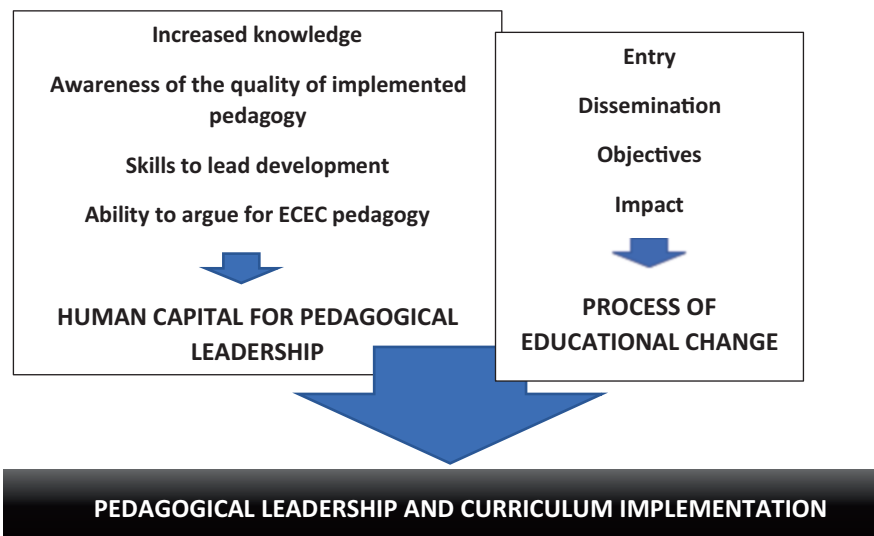
Fig. 8.3 Leadership competence model for leading pedagogy and curriculum implementation. (Modified from Ahtiainen et al., 2021)

competence leaders need when they must implement educational changes in their organisation. Ahtiainen (2017) has introduced phases in which *entry* gives purpose to the change, *objective* directs the focus to the aims of desired change, *dissemination* includes strategies and actions in terms of the change agenda. Finally, follow-up is needed on the educational change to evaluate its *impact.* In conclusion, the result of this research indicates that leaders need to have the human capital of pedagogical leadership (Fonsén, 2014), and they need to understand the process of educational change (Ahtiainen, 2017) to successfully implement the curriculum (Ahtiainen et al., 2021).

The theory of human capital for pedagogical leadership (Fonsén, 2014) has also been utilised in the research of early childhood education teachers' professional development during in-service training (Fonsén & Ukkonen-Mikkola, 2019). The competencies that the model defines, and which were followed in the content of in-service training proved to increase professional empowerment and professional development. To support distributions of leadership and strengthen teachers' pedagogical leadership, based on their study, Fonsén & Ukkonen-Mikkola (2019) recommended that the initial training of ECE teachers should include more studies of pedagogical leadership. In addition, university-based long-term in-service training is needed for enhancing teachers' skills in pedagogical leadership.

Conclusions and Discussion

Through introduction of our theories and models of pedagogical leadership, we claim that we may enhance the understanding of leading high-quality education. Pedagogical leaders at all levels of educational organisations are needed to ensure the high quality of education. Especially in the times we are living in, the pressure of neo-liberal politics that jeopardise educational equality and children's opportunity to achieve high-quality education despite their backgrounds and economic and social status (Moos, 2017). The economic situation forces leaders to make decisions that are sometimes against the ethics of children's benefit and educational premises. Leaders with a good knowledge of pedagogical leadership may be more able to face those challenges.

At school level, the principal's key role is to ensure that the school achieves the objectives set out in the curriculum. The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Comprehensive Education (FNAE, 2014) does not only set the objective of learning to master the content of subjects. The concept of transversal competencies, which refers to a set of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will, is included, too. This also means the ability to use knowledge and skills in a way that is appropriate for the situation. How pupils use their knowledge and skills is influenced by the values and attitudes they hold and by their will to act. The increased need for transversal competences is driven by changes in the world around us. Growing as a human

being, learning, working and acting as a citizen now and in the future requires competencies that transcend and integrate knowledge and skills (FNAE, 2014). The changing world growing as a human being and the skills needed for the future are challenging the field of education all over the world. Broad understanding about pedagogical leadership provides a useful framework for examining and developing educational leadership when the goals set go beyond the learning outcomes of individual subjects.

Ultimately, the success of the curriculum depends on the success of teaching and the interaction between teachers and pupils. The long-term development of teaching and interaction cannot succeed without the commitment of the teaching staff. This commitment is best achieved when staff can have the opportunity to participate in setting objectives and developing activities. Broad-based pedagogical leadership therefore focuses the principal's attention on developing staff competence and initiating and maintaining processes for setting objectives. According to the Finnish National Agency of Education (2013), the principal's most important task as a pedagogical leader, alongside the fulfilment of the school's core mission, is to ensure the learning of all members of the school community – students, teachers, principal and support staff.

Even more important is that a comprehensive view for leading education is needed at the levels of policy makers in the governance and administration of education. In our chapter, we have presented theoretical modelling of pedagogical leadership which can be utilised in the design of training for future pedagogical leaders. This theoretical thinking has been the basis for the EduLeaders project (see Chap. 3 in this book) and future design for the Vepo johtaminen 2035 project (Ahtiainen & Fonsén, 2021) both of which aim to do product research based studies for educational leaders at various levels from teachers to the administration of education.

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Chapter 9
The Why, Where, How and What of Curriculum Leadership: A Non-affirmative Approach

Michael Uljens

Abstract The movement from a social-democratic welfare state towards a neoliberal competition state since the 1990s in Europe required a multi-level perspective to understand the dynamics within and relations between macro-level educational governance and micro-level educational leadership. The chapter starts with critiquing initiatives to handle this multi-level nature of leadership. First, the limit of universalist multi-level models is that they are educationally unarticulated, while particularist approaches are typically specialised on either curriculum or leadership of teaching. Second, instrumental and normative approaches in turn are problematic in education for a political democracy. To overcome these dilemmas, the chapter argues that curriculum leadership theory needs to explain (a) the societal task of education (the *why* and *where* of educational leadership), (b) the pedagogical nature of leadership interactions (the *how* of educational leadership) and (c) the object led or the teaching-studying-learning process (the *what* of educational leadership). To this end, this chapter outlines how Bildung-centred non-affirmative education theory (NAT) offers fruitful concepts for approaching the pedagogical dimensions of educational leaders' curriculum work.

Keywords Non-affirmative education theory · Curriculum leadership · Educational leadership

Introduction

There seems to be an increasing international agreement that both educational leadership and curriculum leadership have a need for further theorising of their purpose (Alvesson, 2019; Burgess & Newton, 2015; Niesche, 2017; Wang, 2018). Also, in Nordic and Finnish educational leadership research, there are many indications of a

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redirection in this matter. For example, in her critique of the International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP, Day, 2005), Møller (2017) observed: 'The design does not allow for critical analysis of the wider power structure. A societal perspective is as important as the organizational one' (p. 381). Another indication of a redefinition of Finnish educational leadership research became visible when Tian and Risku (2018) argued: 'Even though enacting curriculum reforms inherently incorporates leadership elements, very few studies have so far connected these two types of research'. Tian and Risku (2018) favoured adopting a non-affirmative education theory combined with distributed leadership to study such a curricular enactment. In turn, Smeds-Nylund (2019), in her study of Finnish municipal educational leadership, saw opportunities to combine non-affirmative education theory with discursive institutionalism, as developed by Vivien Schmidt (2008). This chapter intends to contribute to theoretical development of the field by addressing four issues: the context, aim, form and object of educational leadership. These correspond to the where, why, how and what dimensions of leadership activity. The chapter argues that the best way to systemically address these dimensions is to ground educational leadership in education theory.

Due to the different usages of central terms, a couple of preliminary definitions are necessary. In this chapter, the expression *educational leadership* refers to any type of activity, on any level, that is present in the leadership, management, administration and governance of schooling promoting human learning. *Curriculum leadership* is a narrower concept. In this chapter, curriculum leadership covers primarily leadership related to aims, contents and methods of *schooling*, which are all central notions in the curriculum as intended, practiced and experienced. Selection of aims and contents, at different levels, is typically a core activity in governing any public school system. Curriculum leadership also covers the initiation, development, implementation and evaluation of various educational measures. *Pedagogical leadership*, in turn, refers to those activities by which any leader, group of leaders or a governing body intends to influence other's opportunities to learn, professional development or to influence the development of the operational culture in schools.

A first point of departure in this chapter is that when we accept educational leadership and governance as a culturally, historically, politically and economically embedded phenomenon, it requires contextual approach. In addition, given that curriculum work, educational assessment, educational policy, resource allocation, teaching practices, leadership and governance form a complex web, it does not suffice to theorise curriculum leadership as an isolated phenomenon at some specific level of the education system. Rather, we need to develop a multi-level, historical and processual view of educational leadership (Uljens & Nyman, 2013; Uljens et al., 2016; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017; Elo & Uljens, 2022).

Critiquing the theoretical foundations of educational leadership research, Elo and Uljens (2022) argued that while accepting the need to approach educational leadership in a systemic manner, they criticised previous multi-level approaches to educational leadership for offering universal or generic theories, valid for any societal multi-level activity, 'thereby losing a necessary conceptual sensitivity for leadership of *educational* institutions'. That said, contextual awareness is by no means

absent in much traditional educational leadership research (e.g. Fullan, 2005; Gunter et al., 2016; Shields, 2012), but how context is handled is problematic. A crucial aspect of the leadership context relates to the *aim* of educational leadership and schooling or its *why* dimension. Some positions represent relatively naïve interpretations regarding the the aim of leadership. Naïve positions are often content with describing how different layers of contexts are embedded in each other, like Russian dolls. It is not unusual to refer to, e.g. Bronfenbrenner's systems theory in these cases. A second group of theories advocate counterhegemonic position of power, which typically takes a strong stand in promoting an alternative curricular and educational ideal for schools (Shields, 2012). A third group of theories are descriptive-functionalist approaches that view leadership instrumentally. Such positions emphasise often the improvement of existing practice according to external policies (for an overview, see Uljens et al., 2016; Gunter & Ribbins, 2003). Compared with these, this chapter argues for a fourth position based on non-affirmative education theory (NAT). This position accepts the systemic multi-layered nature of educational leadership, but is not satisfied with describing these layers. Rather this position argues that an educational leadership theory should *explain the nature of the dynamics* between and within these layers.

The NAT position advocated here also accepts the constructive role educational research and leadership should have regarding practice. The role of educational leadership research is thus not only to describe the world but also to contribute to its development. However, NAT maintains that in contributing to educational reform, educational leadership research should avoid reducing itself into the mere service of external interests. Regarding the third position mentioned above, that is the counter-hegemonic, critical-transformative approach, NAT shares the view that all theories in social and educational science are always value-laden, but NAT does not aim to convey a given set of strong ideological, political or religious values, or to replace such a set with some other predefined way of thinking. More about this later on.

A second point of departure in this chapter is to take seriously the what-dimension of educational leadership. The what-dimension of leadership refers to the object led. In educational and curriculum leadership, this object is primarily teaching- studying and learning but on upper levels the object is rather leadership and governance. Emphasising the what-dimension of leadership also acknowledges that educational leadership of and in schools is different from educational leadership in other parts of working life. In other words, the aims and methods of leadership are always related to what is lead and where this activity occurs. This necessary connection between the what, how and why of leadership still accepts that there are generic content- and context transcending features of leadership. Yet, it is sad to see how often educational leadership research in schools seldom explain how it perceives of its object, the teaching-studying-learning practice. The omitting of this object is even more surprising given that both European Didaktik and Anglophone curriculum theory have extensively explored the object of school leadership – the aims, contents and methods of teaching.

However, the problem exists also in the opposite direction. Traditionally, curriculum theory and research in Didaktik seldom pay attention to leadership,

management and governance involved in the initiation, implementation, development and evaluation of curricula.

In contrast to the above approaches, this chapter argues that although we may identify generic qualities featuring leadership in various contexts, the object of leadership as it is constituted in schools cannot be overlooked. For this reason, a dialogue between educational leadership research and curriculum theory/Didaktik is important, as I have argued elsewhere (Uljens, 2015; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017).

A third question to address in elevating the conceptual ambitions of educational leadership research has to do with how we see the *pedagogical or educative dimensions* of educational leadership activity itself. Educational leadership certainly differs from teachers' teaching, but does it mean that educational leadership activity lacks educational or pedagogical qualities? Or, perhaps all leadership of any professionals always feature a pedagogical quality to its core, as it partly aims to support professional and organisational development? If we accept that educational leadership includes a pedagogical dimension in addition to dealing with economy, law, communication, transportation, health care, etc., then an educational leadership theory must provide an idea of how these pedagogical qualities may be conceptualised.

In addressing the pedagogical dimensions of curriculum leadership in this chapter, we ask: how do we conceptually explain the kind of activity that educational leaders at different levels are involved in when they support the professional development of followers and when leaders contribute to school development or when they translate education authorities' initiatives, in order to implement new curriculum policies? Such direct and mediational leadership activities are here considered as pedagogical activities. Creating direction, creating conditions for change and influencing others' activities aiming for learning are core tasks in educational leadership. Hence, we need a *theory of education* for explaining the *pedagogical qualities* of educational leadership and curriculum leadership. Accepting that curriculum leadership ultimately is leadership of schools' pedagogical work and that curriculum leadership itself operates through pedagogical measures means that although organisation theory, sociology, psychology, ethics and politics highlight certain aspects of educational leadership, none of them are sufficient enough to form an essential theoretical base.

To conclude, this chapter argues that curriculum leadership is understood better if it is related to (a) the societal context and task of education (the *where* and *why* of educational leadership), (b) the pedagogical quality of leadership interactions at different organisational levels (the *how* of educational leadership) and (c) the object led or the schoolwork (the *what* of educational leadership).

Given the above developments, a major argument of this chapter is to ground curriculum leadership research in education theory. The simple reason for such an initiative is that education theory is arguably capable of dealing with the expectations mentioned above regarding the why, how and what of educational leadership. First, a theory of education offers us a language for exploring the societal aims of education. These aims communicate how education relates or should relate to other

forms of societal practice, such as politics, economy and culture. Education leaders create direction in relation to these aims. Second, a theory of education offers us a language for clarifying how curriculum leadership pedagogically may influence others' learning, including professional development. And, if curriculum leadership significantly operates through pedagogical influencing, then a leadership theory must explain the nature of this influencing. It is not enough to just claim that leadership aims at *influencing learning*. While many structural and rationalist models of educational leadership picture its elements, they stay silent regarding the dynamic relation *between* these elements. Yet, explaining this dynamic is one of the major ways to explain the pedagogical qualities of leadership. Third, a theory of education offers us tools for understanding teaching, studying and learning, which are practices that education leaders lead (Uljens, 1997, 2023).

Different education theories deal with the above questions differently, and sometimes only in very limited fashions. In explaining how education theory may frame the where, why, how and what of curriculum leadership, this chapter is grounded in the research programme of critical Bildung theoretical non-affirmative theory of education (NAT) (e.g. Benner, 2015, 2023; Uljens, 2023; Elo & Uljens, 2022; Sundqvist et al., 2021; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017; Sivesind & Wahlström, 2017).

In the following section, I first describe those contemporary societal changes that have made it obvious that educational leadership, curriculum theory and Didaktik need to be treated in relation to each other. By this cultural-historical contextualisation I argue why these societal developments have made a multilevel approach even more necessary today, and why we need to develop a theoretical language that coherently connects curriculum work, didaktik and educational leadership. We may succeed in this by grounding educational leadership research in education theory.

In the third section of this chapter, I return to the proposal of how to deal with curriculum work as a form of educational leadership with the help of non-affirmative education theory.

Contextual Challenges Requiring Us to Bridge Curriculum Theory and Education Leadership

The movement from a social-democratic welfare state towards a neoliberal competition state since the 1990s in Europe and globally created new forms of dynamics within and between macro-level educational governance and micro-level educational leadership. The shift made it clear that system-level changes have profound consequences for education professionals. Neoliberal education policies promoting competition have influenced education professionals' self-concept (Pettersson et al., 2017). Teachers were made accountable for the students' results, while they previously were accountable for aims and methods, not results. This increased principals and teachers' workload and is today a heated topics regarding the teaching profession, also in Finland (Uljens et al., 2016). Performance- and

achievement-centred curriculum policies increase stress amongst pupils and students in ways not seen before. Reduced well-being amongst students has become a major issue.

A part of the changes is visible in how the curricular aims are being redesigned. An instrumentalist view of knowledge under influence of a post-industrial economy has become more prominent in many countries. The ideal of the individual as a productive but flexible actor in economy is visible in competency-based curriculum policy (Gervais, 2016; Moos & Wubbels, 2018). Competency-oriented curricula often emphasises performativity and qualification for labour market in terms of generic competencies. Such a change in policy challenges a classic Bildung-centred approach to human growth. Bildung emphasises reflective identity, multidimensional personality development, moral reasoning and political citizenship (Klafki, 1995; Hopmann, 2015; Von Oettingen, 2016). One of the cornerstones of this modern idea of Bildung is the notion of autonomy *(Mündigkeit)* as the highest objective of education, that is, discerning thought and action regarding issues of both knowledge and values. In other words, neoliberal policy challenges a longstanding European idea of Bildung-centred education. These observations are important to have in mind when we continue reflecting differences in research paradigms on school leadership. After all, the expansion of leadership research the past decades has evolved as part and parcel with the establishment of the neoliberal education paradigm.

This movement and related discourses are truly international, but they take different forms in various countries (Paraskeva & Steinberg, 2016; Uljens & Rajakaltio, 2017). In different parts of the world, we find various types of deregulation and decentralisation processes along with privatisation, as well as (re)centralisation of political, curricular and organisational power (Gunter et al., 2016). In their analysis of educational policies, Moos and Wubbels (2018) identified two contemporary but dissimilar educational discourses, namely one representing a democratic Bildung discourse typical in Europe and the other representing an outcomes-oriented discourse, typical in the Anglophone world. The Anglophone tradition has located more decision-making power to the school level in combination with a culture of free parental choice which made school leadership early on a central issue. This is visible in extensive activity in organisations like the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) in the United States. In many European countries, where more curricular power is located to the national level, school leadership appeared much later. In many countries, anything reminding of principal education has been totally absent until the past decade. However, for more than 20 years we have also witnessed a harmonisation across countries with centralisation of curricular issues in traditionally decentralised polities and with decentralisation occurring in previously very centralised administrations (Gundem & Hopmann, 1998; Uljens, 1997).

Figure 9.1 presents general model that summarises this transition the past five decades. The model in Fig. 9.1 is based on school didactic theory (Uljens, 1997, 2023). Reading Fig. 9.1 from the left side to the right, makes visible the transition
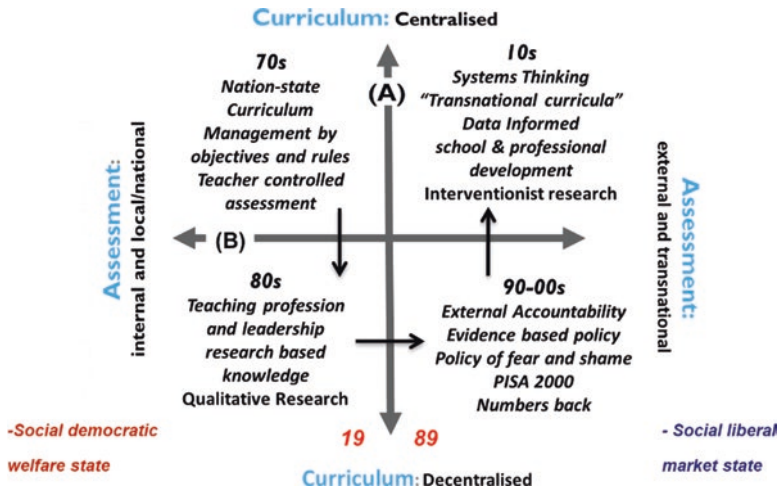
Fig. 9.1 Five decades (1970–2020) of reforming curriculum and assessment practices, related to the transition from a social-democratic welfare state to a neoliberal market state (following Uljens & Nyman, 2013; Uljens & Rajakaltio, 2017)

from the *social-democratic welfare state* approach to curriculum and assessment in Europe (old public administration, OPA), to a neoliberal competition-oriented policy in the *social liberal market state* (new public management, NPM). Figure 9.1 then identifies four different policy positions with respect to (a) curriculum making as something centrally or locally governed and (b) by viewing assessment as something internally controlled by the school and teachers or something externally regulated, whereby teachers were transformed from subjects carrying out evaluation to the objects for evaluation. These two dimensions describe developments in many countries regarding their educational policies during the past five decades (1970–2020) (Uljens, 2023).

To conclude this section of the chapter, the re-structuring of educational administration that began in the 1990s, by moving from one bureaucracy to another, from government to governance (Tiihonen, 2004), turned the attention towards understanding educational leadership as a broader, systemic multilevel project that very much centred around curriculum making and the evaluation of education (Fig. 9.1). The challenges that follow from this: first, how we should treat educational leadership (curriculum work and assessment), occurring at different levels, in a *conceptually coherent* way? Second, can we do that without falling into the trap of neither (a) instrumentalising educational leadership in the service of external interests and (b) without viewing educational leadership as an ideologically loaded activity that reduces the possibilities to educate for a self-determined praxis in a democratic society with an open future?

Dilemmas with Universalist and Particularist Approaches to Multi-level Educational Leadership

A core issue that unites education leadership and curriculum work is that of creating direction. Both of these practices embrace complicated multi-level translation processes through which external interests and policies transform into school practices. There is substantial international agreement amongst both practitioners and researchers that this process is complex and that it includes several levels and actors operating in networks. A researcher's challenge is how to connect these various levels *conceptually,* especially given the relative freedom featuring each level. Because we know that it is more than easy to produce a *descriptive* model or figure with levels and circles included in larger ones, but more difficult to *explain* the dynamics between the elements of such models. To be able to clarify how non-affirmative education theory explains how these levels and activities within them are connected and operate, we begin by identifying two mainstream strategies for connecting these levels. I call them *the universalist* and *the particularist* approach.

Several positions represent a *universal approach* to understanding the transformation of societal interests into pedagogical practice, mediated by curriculum policies and many other mechanisms. These universal approaches include actor-network theory (ANT) (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005), discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008), and refraction (Goodson and Rudd, 2012), but also Niklas Lumann's systems theory, Yrjö Engeström's cultural-historical activity theory and Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development belong here.

The strength of these approaches is that they offer a coherent language for analysing the dynamics within and across levels. But this strength is also their weakness. The reason why they are called *universal* is that they offer the very *same* language for understanding policy translation in *any* societal practice – education, health -care, communication, traffic, taxation, legal system or city planning. From an educational perspective, this universal character is also their weakness. Due to their universality, they lack an idea of education (Fig. 9.2).

The *particularist* way of understanding transformation of societal interests into pedagogical practice argues for a multi-disciplinary approach. Depending on which level we focus, curriculum reform work is best studied with different level-specific theories and disciplines – policy analysis, governance research, educational leadership studies, organisational theory, and research on teaching and learning. By combining results from these different levels, the whole system is described, the argument runs. Yet, in practice, we seldom see such cross-disciplinary research initiatives, combining, for example, classroom and leadership research. If we abandon these approaches, we need to come up with a third alternative. We will return to the answer provided by non-affirmative theory to this dilemma.

	Universalist approaches Valid for *any* societal *context*, thereby losing sight of education	Particularist approaches Valid for *education*, but only for *separate* levels – teaching, leadership or policy

Reproductionist
- **Consensus
  theories**
- **Functionalist
  oriented**
- **Analytic /
  descriptive
  approaches**
- **Discursive
  approaches**
	V. Schmidt – Discursive institunionalism
	
	N. Luhmann – Systems theory
	
	B. Latour – Actor Network Theory
	
	G. Steiner-Khamsi – Policy borrowing
	
	Y. Engeström – Cultural-historical
	Activity Theory
	
	U. Bronfenrenner – Ecological systems
	theory
		R. Tyler – Instructional design
		
		P. Heimann & O. Schulz – Berlin Model of
		Didaktik
		
		L. Shulman – Pedagogical Content
		Knowledge
		
		F. Marton – Phenomenography
		
		U. P. Lundgren – Curriculum theory
		
		C. Day – Succesful leadership
		
		M. Fullan – Systems leadership

Critical and emancipatory transformation - **Conflict theories** - **Normative approaches**	I. Goodson – Refraction S. Ball – Policy enactment – power decentered in discursive policy cycle I. Wallerstein – World systems theory P. McLaren – Critical curriculum theory	C. Shields – Transformative leadership W. Klafki – Critical-constructive Didaktik W. Carr & S. Kemmis - Action research P. Freire - Social Justice Pedagogy

Fig. 9.2 Universalist and particularist approaches in social theory, curriculum, Didaktik and educational leadership, explaining the multi-level character of how societal interests transform into pedagogical practice in the light of reproduction-oriented and critical transformation-oriented ideals

Dilemmas with Instrumental and Normative Transformativist Positions

The second dividing line in Fig. 9.1 was that between viewing educational leadership either as a reproductionist and instrumental or as normative-transformativist activity.

According to both instrumental models and normative-transformativist (sometimes identified as utopian or emancipatory approaches), what education aims at is often predetermined. Instrumental models are in themselves more or less value neutral. They subordinate themselves either to the conservative reproduction of existing cultural and other practices or to the implementation of values and ideals for future, as efficiently as possible. In the instrumental view, the task for education is to fulfil external ideals as efficiently as possible. These external ideals may stem from economy, religion, cultural practices, politics or from somewhere else. This fulfilment occurs either as education as socialisation into something already existing or as education that intends to change society according to some external ideals. In both cases, the instrumentality of the positions in this first category sees itself in the

service of values external to the models per se. In some rationalist and instrumental models, issues of normativity and values are not even visible.

In contrast to instrumental approaches to educational leadership, explicitly normative models are transformative in character. The ideals that such normative models promote do not, however, stem from interests external to education, like from politics, economy or religion, but from the theories themselves. In this case, normative models are counterhegemonic given the context in which they operate. Normative-transformative models view educational *practice* as an instrument for changing society by the help of education, but in this case the ideals do not come from somewhere else but are shared by the theories themselves. These positions often equate politics and education, unable to identify the difference between their function and character as societal practices.

The dilemma with both of these positions, the instrumental and the normative, when taking them seriously, is that they run the risk of turning the *practice* of education, curriculum work and teaching into a technological and instrumental activity. These educational leadership models operate as a part of peculiar translational discourse between educational ideology and educational practice. From a democracy perspective, instrumentalist-oriented approaches are problematic as they do not necessarily even raise questions about the norms and aims of education, but are satisfied with promoting given aims, regardless of what they represent or where they stem from. These models are democratically problematic as they do not expect teaching or leadership practice to engage in value questions. To oversee a critical deliberation of value questions in educational leadership and in teaching reduces the students' possibilities to learn to reflect critically. Learning critical thinking in any field of knowledge require dialogical, participatory and deliberative dialogues that do not affirm the world as it presents itself. To learn to reflect critically means to form an own well-grounded opinion which in turn is crucial in both democracy and anywhere in societal life.

The alternative, or counterhegemonic, normative-transformative leadership approaches are also problematic from a democracy perspective, but for different reasons. Normative models tend to take the liberty to decide by themselves which values education should promote. These models are then indeed conscious about the question of aims, but they do not problematise the values they represent themselves. Rather, the promoted values are used to criticise existing hegemony. The new, replacing values are then implemented through the education process. Such education draws attention to critically think about existing societal values and practices, but narrows down the space for students' forming of an own opinion. Such normative approaches are typical, for example, in religious schools or strongly ideological school systems. Normative approaches of this kind run the obvious risk of replacing an existing ideology with another one.

Both of these positions are utterly problematic from the perspective of political democracy. Democratic polities will have serious difficulties viewing education either as socialisation to something existing or as part of a brute and narrow normative-idealist transformation of society following ideals that are not even established by a political process. As these positions are problematic, we face the

problem of arguing for a third option beyond these. In the next section, I describe the answer provided by non-affirmative education theory to this topic and to the dilemma described in the previous section.

The Non-affirmative Approach to Educational Leadership as Curriculum Work

To overcome (a) the problems with universalist and particularist positions and (b) problems with instrumental and normative-transformative approaches, this chapter argues that curriculum leadership theory need to develop a different view of (a) the societal task of education (the *where* and *why* of educational leadership), (b) the pedagogical nature of leadership interactions within and between different organisational levels (the *how* of educational leadership) and (c) include an idea of the object led or the teaching-studying-learning process (the *what* of educational leadership). To this end, this chapter outlines how Bildung-centred *non-affirmative education theory* (NAT) offers a language for how educational actors at different levels collaborate to initiate, implement, enact and develop curricula that promote human growth in a broader meaning. In order to provide a conceptual answer on how non-affirmative education theory defines *educational leadership as curriculum work* or *curriculum leadership*, we begin by stating that multi-level reasoning in educational leadership and governance include two related but distinct questions or tasks that we discussed earlier.

This first question is how some leadership *theory* explains political regulation of public education, given that one aim of education in democracies is to prepare for participation in future political life (the *where* and *why* of pedagogical leadership). Thus, a dilemma to handle for education leadership theory is to what extent and how education for future active, self-reflecting and self-determined citizenship should be politically regulated and how independent schools should be to form the future of the society.

The second question is related to the first, yet distinct. It asks how we explain the nature of teachers and education leaders' pedagogical interaction with students and colleagues. In other words, as education leaders at different levels influence others *pedagogically*, we need to explain what we mean by *pedagogical* or *educative* qualities of leadership and teaching (the *how* of educational leadership). A related issue has to do with the *what* of educational leadership. As leadership is always leadership of *something*, and this something happens to be teaching, studying and learning, educational leadership has a special twist to it. In a school context, it is about pedagogical leadership of teachers' pedagogical activities in relation to the students' studying activity. Also on other levels of the education system, education leaders operate by pedagogically influencing others by creating learning opportunities, directly or indirectly. Given this, educational leadership theory needs to explain how it defines a pedagogical process, as this process is present in terms of the *how*

of educational leadership activity itself, and it is present as the object or as the *what* of educational leadership.

The Why of Educational Leadership: A Non-hierarchical View of the Relation Between Education and Politics

Regarding the why question, dealing with how non-affirmative theory of education (NAT) explains political regulation of education, NAT assumes that education and politics, as two forms of societal practices, relate to each other in a *non-hierarchical* way. This is a simple statement, but it has dramatic implications. In such a view, politics is viewed to direct and regulate education, albeit in a way that educated subjects will become able to step in and contribute to a reformulation of a future political agenda for the society. Education is thus not totally sub-ordinate to politics, which would reduce education to an instrumental activity. The idea in non-affirmative theory is therefore that in modern and late-modern democracies, politics by itself accepts to operate with a permanent open question as its companion: to what extent and how strong should policies steer education practice? A conclusive answer cannot be formulated because if politics tries to decide strictly in advance how a future generation should think and act, then paradoxically, this would endanger the future of the democratic state. That is, democratic states need to educate their citizens *for* democracy, and the condition for this is to accept education as a critical institution in the society.

Let us look at the non-hierarchical relation between politics and education from a pedagogical perspective. According to non-affirmative theory, a hierarchical reasoning that subordinates education to politics would reduce pedagogical reflection and practice to an efficiency problem, namely how efficiently given educational aims can be reached by educational efforts. Again, viewing education as hierarchically super-ordinate to politics would mean that the field of education alone would define towards what kind of future the world should be moved. In contrast to the previous positions, NAT argues in favour of a third position. It reminds us that education and politics do not have to be super- or subordinate to each other. Consequently, NAT identifies curricular ideals in a democracy as resulting from a public dialogue involving politics, cultural reflection and professionals' opinions. NAT reminds us that a teacher must *recognise* existing interests, policies, ideologies, utopias and cultural practices but should not be asked to *affirm* them. Not to affirm various pre-defined interests means to not pass them on to the next generation without making these interests into objects of critical reflection in pedagogical deliberative practice with students. According to NAT, citizenship education for democracy can therefore not be about the socialisation of youth into a given form of democracy but must include critical reflection of historical, existing and possible future versions of democracy. In this sense, NAT locates itself beyond the reproductionist and beyond the normative-transformative paradigms. Yet, it is a critical position.

The What and How of Educational Leadership

The universalist and the particularist approaches to handling the multilevel character of educational leadership and curriculum work were previously criticised. The dilemma with universalist models was that these offers one and the same conceptual system for understanding policy implementation and changes in the operational culture for *any* societal practice. In this respect, these models are educationally and pedagogically blind, unable to name and identify the unique features of education as a societal practice in a democracy. Given that these theories lack a language of education, they come to treat pedagogical dilemmas in a superficial way. To be relevant for educational analysis, they at least need to be supplemented by education theory.

The strength with the particularist approaches was they indeed do contain elaborate conceptualisations of both curriculum policy making, educational leadership and teaching. The dilemma with these approaches is that they represent disparate terminologies that typically oversee or neglect research and theory at levels beyond those represented by themselves. For example, mainstream educational leadership lacks a language on teaching, while Didaktik, for example, does not pay attention to educational leadership issues.

Building on Dietrich Benner's general education theory (Benner, 1991, 2015, 2023), I argue that non-affirmative theory of education theory provides us with conceptual distinctions that allow us to relate these levels coherently to each other (Uljens, 2015, 2023; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017; Elo & Uljens, 2022). This is since the pedagogical dimensions of leadership activity at each level may be described with the same idea or principle. I demonstrate this in the following section.

Non-affirmative General Pedagogy

Dietrich Benner's approach to non-affirmative theory distinguishes between two *constitutive principles* that help to clarify pedagogical interaction and two *regulative principles* that clarify the relation between education and society (Fig. 9.3).

Principle 4 in Fig. 9.3 explains that different societal practices stand in a non-hierarchical relation to each other. This was discussed before. The second regulative principle, Principle 3, asks how curriculum work and educational leadership operate in transforming societal interests to pedagogical work. This principle reminds that the transformation of societal interests should allow educational degrees of freedom for individual schools and teachers not to violate students' necessary agency in the learning process. The more teachers are expected to affirm given policies, the less room there is for critical and student-centered pedagogical treatment of teaching contents.

	Constitutive principles	**Regulative principles**
A Theories of education (Erziehung) (2:3)	(2) Summoning to self-activity	(3) Pedagogical transformation of societal influences and requirements
B Theories of Bildung (1:4)	(1) Bildsamkeit (Bildsamkeit) as attunement (Bestimmtsein) of humans to receptive and spontaneous corporeity, freedom, historicity and linguisticality	(4) Non-hierarchical order of cultural and societal practices
	C Theories of educational institutions and their reform (1/2:3/4)	

Fig. 9.3 Two constitutive and two regulative principles organising four basic concepts as related to theory of education and theory of Bildung (Erziehungs- und Bildungstheorien) (Benner, 2023)

Principle 2 defines what pedagogical activity, or teaching as summoning of self-activity, is about, but it does so in relation to notion of *Bildsamkeit* described as Principle 1. In short, Principle 2 indicates that pedagogical activity is about recognising the learner not only as an indeterminate Other, but also her reality, potentiality and interests, yet *summoning* or inviting the learner as a self-active subject, to engage in activities that create a reflective distance to the learner's previous experiences. As noted earlier, *affirmative* teaching either aims at conservative transmission and reproduction of existing orders or at transformative change, led by some predefined educational ideal. In contrast, *non-affirmative* pedagogical activity views education as operating in an emancipatory fashion, embracing the idea of negative freedom, i.e. teaching as promoting learner's freedom *from* something, yet without intention to get the learner to unreflectively adopt some other predefined way of relating to the world, without own processing.

The 'modern' interpretation of teaching as *summoning* the Other to self-activity refers indirectly to political and moral liberalism of the eighteenth century, as advocated, amongst others, by John Locke. The dilemma that liberalism raised for education pointed at two different interpretations of how pedagogical influencing was possible. On the one hand, if the subject indeed was originally free and self-active, the question was if pedagogical *influencing* was possible at all? Instead, the learner could, in her capacity of being originally free, decide to what extent external activity indeed influences her. On the other hand, also another interpretation of this original freedom is possible. Of indeed the subject is radically open and indeterminate, then education perhaps could mould the student according to its own interests. A third option, advocated by non-affirmative education, makes use of the principles of

summoning to self-activity and *Bildsamkeit*. These were advocated by Johann Gottlob Fichte and Johann Friedrich Herbart in the early nineteenth century. They offered the means to find a path beyond viewing education either as something omnipotent or education as totally powerless. These two principles make up an argument that views education as something necessary, without disregarding the learner's constitutive role. Differently expressed, these principles make education not only possible but also demonstrate its necessity. On the one hand, although subjected to a world that the human being was unable to escape, education was made possible by human *anthropological* freedom. Accordingly, the individual's future is not determined by eternal sin, social status or genetically. On the other hand, education was necessary for the individual's becoming a *culturally* autonomous and self-determined subject, sharing culture with others but with capacity to move beyond it. Although education for these reasons was necessary, it could still not determine the subject, due to the subject's anthropologically given freedom. In this way, the subject was dependent of education, but the possibilities to influence the subject were in turn dependent on the learner's capacity to learn and her own activity – *Bildsamkeit*. Herbart's central contribution was thus to introduce the idea of *pedagogical causality* to overcome the antinomy between freedom and coercion, between the causality of nature and the causality of freedom. The concepts *Bildsamkeit* and *summons to self-activity* thus received a bridging function for Herbart (Siljander, 2008, 74-76).

To conclude, the principle of *Bildsamkeit*, including the idea of human plasticity or capacity to change, makes possible pedagogical influencing as summoning the individual to self-activity. On the one hand, as Bildsamkeit is relational, in that the individual always reaches out towards the world, educational influences form a part of this external world that the learner experiences. Thus, the Bildsamkeit concept allows education to operate as an influence regarding the individual, yet not if external influences determine the subject. On the other hand, it accepts humans as originally self-active, yet not assuming the individual as capable by itself to acquire conceptual knowledge by mere participation in social life. In a modern complex world, everyday practice is insufficient for reaching the 'invisible' conceptual knowledge which helps to explain observations.

Through pedagogical actions from the leader's or teacher's side, together with the learner's activity, a *transitional space of Bildung* is established. This *pedagogical space* is a temporary construction, a space that depends on the engagement of the subjects involved. This experiential or virtual space is a space in which the learner experiences being recognised (seen, acknowledged, worth being addressed) but also challenged, being involved in shared working on a topic. This space offers the subject an opportunity to make her experiences an object of reflection and thereby perhaps exceed herself.

Finally, in this context, the notion of *recognition* includes the educator's acceptance of the individual's right to work out a reflected own will. If the establishment of the individual's self-image is dependent on social interaction with others, and if the ability to discerning and critical, autonomous thinking are recognised as an individual right, then pedagogical activity appears as a response to the moral demand that arises from recognising these particular rights (Fichte, 2000).

Pedagogical influencing of this kind is arguably present in educational leadership as it is in teaching. In this way, the principles of summoning self-activity and Bildsamkeit as engagement in learning activity are valid for describing both the *how* of educational leadership as its *what* aspect, namely the teaching-studying-learning process.

Conclusion

This chapter started out by claiming that the movement from a social-democratic welfare state towards a neoliberal competition state since the 1990s in Europe, stepwise resulted in a need for a multi-level perspective to understand the dynamics between macro-level educational governance and micro-level educational leadership. In this chapter, I first argued that some existing schools of thought are unproductive to solve the multi-level dilemma. The limit of so-called universalist multi-level models was that they are educationally unarticulated. The same approaches are offered for the analysis of any societal practice. Then, in turn, the dilemma with so-called particularist approaches was that they deal with the various levels by applying different theories for understanding different levels. Thus, policy analysis is typically applied for the broad nation-state and transnational analysis or the *why* of educational leadership. Separate educational leadership models are used to understand the *how* of educational leadership at the school level. Finally, instructional theory or Didaktik is used to understand the *what* of leadership. The dilemma emanating from this combinatory initiative is to connect all these positions, which, in practice, seldom or never occurs. Thus, a third option was announced as necessary for overcoming the limitations of these approaches.

Previous theoretical contributions were also criticised for how they relate education to other societal fields of practice such as politics, economy or culture. Instrumental approaches saw educational leadership as sub-ordinate to serving external ideals promoted by other societal practices, thereby turning educational leadership into instrumental-technical activity that does not raise questions of educational aims or values. Normative-transformative approaches again indeed did raise questions of aims and values but only in a counterhegemonic sense turning educational leadership into educational activism unable to see the difference between politics and education as societal practices. Both traditions of thought were considered to stand in conflict with democratic education and education for democracy. Thus, a third option was needed to overcome the limitations of these approaches.

To overcome the above troublesome alternatives in the educational leadership field, this chapter argued that for an alternative way of explaining (a) the societal task of education (the *why* and *where* of educational leadership), (b) the pedagogical nature of leadership interactions within and between different organisational levels (the *how* of educational leadership) and (c) the object led or the teaching-studying-learning process (the *what* of educational leadership). To this end, this chapter

outlined how non-affirmative education theory (NAT) offers us a language for how educational leaders at different levels collaborate to initiate, implement, enact and develop curricula. The proposal drew on Dietrich Benner's general pedagogy interpreting modern theory of education. The regulative and constitutive principles in this theory offer, in connection with the notion of recognition, a coherent language for theorising educational leadership.

When claiming that educational leadership based on NAT avoids viewing leadership as an instrumental activity and avoids viewing educational leadership as ideologically loaded activism, this does not mean that the non-affirmative position is value neutral. It is a value-laden position. There is a moral imperative inherent in this theory saying, for example, that leaders and teachers are not expected to simply affirm existing societal practices or future political or educational ideals. Such a behaviour would mean reducing education to an art or technique that aims to fulfil given, specified aims. Educational leadership and teaching would then turn into versions of technical instrumentalism. Yet, leaders and teachers in public school systems are, by law, also expected to follow the spirit of a curriculum and must recognise such interests. NAT therefore argues that teachers must *recognise* curricular aims and contents, but they should be hesitant in pedagogically *affirming* these aims and contents. To affirm them would mean not to problematise these aims and contents with students, thereby reducing education to transmitting given values and contents. This is how NAT explains the creation of pedagogical spaces both for colleagues and students. These pedagogical spaces feature critical reflection of what is, what is not and what might be. They represent an invitation for discerning thought and experimental practice.

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Part III
Leadership Profession

The third section of the book focuses on the views and experiences of the educational leaders and considers leadership theoretically and empirically. We live in a diverse and pluralistic society with constantly changing educational environments. The leaders experience tensions and crises coming from global, national and local levels that challenge the leaders and everyday leadership in many ways. This section provides further understanding about the competencies leaders need when they encounter these challenges and how they evaluate their own professionalism and coping strategies. Furthermore, the reader can find solutions and options about how educational leaders deal with various complex situations and take care of well-being in their educational communities.

Chapter 10 considers moral professionalism in the context of educational leadership, recognising the ethical situations educational leaders encounter and how they work as moral professionals in their educational contexts. With the help of the large amount of quantitative data based on the theories of diversity and culturally responsive school leaders, Chap. 11 investigates how Finnish comprehensive education principals evaluate their conceptions of diversity and culturally responsive school leadership. Chapter 12 takes a constructive and discursive approach to educational leadership showing the constraints, opportunities and contradictions in everyday leadership and situations in schools, experienced by the principals and teachers. In Chap. 13, the needs, opportunities and contradictions in developing principals' competencies are examined. Chapter 14 views educational leadership through the lenses of the COVID-19 crisis, illustrating principals' well-being and coping strategies in remote situations.

Chapter 10
Moral Professionalism in the Context of Educational Leadership

Eija Hanhimäki

Abstract This chapter aims to investigate moral professionalism in the context of educational leadership. Many researchers have investigated school administration ethics and ethical educational leadership based on case studies. However, the moral, ethical and nonrational aspects have been omitted from the discussion, even if they are present in school policies and practices. This chapter includes an analysis of data gathered as narratives in a study of educational leaders and teachers ($N = 82$) who participated in two educational leadership training programmes from 2019 to 2021 at one Finnish university. Based on the results, the kinds of ethical dilemmas the educational leaders encountered and how they worked as moral professionals were identified. The results showed that the main parties, in both ethically easy and ethically difficult dilemmas, were staff members. In the ethically easy dilemmas, the main theme concerning staff was interactions and conflicts; in the ethically difficult dilemmas, it was work arrangements. The most frequently mentioned principles and values in the ethical dilemmas were fairness, justice, equality, the child's interest and well-being.

Keywords Moral professionalism · Educational leadership · Ethical leadership · Narratives · Ethical dilemmas

Introduction

Previous research on educational leadership has emphasised practical and rational points of view, while the moral, ethical and nonrational aspects have been omitted from the discussion. However, ethical values are present in all aspects of school

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policies and practices (Day & Johansson, 2008). Moral professionalism is also at risk when educational leaders and teachers encounter ethical and value conflicts in their work, even if they do not recognise the ethical dimension in these situations (e.g. Campbell, 2008).

Many researchers have considered school administration ethics and ethical educational leadership based on case studies (e.g. Hanhimäki, 2011; Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021; Shapiro & Stefkowich, 2005; Strike et al., 2005). Ethical leadership creates an ethical and educational community in which people 'live well together and in which children learn how to live well together in the larger community' (Strike, 2007, p. 146). In the present study, the concept of moral leadership is used in addition to ethical leadership because the primary focus is on the practice of leadership. Moral professionalism can be defined as the quality of educators' professional practices (Sockett, 1993), which are judged by professional standards and codes of ethics and which become evident in the moral practices and roles of educators in the everyday life of schools (Hanhimäki, 2011).

Moral leadership is a broad phenomenon that includes personal characteristics, ways of leading and their effects on the community (e.g. Fullan, 2003; Strike, 2007). Hanhimäki (2011) investigated the moral professionalism of educators, such as principals and teachers, working in challenging urban Finnish schools in which pupils came from economically and socially deprived backgrounds and exhibited attendance and behaviour problems. The main results emphasised that the loudest moral voices heard and repeated in the educators' narration were caring, cooperation, respect, commitment and professionalism (Hanhimäki, 2011). Moreover, the moral profiles of the principals involved in the study differed, even if they were all moral professionals: these profiles included the gentle mediator, the just leader, the effective professional and the caring communicator. However, these principals shared the same key values, which were trust, cooperation, equality and caring (Hanhimäki, 2008; Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2008).

This chapter aims to investigate moral professionalism in the context of educational leadership. This study's data were gathered as narratives (N = 82) from educational leaders and teachers participating in two educational leadership training programmes between 2019 and 2021 at one Finnish university. In these narratives, the educational leaders and teachers described the easy and difficult ethical situations they encountered in their work. The results reveal what kinds of ethical dilemmas the educational leaders encountered and how they worked as moral professionals in their educational contexts. The research questions were as follows:

1. What kinds of ethical dilemmas do educational leaders and teachers encounter in their work?
2. How do they work as moral professionals in their educational contexts?

Moral Professionalism in Educational Leadership

According to previous research, teaching is a moral activity (e.g. Hansen, 2001), and educators' professional morality and ethical conduct have been actively investigated (e.g. Campbell, 2003; Hanhimäki, 2011; Tirri, 2003; Tirri & Husu, 2002). Furthermore, good instruction can be defined as teaching that seeks at best to promote learners' moral, psychological and physical well-being (Carr, 2000). However, teachers do not always recognise the moral dimension of their work (e.g. Campbell, 2008; Sockett, 1993; Tirri, 1999). In addition to teaching, the moral dimension is widely present in educational contexts because education can be seen as a moral endeavour (Zubay & Soltis, 2005).

Ethical and moral standards also guide educational leaders' work in terms of their relationships and practices (Day, 2005; Fullan, 2003). In the Finnish context, ethical educational leadership is guided by contemporary education policy documents, including legislation and other regulations, curricula and trade unions' ethical recommendations for educational leaders and teachers. Finnish educational governance comprises four main lines: the state, local authorities, labour organisations and civic organisations at the local, regional, national and transnational levels. Although legislation and other regulations mandate education providers, teachers have the autonomy to organise their education provision. This means that educational leaders and teachers serve the education providers, who are mainly local authorities. When we look at the legislation (e.g. Administrative Procedure Act, 2003; Basic Education Act, 1998), it says, for example, that every school must have sufficient staff and a principal who is responsible for everything in the school. In practice, this is determined by local steering documents, such as annual work plans. Furthermore, the key principles of good administration include serving in an appropriate manner, providing services and cooperating (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021).

The Finnish curriculum system includes national, local and school tiers, which enable education providers to interpret and enact education. Basic values are also included in these curricula. For example, in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014, the main values are that every pupil is unique and has the right to high-quality education. Furthermore, humanity, civilisation, equality, democracy, cultural diversity and a sustainable way of life are the values that guided the making of the national curriculum (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022a). The fundamental values of the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care 2018 have much in common with those for comprehensive education, emphasising the intrinsic value of childhood, growing as a human being, a child's rights, equality, diversity and a healthy and sustainable way of life (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022b).

During previous decades, many professions and trade unions in the education field established their own values and ethical principles to support and guide their members in ethical matters. For example, the Trade Union of Education (1998, 2014) published the Code of Ethics for Finnish Teachers. The main emphasis is that educational professionals must have good professional skills and ethical principles.

The main values in these codes are human worth, honesty, justice, responsibility and freedom (Trade Union of Education, 1998; 2014). In the Principal's Ethical Code, the Finnish Association of Principals (2018) emphasises caring in the principal's profession both as communication between the school community and society and as taking care of one's school community. Other main values in this code are equality, respect, encouragement and hope.

The Code of Ethics for Finnish Municipal Directors of Education by the Finnish Association of Educational Experts (2019) states the municipal directors' ethical duties, such as promoting and securing the fulfilment of citizens' cultural rights. Equality, respect, encouragement, trust, professional and sustainable development and hope are the main values in this code. The Ethical Principles for Professionals in Early Childhood Education by the Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors (2020) underline children's rights, respect for people and the environment and support for staff. The main values in these principles are respect, equality, cooperation, encounter, professional development, responsibility, trust and well-being.

Hanhimäki and Risku (2021) investigated the cultural and social foundations of ethical educational leadership in the Finnish context. They mapped ethical educational leadership from curricula, legislation, ethical principles and empirical results, including, for example, how educational leaders define moral professionalism as part of their educational leadership competences. Consequently, it is possible to see specific main values and ethical principles throughout the educational system. First, striving for equality forms the fundamental ethical principle at all levels of the Finnish educational and societal system and is based on the Nordic welfare state ideology. Second, taking care of all individuals is a fundamental characteristic of the Finnish educational system. Third, multiprofessional collaboration is traditional for our system in terms of how to support people's well-being and development (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021).

In the Finnish educational system, educational leaders and teachers have a significant amount of autonomy, agency and responsibility, for example, in developing curricula for their schools together with educational providers, stakeholders and special interest groups. The growing role of value-based leadership, complexity, unexpected changes, diversity and different individual needs challenge every educational professional's ability to address ethical considerations and moral practices. In teacher education and education in educational leadership, it is also challenging to determine how to respond to these professional development needs. There have been promising results when educational leadership students have engaged in reflective ethical assignments that are closely connected with their moral practices in their professional development (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021). Reflexivity should be supported by these kinds of professional development programmes for leaders. For example, a new vision of education that is more sensitive to moral and ethical issues is being developed in the United States (Normand et al., 2021).

Encountering Ethical Dilemmas in the Everyday Work of Educators and Leaders

The educators of school communities encounter various ethical dilemmas in their everyday school life, including diversity and conflicts between community members. At their core, ethical dilemmas are concerned about solutions and determining the right thing to do (Hanhimäki, 2011). According to previous research, teachers are not always aware of the moral impact of their actions (Jackson et al., 1993). Teachers have also felt that they are ill-prepared to deal with ethical dilemmas in their work (Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2009; Lyons, 1990; Tirri, 1999). Ethical sensitivity, ethical judgement skills, ethical focus and competence in ethical actions are the main skills of moral experts (Narvaez, 2005, 2006). When Finnish principals and teachers were investigated in a case study, ethical sensitivity, especially reading and expressing emotions, was present in the critical incidents at challenging urban schools, and this created opportunities for cooperation and caring relationships with the students and their families (Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2009).

Ethical challenges and ethical dilemmas have been investigated in various leadership sectors and contexts other than education. For example, Feldt et al. (2013) studied ethical dilemmas in leaders' work in different sectors of society. There are two types of decision-making situations: when the leader does not know the right thing to do or knows it but does not follow it for some reason (Nash, 1993, as cited in Feldt et al., 2013). Normally, ethical dilemmas concern everyday work, but this is not often the case for big and strategic decisions. However, these situations can be very difficult because they are related to human beings and, for example, their further possibilities of finding employment. Feldt et al. (2013) also analysed the connection between ethical dilemmas and psychological stress and the meaning of the ethical organisational culture in this context. They found that leaders are meaningful role models in their communities, and ethical leadership is like the backbone of the organisational culture (Feldt et al., 2013).

Moral conflicts can also be used to investigate business leaders' moral identities and how to support them in their development by increasing discussions and using different individual approaches to resolve moral conflicts (Huhtala et al., 2020). Collin et al. (2020) investigated human resource development practices that support creativity in Finnish growth organisations. Their results showed that everyday fair leadership is one of the main factors that supports creativity in the workplace so that, for example, employees can trust in problematic situations where help and support are available and no one is left to navigate this on their own. One interesting question is what is special in leadership in educational contexts compared with leadership in other sectors.

Sustainability is a topical point of view that is closely related to ethical leadership and encountering ethical dilemmas. Leaders play a significant role in terms of how they promote an ethical culture and facilitate training and discussion on ethical

questions and principles concerning ethical dilemmas. This role also supports an ethically sustainable way of working (Pihlajasaari et al., 2013). Sustainable work promotes the development of personal resources, which leads to sustainable work ability. One way to create sustainable work is work crafting, 'in which existing personal resources are benefited from, developed further through learning, or translated into novel resources' (Kira et al., 2010, p. 616); moreover, 'at its best, work crafting is a collaborative activity between employees, supervisors and other stakeholders' (Kira et al., 2010, p. 628).

Self-determination theory is closely related to sustainable work and ethical leadership. When three innate psychological needs—competence, autonomy and relatedness—are satisfied, self-motivation and mental health are enhanced. This theory is significant in many ways, and in the context of educational leadership, it strengthens the idea of how to motivate and bind members of educational communities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Hargreaves and Fink (2004), sustainable leadership must be supported by the system. This means that sustainable leadership cannot be the responsibility of one individual; it should be created by distributing leadership and responsibility. Sustainable leadership is also socially just and promotes diversity (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004). When we consider moral professionalism in ethical dilemmas, the meaning of sustainable leadership is important in terms of how moral practices can follow sustainable principles.

When people encounter ethical dilemmas, they can use different moral orientations. Justice and care are perhaps the best known moral orientations: a justice orientation can be described as equal respect and an ideal of reciprocity, and a care orientation emphasises the ideals of attention and response to need. Oser (1991) investigated teachers' professional morality and presented a model that describes teachers' professional decision-making: in addition to justice and care, claims concerning truthfulness are critical, and how a teacher coordinates these moral dimensions to solve conflicts is influenced by professional morality. Both female and male educators can have different moral orientations, not just emphasising, for example, care as a female orientation (Hanhimäki, 2011).

Data and Methods

The data for this study were gathered from educational leaders and teachers in three training programmes between 2019 and 2021 (N = 82) at one Finnish university. These training programmes concentrated on educational leadership, one on intermediate studies in educational leadership (N = 24) and two on good practices in educational leadership (N = 58). The participants were mainly educational leaders, including principals, municipal directors of education and leaders in early childhood education and care centres, and they had different levels of education. Moreover, there were teachers from various educational contexts. For example, all but one of the participants from intermediate studies were principals; one was a teacher. The data were gathered as written case descriptions, either as course

assignments or separate electronic surveys. Most of these case descriptions were written anonymously, but the writers' leadership or teaching status was described in the cases. Permission to conduct the research was sought before the participants wrote and sent their texts. In these case descriptions, the educational leaders and teachers were asked to describe easy and difficult ethical situations, the persons who were involved in these situations and the principles and values that guided the solutions to these situations.

The final analysis included 43 narratives of ethically easy situations and 39 narratives of ethically difficult situations. The narratives' length varied from a few sentences to two pages. Data-driven content analysis was used to answer the first research question about the kinds of ethical dilemmas educational leaders and teachers encounter in their work. The analysis started with reading the narratives many times. Then, the narratives were coded with letters and numbers (E = easy, D = difficult; e.g. the narrative of the first easy situation was coded as E1) and labelled according to the codes, the parties in the situations, the situations' themes and the guiding ethical principles and values in the solutions of the situations. In particular, the focus was on the parties and themes of the situations when the first research question was investigated. Theory-guided content analysis was used to investigate the data in relation to the second research question of how the educational leaders and teachers work as moral professionals in their educational contexts. Furthermore, quotations from the most descriptive narratives were added to the results.

In addition to qualitative analysis, quantification of the qualitative data was possible because of the large number of narratives (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2003). The number of times the various parties, themes, principles and values appeared in the narratives was counted.

Results

The first research question was what kinds of ethical dilemmas educational leaders and teachers encountered. In the results, the ethically easy and ethically difficult situations refer to the characteristics of these situations in which ethical dilemmas denote the consideration of the right thing to do (Hanhimäki, 2011). When the narratives were tabulated according to the codes, it was possible to recognise how the educational leaders and teachers responded to the ethically easy and ethically difficult dilemmas. The parties refer to who or what the people or things in the dilemma were when the educational leaders or teachers described the situation in their narratives.

Table 10.1 shows the names and numbers of the mentioned parties, the themes and the principles and values in the narrative. However, the aim of the quantification was not general applicability of the results because the study was qualitative. Regarding the parties mentioned in the educational leaders and teachers' ethically easy dilemmas, most of them were staff, followed by students, students and families,

Table 10.1 Parties, themes, principles and values in the ethically easy and ethically difficult dilemmas

Dilemmas	Ethically easy dilemmas (43)	Ethically difficult dilemmas (39)
Parties	Staff (17), students (10), students and families (7), staff and students (6), resources (3)	Staff (20), students and families (7), students (6), staff and students (4), resources (2)
Themes	Staff: interaction and conflicts (5/17), working hours (3/17), work arrangements (4/17), rules of operation (4/17), school premises (1/17) Students: behaviour (6/10), support and rights (4/10) Students and families: study arrangements (3/7), behaviour (3/7), interactions and conflicts (1/7) Staff and students: study arrangements (5/6), rules of operation (1/6) Resources: division of resources (3/3)	Staff: work arrangements (10/20), rules of operation (6/20), interaction and conflicts (4/20) Students and families: study arrangements (4/7), interactions and conflicts (3/7) Students: behaviour (5/6), study arrangements (1/6) Staff and students: study arrangements (2/4), support and rights (2/4) Resources: division of resources (2/2)
Principles and values (number of mentions in the narratives)	Staff: fairness (5), well-being (3), justice (3), the child's interest (3), responsibility (2), equality (2), common rules (2) Students: justice (4), fairness (4), common rules (3), law (2), optimism (2) Students and families: ethical values (2), justice (2), respect (2) Staff and students: justice (2) Resources: fairness (2)	Staff: justice (4), fairness (4), equality (3), common rules (3), realism (2), professional ethics (2), law (2), humanity (2), well-being (2) Students and families: the child's interest (3), fairness (3), humanity (2), respect (2) Students: equality (2), justice (2) Staff and students: the child's interest (2) Resources: justice, responsibility, honesty, ethical reflection, striving for good, early influencing, equality

staff and students and resources. As for the ethically difficult dilemmas, half the parties in the dilemmas were staff; students and families, students, staff and students and resources were less often mentioned.

The main themes of the ethically easy dilemmas concerning staff were interactions and conflicts, working hours, work arrangements, rules of operation and school premises. For the ethically easy dilemmas concerning students, the main themes were behaviour and support and rights. The main themes concerning students and families were study arrangements, behaviour and interactions and conflicts. The main themes concerning staff and students were study arrangements and rules of operation. The main theme concerning resources was the division of resources.

For the ethically difficult dilemmas, the main themes concerning staff were work arrangements, rules of operation and interaction and conflicts. The main themes

concerning students and families were study arrangements and interactions and conflicts. For the dilemmas concerning students, the main themes were behaviour and study arrangements. The main themes concerning staff and students were study arrangements and support and rights. For the dilemmas concerning resources, the main theme was the division of resources.

In summary, the main parties in both the ethically easy (17/43) and the ethically difficult dilemmas (20/39) were staff. In the ethically easy dilemmas, the main theme concerning staff was interactions and conflicts (5/17); the main theme concerning staff in the ethically difficult dilemmas was work arrangements (10/20). These results emphasise the significance of human resource management in ethical educational leadership.

The second research question was how educational leaders and teachers work as moral professionals in their educational contexts. The following definition of moral professionalism was used in the theory-guided analysis: the quality of the educators' professional practices (Sockett, 1993), which are judged by professional standards and codes of ethics and which become evident in educators' moral practices and roles in the everyday lives of schools (Hanhimäki, 2011). The coding of the data showed the principles and values that guided educational leaders and teachers in ethically easy and ethically difficult dilemmas with different parties, in other words, when they worked as moral professionals.

In the ethically easy dilemmas concerning staff, the most frequently mentioned principles and values were fairness (5), well-being (3), justice (3) and the child's interest (3). For example, one educational leader described a dilemma concerning a conflict between three employees, which the leader solved according to the principles of fairness, justice and respect:

> One employee told another colleague how a third colleague had been curt with her and did not talk with her. Another colleague told me, and after that, I asked the first and third colleagues to speak with me, first separately and then together. The discussion ended so that they reached an understanding and realised that they were heard and understood. The situation was easy because I did not take sides in this dispute, but I saw that it was just that they did not understand each other's way of thinking and interacting. I remember that I thought about how important it is to give space for feelings, but understand deeply and show respect to everyone [with] the principles of fairness, justice and respect. (E5)

The most frequently mentioned principles and values in the ethically easy dilemmas with students were justice (4), fairness (4) and common rules (3). In the ethically easy dilemmas with students and families, the main principles and values were ethical values (2), justice (2) and respect (2). The main principles and values in the ethically easy dilemmas with staff and students were justice (2) and resource fairness (2).

For the ethically difficult dilemmas with staff, the most frequently mentioned principles and values were fairness (4), justice (4), equality (3) and common rules (3). For example, one educational leader wrote about the situation of an employee's misconduct that was solved according to the principles of fairness, justice and honesty:

> During the last school year, I had a project employee from outside the school. I received feedback that his working methods and working hours were not in order. I solved the situation by listening to him, and it went well. This person admitted his mistakes and corrected his working methods. This situation was challenging because it was difficult, and his attitude towards an employer was already very negative when he started his job. In addition, I considered the right way to react—suitable but strict. The principles of justice, fairness and honesty guided [me]. Lying and misconduct are mainly wrong, as well as self-interest at the expense of others. (D14)

In the ethically difficult dilemmas with students and families, the main principles and values were the child's interest (3) and fairness (3). The main principles and values in the ethically difficult dilemmas with students were equality (2) and justice (2); with staff and students, it was the child's interest. With resources, many individual principles or values were mentioned once, such as justice, responsibility and ethical reflection. In both the ethically easy and ethically difficult dilemmas, the educational leaders and teachers mentioned other principles and values, but these were only mentioned once under the themes of the dilemmas, so they are not listed in Table 10.1. However, most of these were mentioned under other themes, such as the principles and values of equality, justice and well-being.

In summary, the most frequently mentioned principles and values in the ethically easy dilemmas were fairness, justice, common rules, equality, well-being and the child's interest. For the ethically difficult dilemmas, the most frequently mentioned principles and values were fairness, justice, equality, the child's interest and humanity. The child's interest was the principle most often mentioned in the ethically difficult dilemmas in comparison to the ethically easy dilemmas. This is seen, for example, in the case when the educator solved a situation in which the dilemma was a pupil's grade repetition, and the child's interest was one of the main principles in this decision:

> It was difficult to watch a pupil's mother's crushing reaction. It was very justified to repeat the grade, but the mother's story reawakened my own motherhood. I understood the mother's pain and worries, but also a child's future pain when learning will not improve. It was difficult to decide between these things. (D3)

When all the mentioned principles and values in encountering ethical dilemmas were summarised, the most frequently mentioned principles and values were fairness and justice followed by equality, the child's interest and well-being.

After the narratives were coded, these principles and values were compared with the professional standards and codes of ethics that guide the educators' work in the Finnish context. These were the contemporary education policy documents, including legislation and other regulations, curricula and trade union ethical recommendations for educational leaders and teachers. These documents emphasise the main principles and values of, for example, human dignity, equality, diversity, sustainability, honesty, justice, freedom, caring, respect, encouragement, hope, trust, cooperation, professional development, responsibility and well-being.

When the principles and values in the policy documents were compared with this study's results, they were in line, as fairness, justice, equality, the child's interest and well-being are also emphasised in the policy documents. Human dignity and

how the educational leaders and teachers encounter people were described through the principles and values of fairness, justice and equality. The principles and values of the child's interest and well-being also reflect a caring attitude. However, one value in the policy documents that was rarely mentioned by name in these data was sustainability, but it was included, for example, when the educational leaders and teachers described the sustainable results of their solutions.

Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to investigate moral professionalism in the context of educational leadership and add another dimension to studies on ethics in school administration and ethical educational leadership. Although many researchers have published investigations into the ethics of school administration and ethical educational leadership (e.g. Hanhimäki, 2011; Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021; Shapiro & Stefkowich, 2005; Strike et al., 2005), the moral, ethical and nonrational aspects have been omitted from the discussion, even if they are present in all aspects of school policies and practices (Day & Johansson, 2008).

Previous research has reported that educational leaders and teachers do not always recognise the ethical dimension in their work (e.g. Campbell, 2008). In the present study, the narratives collected from educational leaders and teachers described the easy and difficult ethical situations they encountered in their work and illustrated the kinds of ethical dilemmas they faced and how they worked as moral professionals in their educational contexts.

The findings were that the main parties in both the ethically easy and the ethically difficult dilemmas were staff, concerning interactions and conflicts in the easy dilemmas and work arrangements in the difficult dilemmas. The most frequently mentioned principles and values in the ethically easy dilemmas were fairness, justice, common rules, equality, well-being and the child's interest. For the ethically difficult dilemmas, the most frequently mentioned principles and values were fairness, justice, equality, the child's interest and humanity. The child's interest was more frequently mentioned in the ethically difficult dilemmas than in the ethically easy dilemmas. When the policy documents' principles and values were compared with the results of this study, they were very much in line as fairness, justice, equality, the child's interest and well-being are also emphasised in the policy documents. One value in the policy documents that was rarely mentioned by name in these data was sustainability.

If we compare these results with previous research results on ethical educational leadership in the Finnish context, the same main values and ethical principles were found and seen throughout the educational system. Equality, caring and multiprofessional collaboration (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021) were also among the oft-mentioned principles and values in these data. However, the results emphasised fairness, justice, equality, the child's interest and well-being more than previous studies because the context of the present study was ethical dilemmas. The

decision-making point of view was strong in these narratives, which could explain the amount of justice orientation in these results. However, a caring orientation was also present, especially through the principles and values of the child's interest and well-being.

In Northern European countries, there is a clear connection between development of educational leadership and socio-historical changes that has also affected values and ethical principles. For example, the weight of tradition and a political consensus to fight inequalities have established a lasting climate of cooperation in Nordic schools. The common good of the local community can also be found, for example, as social solidarity between community members in the United States and New Zealand, while there is an expectation for the educational leaders to sustain local discussion. The Chinese educational leaders try to ensure social stability and harmony against the market and hierarchy. This international comparison emphasises the meaning of community trust and how it drives innovation, solidarity and social justice in Finland (Normand et al., 2021).

Based on the results of this study, it can be stated that the educational leaders and teachers recognised the principles and values that guide them in both ethically easy and ethically difficult dilemmas. In only one narrative, the narrator did not know the guiding principle or value in the dilemma. This conclusion creates hope, in contrast with the previous research that raised concerns that educational leaders and teachers do not always recognise their work's ethical dimension and are ill-prepared to deal with ethical dilemmas (e.g. Campbell, 2008; Day & Johansson, 2008; Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2009; Lyons, 1990; Tirri, 1999).

Furthermore, it is significant how research on moral professionalism and education in educational leadership can create both the theoretical and empirical basis for educational leaders' and teachers' work as moral professionals. Reflective ethical study has been used in educational leadership education with promising results. When studies on educational leaders and teachers are closely connected with their moral practices, the professional development process naturally combines theoretical and empirical points of view with the help of reflexivity (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021; Normand et al., 2021). Using case studies has also been a very efficient and evocative pedagogical method in educational leadership education (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021). It is possible to use written case stories, or the participants can write their own. The case stories can be handled using drama methods or discussions on the dilemmas and different ethical orientations to solve the dilemmas. The main point is to have a person reflect individually and with peers, become aware of his/her ethical thinking and develop his/her ability to work as a moral professional. Moreover, case studies can be used in both pre- and in-service teacher education (Hanhimäki, 2011; Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021; Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2009).

Fairness and justice were the most frequently mentioned principles and values in the ethical dilemmas of this study. Fair leadership notably affects creativity and trust in the workplace (Collin et al., 2020). While sustainability was mentioned in the educational policy documents, it was rarely mentioned by the participants in this study. However, one of the main results of this study was that the main parties, in

both the ethically easy and the ethically difficult dilemmas, were staff, which underlines the significance of human resource management in educational leadership. The easy dilemmas with staff concerned interactions and conflicts; the difficult dilemmas focused on work arrangements. Previous studies have investigated sustainable leadership and work in different sectors. The findings indicate the important role of leaders as promoters of an ethical organisational culture, who, in doing so, support an ethically sustainable way of working (e.g. Kira et al., 2010; Pihlajasaari et al., 2013).

In conclusion, if we consider what is special in moral professionalism in the context of educational leadership in comparison to leadership in different sectors, one answer can be the relationships with many people of different ages and from various backgrounds. Relationships also play a central role in the ethical principles and values for educational professionals, for example, in the Code of Ethics for Finnish Teachers (Trade Union of Education in Finland, 1998, 2014) and the Principals' Ethical Code (Finnish Association of Principals, 2018). In practice, educational leaders and teachers are directly or indirectly connected with other people, including their colleagues, students and children, families or other cooperation partners. Thus, how the system supports educational leaders and teachers in their moral professional work is essential to ensure that their efforts can be sustainable and they can be sensitive towards themselves and other people.

What educational leadership can learn from leadership in other sectors is, for example, how to utilise theories and practices of sustainability in human resource management. In the long term, ethical and sustainable educational leadership increases the motivation and commitment of the members of educational communities and strengthens well-being. A future challenge for research and education in educational leadership is to provide support and education for educational leaders and teachers on how to develop their moral professionalism skills, for example, with the help of reflective ethical studies.

The data of this study were gathered in one university, but with three separate datasets from different training programmes, which increases the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, the participants were educational leaders and teachers from various educational contexts, ranging from early childhood education and care to higher education; this triangulation of the data strengthens the credibility of the study (Patton, 1999; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2003). In addition to the qualitative analysis, quantification of the qualitative data was also used in this study, even if the aim was not a general applicability of the qualitative results. However, the large number of narratives facilitated the counting of the responses (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2003). The nature of the case assignment was to describe both easy and difficult ethical situations; this affected the results of this study, which emphasised some values, such as fairness, justice and equality, more than other values. Even if this is a limitation of the study, the results are in line with the previous research results from the Finnish context (e.g. Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021) and internationally (e.g. Normand et al., 2021).

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Chapter 11
Conceptions of Diversity Among Finnish Principals

Anita Jantunen, Lauri Heikonen, Raisa Ahtiainen, Elina Fonsén, and Arto Kallioniemi

Abstract Principals have a crucial role when leading the school community towards more responsive and equitable education. Changes in Finnish society have occurred rapidly, and there is a gap in Finnish research concerning diversity in education and leadership. Our aim with this study was to form an understanding of Finnish comprehensive school principals' conceptions of diversity. Richard Milner's (2010) outlining of the conceptual repertoires of diversity formed the basis for this examination. This study is a quantitative analysis of the responses of Finnish comprehensive school principals to a questionnaire. The results were obtained through two separate analyses: descriptive analysis about principals' approaches to conceptions of diversity and cluster analysis to identify the profiles of principals based on their diversity conceptions. As a result, we described Finnish principals' conceptions of diversity, as well as identifying five profiles: the Encouragers, the Understanders, the Delegators, the Adjusters and the Discreets.

Keywords Diversity · Leadership · Conceptions · Comprehensive school

Introduction

There has been little research about diversity leadership in Finnish schools. As the role of a leader in education is central in developing a school community that values diversity and experiences it as richness and an asset (Räsänen et al., 2018), it is

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important to have research that has been conducted in the Finnish context. Compared to many European countries, Finland is still homogenous, and the comprehensive schools have maintained and nourished the idea of a "unified Finnish culture", which is dated, and no longer applicable to a rapidly changing society. Moreover, due to a lack of education policy debate and experiences in practice, comprehensive school principals may not have up-to-date knowledge and skills regarding diversity leadership within schools. The previous Nordic research suggests that leadership competence, such as knowledge, skills and attitudes, need attention and re-evaluation as schools are increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse (Andersen, 2014; Merchant et al., 2012). The climate around the questions of diversity is gradually changing, and the questions concerning minorities have started to be recognised as being politically meaningful. In addition to these factors, we believe that the scattered nature of training for the Finnish principals and the opportunity to qualify as principal through a range of routes can affect the way principals approach diversity in their school communities (Lahtero et al., 2019). That is, the competence of principals in matters related to diversity is varied as it is dependent on the content of their training as well as the practical knowledge gained during their professional careers. Furthermore, the questions concerning the diversity of worldviews and values have become more visible.

Data from several studies have suggested that the most significant feature concerning teachers and principals' responsiveness to cultural and other forms of diversity is their personal attitude, their ability to take other people's perspective and their capacity to critical self-reflection (Abacioughu et al., 2020; Khalifa et al., 2016). This quantitative study has focused on principals' conceptions of diversity, which we believe reflects their current attitudes and relation to diversity within schools. We have used Richard Milner's (2010) outlining of the conceptual repertoires of diversity as a framework for the questionnaire and for the further profile analysis conducted for the data. The aim was not only to produce new information about diversity leadership in Finnish schools but also to form a basis and starting point for further research planning about this area of interest which in Finland is yet to be studied.

Theoretical Framework

Diversity in Educational Leadership

In the field of education, the questions of diversity and leadership are generally related to gender, religious and non-religious worldviews, race and ethnicity, sexuality, social justice and equality (e.g. Coleman, 2012). In addition, it usually includes the aspects of ability and capability. The recognised challenges related to diversity within schools are stereotyping and categorisation based on interpreted otherness and what is considered as "normal" (Coleman, 2012; Dervin, 2016). Diversity leadership in education is theoretically closely connected with culturally (and

linguistically) responsive school leadership (Khalifa et al., 2016; 2019; Scanlan & Lopéz, 2015), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018) and many constructions of leadership that are aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive ways of working in the school communities (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Bottery et al., 2018; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

Principals' conceptions of diversity are important because principals have a significant impact on school improvement as well as on features in school organisation that in turn have a positive effect on teaching and learning (Leithwood et al., 2020). This is connected to developing education that is more equitable, which means discussing not only the equity of opportunity but also the equity of outcome (Anderson, 2007; Sahlberg & Cobbold, 2021). (Culturally) responsive school leadership challenges principals to evaluate their personal conceptions and biases, because at least in western countries, schools are culturally Eurocentric and maintain "the white norm", which presents the students outside these cultures and norms with challenges in their academic achievement and other school activities (Milner, 2010; Khalifa et al., 2016, 2019; Gay, 2018).

The role of a leader in education is central in developing a school community that values diversity and experiences it as a source of richness and as an asset (Räsänen et al., 2018). Principals are responsible for all the school activities and teacher development, but they also have a unique position to be able to develop non-classroom spaces and structures at school (Khalifa, 2019, 25). If diversity is not recognised, it can lead to a situation in which various groups and structural inequalities that may affect them remain unseen. Recent research has pointed out that principals in Finland seem to have narrow conceptions about different worldviews and some other aspects of diversity (Rissanen, 2019; Lipiäinen et al., 2020; Jantunen et al., 2021). This may be because diversity in the Finnish educational context has been close to a synonym for immigration for a long time (see, e.g. Immonen-Oikkonen & Leino, 2010) and that led to a situation in which diversity was seen as something that comes from the outside and needs to be solved, not as something that is an integral part of every individual's identity. However, Finnish research on the topic is limited, and diversity in a broader sense has not previously been studied in the context of Finnish educational leadership.

Principals in Finnish Comprehensive Schools

The main education organisers of comprehensive school education are the local municipalities, and almost all schools are public. Comprehensive school covers grades 1–9, and the pupils typically start their school during the year they turn 7 years old. The work around diversity and themes related to diversity in education in schools has been included in documents or instruments provided to schools. The basic education act (Basic Education Act 628/1998), as the basis of organisation of education, states that the purpose of the education in comprehensive schools is to promote equality in society and to support students' growth to humanity and

ethically responsible membership of the society as well as to promote the conditions for pupils to take part in education (Basic Education Act 628/1998). The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (Finnish National Board of Education [FNBE], 2014) defines all diversities as a value, a resource and richness and acknowledges schools as learning communities which are a part of a culturally transformative and diverse society (FNBE, 2014). In the National Core Curriculum, Finnish culture is described as having been formed in many ways and from several sources and defined as the "diverse Finnish cultural heritage" (FNBE, 2014, 16). The National Core Curriculum clearly states that "being Finnish" does not have any specific requirements or desired features. However, it can be noted that the word used is "Finnish culture" and not "global citizenship". Further, the municipal education authorities and schools can decide how to emphasise the various principles introduced in the curriculum. Along with the curriculum, the school communities are expected to prepare an equality and equity plan, and the school staff, students, parents and other community members are required to be involved in its preparation.

Finnish principals are traditionally required to have a master's degree, teaching qualifications, sufficient work experience as a teacher and excellent knowledge of the school's official language. The set of qualifications must include a certificate in educational administration to provide proof of the knowledge and skills of educational administration gained in another way or by completing university-level study in educational leadership and administration (Asetus opetustoimen henkilöstön kelpoisuusvaatimuksista, 1998; Lahtero et al., 2019). Finnish principals have a high level of autonomy (OECD, 2019), and they do not have a specific national-level job description. In general, Finnish principals are responsible for the school's use of human and financial resources, pedagogical leadership and leading teachers' professional development. Other responsibilities are dependent on the organisation of the municipal-level education authority, as a result of Finland's decentralised nature (FNBE, 2013).

The Conceptual Repertoires of Diversity

Milner's (2010) literature review from "the empirical and conceptual work in the fields of education and teacher education" to frame "conceptual repertoires of diversity" was used in this study to examine to Finnish principals' responsiveness to these conceptions. Although Milner's frame was built through research concerning teachers in the USA, results are equally applicable to principals, as the conceptualisation is similar to that relating to teachers, as they work in the same educational context. However, another aspect to consider is that Finland and the USA are different societies. Diversity in Finland has increased rapidly (e.g. statistically), but the USA has been diverse from its roots. Milner outlined five concepts from research which are critical for teachers to understand: *colour-blindness*, *cultural conflict*, *the myth of meritocracy*, *deficit conceptions* and *(low) expectations*. Here we introduce

these concepts with relevant and more recent research to support and strengthen their content as well as to tie the conceptions to educational leadership.

Colour-blindness is generally known to be harmful in perceiving students (or staff or any human being) as it leads to ignoring racial backgrounds and their meaning for an individual's identity, position in the society, power relations, discrimination and structural racism (Milner, 2010). In relation to school leadership, Muhammad Khalifa et al., (2016) outlines in his collection of behaviours of culturally responsive school leaders that "challenging whiteness and other hegemonic epistemologies in school" is an important part of critical self-reflection on leadership behaviours. Similarly, Milner clarifies that colour-blindness is usually due to fear of being considered as a racist if bringing up a student's skin colour, consideration of being politically incorrect and offensive, and to the conception that race does not matter as racism has ended, and it is no longer a relevant topic (Milner, 2010). Critical self-reflection is crucial to recognise and avoid these types of conceptions. However, as the Black Lives Matter movement has shown, racism has not ended, and racial and ethnic backgrounds play a significant role in an individual's life. There certainly is no room for colour-blindness at school, even though the intentions behind it may seem good. Some "good intentions", such as supporting internationalism, may even strengthen "the white norm" and injustice at school (Gardner-McTaggart, 2021).

Milner's *cultural conflict* is also about power and power relations at school. When creating the school culture, principals and teachers can be profoundly inconsistent with that truly reflecting the students or the school community's cultural experiences. According to Milner, behind this are most often the ideas of adaptation or assimilations to the school or classroom culture. Principals and teachers may then be in a constant cultural conflict with their students, which leads to interpretations of what is considered to be "normal" behaviour (Milner, 2010). In Khalifa et al., (2016) theory, culturally responsive school leaders take responsibility for developing culturally responsive teachers and to promote inclusive school environments. This requires accepting all the identities at school, modelling what culturally responsive teaching is and reforming the school curriculum. Relating to this, socially just leadership and schooling require that all students and their families feel welcome at school (Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015, 3).

The myth of meritocracy in teachers' thinking, Milner claims, is a result of beliefs that everything one has is earned, and success (and failure) is the result of choice, ability and effort, not as a consequence of economics, whiteness, privileges or benefits. Meritocratic thinking relates to believing that everyone has the same opportunities and equality of opportunity (Milner, 2010). Meritocratic ideas are not promoted by Sahlberg and Cobbold (2021) either, but they promote the idea of the equality of outcome in education, not as an equal outcome of individuals, but as an equal outcome between the groups, which they call "social equity". Their claim arises from global concern that the educational outcomes between different social classes, genders, races and ethnic backgrounds continue to grow (Sahlberg & Cobbold, 2021). The hard questions are about what an adequate outcome or fair opportunity in education would be, which need not only to be determined but also

lived up to at the societal level (Anderson, 2007). When it comes to leadership in education, it has been argued that educational leadership has adopted neoliberal norms, which has led to supporting practices at school that promote meritocracy, "merit" and competition (Wijaya Mulya & Sakhiyya, 2021). Considering this trend, it is a valid concern to pay attention to meritocratic conceptions.

The deficit conceptions in Milner's outlining are mainly related to influencing practices at school. If there is a firm mindset that students of colour, students from lower socioeconomic status or those whose native language is not the school language, do not bring as much to the classroom as other students, cannot do as much or do not possess as much cognitively, the students' learning opportunities are shaped and affected, and not in a desirable way. Sometimes this type of thinking among teachers and principals is due to a belief that they are being sensitive towards (culturally) diverse students when they are not "too demanding", feel sorry for them and make up for what (they feel) the students are lacking (Milner, 2010). This can lead to marginalisation, and to avoid that and to ensure academic achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students, principals, as school leaders, are required to take a role as a creator of communities of practice, as teachers do not change their practices in isolation (Scanlan & Lopéz, 2015, 22). Additionally, Khalifa emphasises the principal's role as a developer of teacher capacities for more responsive pedagogy and as a professional who resists deficit images of students and their families (Khalifa et al., 2016).

The (low) expectations are closely related to deficit conceptions, as the expectations in education influence teachers' thinking, discourse and actions. According to Milner's perceptions, teachers lower their expectations from their students especially when the students' problem-solving, expressions or acting in a situation is different from those of the teacher. Lowered expectations become the norm in curriculums, both explicitly and implicitly. Typical thinking patterns of teachers (and principals, we assume) are that lowering expectations are helping the students to build more self-esteem and that the teacher's main task is just to have everyone pass their (standardised tests or) class, as it would require too much to do anymore for certain students (because they lack the capacity to do any better) (Milner, 2010). Also Gay (2018) points out the importance of teachers' faith in their students' intellectual capabilities. She argues that culturally responsive teachers are able to use an array of methods and approaches when designing and implementing education as a whole, including curriculum, instructions and assessment, in any context in which the students are diverse (Gay, 2018, 52–53). In practice, this concerns all the teachers at every school, because if a broad perspective is taken, all the classrooms are diverse. What comes to the role of a school leader, according to Khalifa (2019), principals are between policy and practice, and they are therefore held accountable for their teachers' professionalism and actions, as well as possible resistance to cultural responsiveness at school (Khalifa, 2019, 25).

In this study, we used Milner's frame of conceptual repertoires of diversity as a basis for examining Finnish comprehensive school principals' reflections on

diversity. In addition, this framework has been used in this study to conduct a profile analysis of the principals based on their conceptions of diversity.

The Study

Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this study was to investigate Finnish comprehensive school principals' conceptions of diversity. In this study design, we drew from Milner's (2010) work on teachers' common conceptions of diversity and used this as a framework for a questionnaire and further profile analysis.

The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. How do Finnish comprehensive school principals approach the conceptions of diversity?
2. What profiles of principals can be identified based on their conceptions of diversity?

Participants

An electronic survey was sent to 1930 comprehensive schools across Finland in January 2020. The total number of responses after deleting the forms that were not completed was 740. An accurate response rate cannot be calculated, because the total number of possible respondents is unknown. However, the number of respondents was considered representative regarding the total number of principals in Finland. Respondents were working as principals, vice principals, assistant principals and head teachers, but in this study, we have referred to all of these school leaders as "principals".

The data represented Finnish principals in terms of age and gender as 60% of the participants were aged 50 years and older, 30.8% were 40 to 49 years old and 9.2% were aged from 25 to 39 years. The majority were women with 58.8% and 40.8% were men. Three respondents did not want to share their gender identity. The percentages are close to the national level numbers which supports the representativeness of the data. Nationally, 52% of the principals are women; 30.5% of the principals are 40–49 years old and 61.7% over 50 years old (FNAE, 2020). A total of 96.1% held a master's degree and 2.4% a bachelor's degree. Eight of the participants possessed a doctoral degree, and three had studied some other degree. Slightly more than half of the participants (51.9%) had more than 10 years' work experience as a principal; 20.1% had from 5 to 10 years' experience; and 28% had less than 5 years' experience as a principal.

Measures and Data Collection

The data came from a quantitative electronic survey. In this study, the focus was on Likert scale questions about principals' conceptions and attitudes about a range of aspects of diversity in a school context. Items presented the five aspects of the conceptual repertoires of diversity, constructed by Richard Milner (2010). The five aspects were colour-blindness, cultural conflicts, the myth of meritocracy, deficit conceptions and (low) expectations. We created four items per aspect to reach the essence of each of the themes. The aim when creating the items was to contextualise the features to suit the Finnish comprehensive school context at the same time. The questionnaire we used was pilot tested with a group of Finnish principals ($N = 30$), and based on the results and the written feedback received, we slightly modified the items to be more precise and clear. The pilot group did not take part in the actual research.

The respondents were asked to evaluate the items on a 7-point Likert scale ("1, completely disagree"; "4, not agreeing or disagreeing"; "7, completely agree"). In addition, there was an eighth option: "not applicable at our school".

Data Analyses

We examined individually each of the items from various features of conceptions of diversity and identified the strongest as well as the most descriptive in terms of content. This was done using frequencies table and by comparing means, standard deviations and skewness and kurtosis. In addition, we used histograms of each item to examine how well the participants' responses followed the normal curve. Through this information, five items, each representing one of Milner's features of conceptions of diversity, were selected for further cluster analysis. First, we conducted a two-step cluster analysis to see what type of solution it would offer. Second, we conducted K-means cluster analysis (more suitable for sample size like this) with 2, 3, 4 and 5 clusters. We ended up using the five-cluster solutions as it was also suggested by the two-step cluster analysis. Cluster analysis was performed with standardised items. At the end, due to violating the assumption of homogeneity of variance, Brown–Forsythe F statistics with Tamhane's T2 post hoc tests were used to analyse differences between the five clusters in terms of conceptions of diversity.

Results

The Finnish Principals' Approaches to Conceptions of Diversity in School Leadership

The first aim of the study was to detect how the Finnish comprehensive school principals approach the conceptions of diversity. In Table 11.1, the items chosen from the data to present the conceptions and their means and standard deviations are presented.

Table 11.1 Means and standard deviations of selected items of the conceptions of diversity

Item	N	Mean	Std. dev.
Colour-blindness: It is not appropriate in any circumstances to mention students' skin colour	687	4.21	2.06
Cultural conflicts: Other cultures and worldviews should be taken into account in school as comprehensively as possible	716	5.61	1.27
Myth of meritocracy: Students' success is based entirely on how hard they work for it	740	3.38	1.71
Deficit conceptions: Expectations about a student cannot be as high as to others if the student does not speak the school language as fluently as a native speaker does	697	3.65	1.84
(Low) expectations: The teacher has succeeded in their work, if all the children pass their class	733	3.44	1.69

The first item presented the conceptions related to colour-blindness, and it strongly divided the principals. Questions about race and ethnicity are still quite new in Finnish educational discussion, and the topic may often be found to be difficult and sensitive. The mean of the item is slightly above the middle answer with a wide standard deviation above 2. The respondents more often felt that it is always inappropriate to mention students' skin colour, as 35.2% ($N = 242$) of the participants had selected 6 or 7 ("completely agree") from the Likert scale. However, 23.7% ($N = 162$) of the respondents felt that skin colour was something that could be said out loud as they had selected 1 ("completely disagree") or 2 from the Likert scale. It is worth noting that a substantial number of the principals selected 4 ("not agreeing or disagreeing"), a total of 18.6% ($N = 128$). The respondents had an opportunity to complement their answers after the Likert scale questions, and there were several notes and descriptions in which the principals explained that they did not have any students other than white students at their school.

The second item presents the conceptions related to cultural conflicts by arguing that different cultures and worldviews should be considered as comprehensively as possible at school. According to the analysis, Finnish principals found it to be very important to take different cultures and worldviews into account at their school. Cultural conflict was an item that the participating principals were the most harmonious about. The mean for this item was 5.61 with a standard deviation of 1.267. Most of the principals, 60.7% ($N = 435$), completely or almost completely agreed with the item, while only 2.8% ($N = 20$) completely or almost completely disagreed with the item.

The third item was selected to present the participants' conceptions of meritocracy. It can be interpreted that in general, comprehensive school principals in Finland do not emphasise students' effort as the most important factor in success. The mean was 3.38 with a standard deviation of 1.710. A total of 37.6% ($N = 278$) of the participating principals completely or almost completely disagreed with meritocracy. Principals completely or almost completely agreeing with the meritocratic idea of hardwork leading to success were 10.7% ($N = 94$) of the respondents.

Deficit conceptions were examined with an item which suggests that not as much can be expected from the students who lack the skills of a native speaker of the school language. The respondents' thoughts about this theme varied considerably, but slightly more often the principals did not find that the lack of language skills would affect the expectations. This item had a mean of 3.65 with standard deviation of 1.842. Similar to the first item, which also had a wide standard deviation, a fairly large number of respondents for option 4 reported "not agreeing or disagreeing" (18.6%, $N = 128$). A total of 33.1% ($N = 231$) of the respondents completely or almost completely disagreed with the item, as 17.4% ($N = 129$) completely or almost completely agreed with it. In addition, in the complement box after the Likert scale questions, several of the respondents expressed the view that they did not have speakers of any languages other than Finnish or Swedish (the official languages of Finland) at their school.

The fifth and the final item was about the principals' conceptions about low expectations. This was examined by arguing that a teacher has succeeded in their work, if all the students pass their class. In general, principals valued other aspects of the teachers' work more than having all the students pass their class, although several of the respondents did not take a stand. The mean for the item was 3.44 with a standard deviation of 1.687. The item was more disagreed than agreed with 34.9% ($N = 156$) of the respondents completely or almost completely disagreed and 13% ($N = 96$) completely or almost completely agreed with it. The group that did not agree or disagree was seemingly large: 24.6% ($N = 182$).

The Principal Profiles Based on the Cluster Analysis

The second aim of the study was to identify the profiles of principals based on their conceptions of diversity. This was done with cluster analysis, in this case K-means cluster analysis.

As a result of the analysis, we ended up with five clusters. Cluster centres are presented in Fig. 11.1 with distances from the item means. The clusters were formed using standardised items, and the profile analysis was completed by characterising and naming the profiles.

The principals in cluster 1 were named *the Encouragers* ($N = 151$), as they seemed to be leaders who wanted to encourage their students and staff to accomplish as good results as possible, but mainly through students' and teachers' personal effort. Principals in this group have more of a tendency to believe in meritocracy, meaning that a student's success is based on their effort and working hard enough. In addition, the idea of a teacher's success related to students just passing their class is elevated compared to the other groups. It can be interpreted from the data that principals in this group tend to emphasise performance. In this profile, all five conceptions were elevated.

The second profile based on cluster 2 was named *the Understanders* ($N = 146$). The Understanders do not believe in meritocracy or emphasise passing a class as a
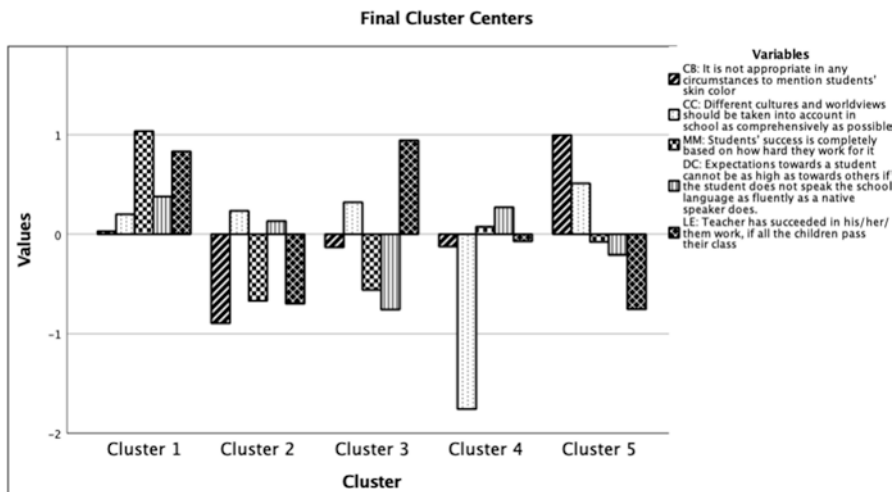
Fig. 11.1 Cluster centres based on standardised items

success factor for a teacher. The Understanders have a tendency for deficit conceptions, which may be because they want to understand every student's situation and might be concerned that they are too hard or demanding of a student for whom it is more difficult than the others. In this profile, taking cultural and worldview diversity into account at school, as well as lower expectations of students with non-native skills in the school language, are elevated. In addition, colour-blindness was the lowest compared to all the other profiles, and it is assumed that this group might be aware of its harmful nature.

The Delegators form the profile based on cluster 3 ($N = 103$). Our interpretation was that in this profile, the principals have conceptions that are supportive of diversity in their school community but are eager to hand responsibility to the teachers. In other words, diversity at school is important, but the primary goal is that the students pass their class. The Delegators are unique compared with the other profiles by their increasingly elevated intensity for evaluating teachers' success based on whether the students pass their class. They do not support colour-blindness, meritocracy or deficit conceptions about students and find supporting cultural and worldview diversity important.

After interpretation of the results, we described the principals in cluster 4 as *the Adjusters* ($N = 98$). The Adjusters are principals whose objective is to have students adjusted to the school and school culture despite their background. In addition, the Adjusters do not put great emphasis on students passing their class as proof of the teacher's success, and they are relatively comfortable about mentioning skin colour. Cluster 4 creates a profile which differs from the others greatly in supporting cultural and worldview diversity as comprehensively as possible in their schools. As other groups found this type of support at least somewhat important, in cluster 4, this conception was reported as clearly being below the mean. Additionally, belief

about meritocracy as well as deficit conceptions were slightly elevated. The Adjusters form the smallest of the profile groups as only 14.8% of the respondents were located in this group.

The fifth and the final cluster creates a profile that in many ways is opposite the Adjusters, and we have named them *the Discreets* ($N = 150$). This profile is as mindful as possible: They feel that mentioning skin colour is always inappropriate; it is important to support cultural and worldview diversity and do not support the meritocratic approach to student success. In this group, students' language skills do not necessarily lead to deficit conceptions, and teachers' success is evaluated using factors other than every student passing their class. The Discreets is the largest of the profile groups, with approximately 25% of the participants belong to this group.

Differences between the profiles were further investigated with Brown–Forsythe F statistics together with Tamhane's T2 post hoc tests because of violating the assumption of homogeneity of variance between the groups. The means and standard deviations of each cluster on the five conceptions of diversity are shown in Table 11.2. In addition, the means are presented in Fig. 11.2.

From both Table 11.2 and Fig. 11.1, it can be seen that for colour-blindness, the principals come from three directions: either finding mentioning it to be completely inappropriate could not form a clear opinion, or that it was somewhat acceptable. The means concerning cultural conflicts are gathered close together, meaning that this conception is not noticeably varied between the clusters. The exception is cluster 4, which differs greatly from the others. The myth of meritocracy and deficit conceptions divide the principals' views, although clusters 2 and 3 are certainly like-minded about not believing that a student's success would be all about hardwork. Clusters 1 and 3 differ from other clusters concerning (low) expectations. The respondents in these clusters support the idea that a teacher is successful when all the students pass their class.

Table 11.2 Cluster means and standard deviations of the five conceptions of diversity

	Cluster 1: the Encouragers ($n = 151$)		Cluster 2: the Understanders ($n = 146$)		Cluster 3: the Delegators ($n = 103$)		Cluster 4: the Adjusters ($n = 98$)		Cluster 5: the Discreets ($n = 150$)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Colour-blindness	4.27_a	1.93	2.38	1.10	3.94_a	1.92	3.96_a	1.84	6.26	1.00
Cultural conflicts	5.87_b	0.91	5.91_b	0.82	$6.02_{b,c}$	0.84	3.39	0.89	6.26_c	0.71
Myth of meritocracy	5.15	1.12	2.24_d	1.21	2.43_d	1.04	3.51_e	1.53	3.25_e	1.62
Deficit conceptions	4.35_f	1.67	3.90_f	1.79	2.26	1.31	4.15_f	1.64	3.27	1.88
(Low) expectations	4.84_g	1.24	2.26_h	1.14	5.03_g	0.94	3.32	1.35	2.17_h	1.10

Note: Means sharing the same subscripts is not significantly different at the $p < 0.05$ level
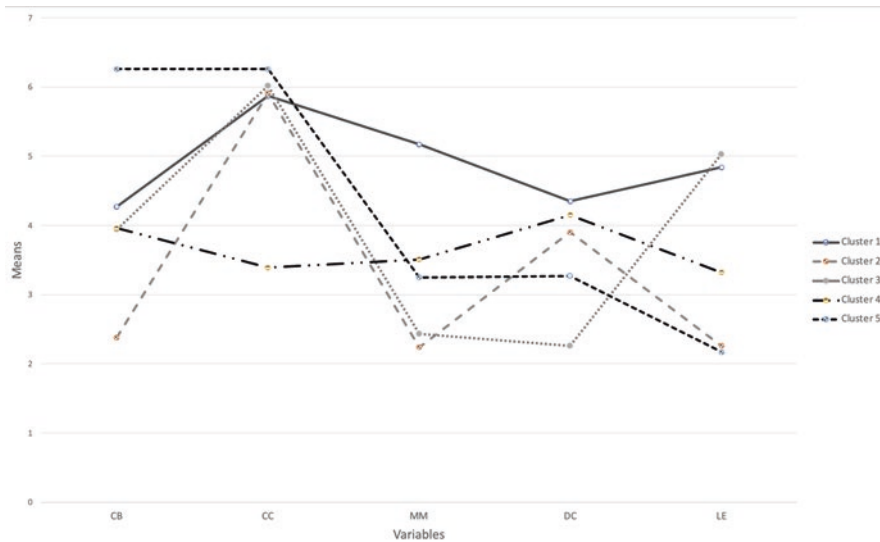
Fig. 11.2 Cluster means. Note: *CB* colour-blindness, *CC* cultural conflict, *MM* myth of meritoc-racy, *DC* deficit conceptions, *LE* (Low) expectations

Discussion and Conclusions

This study explored Finnish principals' conceptions of diversity and aimed to present common approaches to diversity in schools by forming principal profiles based on cluster analysis. The first aim was to detect how the Finnish comprehensive school principals approach the conceptions of diversity. Principals found the speaking about students' skin colour mainly as a sensitive topic. According to Milner's studies, this may reflect a conception that the respondent is concerned about what others think of them if the race or ethnicity of an individual is mentioned. In a leadership role, the demand for political correctness may feel too great, especially when questions about race and ethnicity in the field of education are still quite new. However, challenging "the white-norm" and fighting injustice require acknowledging race and skin colour which can be acquired as self-reflective leadership behaviour (Gardner-McTaggart, 2021; Khalifa et al., 2016).

When it comes to cultural conflicts, the principals greatly supported considering different cultures and worldviews at school as comprehensively as possible. In the past 5 years, several reports and studies regarding cultural, worldview and linguistic diversity in education have been published, and based on them, additional training for schools and teachers has been offered (e.g. Räsänen et al., 2018; Tainio et al., 2019; Alisaari et al., 2020; Tamm et al., 2021). In addition, there has been a larger change in the climate about diversity, and many teachers and principals were educated in totally different societal atmosphere. It is possible that these concepts and understanding them in the school context are generally at a good level. However, a

positive attitude about an idea does not necessarily indicate what happens at a practical level. Promoting a culturally responsive school environment may still be shallow rather than building a community that values and respects diversity with staff, students, their families and other community members. In following the guidelines of culturally responsive school leadership, it is school leaders' responsibility to enhance teachers' competence and to promote inclusive and all families welcoming school climate (Khalifa et al., 2016; Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015, 3). It is worth noting that rather than working completely solo, principals (at least in larger schools) can utilise a shared leadership model for matters concerning diversity and inclusion. In Finland, principals generally have high trust to teachers' professionalism (Eisenschmidt et al., 2021).

The myth of meritocracy had the lowest mean of all the items explored, so it seems that Finnish principals in general do not strongly support meritocratic thinking in their schools. This suggests that Finnish principals have yet internalised neoliberal norms which would promote meritocratic thinking and competition in schools (Wijaya Mulya & Sakhiyya, 2021). The respondents did not support the lack in school language skills as a reason to expect less from the students academically, which in Milner's outline is known as deficit conceptions. This is a promising result, because it gives a hint of school communities which avoid marginalisation and ensures academic achievement for linguistically, and culturally, diverse students if the principals take the role in creating communities of practice with their teachers (Scanlan & Lopéz, 2015, 22). More research are needed to find out whether the principals actually take actions to support their teachers in meeting the needs of diverse students.

The respondents rarely demanded that their teachers only had to have students pass their class. In relation to the previous statement, the deficit conceptions, principals in Finland are more likely to support the teachers to have their students achieve as much as possible in an academic sense, and it is likely that ideally, deep learning was preferred over formal tests, results and passing a class. Having faith for students' capabilities is crucial for teachers (Gay, 2018, 52). Again, it is on school leaders' responsibility to take care of their teachers' professionalism to ensure that they are equipped with methods and approaches to design their teaching as a whole to suit the context with diverse students (Khalifa, 2019, 25; Gay, 2018, 53).

The second aim of the study was to identify the profiles based on the principals' conceptions of diversity. As a result, five principal profiles were formed: the Encouragers, the Understanders, the Delegators, the Adjusters and the Discreets. The largest profile ($N = 163$) was the Discreets, which were the most sensitive about mentioning the students' skin colour and in other ways indicated responsiveness about diversity at school. The Encouragers ($N = 151$) differed from the others by having the strongest tendency towards meritocratic thinking as well as deficit conceptions. The Understanders ($N = 134$) was a group with the most (culturally) responsive profile, but they had a slight tendency to deficit conceptions. It was assumed that this was because of their will to mainly understand every student and their unique situations. The Delegators found significant importance in teacher performance, and in this case, that teachers had students who passed their class. The

smallest group ($N = 96$), the Adjusters, was different from the others as they were surprisingly comfortable about not promoting culture and worldview diversity in their schools. Interestingly they also did not have a problem with mentioning skin colour, and with this combination, our interpretation was that this is a profile of principals who see their students as they are but want them to adjust to the (Finnish) school environment rather than trying to develop the school and staff to be more responsive to diversity.

These results indicate that Finnish comprehensive school principals predominantly have good premises for promoting responsive diversity leadership in their school contexts. The main concerns are related to conceptions of colour-blindness, which the Finnish principals seem to support, at least to some extent. As stated earlier, questions and discussions about race and ethnicity have not been common in the field of education in Finland. However, due to the harmful nature of colour-blindness, it is a conception that should be studied further. This is related to the principal profile: the Discreets, which may reflect the attitudes of Finnish society on a larger scale. Traditionally in Finnish society, it has been important to be sensitive about diversity, which in practice has meant not pointing out any differences too much. In addition, for further research, the Adjusters, which did not aim to promote cultural and worldview diversity at school, is an interesting group to examine in more in depth. Lastly, deficit conceptions at least towards Finnish/Swedish language learners were more common than were assumed and are also something that should be studied more thoroughly.

Taking diversity into account is important if we want to support equality and equity in the school system. Principals have a crucial role while leading the school community towards more responsive and equitable education. The quantitative data used provides one perspective but lacks the depth of qualitative perspectives. With a mixed method study, we would have been able to examine the phenomenon more comprehensively. By answering the research questions in this study, we have formed a preliminary understanding of what some of the strengths and weaknesses are of diversity leadership at Finnish comprehensive schools based on the principals' conceptions. The results could be used for further research design and as a basis for developing training for qualifications required by principals and for professional development. As this was a pioneering study, the results should be interpreted as a starting point for more in-depth study and hypothesis testing for research that is due to be conducted in the near future. However, the study provides an interesting insight to a topic that has not featured much in research in Finland.

The purpose of this study was to draft an understanding of Finnish comprehensive school principals' approach to diversity, based on Richard Milner's (2010) conceptual repertoires of diversity with descriptive data and using profile analysis. This study has limitations as it is a pioneer study in the Finnish schools. Changes in Finnish society have occurred rapidly, and there is a gap in Finnish research concerning diversity in education and leadership, and the discussion perspective as a whole is a new one. Applying a North American research and framework to the Finnish educational context is problematic because of ecological validity, and the societies differ from one another in many ways. Developing diversity leadership in

comprehensive school education in Finland is also yet to be done. The roots of North America are diverse, and Finland has diversified quickly in the past 10–20 years. The societies differ markedly, and the structure of the population is different. Furthermore, the tradition of promoting a diversified society is different. However, there is a demand in Finland for research in the field of education about diversity, and this study is one response to that demand. Research about diversity and educational leadership has been limited, although interest in it has been growing lately. As mentioned, our study has limitations but provides indications about continuing the research. Furthermore, it also gives perspectives and approaches on how to develop educational leadership with diversities.

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Chapter 12
Contradictions and Opportunities in Contexts of Everyday Leadership in Education

Mari Simola and Raisa Ahtiainen

Abstract In this chapter, we focus on the emergence of contradictions and opportunities in everyday leadership in five comprehensive schools. We discuss how principals, teacher-members of leadership groups and teachers with no leadership responsibilities understand and conceptualise leadership work, their relationships with each other and the practices of the school. Leadership and schooling are understood as contextual practices taking place in situated, professional, material and external elements of contexts. Power is seen as an essential part of leadership, existing in relationships and interaction, and through shared understandings, values and practices. The data were collected in five schools in Southern Finland in 2018 and consist of five interviews with principals ($n = 5$) and five group interviews with leadership group member teachers ($n = 21$) and five with teachers ($n = 26$). We approached the data by asking: How do the respondent groups define the leadership and the school-level practices stemming from that, and how do they describe the contradictions and opportunities for leadership in their school contexts? The results unravel a range of situations and positionings of leadership in Finnish schools indicating the nature of nonuniformity of the comprehensive school system.

Keywords Educational leadership · Contexts · Power · Comprehensive school

Introduction

During the past three decades, in many countries, the policy changes around education have moved towards decentralisation (Pont, 2021; Simola et al., 2002). This has led to the education systems becoming more complex through multilevel governance constructed at various levels of responsibility and greater autonomy afforded

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to local-level education administrations and schools (Pont, 2021; Simola et al., 2017). Within this wider education frame, various new dimensions have been embedded in the role of a school leader who along with leading learning and teaching is seen as a facilitator of collaboration and collective work of professionals in the school community (Pont, 2021). Leadership roles like this can be seen as being connected to approaches of leadership in education depicting leadership as an interactive, shared, and distributed practice between a leader and teachers (Jäppinen et al., 2015; Harris, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2020; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020; Spillane et al., 2004). The definition of educational leadership drafted by James et al. (2020, 632) "educational leadership practice is legitimate interaction in an educational institution intended to enhance engagement with the institutional primary task" sits well within this framework.

These phenomena regarding educational governance and leadership are traceable in the Finnish context (Eisenschmidt et al., 2021; Lahtero et al., 2019; Simola, 2015; Simola et al., 2017). It is typical that the principals as school leaders aim to create practices that disperse the responsibilities for school development and decision-making, and schools often have structures that enable sharing leadership tasks (Eisenschmidt et al., 2021; Lahtero et al., 2019). In many schools, there seems to be a leadership group or similar constructed by the principal and a group of teachers (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a; Lahtero et al., 2019). However, due to the autonomy of local educational organisers, and to some extent the autonomy of schools, the leadership structures vary, as do the tasks and responsibilities of the principal (Ahtiainen et al., 2019; FNBE, 2013).

Our understanding of leadership is contextual and relational, and the social practices of schooling and leadership in education are viewed as being positioned in a certain space and time (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Power comprises an essential element of leadership and a way of modifying and producing hierarchies and practices within the organisation and its connections with the external world. Power is conceptualised as relational, existing in relationships and interaction, and being based on shared understandings of the experienced reality and values, as well as hierarchies and practices within a certain context (Foucault, 1971). Within this frame, we see schools and their leadership practices as an essential part and product of the current and former social conditions, thus inseparable from their contexts.

This draws a framework for this chapter directing the focus on the emergence of *contradictions and opportunities* in relations between actors in the designated leader position (i.e. principal), leadership group members (i.e. teachers) and the larger teaching community of the school. It is of interest to look at how these actors understand and conceptualise the leadership of the school and their relationships with each other. The aim is to increase the understanding of the leadership practices and to highlight what the actors see as a contradictory element and what they see as an opportunity. We discuss the results by contrasting them with the model of situated, professional, material and external contexts (Braun et al., 2011; Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017).

This chapter presents discussion about the existing and potentially conflicting issues and contradictions related to school leadership, the relationships between the actors and different assumptions and expectations on leadership possessed by them. The empirical context of this study is based on five Finnish comprehensive schools, and their principals, leadership groups and teaching communities.

Composition of School-Level Leadership Within the Education System

Governmental regulations on comprehensive school education define a framework for organising schooling (Basic Education Act 628/1998; Basic Education Decree 852/1998). The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (Finnish National Board of Education [FNBE], 2016) and Government Decree (422/2012) defines the objectives for subject areas and distribution of lesson hours. The National Curriculum also covers the mission, value basis and general objectives of comprehensive schooling and provides guidelines for the preferable school culture and collaboration within the school community. These legislative and norm documents form the grounds for the organisation of comprehensive school education at the local level, which is mainly the responsibility of the municipalities – only a small proportion of pupils (fewer than 2% in total) go to private or state schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, n.d.).

The municipalities are autonomous and have a lot of discretion in the organisation, governance and administration of their services (Risku et al., 2014). Consequently, there is a variation between municipalities in how they have structured the administration and interpreted and applied the government regulations (e.g. Basic Education Act or National Core Curriculum; Ahtiainen et al., 2021b; Risku et al., 2014). The municipalities are obliged to assess the impact of the education they organise, and the assessment data should be used to support local education development and decision-making as well as provide the basis of national education policy-making (Statute of the Council of State, 1061/2009).

To guide the education locally, the municipal education administrations formulate a local curriculum that "complements and emphasises the goals, policies that direct the activities, key contents and other aspects related to the organisation of education specified in the core curriculum from a local perspective" (FNBE, 2016, 9). The local curriculum is seen as a strategic and pedagogical tool for defining and linking together the policies for operation of the municipal education organiser and the work of the schools (FNBE, 2016). That is, the education organiser is responsible for the process, yet it can delegate responsibilities to schools regarding the school-level curriculum or specific areas within it.

The work of the schools is directed by the local curricula, annual school year plan, local strategy for education, and other locally decided frameworks. The Basic Education Decree (852/1998) defines some responsibilities placed at school level,

e.g. assessment and legal protection. The Finnish principals are among the ones having the highest degree of autonomy in Europe (OECD, 2019). In general, principals are responsible for the use of the school's resources (i.e. financial, human) and the professional learning of teachers (FNBE, 2013). However, the range of responsibilities given to the school-level leaders varies between education organiser, as the municipality can decide on the extent to which it delegates decisional power to school principals concerning teacher recruitment, etc. (Ahtiainen et al., 2019; FNBE, 2013). The international assessments of the OECD indicate that as with many of their colleagues globally, Finnish principals must deal with multiple duties and spend much of their time doing tasks related to administration (33%; OECD, 2019). They see that the biggest factors functioning as barriers to quality education are lack of time for pedagogical leadership (42%), time for pupils (26%), and lack of school support personnel (25%; OECD, 2019).

The school-level leadership structures are often dependent on municipal regulations, the size of the municipality and its schools (Lahtero et al., 2019), and the service delivery structures that can be complex and multifaceted in larger municipalities if compared with the smaller ones (Risku et al., 2014). However, many schools apply team or working group structures related to various target areas of schoolwork development (e.g. curriculum, well-being), and most of the middle-sized or large schools have leadership groups that are formed of principals (i.e. principal, executive deputy principal, vice principal) and a selected group of teachers (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a; Lahtero et al., 2019). The creation of a leadership group is about teacher involvement in decision-making processes at the school level. In many cases, the leadership group structure has been coupled with teacher teams formed around a specific task, and every team has a representative in the leadership group (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a). Due to the tradition of professional freedom of individual teachers, decisions related to organising their classroom work have been strong in the Finnish context (Sahlberg, 2014), the collective ways of working are sometimes perceived as being challenging, and principals may struggle in getting the whole teaching community involved (Eisenschmidt et al., 2021).

Although the role of a leadership group may be limited to the local application of the national curriculum at a school and advancement of ongoing development goals, the group members often function as a bridge between the wider school community and the leadership (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a; Ahtiainen & Heikonen, Chap. 16 in this volume), but the principal and executive deputy principal have the decisional power based on their designated positions. In this context, it is interesting to explore the leadership of educational organisations from the perspective of the people in leadership positions and people not being involved in those – how they conceptualise the leadership, its constraints, contradictions, and opportunities.

Materials and Methods

Research Questions

The focus of the chapter is on exploring the conceptualisations of leadership (RQ1) and contradictions and opportunities arising in school contexts (RQ2) defined by various groups of actors. The research questions are the following:

RQ1: How do the various actor groups (principals, teacher-members of leadership groups, other teachers) define the leadership and the school-level practices stemming from that?

RQ2: How do the actors describe the contradictions and opportunities for leadership in school contexts?

Participants

The participants represented five schools involved in a 2017–2019 in-service training project "Broad-based Pedagogical Leadership", targeted at developing the work of leadership groups (LG). In their development work, schools had chosen school-specific targets for their work and focused, e.g. on restructuring the practices of the LG, creation of means to increase teaching community involvement, or work with specific goals in their schools (e.g. well-being). The schools met with university experts five times during the programme. Most of the time, the schools worked independently.

The participants were principals, teacher members of LGs, and teachers not involved in leadership tasks. The two former participant groups represent the school-level leadership. The teacher groups were formed with the help of the principal. The aim was to have teachers from a range of grade levels or teacher positions (e.g. classroom teacher, subject teacher). The participants worked in comprehensive schools having grades 1–9 ($N = 3$) or 7–9 ($N = 2$). The schools were located in a range of municipalities outside the metropolitan area. The schools were middle-sized (350–500 students) or large (800–900 students). To ensure the anonymity of the five principals, the data have been presented at a general level. Information that could reveal or connect information concerning the education, age, specific school sizes, or gender of the participants in detail have been left out because of the close collaboration between the schools during the development programme.

Data Collection

The data were collected in 5 schools in April–May 2018 by conducting 3 sets of interviews, which formed 15 interview sessions: individually for principals (n = 5) and in groups for LG member teachers (n = 21) and teachers (n = 26). That is, 52

educators participated in the interviews. The sizes of the groups varied from 3 to 5 in LG teachers and 4 to 6 in teacher interviews. We employed the qualitative attitude approach (QAA) in the data collection. The QAA is based on statements given to interviewees who are supposed to position themselves in relation to these statements in the interviews (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007). The formulation of the statements is aimed at triggering discussion, and the purpose is that the interviewees argue in favour or against each statement.

In this study, the statements were drawn from the approach of broad-based pedagogical leadership that describes school leadership from a wide perspective (Fonsén & Lahtero, Chap. 8, in this volume; Lahtero et al., 2021; Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015). The approach was chosen as a basis for the formulation of the statements because it includes direct and indirect leadership and also the symbolic level of leadership. The statements covered themes of the nature of leadership and communication performed by the principal and leadership group (e.g. "the leadership in our school is conflicting in many ways, and the way the principal and the LG members act and talk is not consistent"), the principal and LG supporting and guiding teaching, learning, and other daily activities in the school (e.g. "the principal and leadership group have provided a necessary common framework for teachers' practice that supports the work on a daily basis"), and the principal's presence in the school (e.g. "the principal is available for teachers and students"). In the interview sessions (individual, groups), the statements were presented one by one, and before moving forward, interviewees were given enough time to discuss each of them. All interviewees commented on and discussed the same statements, which were adjusted according to the participants' perspective (i.e. principal, LG teacher, teacher). The interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

To organise the data, discover patterns, and make sense of the definitions of leadership in a comprehensive school context, and the descriptions of opportunities and contradictions in these definitions, we employed the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2012). Our thematic analysis approach leans more towards a deductive orientation (Braun & Clarke, 2012) guided by the understanding of the relational and contextual nature of social constructions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) of leadership and the essence of power related to the leadership (Foucault, 1971).

The analysis proceeded through four main phases, of which the first consisted of both researchers becoming familiar with the data by reading and rereading the material (Braun & Clarke, 2012). During this phase, we started searching for meanings and making notes guided by our pre-understanding about connections between the actors. In the second phase, we started to form codes and name the meanings and relations between the emerging codes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The codes were used to capture the various aspects of leadership (e.g. definition: what is leadership; leadership practice; leadership activity), validation of leadership, the role of actors

within the defined leadership, and possession of the leadership. The third phase was about constructing two themes, contradictions and opportunities, and organising the coded data under them. To reach the variety of nuances of the thematic nature of the coded excerpts of the interviews required careful reading of the meanings given within each code. However, the distinction between themes was not always clear, and the same element could be presented as both (i.e. opportunity, contradiction). Finally, we reviewed the themes, discussed their composition, and made some adjustments to reach the final thematic form of our findings.

Ethical Considerations

The University of Helsinki has research ethics regulations that are binding on all researchers, but this research did not require ethics committee review. All the participants were provided with information about their rights (e.g. withdrawal), the aim of the study, and data collection methods, the storage, and use of the data. All participation was voluntary. The data were pseudonymised. Names (i.e. schools, principals) were replaced with artificial identifiers. The data were stored in the secured network of the University. Only the researchers had access to the data.

Findings

The conceptualisations of leadership were constructed from the understandings and meanings given to it. The descriptions of various research participant groups reflected the actual practices connected to the concept of leadership and roles given to the leader(s), and through that, the leadership was positioned within and in relation to the teachers, LG member teachers, and the principal in the school. Following our research questions, the findings are presented in two phases. The first covers the conceptualisation of leadership in each of the five schools and draws a picture of meanings connected to it within them (RQ1). In the second phase, the findings are summarised and reflected under the two thematic areas of the study, opportunities and contradictions (RQ2). In the discussion, the findings are contrasted to a heuristic framework on the contexts of schooling and educational leadership borrowed from Braun et al. (2011) and further applied to leadership contexts by Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017).

Conceptualisation of Leadership

In the following, we present the conceptualisations of leadership according to the (groups) of actors in each school. In conceptualisation, the focus has been placed on RQ1: How do the various actor groups define the leadership and the school-level practices stemming from that.

School 1

Principal

The principal depicted leadership at School 1 through the concept of distribution and explained how leadership occurred within the school. The main components of the leadership were the principal and two vice principals. The opportunity to share duties with the vice principals was perceived as crucial in a large school. The LG formed one part of the school's leadership structure, yet the principal emphasised the central position of the three principals – they formed an essential part of the leadership in the school. Moreover, the principal saw the LG teacher members' role as being vague and unestablished and wondered if LG members should take on more leadership in the future. The principal wanted to point out that in a school, one arena for leadership was at the classroom level, at which the leadership position belonged to teachers having the main decision-making power in pedagogical matters. At School 1, the principal mentioned that there was a lot of responsibility for pedagogical problem-solving, and discourse had been placed at the level of teacher teams.

   Through these aspects, the principal was distanced from the leadership taking place at different levels within the school, by themselves and by others. The principal described the leader's role as something that was a facilitator encouraging and supporting the whole school community, and if needed, the principal was available for discussions with teachers in issues related to their professional (e.g. pedagogy) or private life. Consequently, the principal was not aware of the quality or methods of actual teaching and learning processes at the classroom level. Consequently, this set-up created slight uncertainty as it was difficult to know the extent to which the elements that they had agreed on together were applied in practice.

Leadership Group

LG member teachers connected leadership to the concepts of decision-making and school development. Also, they saw that assessment of the current situation and ambitions for future direction along with identification of development needs were central at School 1. The annual school year plan as a frame for schoolwork was seen as being loose, and the LG teachers felt that the frame lacked a pedagogical touch. The main responsibility for leading these processes seemed to be included in the tasks of the principal and two vice principals, but the principal seemed to hold the definite vision and power over the direction of the school. LG teachers had recognised challenges in the mutual power relations between the three principals (i.e. principal and two vice principals) that affected the smoothness of the workflow. It seemed as though the tasks and duties were delegated but that practice did not provide decision-making power to a vice principal. The LG teachers positioned themselves on the margin regarding the decision-making power in their school. The actual leadership appeared to be distributed between those occupying the senior

positions (i.e. the principal, vice principals). Moreover, the LG teachers called for the principal's stronger presence within the teaching community.

Teachers

For the teachers, leadership appeared as a guide to the school's course of action at a practical level. At School 1, the principal and the LG formulated rules, drew up an annual school year plan, and gave direction to the work and instructions for various practices (e.g. supervision of recesses). Teachers appeared to be unaware how the leadership in their school was constructed and who made the decisions, but they noted that one of the vice principals probably had more leadership responsibilities in these areas than the others in principal positions. Elements concerning aspects of pedagogy or values or ideologies behind education seemed to be lacking in the shared discussions among the school community members. However, the teachers felt that the principal encouraged professional learning, and several opportunities for participation were available according to one's own interests, and the same applied to a number of responsibilities in teacher teams.

School 2

Principal

The principal described the leadership structure of their school as a team organisation that had been developed further regarding the roles of teacher team leaders. Together, the principal and LG had considered the purposefulness of frameworks for schoolwork regarding the balance between common guidelines and the space for individual leeway. Consequently, the guidelines were written rather loosely. The LG was a place for discussion, and the LG teacher members had been given responsibilities in finalising common processes and giving guidance to others. The principal described the working methods through interactions within the LG (including the principal) and LG member teachers and other teachers. Further, the principal pointed out the importance of pedagogical discussion led and facilitated by the principal, but there seemed to be a lack of time for it to be done regularly. Nonetheless, the principal stated that pedagogy is an area that requires sensitivity from the leader's side as that was the area of expertise of teachers.

Leadership Group

LG member teachers perceived leadership at School 2 as a practice based on collaboration and joint discussion aimed at defining the main framework within which teaching and learning along with other daily activities took place. The LG teachers felt that they worked with the principal, had a common understanding, and that a

way of working that had a strong sense of distribution of leadership and responsibilities existed at their school. The concepts of transparency, support, interaction, and being easy-going were used to describe the leadership of the principal. In general, the LG teachers contemplated the meaningfulness of specific rules or guidelines given by the principal and LG regarding practices. LG teachers did not see it to be necessary to restrict the task of decision-making on these matters to the selected few (i.e. the principal and themselves); instead, they thought that the things concerning everyone should be decided at the school level and that these processes would benefit from the participation of the whole teaching community.

Teachers

Teachers at School 2 appeared to be satisfied with the way the principal involved them in discussion about the guidelines for teaching and learning, listened to, and gave them a voice. The principal encouraged trying out new pedagogical ideas and methods and also participated in them. These characteristics of a leader were perceived as being in contrast with their previous authoritarian principal. Further, teachers reflected on how the principal tended to present ambitious plans and ideas and also aimed at their realisation. Teachers perceived the leadership of the principal and the LG as being trustworthy, yet they were uncertain about the transparency of the decision-making processes in the LG. However, they suspected that they had not done enough to find out about it either. The teachers saw the leadership of the principal or vice principal as being clear, whereas the LG's position and role were more obscure. Nonetheless, the principal and LG appeared to work in a collaborative manner with the teachers and also considered the pupils' viewpoints.

School 3

Principal

The principal described the processes of making plans, formulating frameworks, and making decisions as a shared practice within the LG, and with the wider school community, because some matters touched all teachers and could not be discussed only within a small group of people. The increasing involvement of everyone seemed to necessitate interaction and collaboration. Further, the principal thought that the work between the principal and LG should be developed in an even more systematic direction to put more emphasis on joint discussions. The principal pointed out that one task of a leader is to be able to "read the situations" and make interpretations about when teachers need support, and about the extent to which the leader should intervene and give guidance. The teachers had to be given enough autonomy, and it was unnecessary to build rigid frameworks or guidelines for schoolwork – there had to be room for modifications during the school year as the

situations changed constantly. The lack of time seemed to limit the principal's opportunities for classroom visits and pedagogical discussions with all teachers.

Leadership Group

The LG teachers at School 3 talked about LG discussions concerning the joint direction of schooling and saw that the processes genuinely were participatory and interactive. There had been an effort to develop the work of teacher teams and their connections to LG to increase the involvement of all teachers. However, the LG teachers felt that too tight internal schedules and external regulations and tasks coming from the local education (i.e. municipal) administration sometimes hindered the implementation of their plans. Moreover, they had noted that team structures were not perceived positively by all teachers, and the team leader position seemed to be lacking a shared understanding within the teacher teams despite the long tradition of circulation of the team leader role. The LG teachers mentioned that their school had a history of strong principal-centred leadership culture, which still echoed in the discourses of some teachers, even after 20 years. The principal was perceived as an approachable leader who supported teachers in many ways, but the current role of a principal was seen as being loaded with many duties outside the school and the tight economic situation being faced by the municipality. Consequently, that had probably affected the principal's opportunities to focus on pedagogical issues.

Teachers

The work culture at School 3 had changed during the past few years and had led to the development of practices that involved everyone in annual school year planning and other processes central to schoolwork. Teachers felt that they being involved more and more, and it was not just the principal and leadership group who worked with these processes. Ways of working like this appeared to move the school forward, increase transparency, and create commitment among the teachers. Although the principal and LG guide these processes, there also appeared to be leeway for all members of the teaching community to take the initiative. Teacher teams were seen as being one means for realising these working methods, and the framework for teams had been facilitated and guided by the principal and the LG. However, the teachers said that freedom and autonomy given to the teams entailed challenges. Teachers had noted how not all teachers were willing or ready to self-direct their teamwork or accept responsibilities, which affected the work of some teams. Teachers thought that some teachers saw that their school duties covered only their classroom work, not the wider school community. In general, teachers viewed the leadership of the principal and the principal as a person as being trustworthy and approachable and often being present and available for teachers to consult. Nevertheless, the teachers wished that their leader could visit their classrooms and give positive feedback and encouragement more often. Moreover, sometimes the

principal should delegate the tasks more and through that reduce the workload that teachers perceived being too large.

School 4

Principal

At School 4, the principal was responsible for several schools, which required the sharing of leadership and delegation of the responsibilities to vice principals who were more present in each of the schools. This was especially relevant to pedagogical issues. The principal found the leadership at the school mostly to be a coherent activity, with the exception of certain contradictory issues. The principal pointed out the good atmosphere between the LG and principals but reported on the critical comments from teachers who seemed to have experienced the discussions as being interrupted. The principal also hesitated when asked about their experiences regarding the clear and systematic guidance towards a future vision. Moreover, the principal felt that some of the teachers expected more discussion on pedagogical issues, support, and direct disciplinary action in difficult situations with students. Yet, at the same time, due to the autonomic nature of the teaching work, the principal found it difficult to intervene in classroom situations, and their responsibilities and duties were heavy, and therefore there was usually no time for discussing pedagogy. The principal pointed out that teachers were supported in their aims for professional development and well-being at work.

Leadership Group

At this school, the LG members defined the leadership activities and decision-making as shared processes between the principal, vice principals, and the LG. They saw the leadership as being collective and distributed and pointed out how there were several leadership organs and planning groups. LG members described their role as being responsible for the everyday leadership practices at the school. Activities included the planning of the everyday matters of the school, events, and leading the pedagogy. LG members' relationship with the principal was contradictory. They perceived the principal as being easily approachable but also called for stronger vision and more presence from the principal, such as visiting classrooms, and a firmer touch in solving problems regarding difficult situations.

   LG members found the leadership to be an activity through which several (sometimes conflicting) targets set by different actors were encountered: the municipal, national, and local level goals intermingled at the grassroots leadership work in the school. LG members pointed out how the strong governance based on the national curriculum, and the traditional autonomy enjoyed by teachers, and the different work cultures experienced by the teachers of lower (1–6) and upper grades of the comprehensive school defined the cultural context of the school and leadership

work. However, the contradictory element as part of the leadership work was mentioned as something which enabled the LG members' opinions to conflict with each other and, as such, formed a fruitful platform for new solutions. The time available for discussion and definition-making around pedagogy and vision was interpreted as being a scarce resource.

Teachers

For School 4, the teachers reported the absence of leadership and vision, especially regarding the principal's role and work and, at the same time, related to their own work as teachers. Mostly, when discussing leadership at school, the teachers talked about the principal's role and work. According to the teachers, there was a lack of frames for teaching, and no clear idea on where support and help could be sought. There seemed to be problems in organisation of everyday leadership practices, e.g. the meetings seemed not to be prepared or no one took notes at the meetings. Teachers reported that some teachers were teaching some subjects without being properly qualified in the content area, and in some cases, it seemed as though the substitute teachers did not get enough teaching hours. However, no information was available about who should be responsible for these issues.

   The teachers called for stronger leadership, which to some extent became defined as a supporting and disciplinary authority in relation to students and difficult situations with them. In the teachers' opinion, the vision for the school was deficient, nor did the teachers have a clear idea of "how things get done". Based on teachers' opinions, it also seemed that they would like the leaders to have a more grassroots understanding of the everyday life at school, the classroom realities and the teachers' work.

School 5

Principal

From the perspective of the principal, the leadership of the School 5 was built up as coordination and overseeing the whole, and as more practical activities such as payment of salaries or planning the use of temporary facilities were needed. Leadership was mainly constructed as activities done by the principal and the vice principals, with the vice principals being the ones who worked on the more hands-on practices, while the principal had the responsibility for defining the direction of the organisation. The teachers' needs for professional development and training were evaluated by the teachers themselves and then discussed with the principal in performance appraisal discussions. The principal appeared to be clearly aware of the needs of teachers for more pedagogical support and physical presence from the principal. Lack of time and resources were mentioned as challenges for work, as well as the need for more concrete work on special education.

Leadership Group

LG members perceived leadership as decision-making and as processes related to organising everyday school life and activities in their school. They also defined it as sharing responsibilities between the tasks central to schoolwork and as discussing and planning the common goals and directions for development. However, LG teachers described the leadership as unstructured and unclear because of the challenging current situation at the time of interview. According to LG members, planning and implementing activities within the school were a collaborative process, and there were working groups for goal setting and decision-making on activities. There was a need for the creation of a clearer framework for common action, the need for more discussion on specific school targets and the understanding of the relationship between goals and actions. That is, they found the commitment of the staff to be an important goal. Actually, the role of the principal was not widely discussed, despite comments on the limited amount of time. LG members discussed the willingness of staying/leaving the personal or professional comfort zone of the teacher as a factor which had an impact on attitudes about development.

Teachers

For teachers, the activities of the leadership group and principals seemed to be quite coordinated, but the information did not always reach the teachers, and consequently, teachers did not find the common goals or direction well defined. They perceived the principal as being quite distant from themselves and from the students. Teachers brought up several issues about the challenges related to leadership. They discussed limited resources (funding, time), as well as the relationship of the school leadership with the municipal governance, and contradicted the position of the principal, as being the one presenting the voice of the school/teachers and/or the voice of the municipal actors and policies. Teachers found the practices in the various relationships of the school (e.g. the principal and teachers, teachers and students) as something which had an accumulating impact from one relationship or level of action to another: if the principal felt stressed and overloaded, this would lead to a situation in which the principal spread the stress rather than support in the meetings with the teachers, who then forwarded the emotion to classrooms. In addition, teachers discussed their own role and responsibilities related to agenda setting of the common discussion, and the needs for balancing personal and professional expectations and needs.

Contradictions and Opportunities

In this second phase of findings, we move around RQ2: How do the actors describe the contradictions and opportunities for leadership in school contexts? In the interviews, the actors representing various groups explained the experiences of

contradicting issues and opportunities for leadership, relationships between the actors, and the whole school community. By a "contradiction", we refer to issues that are potentially or already conflicting and that often are characterised by the lack of clarity. "Opportunity" is defined as something – potentially bad or good – which might occur in the future. In Tables 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3, these elements have been organised and presented per groups of actors.

Among the principals, the contradictions were formed around balancing between their distant position in relation to classroom activities, caution regarding getting involved with the teachers' work, and lack of opportunities for pedagogical discourse in the school community. The opportunities stemmed from the existing or evolving practices that relied on collaboration between the various actors in the schools.

According to LG members, contradictions arose from unclear structures of leadership (Table 12.2). Frameworks were unclear or undefined, and the sharing of power or positioning between the principals in the schools was unclear. Further, the LG members seemed to position themselves at the margins of leadership. Like the principals, the LG members voiced the need for increased pedagogical discussion among the teachers and with the principal.

In several comments, LG members contrasted the "old" and "more traditional" leader-centred leadership practices with "new", collaborative ones. Some of the respondents were aware of the difficulties arising from increased teamwork, and responsibility of teachers over the school level-issues, while some of them had an optimistic attitude about getting involved with decision-making. They also saw the role of a principal as contradictory; on the one hand, the principal was a representative of the school (and teachers) to municipal actors, and on the other, the principal was the implementer of the external policies internally.

The most often mentioned contradictory issues by teachers related to the distance of the figure of the principal and the practices perceived as being unclear or

Table 12.1 Contradictions and opportunities defined by principals

Principals	
Contradictions	Insufficient level of understanding regarding the state of everyday life in classrooms, the actual teaching, and learning
	Pedagogical expertise and decisions sensitive topics to discuss with teachers due to the professional autonomy
	Not enough time for facilitating and leading pedagogical discussions with teachers, or to visit classrooms
	Teachers would need more pedagogical support and physical presence from the principal
	Lack of time and resources challenge the work as a leader
Opportunities	Sharing duties with vice principals is crucial in larger schools
	The delegation of work between the principal and LG should be developed in a more systematic direction and to put more emphasis on joint discussions
	There is a room for LG members to take on more leadership in the future
	The increasing involvement of everyone necessitates interaction and collaboration

Table 12.2 Contradictions and opportunities defined by leadership group members

Leadership group members	
Contradictions	The annual school year plan as a frame for schoolwork was too loose and lacked a pedagogical touch
	Leadership unstructured and unclear
	The time resource for discussion on pedagogy and vision was too short
	Challenges in the mutual power relations between principals (including vice principals) affect the smoothness of the workflow
	The LG teachers positioned themselves on the margin regarding the decision-making power in their school as the actual leadership appeared as distributed between the people in senior positions
	LG teachers called for the stronger presence of the principal among the teaching community, e.g. visiting classrooms and firmer problem-solving of difficult situations, and stronger vision
	Team structures were not appreciated by all teachers, and team leader positions were unclear or not taken on
	LG teachers did not see it necessary that they with the principal would provide specific rules or frameworks for schooling
	Old leader-centred leadership culture had its impact on teachers' expectations on the principal role
	Role of a principal was loaded with many duties outside the school and the tight economic situation faced by the municipality
	Too tight internal schedules and external expectations and tasks coming from the local education (i.e. municipal) administration sometimes hinder the implementation of the internal plans
Opportunities	Several issues could have been decided at the school level (instead of at the principal or the municipal levels), and among the whole teaching community
	LG members' conflicting opinions were seen as a fruitful platform for finding novel ways to solve issues in the school
	There would be a need to create a clearer framework for common action, the need for more discussion on specific targets of this school, and the understanding of the relationship between goals and actions
	The commitment of the staff was seen as an important goal
	Willingness of teachers staying within/leaving the personal or professional comfort zone was seen as a factor with an impact on attitudes about development

unfair. They called for more grassroots level leadership and support for pedagogical development, discussion, and discipline. Lack of relevant information, structures for teaching work, and fluidity in the everyday organisation of schooling were seen as challenging for one's main work, teaching.

Above, we have interpreted the "contradictions" as activities, role conflicts, and mismatches between expectations versus the experienced reality and as being present in the current situation described by the participants. These contradictory issues were seen as causing tensions and misunderstandings among the actors at schools. The "opportunities" often tend to be understood as situations leading to potentially positive futures, but in this study, we did not presume that. However, the participants' speech on the future was mostly positively charged, and the future was

Table 12.3 Contradictions and opportunities defined by teachers

Teachers	
Contradictions	The organisation of leadership and who made the decisions were unclear
	Lack of leadership and vision, especially regarding the principal's role and work
	No discussions on pedagogy or values or ideologies behind education
	Lack of frames for teaching work, and no clear understanding of the sources for help and support
	Practicalities were not maintained properly, e.g. meetings were not prepared, nor were notes taken
	Unfair treatment of teachers: e.g. someone taught a subject without being properly qualified, substitute teachers were not given enough teaching hours
	Teachers called for more grassroots knowledge about classroom work and realities from the principals
	Teachers hoped for classroom visits, positive feedback, and encouragement more often
	Not all teachers were willing or ready to self-direct their teamwork or take responsibilities but saw their duties covering only their classroom work
	Teachers called for stronger leadership, supporting and disciplinary authority in relation to students
	The information did not always reach the teachers
	The principal was distant from teachers and students
	Limiting resources (funding, time) were mentioned as a challenge for leadership
	Contradicting the position of the principal, being the one representing the voice of the school/teachers to municipal actors and external policies to staff
	Teachers found the practices in school relationships (e.g. principal and teachers, teachers and students) to be something with the accumulating impact from one relationship or level of action to another: If the principal feels stressed and overloaded, this might cause him to share the stress instead of providing support while meeting the teachers, who then spread the emotion while at classroom
	Teachers discussed their own role and responsibilities related to agenda setting of the common discussion and the need to balance personal and professional expectations and needs
Opportunities	Teachers were encouraged to further educate themselves
	Teachers were provided with opportunities for participating and taking responsibility in shared planning
	Teachers were satisfied in the way of involving their opinions in discussions and guidelines for teaching and learning
	Teachers were happy for the encouragement to test new pedagogical ideas and methods
	The increased involvement of teachers in annual school year planning and other central processes experienced increasing transparency and commitment

interpreted as a promising opportunity (cf. Simola, 2022 on emotions in development work). This may have been influenced by the fact that the schools were voluntarily participating in a research and development project with the aim of improving the leadership practices of the school.

Different Contexts of Schooling and Educational Leadership

The focus of this chapter has been on the definitions of everyday leadership by principals, LG members, and regular teachers. We have looked at the contradictory issues explained by the research participants and the opportunities the representatives were able to see as possible future happenings. In the following, we discuss the findings through the heuristic framework of situational, professional, material, and external contexts of schooling and educational leadership (Braun et al., 2011; Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017).

Situated contexts are historically and locationally linked to the school, such as a school's setting, its history and intake, school's history, and reputation (Braun et al., 2011; Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017). Elements of situated contexts were present in our schools and discussions, such as mentions of "current situation" related to repairs to the school buildings. The need for and difficulties with pedagogical discussions were the most essential element of *professional* contexts present in interviews with all groups of actors. Professional contexts refer to values, teacher commitments and experiences, and policy management in schools (Braun et al., 2011). Pedagogical discussions were perceived as being difficult because of the lack of time of principals had, but also because traditionally the teachers' autonomy in decision-making on didactic matters has been important in Finnish schools. Quite often teachers called for the more authoritarian figure of the principal, especially when it comes to disciplinary issues in relation to pupils. All schools were participating in a university-led project in which they were supported and facilitated to develop their leadership practices to be more collaborative, shared, and involving. The perceived change from "old", "traditional", and "authoritarian" to more involvement of staff in decision-making or teamwork was experienced as being contradictory. *Material* contexts mean staffing, budget, buildings, available technology, and surrounding infrastructure, e.g. layout, quality, and spaciousness of the environment and buildings (Braun et al., 2011). There were few mentions of actual, material school infrastructure. Few mentioned how the principal often could not be present at one site due to their responsibility for several schools. Lack of time and resources were presented as a limiting element by all actors, but actual budgeting processes or financial limits were not mentioned at all.

Broader decision-making and governance structures of the state and the municipality which cause pressures and expectations form *external* contexts (Braun et al., 2011). Especially the LG members of the schools saw the leadership as an activity in which the municipal, national, and local level goals met. At one school, they pointed out how the impact of national curriculum, the autonomy of teachers, and different cultures among class teachers and subject teachers created culturally different contexts for leadership work at elementary and lower secondary schools. Because of the choice of focus in the interviews, municipal and governmental regulation and their impact on everyday leadership at schools were not mentioned many times. One reason for the relative lack of those mentions might also be because there is no school inspection system in Finland, which in some countries and regions

might have an impact on leadership targets. Also, schools operate relatively autonomously in relation to municipal governance.

Conclusions

We have presented leadership in education as a contextualised and relational practice. In the first part of the findings, we described how the principals, teacher members of the leadership groups, and regular teachers define the leadership in their schools. We also pointed out the ways these groups of actors define their relations to each other. In the second part of the findings, we discussed how they saw the opportunities and contradictions faced in the everyday life of schooling. In the discussion part, these findings were again contrasted to the model of contexts of educational leadership (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017; Braun et al., 2011).

Based on this study on schools with the will to develop their leadership practices towards a more collaborative and shared model, the change was not always perceived as an easy one. Different groups of actors experienced the situations and each other differently. There were existing school-specific differences in cultures and the understanding of the leader. At some schools, the upper secondary school subject teachers contested leadership by a person with a background in elementary education and as a class teacher. The most mentioned was the need for leadership on understanding the everyday realities of classrooms, teaching, learning, and their practical framework. However, the lack of time caused challenges for all actors, and pedagogical domain was traditionally considered as the teachers' private area. At the same time, some actors called for the more disciplined, authority figure to guide and provide direction, while others were happy with the more shared decision-making. It seemed that there was a need for situational flexibility in that sense. In addition, the expectations of different actors and leadership appeared to differ, as did the contexts.

Often, the leadership models show practices as idealistic, individualistic activities performed by leaders, in school contexts the principals, and lacking the messiness and richness of the organisational realities. Likewise, the research on leadership and organisational change often tends to idealise the leadership at the expense of sensitivity to contextual differences and positioned interpretations. Based on our study, the conceptualisations of leadership, different actors, and their relationships differed based on the position of the actor and the context of each school. Meanings given for leadership were constantly in flux and negotiated, interpreted, and translated in daily discussions and further enacted by the local actors in their local contexts. In general, understanding of this fluidity of meanings and contextuality requires research orientations which can focus on how policies and leadership are constructed in the local contexts. To do that in this study, we employed the heuristics of contexts developed by Braun et al. (2011) and Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) which have enabled us to discuss further the observation of the nonuniformity of the situation in Finnish schools and their leadership. We argue that a more

realistic, context-sensitive, and everyday-focused orientation (e.g. Ball et al., 2011) will give researchers and practitioners tools for their work. These perspectives might help in solving the conflictual situations in a new way, understanding the possible clashes between the expectations, ideals, and practices of different people not as errors of the specific tool or method but as products of the current conditions and culture.

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Chapter 13
Examining Contradictions for the Development of Competencies in School Leadership

Lauri Lantela, Ville Pietiläinen, and Saana Korva

Abstract This study examined the challenges school principals face at work, and their support needs for professional development. The study drew on cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) and approached as contradictions principals' work, the schools in which they operate as activity systems and the challenges they face. The research data consists of three data sets collected from principals: data from a quantitative survey ($n = 47$), data from workshops for principals ($n = 8$) and data from individual interviews ($n = 5$). Three main contradictions were formed from the data and named as (1) inadequate tools in relation to the object of activity, (2) hierarchical structure and tradition of schools and (3) fragmentation of the subject. The results reveal that the work of the principal and the organizational environment are increasingly complex—principals must solve unique problems that are new both to them and in society. The results point towards a shift in problem-solving and learning from an individual perspective towards the communal and inter-organizational view. A CHAT framework can be used as a tool in the development of these collaborative structures, practices and culture.

Keywords Activity theory · Leadership competencies · Principals' professional development · Complexity

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Introduction

The idea of a desirable school system has always varied over time and across countries. Due to these different trajectories, no universal definition of the nature of school (educational) leadership has been proposed. Researchers have offered many propositions on the concept. For example, Miller (2018) highlighted personal, socially focused, relational and environmental leadership aspects. Leithwood (2021) presented equitable school conditions that contribute to a deep understanding of different cultures, values and expectations of leadership. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has also led to the emergence of new crisis management issues, such as tension navigation and life support (Harris & Jones, 2020). This chapter delves deeper into school principals' competencies and the context beyond the Finnish school system, which the OECD considers to be a best-practice country in terms of leadership (Hargreaves et al., 2007).

According to the latest Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), which gathers the most extensive data on principals in 48 countries, school leadership and practices must be distributed among organizations (OECD, 2020). There are two primary levels of distribution. First, teachers engage in professional collaboration. According to the TALIS (OECD, 2020), teachers commonly share responsibilities related to their students but rarely utilize deeper cooperative working procedures concerning professional development. Second, distribution is associated with teachers' involvement in pedagogical decision-making processes. The TALIS (OECD, 2020) results reveal that teachers do not extensively participate in school management teams, policies, instructions or curriculum work.

Regarding school leadership, Finland appears to have some unique features compared to most TALIS countries. Following the success of PISA, the OECD characterized Finland as an instance of "positive deviance" and chose it as a case of desirable school leadership. In a case report (Hargreaves et al., 2007), the researchers praised Finnish societal structure at the general level, highlighting the attractiveness of teachers' profession, decentralized decision-making and the low teacher-student ratio in the classrooms as distinct elements of its success. Furthermore, the researchers characterized freedom and evidence-based steering, as opposed to standardized student testing or inspections, as unique features of Finnish school leadership. High levels of teacher professionalism and independence, in turn, enable a genuine distribution of responsibilities between the school principal and the teachers.

In the leadership context, schools can be viewed as complex environments (e.g. Lipscombe et al., 2021, Morrison, 2012). The educational system is part of a larger complex, continually changing system consisting of other public sectors (Sahlberg et al., 2021); therefore, principals must constantly face problems new to themselves and the rest of society. Societal and systemic changes such as the current reforms to regional government and social and health services being implemented in Finland particularly affect schools and principals; schools are critical operators in the lives of children and young people, and the support for their well-being takes place

through multiagentical cooperation between the school, different administrative branches of the municipality and the surrounding community (Deschesnes et al., 2003, Leinonen et al., 2021). Cooperation requires school leadership to have systemic, cross-border thinking and shared leadership practices. In Finland, principals have various duties and responsibilities and must make decisions that may affect multiple stakeholder groups, including students, parents, teachers and other school personnel (see, e.g. Holappa et al., 2021). Thus, due to such complexity, the demand for new leadership competencies is constantly high.

Leadership in complex environments, as well as in changing and unexpected situations, requires consideration of diversity and the dynamic interactions therein instead of just controlling and managing; leadership should also be seen from a complex perspective that includes relationships and network interactions (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2007; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). In current leadership theories, leadership is understood not just as an individual characteristic but as a collective phenomenon manifested in various interactions (Denis et al., 2012). Leadership models that emphasize collective leadership forms, such as distributed leadership, have been widely recognized as prevalent and ideal in educational organizations (e.g. Gumus et al., 2018). In Finland, distributed leadership is considered a solution to the increasing responsibilities of principals and problems regarding the division of labour by involving and engaging teachers in various leadership processes (Tian & Risku, 2019). In practice, distributing leadership is not simple, but it can be realized in many ways, from the delegation of tasks to genuine interaction regarding leadership action (Lahtero et al., 2017). However, it can also be quite complicated due to formal leadership structures and, in contrast, due to the informal relationships and hierarchies prevailing in the school community, which can prevent members of the community from participating in leadership. Hence, distributed leadership requires the principal to understand the multidimensional nature of leadership and to have the ability to develop practices and a culture that support the school community's participation in leadership (Lahtero et al., 2019).

Competencies are at the heart of principals' professional development. Competencies can be defined as the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that lead to humane and effective actions in the work of a principal (Sergis et al., 2018). As the definition suggests, competencies can be understood through principals' overall work, and the contents and qualifications of it determine the competencies, information and resources relevant to the principal's work and professional development. However, the perception of leadership as (individual) competencies has been criticized (Carroll et al., 2008). This is because, on the one hand, competencies are bound to the context and are often considered to be somewhat general and transferable. On the other hand, competencies can also be understood as community competency, as in the professional learning community (PLC) theory, in which a community learns in various ways to support student learning together (Antinluoma et al., 2018). Understanding competencies from the perspective of PLC presents a broader perspective from which to perceive professional development. However, approaching leadership competencies as dynamic and distributed, rather than as individual phenomena, demands a flexible, context-dependent examination. In

addition to traditional learning methods, flexible and agile methods based on principals' cooperation are needed to support the latter's professional development.

In this introduction, we have described the multifaceted contradictions related to school leadership that make such leadership challenging in many ways. However, few tools are available to tackle this complexity. In this study, we approach competencies through complexity and contradictions and show that contradictions can be seen as a source for school leadership development. To structure this complexity, we use the cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Engerström, 2001, 2005, 2015) to implement the research and analyse data. The following sections introduce the theoretical and methodological CHAT framework, followed by a presentation of the research questions and design.

## Approaching Complex School Leadership Competencies from the CHAT Perspective

In the face of complex problems, solutions are typically sought through bottom-up co-development tools. This is because complex issues require a multifaceted approach, and consultation with stakeholders is essential (Engeström, 2005; Raisio et al., 2018). This study's theoretical–methodological framework draws on Engeström's (2005) research in developmental work and is based on CHAT. In this theory, an activity consists of activity systems embedded in social practices. These systems are historically developed and have distinct social practices, ways of thinking and societal duties that influence people's actions. Historically, principals have had a central leadership and management position in schools: they direct and supervise the teaching and educational work of the school and are also responsible for administrative duties. Furthermore, they are tasked with monitoring the school's finances, drawing up timetables, making a work plan for the school year and granting longer leaves for students. While principals have teaching duties, their work may also include communicating with the school community, such as the parents of their students. Thus, the work of principals requires multiple competencies (e.g. managerial, pedagogical) and an interest in the well-being of the work community. Principals' competencies also include legal "ability", jurisdiction power and leadership.

Engeström's (2001) idea of developmental work research and expansive learning is utilized in the data analysis of the current study. The learning that occurs through activity, which Engeström calls *expansive learning*, is a valuable concept for the current study, as it focuses on principals' professional development and learning, which happen in authentic situations, by examining their daily routines and problem-solving situations. In Engeström's model, learning happens in contradictions. For example, a learning cycle might start with a need for change; in the principals' context, this could be a new curriculum, a new electronic governance system or a new situation with a student, parent or another stakeholder. Learning advances

when a contradiction requires a new kind of action. This is embedded in analysing a situation, weighing different options, implementing a new model and evaluating that model. The goal of developmental work research is to provide employees with concrete observational data about their work and its contradictions that can serve as a "mirror", thus enabling tasks to be set and conceptual tools designed to deal with the contradictions. This process can help establish new operating models and ways of working.

This study views principals' work and the schools in which they operate as activity systems. As seen in Fig. 13.1, different parts of the system, such as subjects, objects, mediating artefacts, outcomes, rules, the community and the division of labour, make it possible to describe culturally mediated actions on an individual level—that of a single principal—while also offering the opportunity to examine the relationship between individuals and their community. Here, "community" refers to a group of people (e.g. school personnel) who participate in the same actions and distribute their decision-making powers, responsibilities and benefits.

As shown in Fig. 13.1, the different areas of the operating system and the contradictions within and between them gather information from the competency development of the subject: the principal. For example, the rules area is strongly challenged in a COVID-19 context that emphasizes specific policies and controlled communication. This, in turn, requires new types of tools, such as managing distance-learning environments, subject moves one degree closer from being a familiar pedagogical developer to a crisis manager. A new set of contradictions is emerging in this situation. This can be seen as both a challenge and a learning opportunity when collective or individual problem-solving situations lead to emergent and expansive learning and competency development. Our primary research interest lies in these contradictions. Related to this, the professional planning co-creation process involves activities that aim to reveal contradictions, structure them and ideate new, innovative solutions.
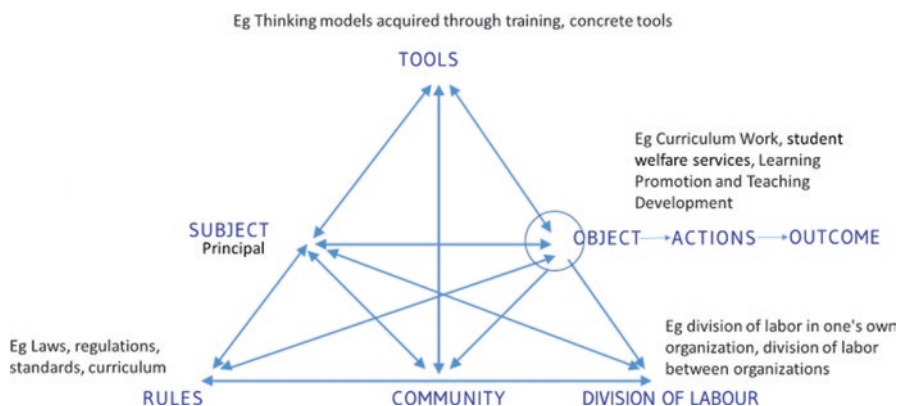
Fig. 13.1 Principals' work and schools as a distributed activity system. (Adapted from Engeström, 2001)

Research Questions and Research Design

This study examines complex contradictions as a foundation for school leadership development. We address the following research questions:

1. What are the contradictions related to school leadership competencies?
2. In what ways can the CHAT framework illustrate the complex features of these contradictions?

The study was conducted as part of the School Leadership in the Arctic (2018–2022) project. The project researched and developed ways to support the principal's work and professional development, focusing on rural areas and principals working in diverse settings (e.g. long distances, small communities and urban settings). One of the project's objectives was to develop and pilot a mobile professional development plan embedded in principals' daily work routines to plan and evaluate their professional development. This specific development work of the mobile professional development plan, as well as other research and development activities, offered a practical context for this study. The development work, which was carried out using methods based on the theory of action, involved questionnaires, service design and other workshop activities, observation and interviews.

Figure 13.2 illustrates the research cycle intertwined with development work to find new ways to support principals' competency development. The cycle began with an analysis (Phases 1 and 2) which focused on the principals' work and challenges. It was conducted through surveys, workshops and individual interviews. In Phases 3 and 4, the workshops centred on different solutions related to leadership competency development. Phases 5 and 6 concentrated on modelling new solutions and evaluating on new activities.

The principals created various materials during the development process described above. These materials consist of survey data, observational data from the workshops and thematic interviews with the principals (see Table 13.1). As the aim was to develop tools that considered local conditions and unique features, the research and development activities were kept as open as possible to attract participants from all over Lapland. The number of respondents, informants and participants was sufficient for the number of schools ($n = 140$) and principals ($n = 97$) in the region. Different parts of Lapland were well represented in the workshops.

The survey and interview questions and themes were designed based on descriptions of Finnish principals' work from earlier literature (e.g. The Ministry of Education in Finland, 2013; Pietiläinen, 2010). These were also derived from peer debriefing, in which principals from the project steering group ($n = 4$) evaluated the structuring. Accordingly, the principals' work was divided into seven dimensions: (i) pedagogical leadership, (ii) leadership regarding knowledge and information and communications technology (ICT), (iii) leadership of personnel, (iv) leadership regarding financial administration and strategy, (v) project leadership, (vi) leadership on international activities and (vii) change leadership (Table 13.2).
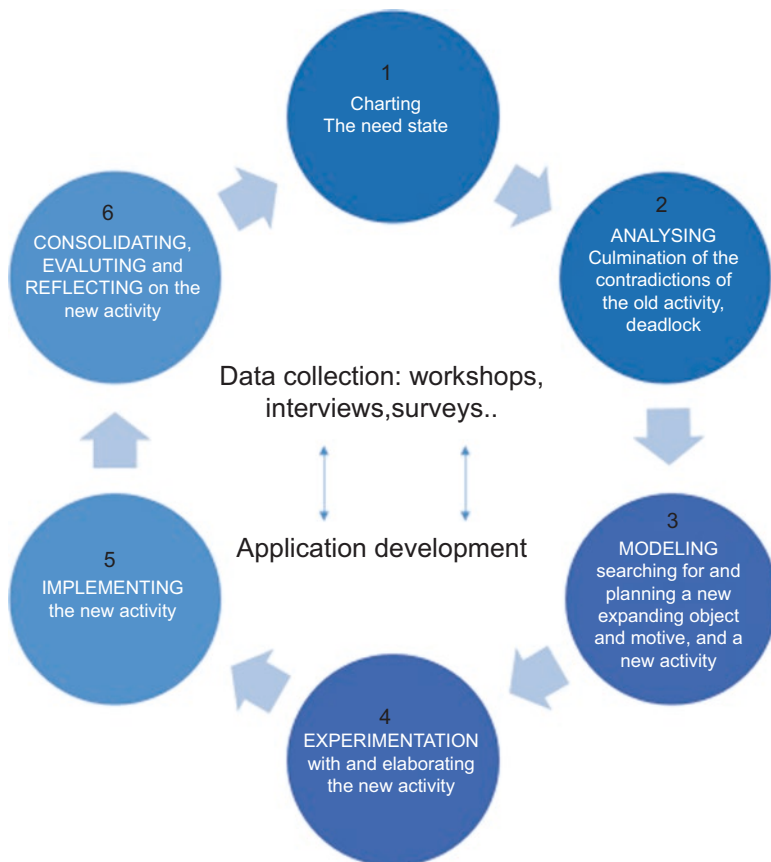
Fig. 13.2 The cycle of expansive learning and developmental work research in this study

Table 13.1 Description of the research data

Means of data gathering	Description	Data
Survey (*n* = 47)	The survey respondents evaluated their competencies, including their development and importance, both now and in the future. Survey had both open-ended and Likert scale questions	Quantitative and qualitative survey data
Workshop (*n* = 8) materials and observations	The workshops mapped the principals' (*n* = approx. 20) work, their need for professional development and their opportunities in support of such development	Observational data and workshop notes, materials produced in the workshops and application prototypes
Interviews (*n* = 6)	The interviews were guided by the preliminary results from the survey and the workshops. The interview questions were based on the division of principals' work and Engeström's (2005) activity system model	Interview data

Table 13.2 Work structuring and related tasks

Human resource management tasks	Issues relating to hiring and employment; work community and staff development; leading people; organizing work and division of labour
Information and communications technology (ICT) tasks	Developing a strategy for digitalization; creating a pedagogical ICT operating culture; ICT competence development; personal ICT skills
Pedagogical leadership tasks	Organization of curriculum work; student care; own training; promotion of learning and development of teaching; work planning
Financial, administrative, and strategy tasks	Budgets and appropriations; financial and action plan; strategy work; cooperation with boards and management team
Project tasks	Schools' internal and external projects; international projects; small-scale projects; teachers' planning and training days
International tasks	International educational cooperation; international funding; cultural awareness; language skills
Change management tasks	Visioning, communicating and motivating for change; organization and implementation of change; evaluation and monitoring of change processes

A survey was designed and sent to all regional principals based on these themes. The data analysis ($n = 47$) was performed, and information was obtained about their work, its challenges and the opportunities presented. This knowledge guided the workshops and was further explored in the interviews. The survey questions, interview questions and workshops focused on the principals' work, the challenges involved and the support they needed in their daily work. The interviewees ($n = 6$) were selected from those who expressed ($n = 9$) in the questionnaire their willingness to participate in the interviews. The selection of interviewees considered the regional coverage, as well as the size of schools and principals' work experience. The interviews were conducted to confirm and gain a more in-depth understanding of the survey results and the workshop outcomes.

To protect the anonymity of the interviewees, the study did not report any further information about them. The interview request indicated that the interviews would address the same themes as the survey. The interview framework included seven aspects of principals' work in the survey. For each area, the respondents were asked to describe the following: (a) the work and the challenges involved ("Describe your work as a principal in the current area of responsibility and where the possible challenges lie, in particular"), (b) the means to meet the challenges ("What means and tools does the principal have to meet the challenges?") and (c) the changes that should be made to reduce these challenges in the future ("What changes should be made [e.g. operating culture, tools, division of labour, own competence] to overcome challenges in the future?"). Moreover, the importance of networking was discussed, as it was identified as an essential theme in the survey and workshops. The question was framed as follows: "The importance of and the need for networking had been repeatedly highlighted in project meetings. What do you think is the reason for this?"

Qualitative analyses of the interview and observational and open-ended survey data were conducted following theory-driven content analysis, alternately guided by theory and data (Schreier, 2012). Here, the analysis units emerged from the data, but the theory guided their interpretation or grouping. The first steps of the analysis emphasized a data-driven approach, as the survey material was grouped according to the principals' mentions of concrete challenges and their observations. These results were then categorized and interpreted through theory, as well as according to theoretical themes from the competency model and the activity systems areas and dynamics. The quantitative analysis consisted of a simple descriptive analysis (e.g. means, medians and other descriptive statistics). The size of the municipality was examined as a sociodemographic factor, as it can be assumed to be relevant to the opportunities and challenges of professional development, thereby serving as an approximate indicator of the impact of the principals' circumstances.

Results

Framing the Contradictions Using Survey and Workshop Data

The process of charting current needs related to professional development support started with a survey, wherein the principals assessed their work and the challenges involved by structuring their work and competencies. In the survey, the most significant areas for development were competencies related to change leadership, financial administration, governance and strategic leadership. Within these areas, the principals evaluated their skills as weak compared to the demands of their jobs. Competencies related to pedagogical leadership were emphasized in the survey. The principals viewed these competencies as their strongest, as necessary now and in the future and as a significant area for development. The main results of the quantitative analyses are summarized in Figs. 13.3 and 13.4, which provide a broad picture of Lappish principals' competencies and those competencies' importance.

Figure 13.3 shows the scattering between and within the competency areas. For example, international and financial, administrative and strategy competencies have significant scattering. As can be seen, there are apparent differences when the means between the areas are compared, such as international competencies (M = 2.8, SD = 1.1) compared to pedagogical competencies (M = 4.5, SD = 1.3). This can be explained partly by the differences in conditions, such as the size of the municipality, as shown in Fig. 13.4. Figure 13.4 also suggests that the size of the municipality might create different profiles. When moving to workshops, these findings provided important background information and helped us mine solutions for supporting professional development.

The main findings from the qualitative survey material gave us a broad picture of the challenges involved in principals' work. When the participants were asked openly about these challenges, most of the responses referred to the breadth and

Int
International competencies

FiAdStra
Financial, administrative and strategy tasks

Proj
Project competencies

Cha
Change management compentencies

ICT
Information and communication technologies competencies

HR
Human resource management competencies

Peda
Pedagogical leadership competencies
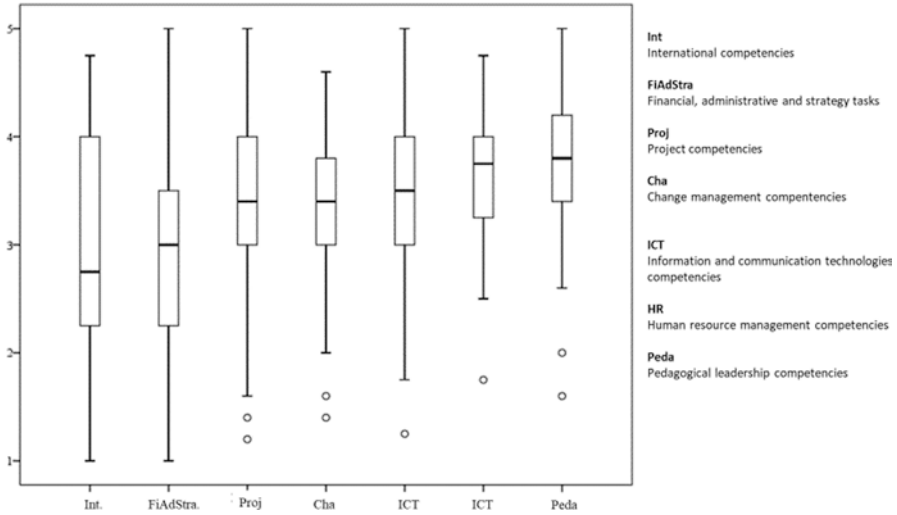
Fig. 13.3 Scatter plots illustrating the variance in competencies
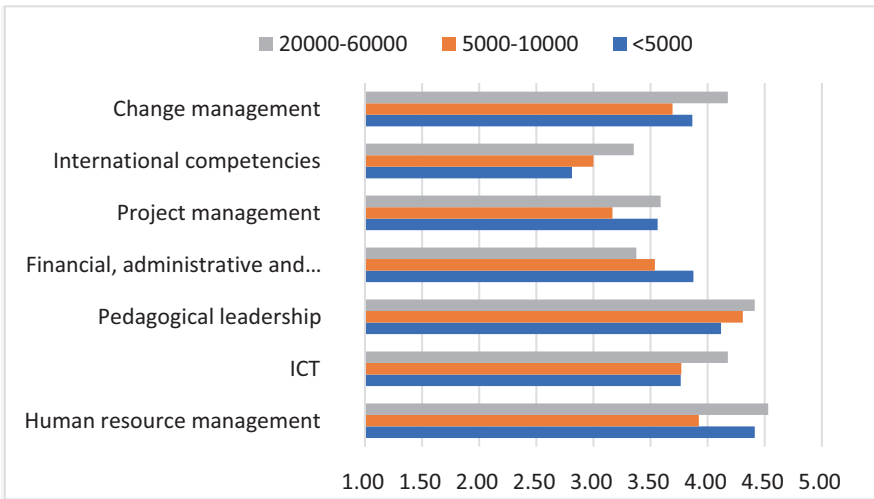
Fig. 13.4 Importance of competency areas according to municipality size

fragmentation of their work. Of the 118 issues that the principals reported, 73% were categorized under the three most prominent themes. The most significant sub-categories were *excessive workload and lack of time* (37 mentions), *complex problems in communication, interaction and relationships* (21 mentions) and *fragmentation of work* (23 mentions). This result gave us insight regarding the culmination of the contradictions, as the principals clearly expressed that they did not have the tools to deal with the problems in their current situations. The rest of the

responses (35) seemed like random notices, such as notices on the economic situation of their schools and on dissatisfaction with school facilities.

The research continued with the workshops, which focused on deepening the understanding of the contradictions and deadlocks and on modelling new solutions based on the derived information. The activities included researching and planning new expanding objects, motives and a new activity, as well as experimenting with and elaborating on this new activity. We started by listening to the principals talk openly. Then, we derived the main themes from the discussions, which later became our focus. The principals' work challenges were also explored. The workshops aimed to function as a "mirror" by producing data about the principals' work and the possible contradictions therein. We aimed to set tasks and conceptual tools to deal with the identified contradictions and ultimately ideate new operating models and working methods. In utilizing different dialogical workshop methods, the workshops' goals were to outline the principals' work challenges and specify the information produced through the survey.

The workshops outlined the overall picture by discussing the principals' work year and mapping out the challenges and emotional stages during the year. After mapping the challenges, the necessary kinds of support that we identified were then considered. The principals' challenges and needs were prioritized by voting, and possible solutions were devised and voted on. The results were validated and supplemented between the workshops and the preliminary findings (the survey). Accordingly, the main themes were as follows: (1) the fragmentation of work and the narrowness of one's competence (competence as power), (2) inadequate tools in relation to the object of work and (3) the hierarchical structure/tradition of the school. Figure 13.5 shows the process of utilizing the theory of activity, in which the
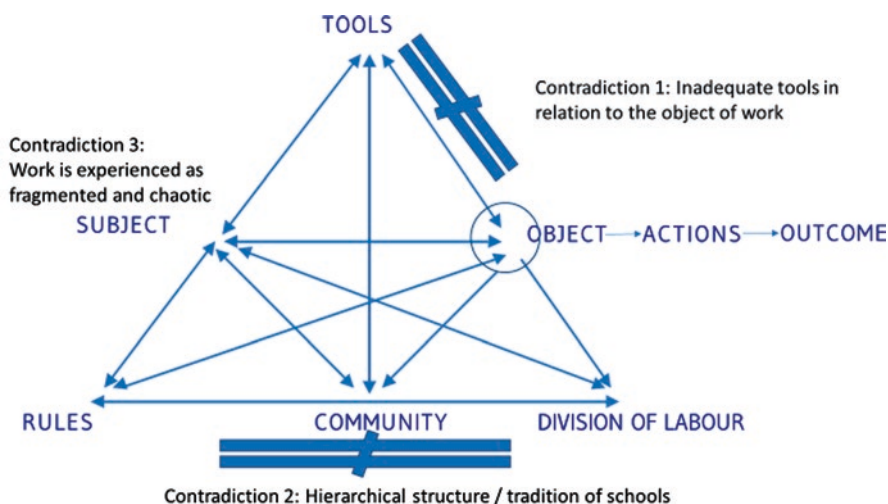
Fig. 13.5 The main professional development challenges in the principals' work (according to interviews and workshop data) identified as contradictions in the activity system

results are summarized into three main themes according to the structure of the activity system.

As shown in Fig. 13.5, the central theme regarding the community aspect of the activity system is the contradiction between rules and division of labour, while the central theme regarding the tools aspect is the lack of adequate tools in relation to the object of activity. The object, of course, is the focal point to which all other aspects are mirrored. However, the principals most often explicitly pointed this out when reflecting on the challenges of their work with respect to the available tools. The following chapters present and interpret the findings more thoroughly, using the interview data to answer the research question. The chapters first introduce the critical competence dimensions related to the contradictions and then illustrate them with appropriate quotes and explanations. Finally, the following chapters identify potential areas in which to provide support or address the contradictions recognized from the data.

In-Depth Understanding of the Contradictions Through the Interview Data

Contradiction 1: Inadequate Tools in Relation to the Object of Activity

One of principals' essential experiences was having inadequate tools at their disposal. The principals usually reflected on these tools in relation to the object of work, and the most commonly discussed ones were concrete physical tools, such as textbooks or facilities where work was usually done. The discussion of the theme of *human resource management*—a contradiction between the purpose of work (supporting the growth and development of children's and young people's learning) and the lack of tools—could strain human resource management. For instance, one principal described the general working conditions and means of doing the work in Lapland as deficient.

This inadequacy illustrates why teachers become tired of a situation in which inadequate tools prevent them from achieving their pedagogical goals. In such situations, principals must take care of the pedagogical operating conditions and the well-being of the staff from the perspective of human resources management. This challenge demonstrates how problems in principals' work can be multifaceted and co-occur among different parts of the operating system, even in unexpected ways; thus, the principal must possess unique new knowledge, skills and competencies. The following quote describes this phenomenon in detail:

> I know rightly from experience what is currently big and challenging in human resources management in schools in Lapland. I mean, it's that a pretty big part of us (schools in Lapland) has to work in some temporary facilities ... the fact that quite a lot of teaching has to be arranged in these kinds of spaces and places that are not designed for school work ... In our municipality, we have an indoor problem in all schools. It kind of requires the principal to plan the whole thing … how everything revolves around that exceptional

situation. And then, on the other hand, the fact that the staff gets tired. They're really tired of it. (Interviewee 1)

According to the principals, this situation would require both training and peer support in discussion with other municipal principals. The problems of human resource management and pedagogical leadership arising from this complex change situation do not seem to be solvable only with competencies produced by traditional training. Instead, they are unique, such that targeted and agile problem-solving processes are also needed. In this case, the facility problem cannot be solved, but it would be possible to solve the resulting management problems and achieve expansive learning, as well as professional and competence development, as can be seen in the following interview excerpt:

> It is not just teacher training, teacher experience and the education administration exam that prepare people for the real, realistic situations where that leadership occurs. … For example, these temporary facility situations require a lot from leadership. ... People get frustrated, and they get tired. They dismantle it with the supervisor. Principals would need much more training. We need more of that peer support and the place where they can then unravel the different situations they have, both with subordinates and, of course, with the students, carers—everyone. (Interviewee 2)

The next extract(s) explains how the available tools do not allow the conduct of efficient activities with students or staff that are aligned with ICT leadership objects. Accordingly, it seems that small municipalities have difficulty providing supportive training for teachers and implementing teaching and other activities for students under the national core curriculum. The current tools and conditions are such that no suitable training can be found. There are also different preconditions for staff development in municipalities where no substitute teachers are available. In response, certain schools have found relief from the challenges brought on by online learning, peer learning and tutoring; these solutions to the problems faced by teachers in their classrooms make it possible to learn in authentic situations, as the following quote explains:

> All the trainings organized by the National Board of Education are [held] in Rovaniemi. Our municipality cannot send teachers to training because it means three days off, and because we have no substitute teachers, we would need to put the kids home. So, even though it is crucial, and even if the principal sees it as a long-term investment to support enthusiastic young teachers who want to develop their ICT skills ... Those web-based trainings have been terribly important to us. (Interviewee 1)

> I see our students as having very unequal treatment compared to their peers from other municipalities. For example, how much information technology we can utilize and how many computers per student. We have about 300 students at the moment and 30 computers. Then, there are schools with great resources and opportunities ... The curriculum says that students should go outside to learn. However, we do not have sufficient financial resources to order a bus and go somewhere. (Interviewee 2)

Peer support with other municipal principals in a similar situation would be vital in developing the principals' leadership competencies in solving problems related to ICT tools. Peer support could also be useful in networking with other municipalities with similar plans and with the kind of equipment that would provide a broader

basis for solving management problems and supporting a larger pool of teachers. This can be seen as a kind of boundary-crossing between different activity systems to overcome contradictions arising from the rules, thus achieving a common, similarly defined goal. Thus, through the expansion of the object, it is now possible to achieve expansive learning, as shown in the excerpt below:

> In fact, what we are entirely missing ... is that it would be terribly helpful if you talked to the neighbouring municipalities about what to focus on, what software, what equipment and what to do. The same can also be said about the population of teachers who can then be trained in something that could result in a much bigger pool of experts. There may always be someone who can answer a question that your municipality is not able to answer. (Interviewee 4)

According to the interview data, the objects for the action, set by legislation and the national core curriculum, do not recognize the preconditions of sparse population areas and neglect the unique issues of the Sami area. Size and other school features seemed to play a role in the formation of contradictions. For example, in the interviews and workshops, the principals of smaller schools often expressed their feelings regarding inequality in the system, while the principals of larger schools seemed to validate their views. In particular, ongoing core curriculum changes revealed that small municipalities with scarce resources are unequal to larger municipalities. For principals in small municipalities, the content of contradictions might actualize as an experience in which, because of the size of a school and its unique features, a leader has no tools to achieve the goal of students' learning and development. When talking about the theme of pedagogical leadership, one partici-pant said:

> We also have this pedagogical leadership's special issue (in the Sami area). According to the National Board of Education, there are no bilingual schools in Finland. Furthermore, there are no bilingual schools in Finnish primary education legislation either ... However, we do have bilingual schools. This is a genuinely complex and big question in pedagogical leadership. Moreover, no one is advising on that in any way. I have raised this matter with the National Board of Education, the Ministry of Education, and the Regional State Administrative Board. Should we require the principal to know the two languages of instruction? According to law, it is necessary to know the language of instruction, and we have two. No one answered. (Interviewee 3)

Inadequate tools regarding financial, administrative and strategy competencies were also discussed. In general, it seems that principals lack competencies due to insufficient education. One participant described how, in her experience, principals generally had too little expertise in financial management. She felt that the matter was the same for the teachers and attributed this to the pedagogical emphasis within principal and teacher education. Specifically, teachers and principals are trained to think about activities from a pedagogical point of view, and they learn the realities of economics only when they enter working life. Thus, the challenges facing principals may be personified by the contradictions caused by inadequate tools, especially if they do not share responsibility and information with the entire teaching community. The following excerpt can be understood as an example of the

contradiction between pedagogical goals and tools and an issue with labour distribution:

> The principal is trained to think pedagogically about schoolwork. But … in fact, the financial drivers in that school planning and pedagogical management are the most significant factors … The new principal ... does not have enough tools for that reality. This situation is so burdensome for the principal ... because the conflict of pedagogical and financial interests. This is not understood even by the teaching community ... Because of this, it is worth trying to involve at least the teaching staff in the financial framework of the whole municipality. ... Otherwise, those solutions, those pedagogical solutions and financial solutions that conflict with each other, are personified in the principal. (Interviewee 5)

When discussing the experience of contradiction between tools and objects, the principals also highlighted that their competency is a kind of legal "ability" and jurisdiction power. This experience is particularly highlighted when it comes to financial management. The principals know the different conditions in which they operate, what room they have for manoeuvres and how their situation compares to the positions of principals in other municipalities. The potential for the development of competencies is hardly seen or is not relevant when there is no real possibility of effective influence. One principal described the situation by saying that he had good personal skills, an interest in financial management and much autonomy in managing finances. The municipality also had an excellent financial situation, while in many other municipalities, the experience seemed to be to the contrary, as shown below.

> That is a crucial area: the economic side. As for myself, I have training and interest, so I haven't experienced it as a burden in that way. Of course, it depends on the municipality's situation, such that if you live with scarce resources, as many do, the more burdensome it will be. … And it also depends on how it is defined. In some municipalities, it may be that the principal receives a lump sum of money and instructions: Run the school with it. In some other places, it's very much kind of already defined what to do with it. There are significant differences here. (Interviewee 2)

> It seems a little funny that I'm on a (several millions' budget), and I can control 2% of it. So, somehow, I do not feel like I am leading the economy. It's more like I am just an inspector of bills, and there is no autonomy there at all. Last year, I saved 20,000€, but then the municipality administration froze all the funds, and I could no longer use the 20,000. I thought I would have made certain purchases with them. (Interviewee 5)

Contradiction 1 clearly shows how principals generally evaluate their work based on the objectives of pedagogical leadership. They set strict standards that may seem impossible to reach. When considering the work, the principals often seem to experience inadequacy and conflict between what is pedagogically necessary and justified and what is possible in their situation and organization. Several examples above show that the resolution of conflict can be facilitated by supporting professional development, such as training, to provide conceptual tools for understanding and handling difficult situations. However, support for professional development and authentic and expansive learning applicable to everyday life would require structures and resources to support and enable problem-solving either independently or with colleagues. Thus, the provision of tools and resources can also be seen as the removal of barriers to facilitate the learning process.

Contradiction 2: Hierarchical Structure and Tradition of Schools

The interviewees often described contradictions arising from the municipal collective bargaining agreement for teaching staff (OVTES). In the activity system, these rules and regulations seemed to limit the principals' activities so that they felt they could not lead the organization efficiently to achieve their goals. From the point of view of human resource management, for example, staff development and distributed leadership are challenging to implement. The principals described the OVTES as outdated and ill-suited to their current situations, in which utilizing and developing the competence potentials of all personnel could better solve complex problems. The principals' general experience is that rules restrict the division of labour, and they generally wish for a change towards distributed leadership. Furthermore, to elicit the best response to complex challenges, schools should use their whole skill potential, as stated below:

> ... If responsibilities could also be shared, teachers have many different skills and interests and desire to do things. But then, the opportunity given by the OVTES for sharing is terrible. The OVTES is so rigid that you always have to sit down and really use your time: "Well, now we have a teacher who wants to take responsibility for Primus, how in the world can we pay for this, according to the OVTES." It represents a very old model of teaching, where the teacher teaches and attends in the teachers' meeting, and that's it. (Interviewee 1)

> I have always said that not all wisdom dwells in this principal's office, nor should it dwell there. The aim is to make use of everyone's knowledge. There is a lot of knowledge from different areas of expertise in our personnel. Young people have the latest information sought from school, and ... the more experienced teachers have that work experience. Together, you can learn and move towards new things. It is always also about committing to those tasks; that is, for some people, the car's taillights are visible as soon as the class is over. (Interviewee 5)

The hierarchical contradiction between the rules and distribution of labour can also be understood from the point of view of tradition, that is, the difference between traditional and changing teachership and between traditional and current (or modern) operating environments. For example, new teachers have different, historically formed perceptions of teaching compared to their colleagues, who have taught for a long time. This can be seen, for example, as a management challenge in personnel development.

> ... If you want to offer training. For example, we had this kind of work well-being training where there were quite a lot of these activities that required throwing oneself into situations and acting out and all that, so it was really great for the young teachers, just great. However, for the teachers in their sixties, it was a terrible waste of people's working time and a mockery of people. (Interviewee 1)

In addition, the distribution of labour is reflected in the challenge of responding to individual needs that principals have not traditionally addressed so strongly. Teachers' autonomy has traditionally been substantial in Finland; according to the principals, teachers have autonomy and responsibility for their teacherhood, professional development and overall well-being. However, at present, teachers seem to need more support from their supervisors. This poses a challenge for

principals because, on the one hand, the tradition and legal position guide principals to respect the teachers' autonomy, while on the other hand, the principals are also expected to act as modern leaders. They are expected to possess and utilize human resource competencies, including interaction skills, to guide their subordinates in challenging and sensitive situations and to solve complex human interaction problems. This can be understood as a contradiction within the area *Rules* due to legislation and the traditionally honoured positions of teachers and principals.

> In Finland, teachers have traditionally been entirely independent actors in teaching, and no one else has any business going to their class. But now, however, quite a lot more of the young teachers want that guidance from the principal and want to discuss everything, such as situations with students and the need for special support. They also want feedback and support for their teacherhood. I have noticed that young teachers are different in that way. (Interviewee 3)

> ... perhaps what has been discussed with colleagues in job supervision is that when a teacher loses that motivation or has problems in their interaction. Or if their mental balance is not good, it produces problems with the students and guardians. Helping there can be difficult ... This may not have been so strongly dared to be brought up in the past. (Interviewee 4)

When principals described their legal position, many used phrases, such as "centre of all" or "the principal is responsible for everything". According to the interviewees, the position of the principal as the centre of the school leads to certain challenges, as principals are expected to have solutions to all problems. This is especially challenging in certain areas, such as human resource management, where problems might be simultaneously very complex and sensitive. Hierarchy also strains human resource management, as shown when principals described situations in which different groups of personnel had problems with one another or with other stakeholders. Because of their complexity, these challenges were often experienced as the most demanding and straining time-wise.

The next excerpt describes how hierarchism is reflected in the position of the principal in relation to their subordinates and in the hierarchy of different staff groups. Due to principals' legal position, they are subject to expectations that are difficult to meet because they require a wide range of skills, dedication and time. This also conflicts with their human resource management competency, as they would like to use more modern approaches and participatory methods in these problem-solving situations. When asked about solutions to this contradiction, one interviewee felt that collegial support might help:

> Our legislation is set very hierarchically, so that the principal is responsible for everything. It creates a setup in which the principal becomes a school's belly button. It is at war with the modern concept of leadership. This is a major contradiction. One place where it shows is in the internal relationships among personnel—between personnel groups and between persons. The school is quite hierarchical ... Resolving conflict situations, that's what it is; it's the principal's job, for the most part. This emphasizes interaction skills. There are many different conflict situations wherein the principal is expected to solve them and deal with them. So, that is where the need arises for you to have a colleague somewhere a little further away, who actually has the same tangle of problems. It kind of dismantles it ... it's a kind of peer-to-peer work guidance. (Interviewee 3)

The theme of change management usually led to discussions wherein leadership and principals' roles were described in a very traditional top-down manner. Change was understood as something inevitable that the principal alone needed to make happen, sometimes in a forced way. The principals described the challenges of change management and the opportunities for success, emphasizing communication, motivation, organization and the implementation of change as critical areas of change management. In particular, they emphasized trust and interaction, as well as the challenges brought about by the conflict between the division of responsibilities and the management responsibilities related to implementation. The necessary changes must be made with determination but in interactive and shared ways. As one principal stated:

> There is resistance to change. People are looking for permanent structures and stability. They are important, of course, and then there is much pressure from the outside for changes. For example, new curricula are now coming, and the Upper Secondary School Act has been reformed. … There are constantly different pressures for change in primary education, and they come quite a lot from outside. The role of the principal is to act as a kind of filter. On the other hand, as an advocate and motivator for change, the principal has to defend a lot the change that comes from the outside, whether at the municipal level or even at the higher level … the pressure for change. Then, the principal often has to defend and justify the change at the school, such as why something like this is being done. (Interviewee 4)

Contradiction 2 reveals cultural- and rules-related obstacles to the development of competencies. The principals interviewed shared a modern concept of leadership, recognized the expertise and competence of their organizations and preferred to use the expertise and competence in the direction of their organizations' goals for the benefit of their students and staff. Competence is understood as shared competence, and its development is hindered by rules that manually prevent principals from acting as they see fit. This problem was naturally raised in several major areas of work in view of the principals' extensive job description, the extensive activities and development needs of the school and the competence base of the staff, which is, of course, very broad. The possibility of dismantling barriers to learning relied on principals for knowledge sharing and peer learning. According to the principals, developing competencies would require reforming outdated systems, including certain rules and new kinds of teaching, principalship and operating culture.

Contradiction 3: Fragmentation of the Subject

The contradiction of *fragmentation of the subject* can be understood as emerging from role conflict in the principals' work, leading to the formation of Contradictions 1 and 2 described above. In this case, the principals felt that they had inadequate tools to handle the challenges in their work. Furthermore, based on school hierarchy and tradition and the multifaceted nature of their work, they often took a central position in their organizations and dealt with the somewhat chaotic content and requirements of their work. Many principals felt that they did not have enough time for any long-term work, such as pedagogical leadership or strategy work, as they already had their hands full with daily routines. For example, strategy work, offered

as a discussion point under the theme of financial, administrative and strategy tasks, was chosen as a topic by only one principal, and financial tasks were always discussed under other themes. Furthermore, the only discussion (with interviewee 3) on strategy work was short: *Maybe the challenge here is that there should be time for that strategy work. (Everyday work) is too much just living in the moment. It takes so much to run daily work. Summer is a good time because it (…) gives us time to plan.* The principals also described the fragmentation of work in multiple ways, and many of them shared how they had their hands full all the time with daily routines, as expressed in the following excerpt:

> The principal should not do routines, but I have to. There are many such things, like school transportation and other things. The principal makes decisions about school transportation, but the school secretary should already be the one planning the transportation and such. Likewise, something like printing certificates or the like ... They take an incredible amount of time. Also, for example, the acquisition of substitutes. I have to do far too much of that, and I don't have anyone to delegate that to. It's a time crunch that is sometimes eating up the whole week. (Interviewee 1)

Of course, pedagogical leadership was viewed as the most crucial aspect of the principals' work. The principals often discussed, in relation to Contradiction 1, the lack of sufficient tools for pedagogical leadership, while Contradiction 2 indicated that, from the point of view of the distribution of work, they had no one to delegate the other tasks to. The centrality of pedagogical leadership was also emphasized when the principals described their rush and workload and the fact that there seemed to be too little time for that most critical issue. They often had to complete daily talks for which they had no compensation, no training or interest, and could not delegate them to anyone. They often described their work as akin to extinguishing fires, as shown in the following excerpt:

> In this everyday life, pedagogical leadership, which should be essential, has the least time. Perhaps, for example, concerning financial management, I would like to see better support from the city's accounts. And then, for example, matters related to property maintenance, which employ a lot, that the facility maintenance service would take care of. Then, I would have time for that, which is the gem in all of this: pedagogical leadership. (Interviewee 2)

This theme was also emphasized when issues of ICT were discussed. Principals had similar experiences regarding the use of ICT to communicate with stakeholders and thought that technology seemed to cause an uncontrollable flood of information, chaos and fragmentation. Thus, paradoxically, it is not the lack of adequate tools that causes the experience of fragmentation but the abundance of such tools and their use. The issue can also be caused by the overall workload and hierarchical culture associated with this phenomenon, in which the principal is seen as "responsible for everything". Then, ICT tools mediate that culture and the accompanying expectations due to the principals' position. The ICT tools are highly effective, increasing principals' availability and lowering the contact threshold. The excerpt below shows how the principals often felt alone in those situations, with many problems to solve and many questions to answer. They also thought that networking might help solve problems and lead to professional development if they were able to turn ICT problems into strengths by establishing channels for interaction:

The principal does not have the means to [solve the problem]. I cannot say I'm not reading the text messages or listening to the answering machine. I don't have the tools to reduce that flood of communication or fragmentation. Then, my communication might seem bad because so many messages will come to me from many different channels and all expect fast answers. This is probably what also increases the need for cooperation; you can't know everything … We (principals) have different areas of expertise and strengths to be shared. (Interviewee 3)

Contradiction 3 is about the experience of the subject, the principal, which occurs especially when their work is busy. According to principals' experience, this is often the case. From the point of view of competence development, the challenge is that high workloads and reactively living in the moment cause time shortages that prevent perseverance and planning. Reducing the workload and eliminating tasks beyond principals' core competencies could free energy and time for the development of other competencies and enable the principals to strengthen their core areas of expertise, such as pedagogical leadership. Similar to the first and second contradictions, in the third contradiction, cooperation and joint problem-solving that crosses organizational boundaries could reduce workload and fragmentation, thus enabling expansive learning and the further development of core competencies.

Discussion

The analysis of empirical materials offers valuable knowledge of Lappish principals' current challenges and various ways to support their professional development. These findings can be understood through Engeström's (2001) theory of expansive learning and the theory of complexity, as principals must learn things that cannot be acquired from books and that are new to both themselves and society. Furthermore, the findings shift the focus from individual-oriented school leadership competence frameworks (e.g. Sergis et al., 2018) to context system adaptability. Accordingly, the three contradictions can be viewed as a source of disequilibrium that, in turn, is a fundamental entity of necessary school transformation.

Contemporary school leadership research suggests that the most appropriate approach to system adaptability highlights team networks instead of centralized models (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016). From this perspective, the three contradictions are evolving phenomena for collaborative and process-oriented learning. The learning-by-contradictions perspective (CHAT) offers both a framework and a tool for this purpose. However, in addition to the common principles, school leadership systems always contain unique features (Leithwood, 2021). Next, we present conclusions associated with the three contradictions' general and contextual dimensions.

School leadership contradictions are duly recognized phenomena in the literature. The lack of adequate tools concerning the object of activity (Contradiction 1) is the most extensively addressed contradiction in different countries, and it is especially intertwined with opportunities related to the achievement of equitable school

results and the accessibility of learning (Leithwood, 2021). The hierarchy among rules, communities and the distribution of labour (Contradiction 2) can be considered a rather unexpected result in this work. Compared to other OECD countries (OECD, 2020), in Finland, researchers (e.g. Hargreaves et al., 2007) have emphasized high-level teacher professionalism and the distribution of responsibilities between school principals and their teachers. According to the data presented in the chapter, traditional teachership and principalship positions partly explain these hierarchy-related challenges. Furthermore, the municipal collective bargaining agreement appears to support these positions. Accordingly, a potential solution to this contradiction might be a careful comparison of the regulatory and competency-based professional development possibilities.

Finally, the fragmentation of the subject (Contradiction 3) posits a principal within a fragile role instead of a strong character. Along with the ongoing pandemic, the focus on school leadership is shifting towards the navigation of tension and students' mental health issues (e.g. Hume et al., 2021). However, the principal's coping skills and the required support (e.g. professional guidance or supervision of work) are still heavily understudied leadership dimensions, although some researchers (Elomaa et al., 2021) are opening up new avenues on the phenomenon.

In conclusion, this chapter shifts the research focus to the critical issues of distributed leadership and competency. The three contradictions for professional learning we have identified emerge as a collective and contextual phenomenon rather than as singular features or characteristics. Activity systems help to recognize such phenomena and their limits and opportunities. Consequently, we emphasize the more sophisticated use of the CHAT framework in the school leadership context. Hence, distributed leadership requires the principal to understand the multidimensional nature of leadership and to have the ability to develop practices and culture that support the school community's participation in leadership (Lahtero et al., 2019). According to Sahlberg (2021), the success of the Finnish educational system is based on teachers' and principals' high levels of professionalism and autonomy, which allow Finnish schools to operate as constantly learning and improving self-organizing systems. According to this study, from the perspective of contradictions and leadership development, there is still much unused potential in sustainable networks *between* schools and principals (r.f., Hargreaves et al., 2007).

The study has several limitations that should be considered when generalizing and applying the results. First, as a context for this study, the Finnish education system has many unique features. The contradictions identified in this paper are specific to Finland and Lapland. Finland is an egalitarian society with few hierarchies, and Lapland has unique conditions. This context undoubtedly produces unique professional development challenges and contradictions. For example, more distributive leadership is not an option in many countries. In Finland, this may be possible, although it is not a realistic option because of the bargaining agreement. Second, the study design and methodology impacted and influenced the interpretation of the research findings. For example, the open-ended questions and encouragement of the principals to engage in creative ideation during the process produced data that revealed needs and opportunities for professional development that, while

interesting, might not be realistic. Also, the CHAT perspective, the developmental work research process and the survey resulted in a fairly comprehensive view of principals, but the views of other significant figures, such as students, parents and carers and teachers, were not heard in this process. Principals' primary responsibility is essentially to lead the school towards the improved learning and well-being of children and young people. In future CHAT-based research, it would be interesting to implement additional research phases in which other essential stakeholders, such as children, parents and carers, could also participate.

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Chapter 14
Principals' Perceptions of Their Work During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mailis Elomaa, Marja-Kristiina Lerkkanen, and Eija Pakarinen

Abstract   The present study aimed to describe school principals' perceptions of the changes and challenges they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and what kinds of support and new competences they found important for managing their work. Fifty-five Finnish principals completed an online questionnaire that included open-ended questions. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data. The results showed that principals experienced changes mainly in their workload, in the nature of their work, and at an individual level, such as in family-work balance and increased motivation. Information and communication technology skills were mentioned most often as new skills needed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, though some principals argued that no new skills were needed. Principals highly valued support from the school community through discussions, flexibility, and teamwork, as well as clear instructions and guidelines from the upper-level administration. The results help in planning crisis leadership to ensure the continuity of high-quality education during exceptional circumstances. As other educational crises may follow the COVID-19 pandemic and crisis and change management are essential skills for principals, these skills should be taken into account when revising the pre- and in-service training curricula.

Keywords   School principals · Crisis leadership · Remote work · COVID-19 · Support · Competences

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused numerous social challenges, including world-wide economic hazards, deteriorations in people's well-being, and impacts on education. School systems around the world have had to adapt their ways of working to

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address various difficulties (Biag et al., 2021; Harris, 2020; Parveen et al., 2022). As the pandemic spread rapidly across the globe, there was an urgent need for school staff to cope with new demands and challenges to maintain education for students in exceptional circumstances. Many governments **ordered** schools to close totally or partly, requiring students and teachers to switch to remote learning almost overnight (Collie, 2021; Harris & Jones, 2020). Drawing from the conclusions of Biag et al. (2021), we can be sure that other educational crises will follow the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we need to learn from the current situation to prepare for new challenges and ensure high-quality education in the future. School principals play an important role in planning, overseeing, and supporting these processes.

The global pandemic has created an unprecedented challenge, especially for school leaders (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021) who play a key role as mediators between national educational authorities and school staff. School leaders are positioned as the pinch point in the system, being reliant on guidance about COVID-19 responses, processes, procedures, and protocols from the upper administration (Harris & Jones, 2020). According to Thornton (2021), the challenges school leaders faced during the pandemic included preparing teachers and students for remote learning for an unknown length of time, supporting the well-being of students and staff, and communicating clearly and compassionately to all stakeholder groups. Salmela-Aro et al. (2020) found that organizing education during remote learning in spring 2020 decreased school principals' job engagement. Worldwide, principals' already heavy workloads have increased with the need to create new remote leadership practices and orchestrate teachers' new and diverse learning environments (Biag et al., 2021; Harris & Jones, 2020).

Although principals are used to handling smaller crises, most school leaders have never dealt with crises of this scale and scope for as long as this COVID-19 pandemic (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021). Thornton (2021) described five leadership practices undertaken by principals in crisis leadership: preparing, addressing well-being, communicating effectively, leading collaboratively, and taking opportunities to frame the discussion. She also indicated that crisis leadership demands agility, a willingness to embrace change, and a mindset of possibilities to resolve crises and position the organization for an improved future state (Thornton, 2021). Fernandez and Shaw (2020) suggested that to address possible future crises, school leaders should take advantage of opportunities to learn and evolve in the current one. Taking into account the unparalleled nature of the current crisis, it is important to understand how to support school principals in leading schools through immediate crisis and through change in the long term. In the current study, "principal" refers to a leader of a comprehensive school providing mandatory education for Grades 1–9, after which students enter secondary-level education.

The main purpose of this study was to provide knowledge about principals' work-related experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also investigated the kinds of new competences and support principals perceived as necessary during the crisis. The results of the study provide important insights into factors that should be considered in supporting principals and preparing them for possible future crises.

School Leadership During the Crisis

In a school context, a crisis can be regarded as any urgent situation that requires school leaders to take fast and decisive action (Smith & Riley, 2012). Boin et al. (2010) defined crisis management as the sum of activities aimed at minimizing a crisis's impact. The effectiveness of crisis management can be assessed in relation to taking action, making sure the task is completed and fulfilling a symbolic need for direction and guidance (Boin et al., 2010). The executive tasks of crisis management are early recognition, sensemaking, making critical decisions, orchestrating vertical and horizontal coordination, coupling and decoupling, meaning making, communicating, rendering accountability, learning, and enhancing resilience (Boin et al., 2010). These tasks are hard to accomplish in the best of circumstances, and the dynamics of crises make them even harder (Boin & Renaud, 2013). According to McLeod and Dulsky (2021), during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, some key challenges for school leaders were the unique nature of the crisis (i.e., most school organizations had not experienced a pandemic before), the rapid timeline, and the accompanying uncertainty that hindered effective responses. Leaders' experience did not matter significantly when the COVID-19 crisis had few "knowable components" (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021, p. 2).

In their systematic literature review, Parveen et al. (2022) showed that the most significant challenges influencing school activities during the COVID-19 pandemic were related to well-being (self-care, safety issues, and emotional and mental health), distributed leadership, digital gaps, the cybersecurity of online education, and ensuring equity, learning continuity, and quality of education. Boin and Renaud (2013) observed that joint sensemaking is particularly important to effective crisis management; if decision-makers do not have a shared and accurate picture of the situation, they cannot make informed decisions and communicate effectively with partners, politicians, and the public (Boin & Renaud, 2013). Unfortunately, for many school leaders during the first months of the pandemic, the administrators and policy-makers often lacked an accurate picture of what was occurring and did not share what they knew with others in ways that enabled effective leadership responses and partnerships (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021).

Effective communication is another consistent element of crisis leadership, and numerous scholars (Marsen, 2020; McLeod & Dulsky, 2021; Thornton, 2021) have emphasized the leader's role in communicating with both internal and external audiences. Marsen (2020) noted that crisis communication must deal with both issue management during the crisis and reputation management after the crisis. Effective communication builds trust and helps create shared understanding and commitments across stakeholders (Lucero et al., 2009).

Generally, school leadership involves positioning the school for the future and supporting and empowering staff and students in the pursuit of teaching and learning excellence (Smith & Riley, 2012). Based on a meta-analysis conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic by Smith and Riley (2012), the leadership attributes and skills required of school leaders in times of crisis are different in nature from those

generally required as part of the "normal" school environment. In its primary focus, leadership in times of crisis is neither developmental nor future oriented but concerns managing events, emotions, and consequences in the immediate present in ways that minimize personal and organizational harm within the school community (Smith & Riley, 2012). In their study on school leaders perspectives toward their leadership practices during COVID-19 pandemic, Arar et al. (2021) found that the principals reported discovering or developing new digital skills that enriched their repertoire while leading in the digital era.

According to Harris and Jones (2020), crisis and change management are now essential skills for school leaders. They argued that running an effective school in disruptive times requires more than routine problem-solving or occasional firefighting. Instead, all school leaders should be engaged in constant crisis and change management, which requires support and collaboration from all staff (Harris & Jones, 2020). As a consequence of the high-speed changes caused by the pandemic, a high degree of trust among principal and teachers is needed to ensure that issues are addressed collectively as they arise (Harris & Jones, 2020).

Previous research has shown that key attributes for effective crisis leadership include the following: assessment of the situation and decision-making that involve sensemaking and skill synthesis (Wooten & James, 2008); decisive decision-making under pressure (Smith & Riley, 2010, 2012; Wooten & James, 2008); flexibility and lateral thinking (Smith & Riley, 2012); and, to a reasonable extent, risk taking (Wooten & James, 2008). During the crisis, communication with different stakeholders should also be effective (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020; Thornton, 2021; Wooten & James, 2008), providing certainty and engendering hope with empathy and respect (Harris & Jones, 2020; Smith & Riley, 2012). Boin et al. (2010) found effective crisis leadership to involve recognizing emerging threats, initiating efforts to mitigate the threats, and dealing with their consequences, as well as reestablishing a sense of normality once the acute crisis period has passed (e.g., Daniel, 2020). In addition to challenges, researchers have recognized that crises provide opportunities for learning and development. As Smith and Riley (2012) stated, crises can create major opportunities for a school by giving it a chance to refocus, reenergize, and try new ideas.

Remote Leadership

Values and purpose, combined with intrapersonal and interpersonal knowledge, have been identified as central to effective leadership (Harris, 2020). The same applies to successful school leadership in remote settings, in which principals are required to lead individuals they rarely see (Daniel, 2020). While Kelley and Kelloway (2012) noted that leading virtually might not be as interactive and effective as in face-to-face situations, Contreras et al. (2020) proposed that remote leadership can be advantageous for not only companies' productivity but also the environment and people working there. However, to thrive in remote work environments, managers must adjust the companies' structures to make them less hierarchical and develop new abilities to establish strong and trusting relationships with their employees while retaining genuine concern for their employees' well-being (Contreras et al., 2020). Harris

(2020) suggested that in times of challenge, school leaders need to establish and sustain a collaborative culture involving connected networks among people. Fernandez and Shaw (2020) found that educational leaders' ability to establish a culture of trust, collaboration, and shared leadership prior to a crisis will more significantly influence institutions' ability to withstand times of crisis. According to Smith and Riley (2010), the question of how to develop appropriate crisis attributes and skills for both present and future leaders has not been addressed in the literature. Moreover, the existing literature on crisis leadership concentrates mainly on crises triggered by natural hazards, such as Hurricane Katrina (Boin et al., 2010), earthquakes (Much, 2015), or human interventions (Katsiyannis et al., 2018) rather than on crisis similar to the one caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite growing awareness of the nature of principals' work, relatively little is known about how school principals experience their work (for exceptions, see Bellemans & Devos, 2021; Elomaa et al., 2021; Mahfouz, 2020), particularly during crises (for exceptions, see Arar et al., 2021; Thornton, 2021). As the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is unique in its prolonged nature and breadth, it is important to record principals' perceptions of the kinds of challenges they have been facing during the current crisis and the kinds of support they perceive as necessary to assist them during the crisis and prepare them for future crises through in- and pre-service training.

Aim of the Current Study

The present study first describes the principals' perceptions of the changes and challenges they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. It then elaborates on the support for leadership and competences they perceive as needed to manage their work. The specific research questions are as follows:

1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected principals' work?
2. Which new competences did principals need to manage their work during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. What supportive elements did principals need for their leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Methodology

Data and Participants

The current study is part of a larger project investigating teachers', students', and principals' well-being and related factors (TESSI; Lerkkanen & Pakarinen, 2016–2022). The study was approved by the university's Committee of Ethics. The participants of the present study were 55 principals from 12 Central Finland

municipalities. All the principals of comprehensive schools (delivering compulsory basic education to students in Grades 1–9) in those municipalities were asked to participate in the study. All participants filled out an informed consent form. The participants' ages ranged from 33 to 66 years (mean [M] = 51.3 years, standard deviation [SD] = 7.7). Their working experience as principals varied from 0.5 to 30 years (M = 12.2 years, SD = 9, missing four). Of all 55 participants, 5 did not have a teaching obligation (one missing), and the number of teaching hours ranged from 1 to 27 per week (M = 13.2 hours, SD = 8.5, missing six). School sizes ranged from 20 to 1100 students (M = 373 students, SD = 279), and the number of staff members in each school ranged from 1 to 151 persons (M = 37 persons, SD = 33). Overall, 3 participants reported leading 3 schools, 10 reported leading 2 schools, and 42 participants reported leading 1 school. The participants were assigned random ID numbers from 1 to 55 to ensure confidentiality.

Of all 55 participants, 33 worked remotely to some extent at the time of data collection in spring 2020. The proportion of remote work in the participants' total working time varied from 10% to 100% (M = 60.8, SD = 32.1). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 33 participants already worked remotely as part of their regular work arrangements, with the proportion of remote work varying from 1% to 35% (M = 10.5, SD = 8.7).

Procedure

The principals were asked to complete an online questionnaire in spring 2020 during the school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire included the following three open-ended questions: (1) What kind of support do you feel you need for your leadership at the moment? (2) How has the ongoing COVID-19 situation/pandemic affected your work? (3) What new competence has the COVID-19 situation required of you? The responses varied from very brief descriptions of 1 to 5 words to answers of more than 100 words.

Analysis

The present study was conducted using inductive reasoning and data-driven content analysis (Patton, 2015). Initially, the first author performed the analysis independently, after which all the authors discussed the analysis. During the discussion, possible findings that needed to be changed were highlighted. Open coding was used to remain receptive to the data and to identify concepts and themes for categorization (Patton, 2015). The data were first organized into broad themes (Williams & Moser, 2019). First, the principals' answers to open-ended questions were coded for emergent descriptions. Second, repeated codes were identified and drawn together to develop subthemes (Blair, 2015). This process led to the development of three main themes concerning the ongoing COVID-19 situation's effect on

the principals' work, six main themes concerning new competences needed, and eight main themes on the support needed for leadership. Third, the existing literature was examined. Because the data analysis results did not support any existing conceptualization, results, and/or theories, the analysis of support needs, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on principals' work, and the new necessary competences remained inductive (see Tables 14.1, 14.2, and 14.3 for the results and examples of the analysis processes). The themes and subthemes that emerged are presented and further discussed in the results section below. Throughout the analysis, we were particularly careful not to overinterpret the principals' very brief self-reports.

Results

Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Principals' Work

The study's first aim was to discover how principals experienced the COVID-19 pandemic as affecting their work. Thus, the principals' self-reported descriptions were divided into three main themes, which were then divided into subthemes based on the patterns emerging from the data (Patton, 2015). These themes are as follows: (1) changes in workload, which was divided into increased workload in general, constant planning and making new arrangements, hurry, extended working hours, and decreased workload; (2) changes in the nature of the work, which was divided into changed work description in general, unpredictability, and remote learning; and (3) individual level, which was divided into increased motivation, family-work balance, and no significant changes (see Table 14.1).

Changes in Workload

Thirty-four out of 67 principals reported changes in their workloads. Participants described a generally increased workload. For example, P4 said, "After a normally already full work description, there is a corona [COVID-19] bonus that has undermined the basic tasks." Under the same subtheme, another principal described how the increased workload influenced their well-being: "[The COVID-19 pandemic] has significantly increased the workload and, through it, also affected my/one's own coping" (P21). The second most-mentioned subtheme under this theme was planning and making new arrangements, such as continuous arrangements and making rapid changes in plans on a tight schedule. As P51 explained, "I am overworked. I need to react quickly to changing situations without ready-made operating models—developing a new model, organizing, and implementing it on a tight schedule." Principals' working hours were extended, as one principal described: "Working hours have stretched—easily up to 12 hours per day. Remote work takes

Table 14.1 The ongoing COVID-19 situation's effect on work ($N = 51$)

Verbatim text	Meaning	Subtheme	Main theme	Mentioned N (%)
After a normally already full work description, there is a corona [COVID-19] bonus that has undermined basic tasks. As a new principal, nothing follows a routine during the first year, and leading a large unit is very challenging	Extra workload Stretching workdays Extra time-consuming tasks	Increased workload in general ($n = 19$)	**Changes in workload**	**34 (67)**
I am overworked. There is a need to react quickly to changing situations, without ready-made operating models. Developing new practices, organization, and implementation and a tight schedule	Continuous arrangements Rapid changes in plans New developments	Planning and making new arrangements ($n = 20$)		
Hurry has increased, and normal spring tasks have shifted to summer	Rush and urgent tasks	Hurry ($n = 5$)		
Working days have extending—easily stretch up to 12 hours per day. Remote work takes time in a different way	Stretched working days Working on weekends	Extended working hours ($n = 6$)		
There is no need for teaching or hiring deputies while working remotely. More relaxed	A calmer work situation	Decreased workload ($n = 2$)		
Work description changed completely in a couple of days. Although working remotely has also been part of the job description in the past (evening and weekend work at home), its nature was completely different from now	The nature of the work has changed Remote work	Changed work description in general ($n = 8$)	**Changes in the nature of work**	**14 (27)**
The whole spring went new. And now we think about the time after 14.5, and we are afraid that the ambiguity will continue in August	Hard to prevent Ambiguity	Unpredictability ($n = 4$)		
Most of the contact teaching has been shifting to distance teaching and learning	Transition from face-to-face to remote learning	Remote learning ($n = 3$)		
I am more motivated now		Increased motivation ($n = 1$)	**Individual level**	**5 (10)**
Work is constantly interrupted when three children and a wife are also at home. There is a lot of staring at the screen and calling. There is enough to organize in changing situations	Working at home while other family members are also there	Family-work balance ($n = 2$)		
In the end, surprisingly little, but of course there have been new things to think about		No significant change ($n = 2$)		

Table 14.2 New competences needed (*N* = 49)

Verbatim text	Meaning	Subtheme	Main theme	Mentioned *N* (%)
Using different platforms. Transforming teaching online. *Online meeting techniques*	ICT skills Using new programs	ICT skill in general (*n* = 27)	**ICT skills**	33 (67)
Meeting-type work via Teams and Meet was basically familiar but increased and diversified explosively	Organizing online meetings Using Teams and Skype	Online meetings (*n* = 7)		
Continuous change management	Crisis and change management Remote management Fast reaction and decision-making	Crisis and change management (*n* = 5)	**Management skills**	9 (18)
Simultaneous handling of many things	Multitasking Systematicity	Managing one's work (*n* = 5)		
Better control over working remotely	Working methods		**Skills to work remotely**	4 (8)
Not exactly new skills. There is organization, clarification, and consultation with people	Not experiencing new requirements		**Nothing**	4 (8)
Reacting fast, rapid communication, resilience to change, and, on the other hand, the fact that one person cannot do everything	Communication Guiding teachers		**Communication and cooperation skills**	3 (6)
Virus action and infection prevention	Healthcare Safety in general		**Safety issues**	2 (4)

time in a different way" (P6). Furthermore, principals reported an increased rush. For example, one reported, "Hurry has increased, normal spring tasks have shifted to summer" (P44). In contrast, two principals mentioned a decrease in workload, reporting that "stress has reduced, there is no hurry" (P12) and "there is no need for teaching or hiring deputies while working remotely. It is more relaxed" (P23).

Changes in the Nature of the Work

Fourteen participants mentioned changes in the nature of their work, including changed work descriptions in general, unpredictability, and remote learning. Eight participants referred to changed general work descriptions, such as working remotely and on a computer. For example, one principal reported, "Work description changed completely in a couple of days. Although working remotely has been part of the job description in the past (evening and weekend work from home), its nature is completely different now" (P27). The principals' work also became more unpredictable: "The whole spring went new, and at the moment, we think about the time after 14.5 [schools' reopening], and we are afraid that the ambiguity continues in August [start of the new school year]" (P20). Another principal stated, "Most of the contact teaching has been shifting to distance teaching and learning, which has also changed the nature of principals' work as remote leaders" (P3).

Individual Level

Five principals mentioned elements belonging to the individual level, including family-work balance, increased motivation, and experiencing no significant changes in work. For example, one principal described the challenges of working from home: "Work is constantly interrupted when three children and my wife are also at home" (P13). Two principals reported no significant changes in their work, with one saying, "In the end, work has changed surprisingly little, but of course there are new issues to go through" (P33). One principal indicated that the current situation had increased their motivation to work.

New Competences Needed

The study's second aim was to identify the kinds of new competences that principals experienced as needing when managing their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The principals' self-reports were organized into the following six main themes: (1) information and communication technology skills (ICT), which was divided into the subthemes of ICT skills in general and online meetings; (2) management skills, which was divided into the subthemes of crisis and change management and managing one's work; (3) skills to work remotely; (4) communication and

cooperation skills; (5) safety issues; and (6) no new skills needed (see Table 14.2 for developed themes, subthemes, and the analysis process).

ICT skills were mentioned by 33 out of 49 participants. Under this theme, 27 principals referred to ICT skills in general, involving the use of ICT tools and different programs. For example, one principal listed new competences needed: "Using different platforms, transforming teaching from face-to-face to online, and online meeting techniques" (P48). Skills for organizing online meetings via Skype and Microsoft Teams were also mentioned by six other principals. One explained that "Teams and Skype meetings were not familiar. Needed to take control over those" (P13), and another (P37) added that although they were familiar with those communication channels before, the intensity and multiplicity of usage had increased.

The second most-mentioned theme under new competences needed was management skills (referred to by nine participants), consisting of crisis and change management skills, remote management, fast reaction and decision-making, and managing one's work. Three other principals described remote management skills as needed to manage their work. Systematicity, setting boundaries, multitasking, and organizing one's own work in general were also cited.

Four participants mentioned skills for working remotely, and three outlined communication and cooperation skills, such as "fast reactions and communication" (P49). Furthermore, safety issues—more precisely, "learning more about safety issues" (P18) and "action related to the virus and infection prevention" (P32)—were described as new skills needed. However, opposite positions occurred as one principal revealed not needing new skills: "Not exactly new skills. There is still organizing, clarifying, and communicating with people as before" (P5). Three other principals also agreed that there had been no need for new skills or competences due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Support Needed for Leadership

The study's third aim was to find out what supportive elements principals needed for their leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. The principals' descriptions were divided into eight main themes: (1) clear instructions and guidelines from the upper-level administration level; (2) support from the school community; (3) support from their supervisor; (4) general communication and cooperation; (5) resources; (6) support from other principals; (7) in-service training; and (8) no need for extra support (see Table 14.3).

Fourteen participants mentioned support from the school community, including discussion in the work community, joint effort, flexibility and teamwork, support from colleagues, exchange of ideas, and a school management team. For example, as two participants noted, "We are doing it together, so that is our great support to one another" (P29) and "Joint efforts of subordinates during exceptional times, flexibility, and teamwork" (P40). The principals also highly valued having a school

Table 14.3 The support needed for leadership ($N = 46$)

Verbatim text	Meaning	Theme	Mentioned N (%)
Joint efforts of subordinates during exceptional times, flexibility, and teamwork. Mentoring, common lines, peer support, and exchange of ideas	Discussion in work community, joint effort, flexibility, and teamwork Support from colleagues Exchange of ideas School management team	**School community**	14 (30)
Upper administrative level/ Board of Education, etc. instructions and advice so that you do not have to think of all the impossible practical arrangements on a school-by-school basis	Common and clear instructions Instructions and advice in general	**Clear instructions and guidelines from upper level**	13 (28)
Meeting with a supervisor even occasionally, and opportunity to discuss and figure out solutions to challenging situations	Discussions and conversations Support in general	**Support from supervisor**	9 (20)
Perhaps the most thought-provoking support, another perspective on teacher transfer issues. Principals' work is quite lonely	Open communication and discussions Help in making important decisions Help in reasoning	**General communication and cooperation**	6 (13)
Insufficient resources are the biggest problem	Resources in general Financial resources Time resources	**Resources**	5 (11)
Exchange of thoughts and ideas with other school principals	Principals' network Sharing Peer support	**Support from other principals**	3(7)
I am in in-service training, and that is enough now	In-service training in general	**In-service training**	2 (4)
I don't feel a need for more support than before. There is enough support offered and available from supervisor	Enough support available	**No need for extra support**	1 (2)

management team and considered it important to discuss, reflect on, and share tasks and responsibilities. For example, one principal wrote, "from other principal at the same comprehensive school" (P30), while another referred to "well-functioning teamwork with the deputy principal" (P24).

The need for clear instructions and guidelines from the upper-level administration was mentioned by 13 principals. More precisely, to manage their work during the crisis, the principals reported requiring clear and common instructions and guidelines, including "clear guidelines and common line" (P3) and "clear and

common policies, so one doesn't need to figure it all out alone" (P11). The principals seemed to perceive such support and clear guidelines from the upper-level administration as important as it allowed them to concentrate on leading their schools by guiding teachers, students, and guardians during this exceptional time. For instance, one principal said, "From upper administrative level, Board of Education, etc., instructions and advice so that you do not have to think about all impossible practical arrangements on a school-by-school basis" (P24).

Three participants mentioned support from supervisors. While some principals reported the need for supervisor support without clarifying its type or target, what they seemed to value most in such support was sharing ideas and figuring out possible solutions to problems together, with participants mentioning the need for "meetings with supervisor even sometimes to discuss and figure out solutions to challenging problems" (P17) and "thinking together with supervisor" (P45). However, one principal reported already having access to sufficient help: "I am not feeling the need for extra support. There is enough support available from [my] supervisor" (P12).

Six principals mentioned general communication and cooperation without clarifying the source of support. When talking about the support needed, one principal reported that "Principals' work is quite lonely" (P28). This theme also included the need for open communication and discussions and support in reasoning and making important decisions. Five participants reported needing resources, with three requiring financial resources and two time resources. Three principals cited collaboration with other principals, including an "exchange of thoughts and ideas with other school principals" (P43), as a form of support needed for their leadership.

Discussion

The present study contributes to filling the research gap regarding school principals' perceptions of the changes and challenges they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the kinds of support and new competences they found important for managing the situation. The results may help in planning crisis leadership and ensuring high-quality education in exceptional circumstances.

Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Principals' Work

The results indicate that principals experienced changes in their workload due to an increased workload in general, planning and making new arrangements, hurry, and extended working hours. In contrast, some principals experienced a decrease in their workloads. Participants also reported changes in the nature of their work related to changed work descriptions in general, unpredictability, and the switch to remote learning. They also described the challenges of maintaining family-work balance while

working remotely. However, some principals did not experience any significant change in their work compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic and even reported an increased motivation for work. Thus, the results highlight the importance of accounting for individual experiences and needs in planning support and future practices.

A high workload is one of the most important causes of principals' occupational stress (Elomaa et al., 2021). Principals' workload and stress levels were already showing steady growth before the COVID-19 pandemic (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Kumpulainen, 2017; The Trade Union of Education in Finland, 2020). In line with earlier research (Biag et al., 2021; Harris & Jones, 2020; Thornton, 2021), during the COVID-19 pandemic, principals' already-high quantitative workload increased because of changes and continuous arrangements related to new remote leadership practices and guiding teachers and students in diverse learning environments. Reid (2022) found that principals described feeling increased pressure to support various organizational stakeholders, such as teachers, students, and parents, as well as increased stress due to their lack of ability to provide concrete answers during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some principals did not experience a significant change in their work, and some even felt that the situation had become more relaxed. This finding is congruent with a study by Pöysä et al. (2021), which found that one-third of teachers did not experience high levels of occupational stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings again highlight the individual nature of the experiences of teachers and principals, which should be taken into account when planning support or pre- and in-service training for them.

New Competences Needed

Regarding the competences necessary to manage their work, principals listed ICT and management skills, skills to work remotely, communication and cooperation skills, and competences related to safety issues. Some principals felt that no new skills or competences were needed. Earlier research on the skills needed for school leaders during a crisis has mostly concentrated on wider skills and qualifications. For example, Thornton (2021) described five effective leadership practices: preparing for a crisis by detecting signals and responding appropriately, demonstrating empathy and prioritizing the well-being of all stakeholders, communicating frequently and effectively using a range of media, leading collaboratively by involving others in leadership and taking a community leadership role, and taking opportunities to learn at all stages of the crisis. The current research offers important insights into factors to be considered when planning support for principals. The principals appeared to most frequently mention ICT skills, which is not surprising considering the switch to online leading, teaching, and learning (Collie, 2021). Arar et al. (2021) similarly found that one of the barriers principals faced during the COVID-19 was a lack of digital skills, though the principals also reported developing new digital skills through remote work during the pandemic. Other researchers have also highlighted the importance of management, communication, and cooperation skills, with Harris (2020) characterizing crisis and change management as essential

skills for school leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Beauchamp et al. (2021) underscored the need to build and maintain new teaching methods and content and communication systems during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such developments may be beneficial in the future and not only in crisis situations.

Supportive Elements for Leadership

Our findings showed that principals need support from the school community through discussions in the work community, joint effort, flexibility, and teamwork. Communication and cooperation in general, clear instructions and guidelines from the upper-level administration, and support from supervisors and other principals in the field were highly valued. Principals' support needs seem to be partly the same as before the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Elomaa et al. (2021) found that principals need informational support resources (cooperation, instructions and guidelines, and relevant information), support from colleagues, supervisors, and other principals, and social support in general.

However, during the pandemic, clear instruction and guidelines from the upper-level administration seem to have been particularly crucial, while the lack of clear instructions caused a problem (Arar et al., 2021; McLeod & Dulsky, 2021). As McLeod and Dulsky (2021) observed, during the first months of the pandemic, administrators and policy-makers failed to share information with school leaders, which may have hindered effective leadership responses. According to Fotheringham et al. (2020), the quality, quantity, and frequency of top-down communication contribute to school leaders' stress, while horizontal communication and collaboration between school leaders and across school communities support leaders during rapid change. Arar et al. (2021) found that the decisions the Ministry of Education made about closing schools were communicated in ways that increased uncertainty; most principals were left to fend for themselves and did not have a clear idea of what to do or how to proceed. At the same time, school leaders may not fully understand the responsibilities and demands of strategic leaders in the upper-level administration (Boin & Renaud, 2013), suggesting the need for open-minded communication and cooperation between different stakeholders to support successful school leadership during a crisis. As Lucero et al. (2009) have outlined, effective communication builds trust and helps create a shared understanding and commitment among stakeholders. Giving attention to and managing processes of communication, collaboration, and change may also support school leadership by allowing better policy-making (Fotheringham et al. 2020).

Researchers are increasingly recognizing the importance and benefits of not only describing but also learning from a crisis. Boin et al. (2010) highlighted the unique opportunities that crises provide for reshaping and reforming organizations. Thornton (2021) described taking the opportunity to learn at all stages of a crisis as one of five effective leadership practices. This opportunity to learn is particularly relevant to school leadership. According to Harris and Jones (2020), most school

leadership preparation and training programs prior to the COVID-19 pandemic were likely to be out of step with the challenges school leaders face today. In many cases, the existing preparation and training programs, along with the leadership models they espouse, will require radical rethinking to remain relevant to aspiring and practicing school leaders (Harris & Jones, 2020). Because cooperation and support from the school community were highly valued by principals, distributed leadership, which refers to leadership exercised by multiple leaders who work collaboratively across organizational levels and boundaries (Azorín et al., 2019), might be beneficial for handling crises. Harris and Jones (2020) noted that distributed leadership became the default leadership response during the pandemic, requiring more school leaders at all levels to connect, share, learn, and network their way through the issues. Including crisis management in school leaders' preparation and in-service training programs might help support principals now and in the future. Furthermore, reflecting on the results of the current research, differences in principals' needs should be taken into account when planning support for them. Likewise, as noted by Arar et al. (2021), in future leadership development, professional communities should pay attention to different contexts and cultures while sharing best practices and designing new policies.

The results of this study suggest that different approaches to crisis management and leadership are needed, depending on the nature of the crisis. For example, Boin and Renaud (2013) observed that the first phase of crisis management is early recognition, while Thornton (2021) highlighted the importance of preparation, yet neither activity was possible for principals in the COVID-19 crisis because the pandemic struck so rapidly. However, despite the differences in the nature of crises or in comparison to the "normal" situation, the role of principals as responsible for successful school functioning remains the same, with one of their key concerns being to ensure high-quality education in all situations. Similar to the results of the current study, before the pandemic, Elomaa et al. (2021) found that principals needed support from the school community, supervisor, and upper-level administration. While the need for clear instructions and guidelines seems to have increased during the crisis, it should be noted some of the challenges that appeared during the crisis may have already existed before the crisis and become apparent because of the exceptional circumstances. Considering the possibility that other educational crises will follow the COVID-19 pandemic (Biag et al., 2021) and that crisis and change management are now essential skills for school leaders (Harris & Jones, 2020), these unearthed challenges should be taken into account when revising the curricula for pre- and in-service training.

Limitations

The study has some limitations that should be carefully considered in future research. First, although the sample was large enough for qualitative analysis, the sample size was rather small. Further research with a larger sample is needed to gain

a fuller understanding of principals' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, the data were collected in Finland concerning the Finnish educational context, which might have an impact on the generalizability of the results. More comparative cross-country and cross-cultural research is necessary to address the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on principals' work worldwide. Different cultural and educational systems have different leadership systems and practices from which best practices can be learned. Moreover, the data were collected only once in the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. To gain a deeper understanding of crisis leadership, more longitudinal research should be conducted, particularly concerning the post-pandemic period.

Conclusions

Principals play a key role in school functioning in rapidly changing crisis situations. Not surprisingly, the already-high workload of principals increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. The essence of their work changed due to remote learning, which required different new skills and competences. In carrying out their important role in society, educational systems, and schools, principals need clear instructions and guidelines from the upper-level administration, as well as support from their work community and other principals in the field. How principals experience their work is influenced by various external and internal factors; thus, their perceptions should be considered when planning support and effective pre- and in-service training for them. In learning from the COVID-19 crises, it is important to evaluate which new practices should remain and which former practices should be given up so we can be better prepared for future challenges.

Appendixes

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Part IV
School Community and Collaboration

The fourth section concentrates on the school community and collaboration and discusses leadership from a perspective that involves multiple actors. This section covers the themes of the whole school community and its members, the local context surrounding the school and actors involved in the provision of public services locally as well as pre-service teachers' understandings related to leadership. The research introduced in this section links the Finnish education to the theme that places collaboration and partnerships as central in local educational governance and leadership. The discourse of collaboration is an overarching element in the field, covering within-school practices and work between various public sector service providers locally. In the international research debate, individual leaders and leadership are given a lot of weight in the success or failure in building, sustaining and facilitating formal and informal collaborations. At a school level, concepts such as distributed leadership or teacher leadership, (referring to sharing responsibilities and distributing tasks and duties) are used in describing the phenomenon by the authors of this section.

Chapter 15 discusses a multiagency collaboration that aims at enhancing children's and adolescents' health and well-being at local level. Authors focus on school principals and municipal educational administrators' views concerning the cultural strengths and limitations in that process. Chapter 16 approaches school leadership groups as a structural means for distributing leadership and participating teachers in decision-making and reflects how these practices are perceived by principals, teacher-leaders and teachers. In Chap. 17, the focus is on shared leadership in the comprehensive school context. The research was guided by the premise that shared leadership entails the aspects of prosociality formed of prosocial motivation, behaviour and impact. Thus, the representations of principals' prosociality in the realisation of shared leadership are examined. Chapter 18 points out how teachers' tasks increasingly include with leadership in schools. This chapter pays attention to student teachers as our future teachers and their perceptions of factors related to teacher participation and agency in school leadership.

Chapter 15
Cultural Antecedents in Multisectoral Collaboration Promoting the Well-Being of School-Aged Children

Henna Nurmi, Jaana Leinonen, Malla Örn, and Outi Ylitapio-Mäntylä

Abstract This study focuses on the antecedents of collaborative culture in multi-sectoral collaboration promoting school-aged children's well-being in Finnish municipalities. The purpose of this study is to understand the role of cultural conditions in collaboration by examining the 'voices' of principals and heads of local educational departments in local collaborative structures and practices. This work is an interpretive qualitative study, and the empirical data consist of 20 thematic interviews collected from principals and heads of local educational departments. The data were analysed using a qualitative content analysis method. The findings show that legislative, strategic, structural and physical frameworks create visible frames and artefacts that enhance collaborative culture. At the level of espoused beliefs and values, the systematic methods of collaboration and the development of collaborative practices support collaboration, whereas the discontinuity of collaborative practices limits it. At the level of basic assumptions, multisectoral collaboration can be strengthened through shared values, recognising the importance of principals' and heads of local educational departments' role as constructors of collaborative culture, understanding of well-being promotion as a common task, knowledge about other sectors, shared understanding of needs associated with well-being promotion and familiarity with other sectors. Multisectoral collaboration can also be supported through workable group dynamics, respect, trust in collaborators and personal positive attitudes, willingness to collaborate and collaborative skills. Old traditions usually hinder collaboration.

Keywords Collaborative culture · Content analysis · Governance · Multisectoral collaboration · School-aged children's well-being · School leadership

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Introduction

The main task of schools is to support pupils' growth into humanity, equality and ethically responsible membership in society. It is the school's duty to provide pupils with different kinds of knowledge and skills (Basic Education Act 628/1998). Education promotes the idea of continuous learning, which refers to maintaining skills throughout a person's life (Finnish Government, 2021). The principals and heads of local educational departments hold a key position to promote these goals (e.g. Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Moreover, cross-sectoral collaboration with professionals from other sectors is important when supporting pupils' learning and well-being.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, collaboration gained popularity in the governance of welfare services and structures (Christensen, 2012). That is, multiple organisations and stakeholders across diverse sectors in society come together and collaborate to achieve shared outcomes and common goals. This kind of horizontal collaboration usually concerns so-called wicked problems, and its purpose is to address complex societal problems (Crosby et al., 2017). The idea is that collaborative forms produce synergistic outcomes that amount to more than what can be achieved by an individual institution, sector or department, or a single collaborator working on its own (Jones & Barry, 2011). For example, to increase the capacity to address the diverse needs of school-aged children, the entire community's involvement and multisectoral collaboration are required. This view is associated with the philosophy of John Dewey, who stressed that communication and collaboration are desirable traits in society. Dewey considered social capital a critical component of social welfare policy and democracy and believed in a comprehensive approach to understanding social problems. He emphasised collaboration's crucial role in promoting public and civic interdependency in socially and economically healthy communities. Thus, he saw joint activity as a necessary condition for the creation of the community (Schultz, 1969; Tracy & Tracy, 2000).

Furthermore, collaboration is promoted by the ideology of *new public governance*, which emphasises networks and is considered a reaction to the siloisation and fragmentation of the public sector resulting from traditional administrative structures. The slogan 'whole-of-government' emphasises the purpose of working across administrative boundaries and levels to achieve shared goals and to build an integrated government to respond to complex issues (Christensen, 2012). Researchers have emphasised the positive effects of collaboration (e.g. Butterfoss, 2007), and scientists have tried to understand the principles that lead to successful collaboration and introduce conceptual frameworks to reveal insights into the prerequisites and conditions for optimal collaborative arrangements (e.g. Corbin et al., 2018).

Several aims have been proposed to develop deeper collaboration between schools, other municipal sectors and the local community. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2009), collaboration and a collaborative work culture at the municipal level are a necessity for principals

in today's changing and complex landscape. Ainscow (2016) stress collaboration within schools, between schools and beyond schools, while Moos et al. (2011) considers 'leading the environment' as an essential category in school leadership. As schools are deeply dependent on their administrative, cultural and political environments, principals should manage and lead relationships beyond the physical boundaries of their schools (Moos et al., 2011).

The importance of multisectoral collaboration is emphasised in Finnish educational policy and legislation. The education policy report (Finnish Government, 2021) stresses cross-administrative collaboration to promote children's well-being and collaboration between professions from different sectors (educational, social and health, youth, cultural, etc.). The Finnish Pupil and Student Welfare Act (1287/2013) requires planning, developing, implementing and evaluating student well-being in multisectoral student welfare groups, while the Finnish Youth Act (1285/2016) requires multisectoral collaboration when implementing youth policies and activities in local networks. The Finnish Healthcare Act (1326/2010) states that the promotion of health and well-being should emphasise collaboration aimed at building community structures with various potential collaborators.

Culture has a significant effect on organisational performance (e.g. Langer & LeRoux, 2017), and cultural conditions shape the success of multisectoral collaboration (e.g. Valaitis et al., 2018; Collins, 2013). However, cultural conditions in collaborative contexts are often underestimated and less discussed. Studies (e.g. Collins, 2013; Chow, 2012) on collaborative culture have shown that knowledge sharing, trust-based relationships, an understanding of mutual benefits and the recognition of common accomplishments are necessary cultural elements for successful collaboration. These conditions may be difficult to achieve due to institutional, socioeconomic, cultural and psychological differences among collaborators representing different professions, sectors or organisations (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014).

Although the collaborative perspective on health and well-being promotion has gained attention among researchers (e.g. Corbin et al., 2018; Crosby et al., 2017), the cultural and educational perspectives on multisectoral collaboration in studying school-aged children's well-being have mostly remained unexplored. Thus, this study examines the educational perspective on the role and significance of culture in local municipal multisectoral collaboration that promotes school-aged children's well-being. We aim to create awareness of the importance and necessity of understanding how cultural conditions affect the success and outcomes of collaboration. The purpose of this study is to identify cultural antecedents in this context.

Heads of the local educational departments carry considerable responsibility in outlining the collaborative actions from a strategic perspective and in developing municipal-level collaborative actions to promote school-aged children's well-being. Conversely, principals are identified as gatekeepers and the 'driving force' of the initiation and intervention of well-being promotion in schools (e.g. Adamowitsch et al., 2017) and the key actors in developing and implementing collaborative actions at the school and community levels (e.g. Ainscow 2016). Thus, it is essential

to study how both actors view multisectoral municipal collaboration in promoting school-aged children's well-being and how they perceive cultural conditions in these collaborative structures and practices. A deeper understanding of the aspects of culture in these contexts may lead to an understanding of the elements necessary for successful collaboration and how cultural aspects may affect the development and evolution of collaboration. When culture is perceived, it helps collaborators to assess, develop and transform it in a certain manner (e.g. Armenakis et al., 2011).

Our study is an interpretive qualitative study, and we are interested in how heads of local educational departments and principals make sense of their subjective reality and attach meaning to it. We intend to address the following research question:

What are the antecedents of a collaborative culture in multisectoral collaboration that promotes the wellbeing of school-aged children?

We approach culture using Schein's (1985) framework for cultural levels. Following Thomson et al.'s (2009) definition, we define collaboration as a recognised relationship and a process between certain sectors, groups and people that has been developed to take action towards achieving the well-being outcomes for citizens. In addition, we view collaborative culture as a phenomenon operating in the arena and boundaries between participants from different sectors. In this context, we use Beyerlein et al.'s (2005) definition of collaborative culture as shared values, beliefs and behaviours that facilitate working together towards a common goal. Finally, we understand school-aged children's well-being as a comprehensive construct that incorporates physical, psychological and social dimensions and environmental conditions, such as services and community actions (e.g. Pollard & Lee, 2003).

Multisectoral Collaboration and Collaborative Culture

Multisectoral Collaboration in the Educational Local Governance Context

Traditionally, school health and well-being comprise three cornerstones: health education, health services and a healthy school environment (Rasberry et al., 2015). These cornerstones are based on a narrow concept of health, and health education in schools, for example, has focused on providing knowledge about diseases and healthy behaviours (Turunen et al., 2017). Therefore, there is a need to develop a more holistic view of and interventions in school-aged children's well-being, and schools are viewed as valuable and appropriate venues for children's well-being promotion. Schools are part of their surrounding community and are one of the main contributors to reducing inequalities among children from different social and socio-economic backgrounds (Finnish Government, 2021; Turunen et al., 2017).

In recent decades, several international programmes have been launched and implemented to enhance the roles and collaboration of schools and the local community in promoting school-aged children's well-being. Instead of simply aiming to change and affect children's health behaviour, the emphasis has been on changing the entire school system to strengthen the children's physical and social environments, develop policy structures and interpersonal and multisectoral relationships and the role of the local community in contributing to children's well-being (Dadaczynski et al., 2020). For example, the Coordinated School Health Programme and Health Promoting School Programmes, developed in the 1980s and 1990s, have specifically incorporated school actions and the local community's contributions into well-being promotion efforts (Dadaczynski et al., 2020; Rasberry et al., 2015). These programmes stress the importance of engaging with families, stakeholders, other relevant policy areas and the wider community. They also show a holistic view of health and well-being and children's involvement in defining and promoting their well-being. In the twenty-first century, programmes have acquired new insights (e.g. Rooney et al., 2015; Rasberry et al., 2015), and the fundamental ideas of collaboration have even strengthened. For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) (2016) has demanded coherence between actions at the national, regional and municipal levels, stronger mechanisms to enhance the capacity for trust and collaboration building and wider intersectoral action (i.e. education, health, social and other sectors) promoting children's well-being.

Collaboration produces synergistic outcomes that amount to more than can be achieved by individual institutions, sectors, departments or individuals working on their own (e.g. WHO, 2016; Rantala et al., 2014; Jones & Barry, 2011). Collaboration may achieve synergy through the combination of resources and competences, and views about collaborations are usually positive (Jones & Barry, 2011). According to Parker (2016), multisectoral collaboration has an important place in public services and is highly valued by administrators, but only if it is carried out correctly and purposefully.

In collaboration, participants interact through formal and informal negotiations, create rules and structures that govern their relationships and share mutual goals, norms and assumptions (Thomson et al., 2009). Structures and rules create frames for collaborations that promote children's well-being, but it is important to acknowledge collaboration as a social action with the conditions of interaction, shared leadership, common responsibilities and feelings of togetherness (Eriksson et al., 2020; Corbin et al., 2018). According to Jones and Barry (2011), the key factors influencing synergy and positive results in the promotion of health and well-being collaboration are trust, leadership and the exchange of diverse views and perspectives. Some authors have addressed the need for clear responsibilities among participants, shared resources, common interests and objectives for collaboration, and continuous interaction and commitment (e.g. Corbin et al., 2018; Valaitis et al., 2018). To create a common shared understanding, the purpose of the collaboration should be discussed, and professionals from various municipal sectors and schools should understand the factors that can impede and promote collaboration and the possible risks involved in collaboration (Widmark et al., 2011). Participants should

not only share information about matters that are important to each sector but also about their own orientations and aspirations, thus allowing the development of shared knowledge and shared goals (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2006).

Nevertheless, collaborations are not considered self-evident, and they often involve serious challenges or fade before the goals are met (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2008). For example, previous research has shown structural and cultural challenges to collaboration between professionals from different sectors. The structural obstacles to collaboration are related to regulatory and financial issues and administrative boundaries, or so-called siloes (de Waal et al., 2019). De Montigny et al. (2019) highlight the challenges in collaboration originating from traditions and found that deeply rooted and inflexible administrative structures are difficult to break.

The other common barriers to collaboration are lack of clarity (e.g. lack of understanding of other professionals' roles), lack of mutual confidence, unclear allocation of responsibilities and conflicting ideologies (Widmark et al., 2011). Collaboration participants may experience collaborative action as draining their resources, become frustrated with time-consuming discussions and consensus-building processes without concrete actions, not be convinced of the value of the collaboration, experience loss of control or feel that they do not have enough influence over the decided-upon solutions. Additionally, problems in collaboration may stem from participants' inability to understand one another's opinions, views and cultural and professional backgrounds. That is, participants may create a cultural 'silo mentality' according to which groups, sectors or departments do not want to share their skills, knowledge or information (de Waal et al., 2019).

Dimensions of Collaborative Culture

The definition of culture is not straightforward and can be explained in a myriad of ways. Schein and Schein (2017) describe culture in evolutionary terms as what 'the group has learned in its efforts to survive, grow, deal with its external environment, and organise itself' (pp. 14–15). An organisation's culture can be seen as the organisation's personality, as comprising artefacts, creations, shared values and basic assumptions, as creating a unique organisational membership and as guiding people's behaviour by showing the members what behaviours are important and generally appropriate (Schein & Schein, 2017). These artefacts, underlying values and assumptions influence the behaviour of organisational members, as people rely on these values to guide their decisions and actions (Schein, 1985). Generally, organisational culture is seen as deeply embedded, stable and enduring. Akanji et al. (2020) state that culture is something that can be transferred socially and generationally and something that can advance, mature, improve or preserve itself. It is important to remember that organisational culture is not straightforward but multidimensional, and it cannot be defined in just a few words (Schein & Schein, 2017; O'Reilly et al., 2014).

According to Schein (1985; see also Schein & Schein, 2017), the structure of culture is formed on three different levels of cultural analysis. The first level comprises artefacts that are the visible products of the group: architecture, physical environment, language, technology, myths and stories about the organisation and its published list of values. These artefacts can also be seen as the group's climate and behaviour routines. One of the most important points about the artefact level is that the culture is easy to see but difficult to interpret. The second level comprises espoused beliefs and values. All group learning is derived from someone's original beliefs and values. The espoused beliefs and values remain in the group's consciousness because they are vital in guiding the training process of, for example, new employees. These values and beliefs become embodied in an ideology and culture that work as a guide when an organisation faces uncertainty or something new. The third and final levels comprise the taken-for-granted underlying basic assumptions. When the same solution for a problem is used again and again, people start taking the solution for granted, and there is little to no variation within a group or unit. 'Culture as a set of basic assumptions defines for us what to pay attention to, what things mean, how to react emotionally to what is going on, and what actions to take in various kinds of situations' (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 22). When people grasp the idea of culture, what it is and how it is embedded in a group's subconscious, it is possible to understand its effects on human behaviour (Schein & Schein, 2017).

Culture creates an essential context for social interaction, knowledge creation, dissemination and utilisation, and it shapes actual collaboration practices (Chow, 2012). All social groups that work together form a culture due to the learning process that the group undergoes. These cultures can vary in strength depending on the time group members have spent together, how sustainable the group is and what kind of learning has actually taken place (Schein & Schein, 2017). Typically, a successful collaborative culture is characterised by a shared long-term vision, teamwork, active communication, mutual respect and empowerment (López et al., 2004). In an advanced collaborative culture, participants are encouraged to offer different views, discuss problems openly and work together by sharing information and learning (Yang et al., 2018). According to Collins (2013), the factors that are linked to influencing the building of a collaborative culture are leadership, feelings of mutual respect and trust among collaborators and an open transfer of knowledge.

Culture can influence either by integrating people, sectors and organisations or by dividing people and threatening collaboration. Collins (2013) reveals several barriers to collaboration (e.g. role conflicts, power struggles or unsupportive management) that may prevent the formation of a collaborative culture. When culture is taken into consideration and the antecedents of the collaborative culture are discussed and acknowledged among the collaborative stakeholders, it is possible to avoid cultural pitfalls and problems. This includes, for example, making concrete plans about how to manage and share information and knowledge (e.g. Al Saifi, 2015) and a discussion on how to support stakeholders' engagement. Therefore, a positive collaborative culture is not an autonomous phenomenon, and cultural dimensions should be taken into consideration when forming and developing intersectoral collaborative structures and practices.

Data and Method

This empirical study was produced as part of the School Leadership in the Arctic 2018–2022 (ArkTORI) regional project, which was implemented in 21 municipalities in Lapland, Finland. The data of this study were gathered from 20 informants who served as principals ($N = 12$), heads of the local education department ($N = 6$), or both principals and heads of the local education department ($N = 2$). The informants represented 11 municipalities selected using purposive sampling. The informants represented small or rural municipalities (less than 10,000 inhabitants) and medium-sized municipalities (10,001–65,000 inhabitants). The data were collected from autumn 2019 to spring 2020.

Our study was guided by the social constructivist methodology paradigm, according to which an understanding of collaborative culture was developed through interactive research data and the interpretation of their meanings (Kvale, 1996, p. 46). This approach guides the exploration of organisational cultures using interviews (Gaus et al., 2017). The data were gathered through thematic individual interviews, with some of them having the characteristics of in-depth interviews. Interviewing was previously used to reveal interviewees' interpretations and experiences of collaborative cultures (Driskill & Brenton, 2005; Gaus et al., 2017). Previous studies have targeted the construction of the interview framework (e.g. Tuurnas et al., 2019; Mitchell & Pattison, 2012; Schein & Schein, 2017).

The main interview themes were (1) schools' roles and practices in the promotion of school-aged children's well-being and (2) multisectoral collaboration. The first interview theme focused on the schools' roles in municipal well-being promotion and strategy work, while the second theme focused on collaborative practices, interactions, conflicts, dominations, commitment to collaboration and what is needed for the development of multisectoral collaboration. The interviews ended with the question of what elements support or create collaborative culture and how the interviewees, which were the principals or heads of local educational departments, could support collaborative culture. The interviews lasted 45–120 min, and they were recorded, transcribed and anonymised. The transcribed data covered 197 pages (pt. 8 Verdana font). The transcribed data were in Finnish. The samples presented in this chapter have been translated into English.

Although interviews are a method for discussing interviewees' experiences, the interview situation and interviewees' awareness of the practices and values of their organisation may determine how deeply interviewees can discuss collaborative culture. In this study, the interviewer was an outsider to the organisations, and this required the researchers to work harder to obtain the interviewees' trust and to attain the same cultural interpretation as the interviewees (Driskill & Brenton, 2005). There was also a risk that the interviewees would narrate in a socially desirable way. During the qualitative research process, it is important to recognise the significance of the researcher's role in constructing knowledge. In this study, internal validity was increased using multiple theories, interviews and transcripts as research data, thematic and in-depth interviews as data gathering methods, and qualitative content

analysis as the analysis method (Gaus et al., 2017; Driskill & Brenton, 2005). The extent of the research data strengthens reliability and ensures a diverse perception of a collaborative culture.

The data were analysed using a qualitative content analysis method that combined data-driven and concept-driven methods to ensure that all research data were noted (Schreier, 2014). First, the data were categorised in a data-driven manner to reveal the strengthening and limiting factors of multisectoral collaboration. Second, the data were restructured using Schein and Schein's (2017) framework of cultural levels: (1) artefacts, (2) espoused beliefs and values and (3) taken-for-granted underlying basic assumptions. Armenakis et al. (2011) also used this framework in their content analysis study. For example, the statements that indicated legislative or strategic frameworks that strengthen or limit collaborative culture were categorised under the first category (artefacts), the statements that indicated practices of multisectoral collaboration were coded under the second level (espoused beliefs and values), and the statements that discussed traditions that guide collaboration were coded under the third category (taken-for-granted underlying assumptions) (Schein & Schein, 2017). NVivo 12 was used to code the data. Previous studies were used to support interpretation during the abstracting phase. The following chapter describes the results of the study, including the data samples.

Cultural Elements of Multisectoral Collaboration Promoting School-Aged Children's Well-Being

Artefacts in a Collaborative Culture

Artefacts are a cultural level comprising the visible structures and processes of collaboration (Schein, 1985; Schein & Schein, 2017). Our analysis shows that the key artefacts shaping collaborative culture are the legislative, strategic, structural and physical frameworks. The first artefact is the legislative framework, which regulates multisectoral collaboration. Several interviewees noted that the purpose of legislation is to obligate sectors to take collaborative action and to ensure that they engage in at least a minimum amount of collaboration. The legislative framework can be described as a guiding frame, an obligation or a trigger for collaboration. The following quote shows how legislation is obligated to develop multisectoral collaboration.

> The Pupil and Student Welfare Act obligates us to develop collaborative student welfare services (Interview 3, head of local educational department)

The second artefact of collaborative culture is the strategic framework, which encourages collaboration by defining the common vision, goals, values and collaboration patterns. Strategies (e.g. municipal health and well-being promotion strategy documents, welfare reports and strategic plans for the children's well-being) can reveal the perspectives to be considered when determining collaboration

practices. Strategies determine, standardise and promote engagement in multisectoral collaboration. Visible processes, such as planning and structuring strategies for well-being promotion, can also lead to collaboration among collaborators. However, strategy structuring processes are often kept in the hands of a closed group (e.g. a municipal management team), and different groups can do overlapping work. Alternatively, participants could find that this strategy does not work or meet the school's needs. Some interviewees argued that the existence of a strategic framework still fails to ensure workable collaboration. For example, strategies may focus on wide-scale targets and may not promote concrete collaborative practices.

> It is a very small working group that has worked on the municipal welfare report, so they have probably included the things that they believe to be important. … I think that the report doesn't allow our school to effectively plan our work (Interview 6, head of local educational department and principal)
>
> The strategy process of municipal welfare reporting has strengthened our understanding of what kind of activity we have in our municipality. So we shouldn't just think that we do everything alone here in our school. Instead, we should collaborate boldly with other sectors (Interview 7, principal)

The third artefact is the structural framework, which supports the representatives of the sectors working together. An interviewee pointed out the idea of 'team organisation' or 'cooperative organisation', which supports the emergence of a collaborative culture. The data showed that a flexible, not-too-bureaucratic organisational structure supports collaboration. Some interviewees argued that bureaucratic structures could cause 'silos' and that this kind of stiff structure should be dismantled if the municipality is trying to encourage collaboration. Departments are sometimes integrated due to organisational reforms. However, some interviewees considered that, when certain sectors are integrated, there is a risk that the rest of the sectors would feel that they are not included in collaboration. The interviewees also emphasised that a lack of resources could limit collaboration. For example, collaborators may not have enough time to collaborate or may experience difficulties in coordinating their schedules. Several interviewees asserted that they did not have enough of the necessary professionals or services or that the sectors' own budgets could limit collaboration, causing conflicts between sectors over who should be responsible for costs. These findings are consistent with those of de Waal et al. (2019), who also find that financial issues can cause silos between sectors.

> We have debated over who pays for the client's services. My opinion is that as long as departments draw up their own budgets and their own goals, we will continue to have these debates (Interview 1, head of local educational department)
>
> Several municipalities have integrated education services and social and health services, which they say constitute wellbeing services. I am a little critical of that because I think that every sector promotes wellbeing (Interview 12, head of local educational department)

The fourth artefact is the physical framework, which supports collaboration by joining collaborators together in the same location, such as by collaborating in a school building, or limits collaboration when it allows collaborators to work apart from each other. Several interviewees stated that collaborations work better when collaborators work in the same building and near the everyday goings-on of schools.

Valaitis et al. (2018) argue for the significance of physical proximity in supporting or limiting collaboration. Physical proximity can enable encounters by creating familiarisation and a sense of community. Collaborators can also act as links to other sectors when they are located in the same physical environment. The data showed that multisectoral collaboration is usually assumed to be in-school collaboration. The interviewees discussed collaborators who come to school or work at school. Moreover, several interviewees argued that the school is a natural physical environment in which to collaborate, as school is part of children's everyday lives. However, it is not possible to locate every collaborator in the same physical location. The data indicated that when municipalities integrated departments from the same building, the collaborators that could not move to the same building feared that they could diverge from collaboration.

Espoused Beliefs and Values in Collaborative Culture

The second cultural level is espoused beliefs and values, which can be observed in the practices and efforts towards collaboration (Schein, 1985; Schein & Schein, 2017). The data included information about both formal and informal collaborative practices. Formal collaborative practices, such as agreed-upon meetings or events organised with collaborators, can drive multisectoral collaboration. For example, formal collaboration meetings are organised through strategic planning, constructing a common understanding about children's well-being or organising activities. Formal work groups, such as student welfare groups in schools and municipalities, can be considered formal collaborative practices. Informal meetings and gatherings are also seen as possible ways to develop collaborative arrangements. Informal meetings are the result of casual encounters, and these encounters in everyday work life are considered important for sharing information.

> We have had all sorts of meetings in which we have sat down and thought, for example, about the possibilities of improving health through nutrition. We have planned at the grassroots level what we could do and how we could do those things (Interview 7, principal)

Systematic methods (e.g. standardised collaborative models and planned, continuous and regular collaborative practices) strengthen multisectoral collaboration. In these situations, collaborators work together to determine collaboration practices, goals and responsibilities. However, our results showed that formal and informal multisectoral collaborations are usually tied to short-term contracts or projects, although several interviewees pointed out the importance of regular long-term collaboration. In some cases, personnel turnover negatively influenced the possibility of collaborating in a long-term manner. Widmark et al. (2011) find that staff turnover breaks the continuity of collaboration. Moreover, incomplete collaboration practices (e.g. a lack of common meetings or unofficial encounters) limit opportunities to collaborate. The interviewees valued regular collaboration and a suitable number of participants in collaborative groups. When the number of collaborators is

too high, a consensus may be difficult to reach, and the participants may interpret that the group cannot achieve its goals and that the collaboration may dissolve.

> I think that we need an annual clock or some other model in which we construct a schedule, and we should plan who we would collaborate with and what we would collaborate on in this period (Interview 1, head of local educational department)
>
> The more often we meet each other, the more our common understanding increases, and it is then possible to begin developing a common language (Interview 15, principal)

Several interviewees considered the need to find new collaborators (e.g. local companies) to work with them to promote the well-being of school-aged children. Involving new professionals, such as well-being coaches or psychiatric nurses, could fill in the grey areas of well-being promotion. The data addressed the need to think innovatively to develop new practices for collaboration. The principals and heads of local educational departments should recognise their own role in supporting collaboration by networking, bringing collaborators together and leading by example. Tuurnas et al. (2019) point out the significant role of managers in fostering a collaborative development culture. Principals and heads of local educational departments play an important role in promoting an innovative atmosphere and supporting the implementation of ideas. The development of collaboration may include risks (e.g. unworkable new collaborative practices), but there is always the possibility of returning to previously implemented practices.

Taken-for-Granted Underlying Basic Assumptions in Collaborative Culture

The deepest cultural level, taken-for-granted underlying basic assumptions, comprises unconscious beliefs and values (Schein, 1985; Schein & Schein, 2017). The data showed that 'the best interests of the child' is a reason to collaborate. A sense of community was also described as an important value to uphold in collaboration. Promoting this value in the context of ensuring children's well-being means that the municipal sectors and the broader community are committed to promoting school-aged children's well-being. One interviewee asserted that collaborators should think of well-being as a value more often.

> A sense of community is, of course, an important matter, as is caring for fellow human beings and caring generally for everyone's wellbeing (Interview 4, head of local educational department and principal)

The deepest cultural level also involves administrative municipal traditions, such as communication and mutual appreciation, which have a huge influence on the success of multisectoral collaboration. Sometimes, old traditions are seen as valuable, such as a sense of community. However, most of the interviewees felt that deeply rooted traditions cause barriers to collaboration. Moreover, the data showed a lack of a collaborative culture in their municipality due to these traditions. For example, one interviewee pointed out that, traditionally, a school could be seen as a

rigid collaborator with a specific status and level of authority, which could lead to potential collaborators approaching them tentatively, 'hat in hand'. Another interviewee explained that they had challenges in developing team–organisation models because it was a tradition in their municipality to have certain professionals work only at a specific physical location and that this order was difficult to break. The data showed that openness and the ability to learn new ways of acting are essential elements to support multisectoral collaboration and abolish old traditions.

> There is a specific status there, and some of the collaborators approach us hat in hand (Interview 9, principal)

An essential antecedent at the deepest level of collaborative culture is interaction, which comprises workable group dynamics and an atmosphere of respect and trust. Several interviewees mentioned 'human chemistry' and noted that it is sometimes easier to find common ground with one person than with others. However, choosing collaborators based on human chemistry was identified as a problematic way of working because the existing assumption is that collaborators should have the ability to work with everyone. The interviewees also pointed out the significance of respect and trust in collaboration. The data showed that some interviewees were sometimes faced with disparagement due to their own or their subordinates' professional backgrounds. Widmark et al. (2011) examine the significance of trust in collaboration and the problem of not taking other professionals' assessments seriously.

To increase the commitment to collaboration, principals and heads of local educational departments should recognise their own important roles as constructors of collaborative culture. The interviewees described their role as an important part of the promotion of school-aged children's well-being. However, several interviewees stated that some sectors play a more important role in this task than others (e.g. some interviewees pointed out the strong role of health, social services and education). Some interviewees also mentioned that technical service professionals could feel that they did not have a significant role in well-being promotion, thus making it difficult to get them to participate in multisectoral collaboration.

Understanding well-being promotion as a common task supports multisectoral collaboration. The data showed the importance of realising the synergistic advantages of collaboration because they could strengthen the motivation to collaborate. Several interviewees mentioned that common goals could also support multisectoral collaboration, whereas group meetings without focus could lead to an atrophy of collaboration. These findings are similar to those of Valaitis et al. (2018), who find that common goals strengthen the readiness for collaboration.

The data addressed the problems of turf protection (e.g. some collaborators fearing that other sectors would interfere with their duties). Valaitis et al. (2018) examine the phenomenon of turf protection in situations in which sectors want to maintain their own responsibilities or fear that they could lose their resources. The data showed another problem: nobody seems to take responsibility for issues, or attempts are made to offload responsibilities onto other sectors. Widmark et al. (2011) find that the allocation of responsibilities is a problem in multisectoral collaboration.

> Many of the collaborators think that it is the school's duty to do things instead of seeing that it is our common duty to care for children's wellbeing. They assign the responsibility to the school because the child is a pupil there (Interview 18, principal)

Knowledge about other sectors, a shared understanding of the needs associated with well-being promotion and familiarity with other sectors can support multisectoral collaboration. Another problem with collaboration that some interviewees noted was that they did not always know who or when they needed to contact them. The principals in particular stated that they did not have enough knowledge about other sectors' regulations or possibilities for action. Valaitis et al. (2018) find that the condition of valuing the other sectors is fulfilled when different sectors have an understanding of the other sectors' responsibilities. Several interviewees emphasised the importance of attaining a shared understanding of needs in children's well-being promotion. For example, one interviewee explained that sectors could have different opinions or even conflicts of interest regarding the 'best' solutions and investments that support well-being. The problems with collaboration seem to stem from a lack of a mutually shared understanding of the purpose and content of children's well-being promotion. These findings are in accordance with those of Leinonen and Syväjärvi (2022), who emphasise the importance of understanding well-being promotion as a common task shared by all sectors.

> A route for snowmobiles versus a kindergarten with good indoor air: This is a clear conflict of interest regarding which should we invest in next year and which promotes more health and wellbeing (Interview 1, head of local educational department)

The interviewees mentioned the importance of familiarity in facilitating contact with collaborators from other sectors. Especially in small towns, smooth collaboration has been connected with familiar collaborators who have worked in the municipality for a long time. The data showed that familiarisation should be promoted during the recruitment process so that new workers could become part of networks. The interviewees proposed the need for meetings in which potential collaborators from different sectors could introduce themselves.

> I hope that we will get to know each other and our respective departments better (Interview 17, principal)

The results showed that personal attitudes, willingness to collaborate and collaborative skills influence multisectoral collaboration. Several interviewees pointed out the significance of knowing data protection laws to avoid misunderstandings regarding professional secrecy. They noted a problem in which the misunderstanding of professional secrecy could lead to information-sharing problems in multisectoral collaboration. The data revealed that multisectoral collaboration could be supported by education targeted at different sectors (e.g. courses and training activities in which the representatives of different sectors can meet and learn from one another). Individual attitudes and willingness to collaborate support multisectoral collaboration. However, some informants considered that this could be a threat to

the equal treatment of all children if the strength of the collaboration depended exclusively on personal willingness to collaborate.

Conclusion

In this study, we examine the antecedents of collaborative culture in multisectoral collaboration promoting school-aged children's well-being by utilising Schein's (1985) framework of cultural levels. Legislative, strategic, structural and physical frameworks create the artefacts—the visible elements—of collaborative culture. Previous studies have shown that open, adaptive and not-too-siloed structures support collaboration (e.g. Tuurnas et al., 2019; de Waal et al., 2019). Our study maintains these results, as flexible arrangements in collaborations seem to support workable collaboration. In addition, we suggest that legislative and strategic frameworks are important elements in guaranteeing long-term commitments and that collaboration does not depend on participants' personal desires and interest to collaborate.

There is a tendency to integrate schools, early childhood education centres, youth communities and other social and healthcare communities together in Finland. These community centres are multi-professional work communities in which teachers of early childhood education and comprehensive school, nurses, youth workers, assistants, social services employees, healthcare employees and administration work together. This is a new possibility for a novel collaboration, but it is also a challenge. The data showed that physical proximity is usually a supporting element of multisectoral collaboration and that it can strengthen the sense of community. However, the data also indicated that when municipalities integrated departments from the same building, the collaborators that could not move to the same building feared that they could diverge from collaboration. We suggest that building physical frameworks cannot be the only method for developing a collaborative culture.

The level of espoused beliefs and values is noticeable in the practices of multisectoral collaboration. Our results showed that various formal or informal collaborative practices are used in multisectoral collaboration. Moreover, the principals and heads of local educational departments valued systematic methods of collaboration, which means a standardised collaboration model and regular, planned and continuous collaboration. However, multisectoral collaboration could face the problem of short-term or discontinuous collaboration or the holding of only a few meetings.

At the deepest cultural level, shared values (e.g. the best interests of the child and a sense of community) are at the centre of multisectoral collaboration. Valaitis et al. (2018) highlight the importance of community- and client-centred approaches to the success of collaboration. Mitchell and Pattison (2012) suggest that values should be congruent between all levels of an organisation and the wider environment so that organisational culture could positively affect intersectoral collaboration. The data showed that traditional ways of thinking usually limit collaborative culture.

Our study emphasises the important role of principals and heads of local educational departments as constructors and enablers of a developed collaborative culture. The research results highlight the significance of enabling leadership to strengthen a collaborative culture. Principals and heads of local educational departments can strengthen multisectoral collaboration by instructing and encouraging subordinates to collaborate and bringing collaborators together. These findings are similar to the results of Tuurnas et al. (2019), who stress the significance of enabling and supporting management in strengthening collaborative culture. Leinonen and Syväjärvi (2022) also assert that managers should take a stronger responsibility in raising cross-sectoral awareness of collaboration and suggest the need for boundary-spanning leadership, which breaks attitudinal and structural boundaries, creates future direction and unites actors through mutual interaction. We suggest that principals and heads of local educational departments should act as collaborative examples through mutual networking and collaboration. This may also support the development of an existing and future collaboration between various sectors. Principals and heads of local educational departments play an important role in promoting an innovative and open-minded atmosphere for new initiatives.

Our study showed that collaboration is supported by workable group dynamics, respect and trust. However, the data revealed difficulties in turf protection and the allocation of responsibilities (see also Valaitis et al., 2018; Widmark et al., 2011). The data showed that some collaborators lacked respect for other professionals' expertise. We suggest adopting the notion of an appreciative culture in which the expertise of each collaborator is valued. A workable collaborative culture requires knowledge about the other sectors' activities and responsibilities, a shared understanding of the needs of well-being promotion and familiarity with other sectors. The results also indicated that personal factors (e.g. attitudes, willingness to collaborate and collaborative skills) can support multisectoral collaboration. We suggest that workable collaboration requires collaborators to develop their collaboration skills and practices. The results of the study are summarised in Fig. 15.1.

This study offers a new perspective on the research theme by giving voice to principals and heads of local educational departments. Strengthening multisectoral collaboration is vital, especially in the societal context in which children's well-being faces many threats (e.g. school-aged children's social exclusion). Furthermore, the cultural and even deep-rooted antecedents affecting the success of collaboration should be recognised and discussed.

This study offers knowledge of the practices and critical factors for collaborative culture. However, this study has certain limitations in terms of the research design and data that must be recognised. We examined the critical perspectives on Schein and Schein's (2017) framework, according to which the idea of culture was simplified to the causal link between culture and organisational performance (e.g. Gajendran et al., 2012). A typical criticism of the qualitative approach is that its

Fig. 15.1 Elements of collaborative culture in promoting school-aged children's well-being

findings cannot be extended to wider populations (Krippendorff, 2004). The purpose of our study is not to generalise the findings but to gain an extensive understanding of the cultural antecedents and conditions in multisectoral collaboration experienced by principals and heads of the local educational departments. The empirical material of this study was collected from municipalities representing rural areas and small- and medium-sized municipalities. Our findings may be useful in municipalities in similar areas. In future research, first, we suggest strengthening the understanding of collaborative culture in multisectoral collaboration by gathering data from more diverse professional groups utilising a quantitative approach. Second, we suggest deepening the understanding of multisectoral collaboration by comparing the perspectives of principals and heads of local educational departments.

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Chapter 16
The Leadership Group as a Means for Teacher Participation and Leadership Distribution

Raisa Ahtiainen and Lauri Heikonen

Abstract For decades, discussion around school development and leadership has emphasised various collaborative practices, active participation, and distribution of responsibilities. The sharing of responsibilities in the decision-making processes exists in many forms in Finnish education, and there are some forms of leadership distribution in most schools, despite the school size. One of the typical ways of sharing responsibilities is to form a leadership group. In our chapter, we examine what meanings are given to leadership groups as leadership structures in school communities, and through which discourses teachers' participation in decision-making is constructed. The data comprise principals ($N = 56$), teacher-leaders ($N = 125$), and teachers ($N = 130$) responses to two open-ended questions in an electronic survey in 2019. In this study, teacher-leader refers to a teacher with experience of being a member of the leadership group, whereas teacher refers to a teacher with no leadership group work experience. A range/determination approach to discourse was employed to reach an understanding regarding the research problem. The discourses on the practice of the leadership group and teacher participation were formed around positioning the leadership group in the school context, and elements that functioned as enablers or hindrances to teacher participation in decision-making.

Keywords Leadership group · Teacher team · Principal · Teachers · Educational leadership · Participation

Introduction

Over many decades, the literature and research around leadership and development work in schools have emphasised and cultivated practices that involve interaction, cooperation, sharing responsibilities, and the idea of doing things together (e.g.

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Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2008, 2020; Spillane et al., 2004), and the research evidence supporting them up is extensive. (For an overview, see, e.g. Leithwood et al., 2020.) These approaches to leadership in schools are essential within the framework of making decisions and setting directions that have an impact on teachers' work regarding common values and ways of working, and their realisation in practice (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 2002). International surveys (e.g. by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020) show that many countries have implemented policies that touch on these elements, yet they were realised in terms of the contextual factors framing education nationally and may manifest themselves differently in practice (Braun et al., 2011). In the context of Finnish comprehensive schools, the ideas of distributed leadership and involvement of teachers in schools' decision-making form one strand of the education policy discourse – they have been integrated into the policy documents guiding principals' work in schools (Finnish National Board of Education [FNBE], 2014). Further, they are visible in several policy reviews (FNBE, 2013) and development initiatives in the 2010s. That is, there seems to be an existing underlying ethos of collaborative and participatory school leadership practices that principals are supposed to realise in their schools.

While writing this, we are living in the global COVID-19 pandemic that started in 2020. This unexpected situation has emphasised the importance of practices based on collaboration, networking, and interaction in schools along with support from colleagues (Ahtiainen et al., 2022; Beauchamp et al., 2021; Harris & Jones, 2020; Marshall et al., 2020). If looked at from a longer-term perspective, it seems that the teaching profession and its historical roots in a culture of individualism have started to shift towards cultures of collaboration, at least in developed and high performing countries like Finland (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2017). Developments like this also require changes in school leadership, and scholars working with the phenomenon try to foresee and understand the probable changes in leaders' roles and the leadership in the future (e.g. Azorin et al., 2022; Campbell, 2022; Netolicky, 2022). Whatever the future will look like, it will be built on the existing practices in individual schools. Taking this future perspective as a backdrop, we examined leadership groups as one of the means of enabling the sharing of leadership and the participation of teachers in decision-making, and through that, increasing opportunities for collaboration and interaction within schools. The purpose is to provide a snapshot of the current stage of a sample of schools in Finland regarding teacher involvement in outside classroom activities in school communities.

Our research questions (RQ) are:

What meanings are given to leadership groups as leadership structures in school communities? Through which discourses is teachers' participation in decision-making constructed?

Leadership Group

Mapping the Terrain

The concept of the school leadership group – or management team – is known globally, and there are similarities in its composition across the OECD countries, and it typically involves principals and vice or deputy principals, and often teachers and department heads (who usually are teachers; OECD, 2020). Establishing a leadership group, and creating its internal cooperation, and further, practices that enable the group to reach for the teaching community with an aim of engaging in decision-making can all be considered to have elements of distributed leadership (Devos et al., 2014; Harris, 2008). The distribution of leadership acknowledges the potential of many people to be part of the leadership, but to be meaningful for its participants, the practice requires facilitation and clear goals (Harris, 2008). The very core of distributing the leadership lies in the interaction between the people – the leaders, teachers, and others working at the school – and their situations (Spillane, 2005). Moreover, the literature directs our focus on communication between leaders and teachers in these situations to formulate a shared vision for the work in the schools (Harris, 2012; Spillane et al., 2004), to create circumstances that support the realisation of that vision, and to enable the professional learning required to reach it (Hallinger & Heck, 2002). In addition, factors related to the earlier practices of leadership and the size and the stage of development of the school affect the way these processes can be carried out (Spillane et al., 2004; Harris, 2012). That is, the school context plays a central role.

The way leadership is distributed and the leadership structures organised is important when engaging the teaching community in the school's decision-making and development processes (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a; Lummis et al., 2022; Stosich 2020). For example, teachers' perceptions of having a functional and engaging school leadership group have been shown to be related to their organisational commitment (Devos et al., 2014; Hulpia et al., 2009). Thus, a leadership group not only functions as a framework for engaging its members in decision-making processes, but it also acts as a structure that further exemplifies school leadership practices and distributes leadership to the wider teaching community (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a). In her study on the characteristics of schools as learning organisations, Liljenberg (2015) emphasised the professional attitude within the community and how it is constructed in a dynamic interplay between the organisation of distributed leadership, legitimation of leadership, principal support and the set goals. Also, trust between the principal and the leadership group has been shown to be a central determinant of collaborative decision-making in schools (Supovitz & Tognatta, 2013). Overall, the principal has a crucial role in leading the organisation with a clear vision, yet for the school to flourish and develop, teacher-leaders need to be empowered to take on leadership roles and cross the boundaries of leadership structures in order to further influence, interact, and engage the whole professional community (Bouwmans et al., 2017; Liljenberg, 2015).

While leadership structures are considered to be facilitators of participation and engagement in school development and decision-making, they can also be viewed from the perspective of strategic leadership (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015; also, Mantere & Vaara, 2008). The leadership group not only sets the school's vision and prepares for joint decision-making processes but can also aim to take the school vision closer to teachers and their everyday work (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a; Bendikson et al., 2012; Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015). In other words, the objectives in the school strategy – let alone the whole idea of having a strategy – may feel distant and unrelated to teachers' work, unless the content is operationalised, discussed, and, further, its implementation systematically evaluated and adjusted accordingly. From this perspective, the leadership group is an indirect facilitator and means for supporting the realisation of the strategy built around the main task of the organisation, teaching and learning (see Fonsén & Lahtero in this book).

The Finnish Context

There is no unified and binding national framework or policy guiding the comprehensive schools regarding the organisation of leadership groups, yet it is a typical way to organise the leadership in most of the schools that are medium-sized or larger (Ahtiainen et al., 2019; Ahtiainen et al., 2021a). In the context of comprehensive schools, the reason for having a leadership group is often connected to the need to distribute or delegate the principal's workload and support the development of the school culture (Taipale et al., 2006) to the intended direction which can be related to goals such as increasing the transparency in decision-making and creating structures for teacher collaboration (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a; Goddard et al., 2015; Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2017). In some schools, the leadership is formed around a structure consisting of a number of teacher teams which are connected to the leadership group through their team leaders.

The autonomy of local education organisers (i.e. mainly municipalities) has a central role in providing guidance or supporting the development of leadership structures. Consequently, the practices are systematically emphasised to create local coherence in some municipalities (e.g. Lahtero et al., 2017), whereas in others, the responsibility for developing the leadership practices in a participative direction is given to the school principals. In general, it seems that many local education organisers have acknowledged the meaning of distributed leadership and the participation of teachers in a range of planning and decision-making processes, and that has resulted in municipal development projects having had a focus on these themes (Heikonen & Ahtiainen, 2021).

Earlier research has implied that there are differences between schools in terms of the established nature of a leadership group and the clarity of the roles and responsibilities related to it (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a). In practice, sometimes too few teachers are motivated and willing to work in the leadership group. This poses challenges for the establishment of a leadership group in an open and transparent way,

which may negatively reflect on teachers' perceptions of the leadership group and, further, their commitment to the work community (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a; Hulpia et al., 2009). However, there is evidence that teachers who have been involved in the leadership group have perceived it as an opportunity for professional learning and getting a wider understanding of the school as an organisation, and seeing both their own work, the joint development work by the professional community, and the school strategy as part of a bigger picture (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a).

Materials and Methods

Data Collection

The data were collected from principals and teachers with an electronic questionnaire in 16 municipalities in southern Finland outside the Helsinki capital area. These municipalities were participating in a school development programme. The data were collected before that work took place in autumn 2019, and 166 principals and 1114 teachers responded to the questionnaire. The data used in this study comprise answers to two open-ended questions concerning the school's decision-making processes and experiences of working in the leadership group. Thus, the respondents working in schools that had established a leadership group and who had answered at least one of the two open-ended questions were included in this study (*n* = 311). The participants included 56 principals, 125 teacher-leaders (i.e. teachers with experience of being a member of the leadership group), and 130 teachers who had not worked in a leadership group. They were from 100 schools and represented the principal and teacher population well in terms of gender (83.9% female, 13.3% male, 2.8% other, do not want to report or missing) and age (5.7% 20–29 years, 17.4% 30–39 years, 38.9% 40–49 years, 33.2% 50–59 years, 4.7% 60 or older), although female teachers were slightly overrepresented. There were 288 responses to the question "Describe in your own words the decision-making at your school and the practices related to it. What works?" (54 principals, 99 teacher-leaders, 130 teachers). The second question "Describe your own experiences related to working in the school's leadership group" included 98 responses (32 principals, 66 teacher-leaders). The written responses to the open-ended questions varied in their length from five words to several sentences.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was guided by a method based on what Alvesson and Karreman (2000) call the close range/determination approach to discourse in the study of organisations. That is, the approach pays attention to social practices – and possible

variations in them – at the local level (in contrast to long range interest focusing on macro-system; Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). We used the method to examine (RQ1) what meanings are given to leadership groups as leadership structures in school communities in the responses of principals and teacher-leaders and, further, to look at (RQ2) the discourses through which teacher participation in decision-making is constructed by principals, teacher-leaders, and teachers. Our approach assumes that these three groups of educators depict the social context and practices of their schools in their written responses (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Mantere & Vaara, 2008). Due to the nature of the data, the written responses provided snapshots of social realities in several schools (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000), and this formed the basis for composing the discourses.

The analysis proceeded through five main phases. First, all the material was uploaded to Atlas.ti software for qualitative data analysis (Atlasti.com). In Atlas.ti, the data were organised according to the three respondent groups (principal, teacher-leader, teacher). The groups differ in their positioning in relation to decisive power and level of experience in school leadership, guidance of the practices implemented in the school, and decision-making practices (Anderson & Mungal, 2015; Henze & Arriaza, 2006). Second, the data were read through to get the first impression of the discourses across the data and within each respondent group. In the third phase, the passages of the data depicting meanings in relation to leadership groups and participation in decision-making were marked. Fourth, the material that was marked was organised according to the three respondent groups, and the contents of the marked data were looked at more closely to identify the dimensions related to leadership group and practices of participation in decision-making. Fifth, the following main strands of discourse were composed: the position and meanings given to the leadership group in school communities, discourse constructed of elements enabling participation in decision-making, and discourse constructed of hindrances to participation in decision-making.

Ethical Viewpoints

In this study, we followed the official guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2013). We conducted the research in responsible, honest, and accurate ways and guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality to the participants (see also Steneck, 2007). We received permission to conduct our research from the municipalities involved. We informed the participants about the research, their voluntary participation (without compensation), and the option to disengage from the research process at any phase. We carried out the study without causing harm to the participants and by treating them respectfully throughout the process.

Findings

The aim was to examine the meanings given to leadership groups as leadership structures in school communities (RQ1) and the discourses that concerned teachers' participation in decision-making (RQ2). In the analysis, we noted that both the meaning-making regarding the leadership group and discourses around teacher participation were linked to the position of the respondent and their familiarity with these two themes at hand. Moreover, the social reality of the respondents reflected the local construction of means for making decisions, and the respondents' own position, experiences, and given meanings in relation to the social reality (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000), yet the actual nature of these contexts stay implicit in this research design.

We divided the findings into three subsections according to the discourses (the position and meanings given to the leadership group, discourse constructed of elements enabling participation in decision-making, and discourse constructed of hindrances to participation in decision-making) of which the first focuses on the first research question and the subsequent ones on the second. At the end of this section, we visit them all in the concluding remarks.

The Position and Meanings Given to the Leadership Group in School Communities

In the responses of principals and teacher-leaders, the leadership group was given a meaning as a central and essential vehicle for school development. In this discourse, the leadership group was positioned as a secure and sustainable means that along with "providing stability [provided] a safeguard for the practices of schooling and stability for development of the practices" (Teacher-leader540). The meaning was further constructed in descriptions in which the leadership group was seen as a tool for coordinating everyday work in schools. The function of the leadership group was also stretched to include the practice of decision-making with the whole teaching community. Moreover, the principals' and teacher-leaders' responses included descriptions relating the meaning of the group to preparation of matters that required joint discussion and decision-making with all teachers during teacher meetings. One principal wrote about this as follows: "the issues that will affect the whole school community are first discussed and the layouts for practices drawn up in the leadership group" (Principal52). That is, the leadership group was positioned as setting the direction for the development work aimed at engaging all teachers, and one of its tasks was to cut down the workload regarding the preparation, as not all teachers needed to get involved in every step of the process.

Discourse Constructed of Elements Enabling Participation in Decision-Making

The discourse of enabling elements appeared in descriptions of both the leadership structures and the practices for participation in decision-making established in the schools. These two were partly intertwined especially in the responses of the principals and teacher-leaders who constructed practices of participation through structures that made them possible. The principals referred to structures such as teacher teams that were used as means for "sharing leadership [and responsibilities] in the form of independent teacher teams having certain assigned tasks – that independently developed their work" (Principal49). The work of teacher teams was constructed around various themes at the level of the whole school (e.g. well-being) or was based on subject areas or grade levels. Further, the purpose of the teams was to develop the areas assigned to them and make decisions independently or with the support of the wider teaching community. Moreover, the principals wrote about practices in teacher meetings that enabled rounds of preparation and joint discussion before making any decisions that concerned everyone. The existing structures were seen as supporting the decision-making as "the leadership group does the preparation, and the actual decision-making takes place in meetings with all teachers" (Principal58). Anyway, sometimes involving everyone in the decision-making and giving space for sharing various viewpoints "meant that all processes took a long time – however, over the years this method has proven to be worth the time and [was] increasing participation" (Principal99). Consequently, the meaning of structures and practices like these were justified by the increase in the opportunities for everyone to have a voice and get involved at the level of the whole school.

The teacher-leaders' perceptions of structures for participating in decision-making in their schools resonated with the ones emerging among the principals. Teacher-leaders built their meaning-making through the relation between teacher teams and leadership groups, and they depicted the leadership group as a bridge between school leaders and the wider teaching community: "All teachers belong to a team, and in each of the teams there is a leader who is a member of the leadership group. The issues raised in teacher teams are taken to the leadership group, and information travels to the other direction [from leadership group to the teams] as well" (Teacher-leader794). Teacher-leaders perceived that matters that concerned teachers were processed together, and there were "opportunities for participation in joint discussion regarding school development, e.g. in teacher meetings [and] everyone was allowed to take issues forward to teacher meetings through the leadership group" (Teacher-leader684). As current or former members of the leadership group, teacher-leaders stated that it was less time consuming if things were prepared by a smaller group of people, and then brought to a meeting targeted at everyone. Especially in bigger schools, it appeared to be important to have smaller forums for sharing and discussion because then everyone could use their time more effectively and did not need to be involved in issues that did not concern them. Further,

distribution of the duties was probably reducing the workload and can "support many to focus on their area of responsibility" (Teacher-leader840).

Among the teachers not involved in the leadership group work, this discourse presented itself in passages depicting the practices of "hearing teachers" in teacher meetings "in which the important matters are brought up, [and] everyone is allowed to voice their opinions or ask questions" (Teacher701). Thus, these opportunities were related spaces for joint discussions on topical matters at hand but were not explicitly connected to active involvement or participation in decision-making.

Discourse Constructed of Hindrances to Participation in Decision-Making

The hindrances regarding participation in decision-making were composed of dimensions of which some had points of connection with the enabling elements or presented the other side of them. One of these dimensions was the lack of time that stemmed from the nature of working in a school setting. The work with teaching and learning is framed by overlapping timetables affecting the way meetings and other gatherings within the teaching community can be organised, and it appeared "challenging to find a timeslot that would enable a joint discussion on common matters" (Teacher590). Further, it forced the schools to "make the decisions at the last minute and too hastily" (Teacher-leader274), which affected the flow of information concerning the decisions within the school. Thus, the information did not reach all teachers in time, and there were no opportunities to focus on the development in these processes. This dimension of the discourse was constructed in the writings of all the respondent groups. It formed one obstacle to the creation of collective practices and having a space for co-planning and shared discussion. Passages from the principals' responses added the disturbance of development of common ways of working to this by stating that they were "not having enough time with teachers makes the development work difficult" (Principal20), and further, "there is no time to develop the leadership practices" (Principal29).

The other dimensions within this discourse were led by the teachers. They reflected the hindrances built through uncertainty concerning the meaningfulness related to participation of teachers in decision-making and the ostensible nature of this as a social practice. For example, one teacher expressed the view that "teachers have been involved but almost no decisions get made and even if we decide on something, the realisation remains indefinite. The whole thing feels really messy" (Teacher223). There seemed to be meeting spaces that allowed participation, yet in the end, these appeared to be somewhat superficial. That is, the decision-making processes lacked a structure or a genuine opportunity to have a say: "They ask the viewpoints of the teachers, but I am uncertain whether they are taken into account" (Teacher553). In addition, the hindrances were constructed through exclusion from the practice of decision-making leaving the teachers without opportunities to gain

knowledge about the ongoing debate in their school. The teachers wrote about how their opinions were not listened to or they were afraid of getting criticised and had chosen to be silent. "The decisions made are presented to teachers as announcements and we do not discuss them together [in the teacher meetings]. In the worst case these things affect teachers' work, and you cannot do anything about them" (Teacher803). These passages covered disappointment with assumptions related to "having opinions that are not perceived as interesting" (Teacher837) by the others or further, being left out of the discussions and decision-making processes within the school community as "the principal favours and listens to only a select group of teachers – not everyone's opinion matters in the decision-making" (Teacher759). However, sometimes the exclusion was constructed as a choice because teachers did not see it necessary to be involved in decision-making in their schools at all.

A further dimension related to the superficial nature of participation was about the practices that are expected to follow from joint discussions and decision-making concerning the common ways of working in the schools. The principals, teacher-leaders, and teachers pointed out that there was a lack of commitment to the agreements, and it seemed that "the most challenging thing is to get all to work in a more coherent way despite some differences in opinion among the school staff" (Teacher606). Thus, despite being part of discussion and the processes of making decisions, not all teachers perceived the common agreements as binding in the school and were "not willing to do according to the decisions made or to develop the school" (Principal81).

Concluding Remarks

On one hand, the discourse positioning and giving meanings to the leadership group in the school community depicted its function through tangible elements of preparation work for teacher meetings. That appeared as a practice for facilitating joint decision-making processes. On the other hand, the leadership group was described as being a bit abstract, an almost engine-like force that kept the development of the school going and along with that provided security and stability. Both these dimensions within this discourse gave the impression that the members of the leadership groups perceived the group as a meaningful structure for both engaging the teaching community and acting in the forefront of the school's development activities.

The way principals, teacher-leaders, and teachers viewed participation in decision-making in their school was constructed in relation to their position in the leadership structures. Principals and teachers-leaders closer to leadership and decision-making practices expressed clear linkages between the structures formed (e.g. teams) and the processes in which joint decision-making was facilitated (i.e. teacher meetings). The principals saw themselves as actors who organise the structures, whereas the teacher-leaders were active parts of these structures through their position as leadership group members. The structure perspective appeared to be thin and vaguely constructed among the teacher respondents who connected themselves

to it by noting that they were allowed to voice their opinions and get their opinions heard in the processes of decision-making. Consequently, the discourse on elements that enabled teacher participation had dimensions showing the variation in intensity of the available means. For most of the teachers, the participation became possible through teacher meetings, in which matters were jointly discussed before the decision-making took place. That is, the level of participation involved at least the common spaces that allowed sharing the information, asking questions, and bringing forward opinions. The other form of participation was related to orientation being more individual, taking place through membership of a leadership group.

The finding that lack of time formed an overarching hindrance to participation was something that could almost be expected to appear in any discourse concerning practices taking place outside the classrooms. However, the way the other hindrances to participation in decision-making were constructed implied that having practices targeted at providing a common space for discussions and sharing viewpoints did not necessarily guarantee an experience of genuine involvement. This discourse concerned superficial participation and in places also the feeling of being excluded or not having opinions that would be of interest to others. In addition, this discourse was also embellished by observed unwillingness to commit to jointly made agreements among some teachers; thus, participation in decision-making did not always lead to realisation of coherent practices either.

Discussion

Although many scholars are keen to discuss, do research, and theorise around the themes of collaborative practices, distribution of leadership, and teacher participation in decision-making, we believe that it is also crucial to remain critical in imposing them on educators working in schools every day, as they do not provide a solution to educational issues per se. Instead, it is essential to keep our focus on the construction of meanings of these practices in relation to the main goal of schooling and its purposeful development in individual school contexts. In general, development of new or fine tuning the existing ways of working – with leadership or in any other area of practice – in a school calls for understanding of the school's current situation as well as its past and being precise with the direction where to be headed in the future (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Harris, 2012). Anyway, collective ways of working seem to be here to stay, and as noted at the beginning of this chapter, their position may have become stronger during the years of COVID-19 pandemic.

Even though leadership in schools is inherently distributed or shared to some extent "as leadership is essentially organisational influence and direction" (Harris, 2008, 173), the assumption does not imply that all members of the organisation would or should be simultaneously leading (Harris, 2008) or having an equally central role in the processes of decision-making that is the focus of this study. A school community composed of teaching professionals as a context for social practices like leadership and joint decision-making forms complex and yet fruitful

grounds for interaction between leaders and teachers. In the discourses, the processes of participation that involved hearing all teachers, common discussion, and opportunities for all having a say appeared to take and require time, which is a limited resource at school. That may force the school leaders to choose between swifter methods for decision-making among a selected few and a slower phase with wider participation of members of their organisation. These choices depend on the situation and context, but, in general, according to our study, allocating time and resources carefully for engaging and involving teachers in joint decision-making is "worth it" as one principal wrote. Considering this finding in light of prior studies, it becomes meaningful. That is, the ways leadership is distributed, the forms it takes among assistant/deputy principals and teacher-leaders, and, further, the cooperation within the group, and practices of participative decision-making all affect teachers' commitment towards their school (Devos et al., 2014). In the framework of organising leadership groups, this requires stimulating collaboration, construction of group cohesion and clarity of roles, and goal orientation as well as the creation of a sense of we-ness among the group members (Devos et al., 2014). Moreover, the various aspects related to the situations of participation and decision-making "define and are defined by leadership practice in interaction" (Spillane, 2005, 145) taking place between the principal and teachers (Spillane, 2005). That is, structures and other channels organised within the school community function as the means for acting, and the interaction in situations is the key (Spillane, 2005). These spaces for interaction may create the experiences of self-actualisation and provide opportunities for dialogue between different groups within the school community and through that increase teachers' interest in participation (Mantere & Vaara, 2008).

Moreover, it seems that the experiences of working in the leadership group and being involved in school level decision-making create the conditions for teachers to develop collective responsibility (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2017). Although the experiences of those being closely involved in leadership groups are important and form one arena for professional learning (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a), the crucial question is whether and how leadership (group) could foster a culture of collaboration. And further, how leadership (group) enables interaction through which teachers who perceive school decision-making processes as distant could also see themselves in relation to the school development and decision-making and start moving towards the feeling of shared responsibility (Liljenberg, 2015). This requires proceeding with small steps that are mindful of clarity, transparency of the meaning of the practice, and descriptions of responsibilities, roles, and tasks (Ahtiainen et al., 2021a; Harris, 2008; Hulpia et al. 2009; Mantere & Vaara, 2008).

The discourse among the principals concerning the elements that enabled participation included a notion of the teacher team being autonomous regarding the assignments given to them. Positioning teacher teams like this signals an ideal of teachers' capability to self- and co-organise their work and be goal-oriented in their teamwork. In addition, such positioning contains an assumption of trust between the members of the school community (Supovitz & Tognatta, 2013) along with a commitment to and shared understanding about the common direction set for the schoolwork. Thus, to function, this requires work with creating coherence in practices

aimed at reaching the set aims, and the approach cannot allow a wide range of individual-level going it alone style practices.

The main emphasis in our reflection has been at the school level, but we see that the establishment of various structures and tools facilitating the interaction and participatory practices cannot be the responsibility of school principals and teachers alone. Earlier research has reminded us that if too few resources and long-term support for development are allocated at the school level, the policies directed at renewed practices and availability of structures do not necessarily lead to genuine changes in the ways of working or the beliefs and attitudes related to them, not even 10 years after their implementation (Ahtiainen et al., 2021b). Therefore, it is necessary to keep on providing opportunities for development and professional learning for educators working in schools (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Further, it is also crucial to ensure that local education authorities guiding the work in schools have knowledge and competence that is up to date.

If we believe that the collective ways of working discussed in this chapter are here to stay, and will gain more ground in the future, that will mean changes for the teaching profession. Although there has been a slight shift in the understanding of teacher autonomy as the autonomy of the profession (collectively) instead of seeing it as the autonomy of the individual, the ethos of the latter still exists and puzzles the principals who are aiming towards participatory practices in their schools (Eisenschmidt et al., 2021). Furthermore, this is a question of pre- and in-service phases of training provided for educators working in the schools. We believe that the idea of collaboration and shared responsibilities should be present and nurtured throughout the career path if we wish to affect the understandings and beliefs around teacher and principal roles and leadership in the schools. Finally, we do not encourage practices built on collaboration and participation just for the sake of them. Rather, we assume that the complexity of today's school reality will become more manageable if we encounter it together by combining the knowledge and skills of many rather than doing it alone.

Limitations and Future Research

Written responses to open-ended questions in an electronic survey enabled us to gather descriptions that touched on the theme of decision-making and teacher participation from 100 schools. Further, we were able to reach discourses that position the leadership group in a school context. However, the nature of the data was scattered and often lacked depth in content. Therefore, in some places, we could only scratch the surface, and this may have limited the construction of the discourses.

The topics looked at in this study provided some starting points for future examinations. Firstly, to understand better the circumstances in which schools operate regarding the establishment of various leadership structures, we would need to take a closer look at the available support, guidance, and common policies provided by the local education authorities. Second, we should direct our research interest

towards teacher education to learn how the aspect of teacher role and its relation to the wider professional community is constructed during the early phases of their career.

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Chapter 17
Prosociality in Shared Leadership from the Finnish Principals' Viewpoint

Takumi Yada

Abstract This chapter aims to explore the role of prosociality when exercising shared leadership in Finnish schools. Educational professionals work collectively to generate expertise conducive for shared leadership. Importantly, shared leadership could be deeply related to helping each other, which is referred to as prosociality. Potential development of shared leadership is achieved with help from others. However, no previous study has investigated the role of prosociality in exercising shared leadership. Therefore, research question is formed as following: How do the principals represent prosociality in shared leadership? This study explored prosociality through the lens of three aspects of prosociality: prosocial motivation, behaviour, and impact. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview from 12 Finnish principals in primary and lower secondary schools. The data were analysed with a thematic analysis in a deductive manner according to the three prosocial aspects. The findings showed that the principals acknowledge the prosocial elements that are deeply related to shared leadership. Moreover, the role of prosocial impact was highlighted by the principals.

Keywords Prosociality · Shared leadership · Teacher collaboration

Introduction

Many researchers today regard educational leadership as a collective phenomenon based on relationships (Nguyen et al., 2019). This is because educational professionals understand that the challenges faced by educational organisations cannot be solved by a single leader's expertise alone (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Pearce, 2006). Hence, educational professionals work collectively to generate

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expertise conducive for leadership that is then shared for the common good (Avolio et al., 1996; Boreham, 2004; Pearce & Conger, 2003). Importantly, shared leadership could be deeply related to helping each other, which is referred to as prosociality.

Finland has been internationally lauded for a strong positive school culture based on collegial relationships that emphasise helping each other as a shared influence (Hargreaves et al., 2007; Yada, 2020). For example, Sahlberg (2014) states that a significant characteristic of Finnish school leadership is school improvement and development through collaboration based on helping each other. In practice, team-based leadership (based on collaboration between various teams) is adopted by many Finnish schools (Hargreaves et al., 2007). These collaborative endeavours occur because the needs of students have become more diverse and complex for many reasons (such as special needs education, social inequality, and family income disparities) and do not allow teachers to handle challenges alone. While Finnish teachers have a high degree of autonomy and trust (Välijärvi, 2012), they are required to offer their expertise as helpers and engage in collaborative endeavours to solve student and school challenges (Jäppinen & Ciussi, 2016). The Finnish national core curriculum calls for more actions from school organisations aimed at cooperation and interaction between educational professionals and stakeholders (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014).

Current international research shows that simply conducting educational operations together is not enough. For example, the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) reports that participation in collaborative processes is actually not common practice in Finland (OECD, 2019). While 30% of Finnish teachers participate in collaborative professional learning at least once a month, a considerable share (40%) of Finnish teachers reports never receiving any feedback in their schools. Moreover, a study by Park and Lee (2015) supports this issue by showing that Finnish teachers report less collaboration than in other countries (such as England, the United States, and Korea). In terms of teacher education, in large part, the focus is on teachers' expertise as an individual. For example, the Finnish teacher education system is still designed to train classroom, subject, and special needs education teachers separately (Välijärvi, 2012). Researchers warn that Finnish teachers tend to work in solitude; therefore, the idea of a cooperative and multi-professional environment is not yet fulfilled (Fornaciari, 2019).

Although Finnish schools appear to be beginning to acknowledge the importance of leadership as a shared endeavour, little attention has been paid to understanding what helping each other means in previous studies. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to understand what helping each other represents in shared leadership contexts. This study describes shared leadership as relationship-based leadership and prosociality that initiates relationships among educational professionals.

Shared Leadership in Schools

A growing body of literature recognises the importance of relationship-based leadership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2006), with researchers examining how reciprocal influence among organisational members can be nurtured and integrated into collectivities of leadership structures (Gronn, 2002; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Shared leadership focuses on relationships between organisational members with the presumption of a dynamic and interactive influencing process among members to achieve organisational goals (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Contrary to a presupposition that leadership is solely the preserve of individuals within a hierarchy of leaders, shared leadership is understood to be a group or organisational level feature (Avolio et al., 2009). Pearce and Conger (2003) refer to shared leadership as:

> a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organisational goals or both. This influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. (p. 1)

Engaging in shared leadership, organisational members develop and reinforce existing relationships that create a variety of reciprocal influences (Carson et al., 2007).

Shared leadership develops in circumstances where diverse individuals with different expertise engage in collaborative efforts to achieve a shared purpose, since professional workers with skills and knowledge are willing to show initiative with regard to leadership and responsibilities (Denis et al., 2012). In educational contexts, shared leadership can take place in various forms (Crowther et al., 2009). For example, Spillane (2006) suggests that shared leadership emerges from three fundamental arrangements: division of labour, co-performance, and parallel performance. He points out that more than one of these can take place concurrently when certain leadership endeavours are made. The optimal combination of arrangements in an educational organisation differs depending on various organisational aspects, such as its history, culture, members' age distribution, size, homogeneity, cohesiveness, motivation, morale, or turnover (Lindahl, 2008).

Based on the notion that equal participation leads to better educational outcomes (rather than a traditional top-down bureaucratic structure), collaborative endeavours have been widely studied (Somech, 2010). For example, researchers have long argued that participative decision-making may be related to school improvement indicators, such as organisational members' job performance, job satisfaction, and turnover (Cotton et al., 1988; Miller & Monge, 1986). However, because of the nature of shared leadership, several barriers may impede the conduct of shared leadership. First, organisational members may oppose sharing leadership if they are unable to preserve their cultural context (Lindahl, 2008). Second, since educational leaders consider themselves conclusively responsible for what happens in their school, it would be difficult for them to adopt shared leadership where accountability may be diffused (Lindahl, 2008; Yukl & Lepsinger, 2007). Third, shared leadership

needs time for organisational members to interact through ongoing processes (Little, 1988). Such barriers could arise in the form of conflict between formal classroom responsibilities and indefinable continuous interactions, which would distress organisational members (Lindahl, 2008). Consequently, it is important to develop a context in which all educational professionals with diverse expertise are expected to provide leadership (Lindahl, 2008). However, understanding of what initiates these relationships is insufficient. One possible approach to exploring this issue is through the concept of prosociality.

Prosociality

Prosociality is important for developing a systemic organisational approach in which members participate in a shared endeavour (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Grant, 2007; Hu & Liden, 2015). Prosociality (whereby the welfare of others is considered in social interactions) involves motivation, behaviours, and experiences that benefit others irrespective of positional roles, making a difference in others' lives (Bolino & Grant, 2016; Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Prosociality is strongly related to relational aspects of leadership. For example, shared decision-making requires prosocial behaviour such as listening to the voice of others (Shields, 2004), and collaboration is encouraged by prosocial motivation, which refers to a will to help others (Hu & Liden, 2015).

Because prosociality focuses on relationships with others, prosociality among employees is critical when job architecture is based on these relationships (Grant, 2007). Educational professionals ultimately aim to enhance the welfare of their students. To achieve this aim, educational professionals learn together and share responsibilities, thereby helping and benefitting others (Jäppinen et al., 2015). In this sense, educational organisations are relational since they promote the mutual benefit of colleagues by collaborating with other professionals instead of only concentrating on helping students. Organisational researchers argue that employees who regard their work as a calling believe their prosocial efforts make the world better, while employees with other values often do not (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). For example, educational administrators in higher education report feeling fulfilled when engaging in leadership endeavours and receiving feedback from peers (Uusiautti, 2013).

Indeed, many researchers have explored prosocial elements of educational leadership under various terms or concepts, such as empathy, caring, servant leadership, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Frick et al., 2012; Louis et al., 2016; Stewart, 2012; Yada & Jäppinen, 2019). Moreover, other phenomena (such as participation in shared decision-making processes, offering induction, mentoring, and coaching, and providing appropriate appraisal and feedback) can be considered to be prosocial (Bolino & Grant, 2016). Because indefinable interactions should occur among educational professionals when enacting shared

leadership beyond that exercised by principals (Hallinger & Heck, 2010), educational professionals expand their perspective beyond the formal requirements of their role by participating in the leadership process (Senge, 1993).

Bolino and Grant (2016) identify three dimensions of prosociality that are connected but distinct: prosocial motivation, behaviour, and impact. Prosocial motivation is derived from the social aspect of work in terms of how behaviour can promote benefits for others (Grant, 2007; Hu & Liden, 2015). Whereas traditional types of motivation—such as intrinsic and extrinsic (Deci & Ryan, 2002)—are focused on self or task, prosocial motivation focuses on the relationship with others and the motive to help others or make an effort from concern for others (Grant, 2008). Thus, prosocial motivation can provide a foundation when developing leadership as a shared endeavour (Denis et al., 2012).

Prosocial behaviour refers to the helpful actions of professionals directed towards individuals, the group, or the entire organisation to promote the welfare of others (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). Behaviour in educational leadership contexts is often not labelled as prosocial (Yada & Jäppinen, 2019). However, researchers have identified various types of behaviour that are consistent with the definition of prosocial behaviour aimed to benefit others (Bolino & Grant, 2016). For example, some prosocial behaviours that are related to educational effectiveness, such as induction (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), mentoring (Waaland, 2016), organisational citizenship behaviour (Belogolovsky & Somech, 2010), and knowledge sharing (Edge, 2013) occur in educational organisations. These behaviours can be role-prescribed or extra-role (George & Bettenhausen, 1990); therefore, performing prosocial behaviour may be part of or may not be paid work (Organ, 1997).

Prosocial impact is concerned with the experience of making a positive difference in the lives of others (Grant, 2007; Grant & Sonnentag, 2010). Until now, little attention has been given to prosocial impact (Bolino & Grant, 2016). Compared to the similar concept of meaningfulness, which describes a sense that one's job is generally worthwhile whether it benefits others (Bolino & Grant, 2016), prosocial impact is different as it stems from a relationship with the other. Researchers recognise that educational organisations are service institutions where educational professionals can recognise their work benefits others through relationships with various stakeholders (Bright, 2008; Grant & Campbell, 2007; Yada et al., 2020; Yada & Jäppinen, 2019).

In brief, prosocial motivation refers to a *willingness* to help others, while prosocial behaviour refers to *actions* aimed at benefitting others, and prosocial impact represents *experiences* of the positive difference one's own actions make on other's lives. It is assumed that knowledgeable others play a critical role in the development of learning, where those others support, discuss, and provide a model to encourage the learner's understanding and performance (Marsh & Farrell, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, potential development and learning in shared leadership contexts can be achieved with help from others (Yada, 2020).

Research Questions

The aim of this study is to explore the role of prosociality when experiencing shared leadership in educational contexts. Therefore, a research question is formed as following: How do the principals represent prosociality in shared leadership?

Method

Participants

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 comprehensive school principals in Finland from 2016 to 2018. Because the aim of the study was to understand prosociality in shared leadership contexts, the interview questions involved questions about shared leadership. This study utilised a purposeful sampling method using criterion to select principals who describe information-rich cases that include the intensity of phenomena—although not extremely (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2002). A member of the National Principal Association recommended interviewees who were experienced and demonstrating shared leadership quality. Some keywords (such as collaboration and working together) were indicated to the recommender to help to identify the kind of principals who were considered to realise shared leadership.

First, face-to-face meetings were conducted with the principals who agreed to participate. Among 12 principals, 5 males and 7 females were from comprehensive schools in Finland. The average age of the principals was 52.00 (SD = 9.05), their average years of teaching experience were 12.67 (SD = 4.61), and the average years in a principal position were 12.67 (SD = 4.70). Six principals were from small schools (201–400 students), four were from medium schools (401–700 students), and two were from big schools (701–900 students). The average interview length was 53 min (varying between 30 and 84 min).

According to the EF English Proficiency Index (2020), Finland was listed third with very high English proficiency. In addition, all principals spoke fluent English; therefore, the interviews were conducted in English.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and organised in a deductive manner to describe categories that best matched each of the original themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The coding process was supported by using qualitative data analysis software (ATLAS.ti 8.0), which helped the researchers organise text passages from multiple text documents.

Interview data were manually transcribed by the researcher before conducting the analysis. First, the data were deductively coded according to the prosocial elements that were identified in the previous review studies (Bolino & Grant, 2016; Yada & Jäppinen, 2019). The prosocial elements include, for example, caring, empathy, altruism, agreeableness, mentoring, organisational citizenship behaviour, meaningfulness, and servant leadership (Yada & Jäppinen, 2019). If no code was identified in the previous studies, codes were inductively generated. In this phase, 63% of the quotations (306/485) were labelled with the deductive codes. Second, the codes were placed into the three prosocial themes: motivation, behaviour, and impact (Bolino & Grant, 2016). There were some codes that were difficult to fit in any themes. Finally, the codes within the themes were grouped to form subthemes to represent each theme. During the analysis phase, the researcher paid attention not only to fitting the codes into the original themes but to seeking alternative explanations identified and checked against each other (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings

The present study aims to understand what helping each other represents in shared leadership contexts with the research question: How do the principals represent prosociality in shared leadership? For answering the question, the findings are shown according to each aspect of prosociality, including prosocial motivation, behaviour, and impact. Each prosocial aspect has subthemes that explain how the principals acknowledge prosociality. In this section, excerpts from the data are presented to retain principals' voices and to assist readers in understanding the analysis according to the prosocial aspects. The participants' names were anonymised using an acronym ('P' and a number referring to the particular interviewed principal).

Prosocial Motivation

From the analysis, the theme of prosocial motivation comprised three subthemes: organisational and professional commitment, enjoyable attitude, and caring for others.

Organisational and Professional Commitment When the prosocial motivation of educational professionals was discussed, the principals pointed to several commitments they felt are related to prosocial motivation. One principal described this as understanding and engaging in the values and goals of the collective: 'The most important thing is how to understand the meaning of the team's main work and main targets and how we value that we are working and developing certain areas in this school, understand, take, and commit it' (P7). Educational professionals make

an organisational commitment to the team or school to realise organisational or team goals. In addition to organisational commitment, the principals stated that educational professionals felt a calling for their profession as a prosocial motivation when they work together. This point was demonstrated by one principal's response:

> I think it's something inside. It's not that you get paid. To be able to work as a teacher, you need to be one that children want. I think even though somebody says that it's an old fashion way to say that teachers have their strong will to become a teacher, I think there is a part of it. I feel this is my job and this is something I like to do, something I am good at, and something I develop by myself all the time all the way. (P8)

Enjoyable Attitude Another aspect of prosocial motivation that educational professionals may experience refers to their innate pleasure when they work together or for the benefit of others. Of course, communication among educational professionals may include some difficulties, such as misunderstanding, conflict, and tough negotiation. However, principals pointed out working together is enjoyable despite these difficulties:

> It's fun to work together. I think it's more fun because working just by yourself is no way. I think everybody who wants to be school staff, they want to be together, want to work together. The feeling of fun is certainly one of the benefits. (P8)

Moreover, there is an agreement among principals that educational professionals are interested in each other when they are motivated to help others. They understand that prosocial motivation leads to the development of their own expertise since they can receive more than they give in return for collaboration or sharing. This inquiring emotion seems to be fundamental to collaboration or sharing of expertise between educational professionals, as demonstrated by a principal's words:

> We are interested in what we are doing in groups. We are motivated in that way. That's why it's very important that people are voluntarily growing through the teams the feeling that they want to share, they want to help, they want to work together harder inside. (P7)

It is reasonable to understand these inquiring and enjoyable emotions are experienced differently and individually. Thus, principals consistently stated that motivation to help others could not be forced, as the following discussion between the interviewer and participant indicates: 'Where does prosocial motivation come from?' (I). 'Good question, I think it should be coming from internal things. You don't feel you must do it. But you enjoy doing it' (P4).

Caring for Others Another aspect of prosocial motivation comes from care for others. Surprisingly, many principals referred to stories from novice or new teachers in their schools, who felt that they were cared for and were consequently energised. One principal remarked:

> Generally, if any new teachers come into the staffroom and start their work here, when I ask these new teachers afterwards, 'How do the staff welcome you?' It has been always the same answer that the other teachers have been amazing. Everybody says, 'Hey, just ask helping out when you need it.' So, I would say that it works quite nicely. They help a lot. (P5)

Educational professionals may want to care for novice or new teachers more than familiar colleagues since they may not have enough information about the school and seem vulnerable. In terms of communication among familiar colleagues, it was important for educational professionals to consciously be empathic to others to make communication effective. When asked why careful communication is considered effective, one principal replied:

> We have all different personalities with different strengths and different ideas. When you bring all your ideas together, it's important, of course, to be able to bring your ideas, but you have to be able to listen to the others' ideas, how the others understand the topic. I think it's a kind of the same thing, what we do in classrooms with children and what we do with adults in a community as well here in the school. (P8)

Prosocial Behaviour

The principals reported in the interviews how educational professionals engage in behaviour that benefits others. This behaviour was characterised by three subthemes: offering own expertise, supporting with simple action, and engaging in teamwork.

Offering Own Expertise Educational professionals have individually different but widely varying expertise, through which they make complementary relationships to achieve educational goals. One principal emphasised the importance of providing prosocial actions using their own expertise since the whole educational enterprise may stop if no expertise is offered, as is manifested in the following comment:

> She took quite a lot of responsibilities for computer things. And she was very good, if we had to make, for instance, new school, we had to make it very present place, she had the eye and she had the ability to do it, so she could do. I was just very relieved. I did not have that. I did not have an interest, but not have the ability to do it. I couldn't see them, for instance, colours. And she did that. (P1)

Providing one's own knowledge and skills does not only work as complementary but also offers the opportunity for mutual learning among educational professionals. In shared leadership contexts, they learn from each other by sharing their own knowledge and skills that could benefit others' expertise. When asked to describe prosocial behaviour among educational professionals, one principal replied:

> Somebody has special skills. He or she would share with the others in the [in-house] training sessions that everybody can get benefits from because everybody can get it. Or somebody goes to some outside training sessions, so they would train everybody in this school. (P5)

However, this does not mean that educational professionals just copy other's knowledge and skills as others do. The principal continued that prosocial behaviour could be a starting point to generate synergy:

> I gave materials, then the teachers say okay. They put it all together in a new way. So, they did not imitate what I have done in previous schools. But they made it their own. It was very nice to see that they didn't just try to copy, but they actually took in that information and they thought about it and discussed what we are gonna do. It was wonderful. (P5)

Thus, in shared leadership contexts, educational professionals do not confine their expertise to themselves. They are open to sharing their expertise to help others and advance issues. One principal pointed out that taking prosocial actions with their own expertise leads to leadership:

> I think all kinds of organization members have something to help others with, some kinds of leadership skills. Because leadership does not belong to me, everyone has some kinds of leadership skills. We, adults, are all some kinds of leaders in our school. (P6)

Supporting with a Simple Action Principals noticed that there is a lot of behaviour that simply helps others. This kind of simple helping behaviour makes following organisational communication smooth since educational professionals understand they can build reciprocal relationships. For example, a simple action to help others was substituting. A principal described there are various moments that require others' help as a substitute:

> So, for instance, this is a big school, I have a staff about 50, and every now and then, or not, almost constantly somebody needs to go somewhere. They need to do whatever they have, have to take care of their kids, because of the doctor, just want a vacation, whatever. Then, I said to them that you know yes, if you need a time out, I'll give you time out if you then can find somebody to substitute for you. And they very willingly, say, 'Hey, I can do it'. (P5)

This example shows how helping as a substitute reflects the organisation where individuals can easily ask help from someone.

Principals agreed that listening also benefits others although this seems to be passive behaviour. One principal pointed to the importance of listening that encourages shared leadership by stating, 'It's helpful to find one hour for one group and just sit down and share what is going on' (P4). Listening to others plays a role in initiating the leadership process. Another principal pointed out that educational professionals are engaged in actively listening to others' voice to create synergy, as is illustrated in the subsequent comment:

> I think it is important in teams they have all different personalities with different strengths and different ideas. So, that's why I would like to form different kinds of teams. Then, I think that the idea is that one plus one is more than two. When you bring all your ideas together, it's important, of course, to be able to bring your ideas, but you have to be able to listen to the others' ideas, how the others understand the topic. I think it's a kind of the same thing, what we do in classrooms with children and what we do with adults in a community as well here in the school. (P8)

Making a decision in the school particularly requires active listening in a discussion. One principal is very sensitive to listening to others in shared leadership contexts:

> To listen when we discuss so that I am able to listen to what others have said so that I am not just pushing my own point of view even though it would be the best idea. But still, we need to be able to listen to [what] others [are] saying. (P10)

These actions are simple but very important to make the school community work smoothly.

Engaging in Teamwork Because educational professionals recognise that the issues around them are becoming more diverse and complex, their work style is also changing towards greater teamwork, as demonstrated by one principal who stated that educational professionals 'are rapidly planning and working more and more together' (P8). Examples of engaging in teamwork include giving feedback and advice and sharing information and workload to help others. In the interviews, teams were recognised as a place that generates relationships between educational professionals who are working together. In terms of shared leadership, engaging in teamwork leads to helping others, as is echoed in the following comment:

> I feel that a very important thing is the relationships between individuals. Teachers working together building relationships together and we support them in very many ways. And then we have, first, each class as one group, as classroom teachers, subject teachers, and special education teachers form their own class group. Then, we have different teams based on different themes. And then all teachers together in this school. I think that we have to first build up relationships all about the relationships between people here. When we trust each other, it is the social way to do. (P12)

One important point the principals stated is that teamwork does not necessarily require certain deliberate behaviour, such as team teaching. Although educational professionals do not have any specific intention to help others, getting together and sharing information and problems can lead to some ideas and solutions, thereby leading to the benefit for others. The following comment illustrates a spontaneous benefitting behaviour:

> Once a month, we have mentoring groups. So, there are five teachers together in one group, and it's like serving what's going on, and might be some topics that we have, but the most important thing is that they can share what is going on in their life and their work. And also, as I said, they can learn from each other, and the main thing is to help. (P4)

To elicit opinion, ideas, information, or even problems, an open atmosphere is required. One principal considered encouraging an atmosphere in the school where one could easily seek help as a prosocial endeavour:

> The atmosphere would be open, welcoming, and helpful. Those are the main things. I also go back to the words, security and safety. You feel safe, then it's easier to be open to others. So, open, welcoming, and helpful are the words that describe the atmosphere. (P9)

Prosocial Impact

During the interviews, the principals noticed that in many moments of school life as educational professionals, they recognise that they are helping others. Here, three subthemes were identified concerning the moments where prosocial impact was recognised: seeing students' development, receiving colleagues' gratitude, and receiving parents' and communities' appreciation.

Seeing Students' Development Because the ultimate goal of schools is to enhance students' development, seeing the growth of the students makes educational professionals realise how they benefit students. Opportunities to see students' development energises and fulfils educational professionals with the experience of prosociality, as one principal explained:

> Everything is done for the students. That's why we are here. Therefore, the very motivating fact was seeing young people developing I can't say any smaller facts which motivate me because I think it was the entity that motivated. (P1)

Opportunities to help students mostly occur indirectly, since educational endeavours take time to come to fruition. Educational professionals experience the students' outcomes or the atmosphere in class as indirect feedback related to their educational contributions, as echoed in the following comment:

> That is what I always ask once a year in the developmental talk: 'What is the most important thing in your work, and what makes you happy or gives you something?' I think almost every teacher, they like to be with children and when they see them growing and learning, maybe the most rewarding things. [...] From students, you can see the feedback, but it's not direct, but you can see what happens and if they are happy or everything is going well. If it's good feedback for your work, you have organised it well. (P4)

Moreover, indirect feedback about students' achievement also comes from colleagues. For example, one principal explained that educational professionals realise their successful contribution to students by the feedback from the other team members:

> The first one is a success. If the team managed to do something very well and all other people hear their good work, we say, 'That's great. You have done a great thing'. If the thing is that we all get so many good things and our work is, you make achievements which help students learn, we applaud. That's very important, success and feedback [for] that. All the time we give feedback. (P7)

Receiving Feedback and Gratitude from Colleagues Opportunities for educational professionals to realise that they are benefitting colleagues come not only from direct teaching in classes but also from working with other educational professionals. In a situation where educational professionals share responsibilities to apply effective education for students, they work together with colleagues to enhance student development. One teacher explained: 'When you see your [teacher] group is working well and you see your good impact on group members' (P4). When educational professionals help other colleagues with their expertise (or even just a simple action), they receive feedback from others. The recognition of receiving feedback reinforces the feeling of helping others, as one principal added:

> Our teachers' group and staff, they can also encourage each other and say 'well done' if there is something we do together. And as I said, it is important to try to encourage each other and to reward it by saying, 'well-done, it was a good work'. Of course, it's impossible no one can see every good thing. But it's something I try to always remember to give good feedback and also to reward like this. (P4)

In addition to feedback from other colleagues, feedback from principals also helps educational professionals to notice their impact on others. Principals emphasised the importance of providing feedback as a form of gratitude so that others could realise that their behaviour is worthwhile. This is reflected in the following extended quote:

> Usually, it's in the staffroom, and many times in [a web-platform], I send, 'Thanks for this and this.... and I will share this with all teachers'. Then, for example, today in a staff meeting where it is all teachers and assistants, I was going to start with thanking people who arrange an excellent seminar in February to all sixty of us a week ago on Friday and Saturday. [...] We have had so good time, so good time talking about this culture and how to help cooperation between the teachers and assistants to get students better. I think almost every time when I open my mouth, I start with 'Thanks'. I think it's very important for all of us. (P11)

When educational professionals shared their responsibility to develop students, principals thank them for their contributions in engaging with school goals. This gratitude makes educational professionals realise that they are not just individually developing students but engaging in shared educational endeavours to benefit others.

Moreover, in the interviews, principals noticed that everyday life consists of many small things that are not usually listed as official tasks. Even though prosocial behaviour is small and not formally recognised, educational professionals could receive prosocial impact in daily life. One principal explained the moments when someone is needed:

> There are things, so-called, we call them free time actions, for example, just make coffee for others. We have one teacher who makes very good coffee. She really makes good coffee, and if there was no coffee, we cannot go on. (P1)

Getting Feedback from Parents Principals stated that parents are the people who make educational professionals realise their contribution to the students. Because seeing the growth of their children makes parents happy, educational professionals recognise their contribution to the students by communicating with parents. One principal illustrated this point:

> In the Christmas and spring celebrations we have at school, we worked together a lot to make it something really special. It's always different and children have plays and do singing. And it's always like we have done it together. After we had the celebrations, we were relieved and so happy because the children and parents were so pleased. This is something which was a huge task [during the preparation], but we succeeded, and we did it well and it went well. (P8)

It is reasonable to say that when parents see the growth of their children, they appreciate the education provided by the school, thereby making educational professionals fulfilled. Moreover, positive comments and reactions from parents and local people have a role in educational professionals experiencing the way they are creating a future through their education. One principal explained:

> The school has a very societal approach to education as a whole. It was by no means confined within the walls of the school. But we saw the school as a part of the local community, in fact, a part of Finnish society. So, we want to experiment with a new thing as we have a strong feeling of creating a future. (P2)

In this sense, prosocial behaviour was perceived not just by the students but the whole society. By developing their students, educational professionals feel that they are benefitting social welfare.

Discussion

This study revealed that the Finnish principals perceived prosociality as essential in shared leadership contexts. Prosocial motivation works as a function to energise educational professionals to work not only for individual others but also collectively. Prosocial behaviour was found to be understood as actual actions that formally and informally occur in shared leadership contexts. Prosocial impact was perceived when educational professionals offer help and receive certain types of feedback. Moreover, the moments when educational professionals experienced prosocial impact were not only when they saw students' development but also when they received feedback from colleagues and parents.

Notably, when we discussed prosociality during the interviews, the principals recognised the importance of prosociality within shared leadership. For example, principals highlighted sharing and giving that is undertaken to benefit others that could be considered prosocial behaviour. This is because educational professionals recognise their work as interdependent and reciprocal and believe they are able to help others as they recognise other colleagues are prosocial and are able to offer reciprocal help when needed. These results corroborate the findings of the previous study by Hu and Liden (2015) that states when organisational members are prosocially motivated and working on tasks requiring interdependence among members, their collaboration and well-being were enhanced. Educational policy-makers can utilise the findings. For example, educational professionals' prosocial behaviour should be rewarded in order to encourage their collaboration.

One important finding here is the role of prosocial impact. In the interviews, the principals realised that when educational professionals received feedback and perceived their work was acknowledged by others, they realised their behaviour helps others, thereby leading to increased helping behaviours. This finding supports evidence from previous observations and signifies the importance of prosocial impact (e.g. Grant, 2007; Yada et al., 2020). This finding offers practical implications. Educational organisations and leaders are encouraged to make opportunities where teachers can experience that they help others. Teacher trainings should include how to make the opportunities, for example, giving positive feedback, in order teachers to acknowledge their contribution to others.

The other important finding is that shared leadership was deeply related to pro-sociality because organisational members are connected to each other in shared leadership contexts (Carson et al., 2007). During our interviews, principals emphasised that when the educational professionals offered help, the recipient was able to develop their understanding and learning. Because helping and assisting others among educational professionals were found to be typical prosocial

motivation and behaviours, prosociality related a person to the other and fulfilled the distance to potential development (Marsh & Farrell, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). An important practical implication from this finding is that educational professionals can learn from each other with prosociality. For example, teacher trainings are suggested to make learning environments where various educational professionals can benefit each other with their expertise to realise shared leadership.

Moreover, this study suggests how educational professionals form collective competence in shared leadership contexts. Although Finnish teachers are renowned for their autonomy and trust (Välijärvi, 2012), the findings suggest that the educational professionals became hubs with which people are connected when they feel confident and autonomy in their actions. The principals noticed that the educational professionals who offered help felt more confident not only in terms of their expertise but also in terms of the collective. This finding contributes to the international literature on how autonomous and efficacious teachers form shared leadership by helping each other (Carson et al., 2007; Yada, 2020). As a previous meta-analysis showed that experiencing autonomy positively leads employees to be more prosocial (Donald et al., 2021), autonomy and confidence in their expertise and actions make educational professionals feel enjoy helping others, which leads to collective phenomena in shared leadership. Thus, educational professionals may collectively enhance their prosociality by their expertise and competence in shared leadership. In line with the findings, educational leaders should emphasise that educational professionals contribute to others when they utilise their expertise, thereby building collective performance required in shared leadership.

Despite these promising results, this study has several limitations and implications for future research. First, the study focused on principals as a representative of educational professionals. Therefore, this study is limited by the lack of information in terms of the other educational professionals, such as teachers. Future research could access other educational professionals as participants. Second, although a qualitative approach depicted perceptions of prosociality in shared leadership contexts, further statistical work should examine the components of prosociality in shared leadership revealed in this study. Finally, the data were collected from a variety of school levels including the primary and secondary levels. Since the structure of cooperation and the role of teachers are different between school levels, separate analysis depending on school levels should be undertaken to examine different perceptions of prosociality in future investigations.

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Chapter 18
Teachers as Leaders? Finnish Student Teachers' Perceptions of Participation in Leadership in School

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Abstract School teachers' work is increasingly associated with leadership. Teacher autonomy is exceptionally high in Finland, and newly qualified teachers are expected to take responsibility for and participate in leadership processes, both inside their classrooms and schoolwide. To develop these abilities, student teachers should recognise the leadership dimensions of their profession to be active agents: their opportunities to participate in and influence the development of pedagogical solutions and the operation of the school. This study explores how student teachers perceive their participation and agency in leadership in their future work. The data consist of student teachers' ($N = 68$) empathy-based written stories describing either the promising future of a teacher or a future in which things went poorly. The data were analysed using a narrative approach. The results show that student teachers perceive leadership to be composed of individual professional skills and external factors that enable them to be active, such as opportunities provided by the principal and the general school culture.

Keywords Student teachers · Teacher leadership · Participation · Agency · Teacher education

Introduction

In Finland, school teaching is viewed as a demanding and expert profession, with leadership connected to the work of a teacher in many ways; in practice, teachers are central agents in school development, curriculum design, and other leadership functions. Finnish teachers are expected to participate broadly and be proactive in their schools (Toom & Husu, 2016). However, initial Finnish teacher education has

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not explicitly included any studies on leadership, whether in general or regarding qualifying as a principal. Thus, the Teacher Education Forum, established in 2016 by the Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education to improve teacher education, encourages teacher educators to develop the capacity of student teachers to take responsibility for and participate in school leadership processes. To support the development of teachers' professional and leadership identity and to develop their skills, student teachers should recognise the leadership dimensions of their profession.

In this study, we investigated student teachers' views on leadership as an aspect of their future profession as teachers. We examined how student teachers perceived their own opportunities to act regarding leadership in the future, what factors support and prevent participation, and what kind of leadership agency the students' perceptions reflect. In order to discover the perceptions of student teachers, we used a narrative methodology and explored the perceptions of student teachers through empathy-based written stories (Eskola, 1991). Through narratives, we aimed to examine student teachers' ideas about teacher leadership as a part of their future profession.

The Concept of Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership has been of increasing scholarly interest since the 1980s (Nguyen et al., 2019; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). While the concept is now well established, it does not have a single definition. According to Nguyen et al.'s (2019) literature review covering 2003 through 2017, teacher leadership has been associated with both peer collaboration and informal interactions. It has been reported to have an impact on improving instructional practices, school effectiveness, and student learning, among other outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2019). Most definitions of teacher leadership include the idea of the 'role of an influencer rather than a role or formal authority' and of teachers being influential both inside and outside the classroom. This definition characterises teacher leadership in the Finnish school context as we understand it; although formal positions are rare, elements of leadership are included in teachers' work, as teachers have significant autonomy and are accorded expert status in schools. They participate in school development and leadership processes in many ways. For instance, teachers engage in pedagogical curricular processes and various internal school workgroups (Metsäpelto et al., 2021). Through these activities, teachers serve as central agents in school development, strategy work, and other leadership functions (Ahtiainen et al., 2019). In addition, teacher leadership can also be viewed as an informal influence on school leadership. This can be driven, for example, by professional hierarchies between teachers or otherwise established power relations inside the school community. As such, teacher leadership can be defined as informal leadership (Hunzicker, 2013) and related to the work of every teacher, not just formal leadership roles. Hence, when teacher leadership is approached as the readiness and ability to participate and influence, it can be understood as part of the teacher's profession.

Beijaard et al. (2004) defined the teacher's professional identity as a dynamic and ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation. While an essential part of teachers' work is influenced by their professional identity (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), it is equally important to examine the evolving teacher identity, especially from the perspective of novice teachers. Personal experiences influence each teacher's identity construction: memories of different teachers, being a student, and the perceptions of a good teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Izadinia, 2013; Körkkö et al., 2016). Teacher identity is also constructed and negotiated in the sociocultural contexts of the community in which teachers participate (Eteläpelto & Vähäsantanen, 2008). In addition, during the teacher identity process, a teacher's professional agency is formed (Buchanan, 2015). Toom et al. (2015, p. 2) define teacher agency as '... teachers' active efforts to make choices and intentional action in a way that makes a significant difference'. In this research, agency is understood, as Ahearn (2001, p. 112) defined it, as the 'socioculturally mediated capacity to act'. To be more specific, those acts happen in and are constrained and resourced by certain historically formed sociocultural circumstances (Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

Teacher identity and its development are also crucial for developing teachers' leadership identity (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Sinha and Hanuscin (2017) pointed out that developing a teacher's leadership identity is a complex, unique process that depends on the specific teacher's life experiences, priorities, and school context. In addition, the development of a teacher's leadership identity is influenced by personal, organisational, and societal factors (Liu et al., 2021). Research has also revealed that school culture plays a role in teachers' readiness for leadership (Oppi et al., 2022). As we emphasise informal leadership in our definition, leadership socialisation is viewed as a process in which the early-career teacher becomes active and influential in developing his or her school. Previous studies on leadership socialisation in school have mainly focused on teachers becoming principals. However, theories and studies regarding the teaching career, such as the identity development studies cited above, explain how teachers acquire different leadership positions and develop a variety of professional orientations in their organisations during their service to the profession.

Teacher Leadership in the Finnish Comprehensive School Context

In the Finnish education system, leadership has not been traditionally perceived as related to teacher's work (Rokka, 2011). In Finnish educational settings, teacher leadership has mainly been studied in early childhood education and care (e.g. Heikka et al., 2018). In a comprehensive school context, instead of using a teacher leadership concept, a teacher's position and competency have been approached from the perspective of teachers' autonomy, pedagogical freedom, and managing their work (Mikkola & Välijärvi, 2015; Tirri, 2010). Supporting this, Finnish teachers have reported strong professional agency regarding their own teaching and

its development; however, they experience less professional agency working with colleagues than with own students (Soini et al., 2020). In classrooms, teachers are pedagogical leaders because they are responsible for planning and organising teaching activities. Teachers have broad autonomy and, with that, come requirements for high professional ethics and professional development throughout their teaching careers. From a school leadership perspective, teachers play a central role in implementing curricula and policies in practice, but it has not been emphasised from a leadership perspective.

However, the perception of leadership has changed in recent decades. The principal has become more of a general manager of the school who manages finances and personnel and is responsible for results (Alava et al., 2012; Aho et al., 2006). As Aho et al. (2006, p. 166) described: 'Previously, a school principal was an experienced senior teacher who was promoted for good service to education. Today's school principal must be a qualified leader who understands education development and has solid management skills to lead a school'. As principals' administrative workload has increased, the idea of more collaborative leadership has become increasingly important. Today, school leadership is referred to as distributed leadership in which teachers are involved in formal and informal leadership processes (Lahtero et al., 2017; Ahtiainen et al., 2019). Teacher leadership has been seen as a form of distributed leadership, or part of it (Harris, 2003; see also Heikka et al., 2018). It is, thus, crucial to understand how future teachers perceive their possible leadership roles under the current circumstances.

Although teacher leadership is not a traditionally used concept in Finnish teacher research, some examples can be found. Recently, this was included in the model of teacher competence in the Finnish teacher research developed by Finnish universities providing university-based initial teacher education (Metsäpelto et al., 2021). This multidimensional adapted process (MAP) model aims to describe the key knowledge and skills needed for teaching. In the MAP model, the teacher's professional development is seen as a continuum from the student selection stage through education to the working life. In addition to the traditional area of teaching in a classroom, the model considers the teacher's agency outside the classroom, including engagement in the school's pedagogical development and teacher leadership, as part of professional competence (Metsäpelto et al., 2021). Next, we describe the implementation and methods of the research.

Methods

The present study investigated student teachers' views on leadership as an aspect of their future profession as teachers. In this study, we were interested in the informal elements of teacher leadership and in student teachers' perceptions of their possibilities to reshape work in school, show initiative, and become agents in their

professional work. Student teachers can provide valuable information from the perspective of leadership socialisation. Teacher education could evolve as an educational entity from the traditional teacher to a pedagogical leader, in addition to being on the continuum towards formal principal qualification.

The research question of the study is as follows:

How do student teachers perceive the factors that prevent or enhance participation and agency in leadership in the school context?

Data Collection Through Empathy-Based Stories

The data were collected in the Moodle e-learning environment during a November 2021 online course that was part of initial teacher education for elementary teachers at a Finnish university. Students were informed about the methods and purpose of the research; their participation was voluntary, and participants could refuse initially or withdraw at any time (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, 2019).

The data were gathered using empathy-based stories (Eskola, 1991, 1997). This method was chosen since we did not want to limit the data solely to students' personal experiences but desired to include respondents' perceptions and knowledge. Moreover, this method is considered appropriate for a topic that has not been extensively studied. The students who attended the course were tasked with writing two stories based on parallel frames: one describing a future in which things went poorly and the other the promising future of a teacher. Students were asked to write freely and empathise with both imagined futures. The frame stories were as follows:

> Negative scenario
> It is the year 2035. You have been a teacher for about 10 years. You feel that your school has not developed as desired. You feel that you and your colleagues have not had the opportunity to influence the course of things in the school community. Tell your story, describing the situation from the perspectives of you and your work community, along with your own skills and professional development.
> Positive scenario
> It is the year 2035. You have been a teacher for about 10 years. The educational institution where you have worked has progressed; students' learning outcomes have improved, and your school community and students are better off. This is primarily thanks to you and your colleagues. Tell your story, describing the situation from the perspectives of you and your work community, along with your own skills and professional development.

After writing the narratives, students were asked to bring the texts to the discussion area of the Moodle e-learning environment where they were discussed freely in groups of three to five students; for example, a group might have focused on a central theme that emerged from the stories. The narratives were used as the research material, with 98 student teachers (who formed 28 groups) writing and discussing the parallel stories and thus leading to 196 items of text.

Narrative Approach in the Analysis

Using a narrative research approach, the data were examined for factors that build teacher leadership (Karjalainen & Puroila, 2017). In this study, 'narrative' refers to the data themselves, the analysis of those data, and how the subjects structured their views and experiences. People use narratives to express personal meanings, build an identity, and structure their views on diverse experiences. By choosing this approach, we situated ourselves as researchers within a constructivist epistemology in which people construct their knowledge and identity through narratives (Heikkinen, 2010). Knowledge was attained by analysing the student teachers' understanding of teacher leadership, its construction, and the factors that prevent and support its growth. The factors contributing to and preventing the phenomenon are at the heart of the analysis, as opposed to the narrative structures of the data. In the career descriptions produced using the empathy-based stories method, the narrator acts as the story's subject and, thus, determines what is and is not omitted (cf. Burgos, 1988). The narratives were examined based on both pragmatic reasoning and narrative analysis, aiming to identify an interpretative story about the relationships and meanings of events (Polkinghorne, 1988).

The first author performed the analysis of the data utilising the QSR NVivo software package. Qualitative content analysis was used to examine and craft stories describing the most typical meanings in the student teachers' narratives and their connections. The factors that prevented participation and agency were interpreted based on negative stories and those that supported participation and agency in the light of positive stories. The analysis of narratives was carried out by thematising and typifying the data. The analysis began by reading the narratives and marking relevant points from the perspectives of teacher leadership, participation, and agency. Data saturation was reached after reviewing about three quarters of the data. A random sample of the remaining 20 participants was undertaken to ensure saturation; no new themes emerged.

After the thematic analysis (Cohen et al., 2011), a narrative analysis was carried out to construct a new story according to the themes and citations found in the student teachers' narratives. The aim was to synthesise data through narrative knowledge. First, themes were extracted from the material, after which core stories were built on those extracts. The two constructed stories resulting from the narrative analysis are based on the interpretation of the data; as such, they should not be viewed as the informants' narratives. The new core stories were constructed thematically following the typical chronological order in the original stories (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Results

In the following sections, we present the findings of this research. First, we provide the results of the thematic analysis, that is, the analysis of the narratives; second, the two core stories are presented as the results of the narrative analysis. The primary

Table 18.1 Themes arise from participants' frame stories

Negative stories	
Principals' negative leadership style	Authoritarian leadership in which the teacher has no opportunity to exert influence
	Principals' inappropriate behaviour
Negative atmosphere	Bad school atmosphere means exhaustion and cynicism
	Bad school atmosphere leads to negative attitudes towards joint development
High workload	Chaotic operating culture
	Workload caused by excessive demands from outside
	Limited school resources
Teachers' own actions	Overly high self-set standards
	Conscious decision not to participate in leadership
Positive stories	
Principals' positive leadership style	Principals as enablers of teacher leadership
	Principals as central figures in change
Positive atmosphere	Emotional atmosphere as a resource
	Systematic culture of working together
	Enthusiastic and innovative atmosphere
Appropriate workload	Well-functioning routines
	Ample resources
Teachers' own actions	Teachers' personal reflection and responsibility
	Teachers' participation in continuing education

and subsidiary themes resulting from the analysis appear in Table 18.1. As an answer to the research question on the factors preventing and enhancing participation and agency, the themes of both negative and positive frame stories are presented in detail in the sections below, with clarifying quotations from the data.

Themes in the Negative and Positive Stories

Teacher Students' Views in Negative Stories

Principal's Negative Leadership Style: Authoritarian Leadership in Which the Teacher Has No Opportunity to Influence

In their stories, the student teachers described how the school had not developed because either the principal or an external authority determined its activities. Teachers had no say in school operations, and there was no interest in their views. Authoritarian leadership may have been personified in the principal, but the stories often described how the school itself was subject to authoritarian leadership because its development was directed from outside its walls. In Finland, the debate over the reform of the fundamentals of the latest comprehensive school curriculum has often

concerned moving too quickly and overriding teachers' views (Niemi, 2021). Authoritarian leadership was almost invariably combined with problems of school development; teachers had no room for agency or even participation in an authoritarian culture. Authoritarian leadership was also often arbitrary and focused on irrelevant issues that weakened the feeling of communality and motivation to participate. In the stories, the school also suffered under authoritarian leadership in other ways; they often related how authoritarian leadership led to a chaotic operating culture that burdened teachers and caused problems for pupils:

> I work at a school where neither teachers nor students have a chance to influence school business. The principal or the municipality decides everything. When I graduated as a classroom teacher, I had big dreams of using my teaching methods and everything I had learned during my studies in my own class, but all these dreams have crumbled.

Principals' Negative Leadership Style: Inappropriate Behaviour

In the student teachers' stories, the principal could also act inappropriately, poisoning the atmosphere in the school community and weakening the motivation of staff to participate in school leadership. Inappropriate actions were most commonly manifested in the stories as teachers experiencing a lack of appreciation, an underperforming principal view of the principal, and a preference for some teachers over others:

> We do not feel supported, we do not feel appreciated: just harsh criticism from all directions. Rumours are also circulating that one teacher's move to an even more unfortunate school was due to criticism from the principal, so the threshold for turning to anyone is really high.

Negative Atmosphere in School: Exhaustion and Cynicism

The stories attributed difficulties with the school's progress and the development of teacher leadership to problems with the school atmosphere, which was often described using stress-related concepts such as exhaustion and cynicism. Student teachers depicted this environment as limiting their agency and participation in leadership activities, even though no explicit, formal obstacles stood in their way. As a result, there was no willingness to participate in development processes or to consider how to improve the school. This view can be understood through stress literature, as high stress and weak individual- and group-level coping can lead to diminished participation in and commitment to the teaching profession. For example, stress has been linked to young teachers' early turnover (Räsänen et al., 2020). In addition, teacher stress has been prominent in public discussions in Finland. A time perspective of the stories revealed how the atmosphere was viewed as having a substantial impact on teacher leadership socialisation; often, the stories described how young teachers quickly grew disappointed after coming to a new school, only to find that innovative ideas were not received as anticipated and that

opportunities and support for the development of their own teaching were not offered:

> At the beginning of my career as a teacher, I was full of new ideas and enthusiasm … For years, however, the atmosphere in our work community has been a bit uninspired and tired … the lack of communality has been surprisingly burdensome and has led to the experience of our not being willing or able to influence our work and its development.
>
> This is not what I expected when I was in college. I have not been able to push through any reforms in our school. If I ever suggest anything, it will get a negative response: 'No, we don't want to do that; it would increase workload'.

Negative Atmosphere in the School: Negative Attitude Towards Joint Development

The scant opportunities for participation and agency in leadership activities were explained not only by cynicism and exhaustion but also by a generally negative atmosphere regarding development. This negative attitude can be understood not only as resistance to change but also from the perspective of the teaching profession's role as an agent of socialisation and transmitter of culture. The school community as a whole and the individual teachers wanted to stick to old routines and restrict new teachers' agency when they expressed the need for change:

> There are always those who oppose things and want to continue with that same old formula. I feel bad for the students when their friends from other schools tell them about the great projects and assignments they have been allowed to do at school.
>
> Instead of including us [new teachers] in school development, we were taught the ways of the house and to avoid extra work … The work community had a bad spirit between employees, and it seemed that there was no hope to do things better.

High Workload: Chaotic Operating Culture

Teacher leadership was also hindered by a disorganised and even chaotic operating culture that manifested itself in the school's everyday life and in challenges related to teachers' work. In the stories, teachers felt that their work was too fragmented and that they had to do significant extra work that did not serve their profession's core purpose: the students' learning and well-being that teachers usually emphasised as a point of reference. Again, the descriptions highlighted factors typical of the 2010s and related to changes in Finland's funding model, which led to cuts in basic allocations and more projects and reforms that did not always come from schools or were not wanted by schools. The projects in the negative stories were described as additions to everyday work, not as opportunities to grow:

> At the beginning of my career, I would have liked to focus on the basics of work, school life and students, but the very first autumn I felt overwhelmed from the outside by projects that were not wanted by or conceived within the school, but by external parties.
>
> After chaotic school days, no one has the will or the energy for development or spending time together.

For 10 years, it has been change after change. During my studies, it felt like so many things should be mastered as a teacher and there was an infinite amount of work to be done … New projects are constantly coming in that are to be taken on, along with all other work.

High Workload: Excessive External Demands

The teachers described high workload and poor resources as leading to situations where teachers could not improve themselves or participate in community development. The workload was often described as 'extra' projects and other work. Teachers often contrasted these demands to the teacher's 'basic work'; in the stories, the teachers clearly stated that they did not have the time to meet with pupils and parents because of the extra work. As a result, the pupils were not doing well, the problems piled up, and a negative spiral ensued. In the end, teachers were unable to display interest in developing their community. This can again be seen as reflecting student teachers' general knowledge about the current demands of the profession that have been increasing over the last decade (e.g. Kauppi et al., 2022). The stories also included frequent references to the theme of socialisation in teacher leadership, with new teachers often described as coming to school eager and idea-rich, only to have 10 years of hardwork force them to withdraw from their work community and its growth.

> Huh! How hard it's been at work again. The constant disagreements and unnecessary meetings day after day are exhausting. I don't have time for anything when I feel like the responsibilities and work are piling up, little by little, on my shoulders on every issue … it's better to be quiet (in meetings) and try to handle your own class as well as possible. I don't have the resources to build a school community on my own:
>
> Especially recently, I have had to work from home in the evenings so that I could meet each student, even for a brief while, during the day.

High Workload: Poor School Resources

In their negative stories, student teachers often referred to scant resources hindering the development of the school. Teacher leadership is impeded when it is difficult and burdensome to do basic work because the necessary tools are lacking. For example, equipment might be broken or otherwise unusable in sports classes, or crucial information and communications technology assets might be malfunctioning or absent. In addition to material resources, the authors described gaps in crucial human resources; there were no instructor resources or special needs teacher supports available for symptomatic pupils or those who needed a little extra help. Therefore, teachers' individual and collective willingness to develop was described as weak:

> The way our school works is very old-fashioned in many respects, but I can't be solely responsible for changes … Even though all the teachers who work here are uninspired and fed up with how things are, no one wants to do anything about it anymore … I find myself

dreaming all the time, for example, that I take my students to the gym for a change, but a bus needs to be arranged because our old small school does not have its own hall … Insufficient resources are irritating in many other things as well, but I find it easiest to do as I always do.

Teachers' Own Actions: Overly High Self-Set Standards

Following classical stress theories of stress as appraisal, the student teachers described how they had set high expectations for developing their competencies during their university studies but could not meet them once they began working, due to the challenges of coping and a high workload. The work community did not support them in their objectives, leading to frustration and exhaustion. The teachers described how they wanted to grow but felt abandoned:

Even during my studies, it felt like so many things had to be mastered as a teacher and there would be an infinite amount of work to do … I don't have enough resources for everything.

Teachers' Own Actions: A Conscious Decision to Not Participate in Leadership

Most of the negative narratives had a turn in which teachers made a conscious decision to retreat from all activities in the school except those involving their own classes and their own students. Even if there was not a decision as such, the student teachers at least stated that they were not interested in participating. Narratives usually described a build-up to the turning point, with the protagonist becoming passive, which could be caused by one or more of the factors described above. This passivity was usually expressed as an unwillingness to take part in the school community, descriptions of waiting for vacation to arrive, planning to change schools, or even quit being a teacher:

I don't even dare ask for help or advice because everyone is so tired and stressed. I had ample enthusiasm for my work, but it's been eroding, and I'm considering leaving the profession. At the moment, I'm just trying to get through the days, and I'm constantly counting down the days to the next holiday. The work itself gives me nothing, and I can say the same thing about the work community.

Teacher Students' Views in Positive Stories

Principal's Positive Leadership Style: The Principal as an Enabler of Teacher Leadership

The principal's actions in successful teacher leadership were described in positive terms, such as being easy to follow, implementing precise and predictable practices, ensuring good interaction, and trusting and supporting subordinates. The important elements of leadership were to support the staff and create a solid framework for

joint action. The personal traits of the principal were not generally explicitly described, and she was rarely depicted as heroic or as the critical factor in the positive evolution of the school. More often, the principal's input could be found by reading between the lines. Teachers see the principal's actions as significant for positive change, but the principal's role is viewed primarily as an enabler of experts' (i.e. teachers') work:

> The school's principal played an important role [in positive development]: Supporting sub-ordinates, disseminating information at all levels and soliciting and responding to feedback made it possible to implement changes.

Principal's Positive Leadership Style: The Principal as a Central Figure in the Progress of the School

Although most positive narratives described the principal's role as an enabler of teacher leadership, some narratives emphasised the principal's role, qualities, and competencies. In these narratives, the principal's interactions were perceived as positive, and her actions were described as in line with the distributed leadership style, since she involved teachers in decision-making:

> Our principal is also a rare gem; she put the changes in place, involved the entire school in the decision-making process, and, through her example, represented the school's position. She set out the principles of eco-social justice in our school: Even in freezing temperatures of −30 degrees, this hero cycled to school.

Positive Atmosphere: Enthusiastic and Innovative Atmosphere

Enthusiasm and an innovative atmosphere were terms that illustrated everyday life in schools where teacher leadership was strong. In these accounts, the teachers' descriptions did not describe many of the leaders' actions; the principal or other management figures did not define the structures of their operations or the operating culture. The stories followed many of the ideas of the innovative school model described by Lavonen et al. (2014). By contrast, teachers' individual and commu-nity agency and inclusion were at the centre of these stories that described what the teachers did and how they acted; the role of the principal and other managerial personnel in these accounts was minimal. The socialisation of teacher leadership got off to a good start in the stories when teachers were well received in the new work community and were quickly afforded ample opportunities to act and express their ideas. Interaction with senior teachers was open and reciprocal:

> Everything is based on our open and continuously learning work community, where every-one's strengths are used in a meaningful way. This practice of doing things together is reflected from the teacher's room to the operating culture of our school at all levels.
>
> Instead of teaching us enthusiastic young teachers about the ways of the house, we were given a chance to develop the work community. The community emphasised openness and responsibility … Things went smoothly, so all the difficulties were also easy to bring up in

the community. Moreover, there was energy left over to participate in teaching development activities and take responsibility for teaching-related positions of trust. This resulted in several projects for the school that increased its resources.

Positive Atmosphere: Systematic Culture of Working Together

Several positive stories highlighted systematicity and consciousness of goals in the joint development of the school community. Teachers defined the needs and concrete goals of school development and made plans to achieve those goals. These descriptions emphasised the features of distributed leadership, in which an organisation's human resources are maximised by empowering individuals and allowing them to take leadership positions in their individual areas of expertise (Ahtiainen et al., 2019). Although formal positions were not mentioned in these stories, they still revealed that strong empowerment, agency, and participation were indicators of genuine distributed leadership; the student teachers described in detail the measures they took as a community while working towards that goal. For example, systematic data collection with questionnaires and a type of action research were employed, as were workshops that openly sought development targets and ideas for new ways of working:

> We carried out empirical research on school well-being: we conducted interviews and surveys at our school on elements of well-being, taking into account the implementation of others' (e.g. Finnish UNICEF) research results on these themes. One of the most significant elements of school well-being is the sense of inclusion, which we set out together to strengthen by having the students use situational mapping within the framework of the Basic Education Act. Our school's premises and operating culture gradually began to look the way we wanted.
>
>   Our school introduced workshop-style cooperation meetings to jointly solve different challenges. The challenges related to current issues; sometimes we worked on student-oriented pedagogical methods and sometimes on matters related to well-being at work. Based on the challenges, we were able to come up with new ideas.

Positive Atmosphere: Emotional Atmosphere as Resource

In addition to an innovative atmosphere, the stories often discussed the emotional atmosphere as an important factor in teachers' ability and inclusion. Teachers felt welcome in the work community as soon as they arrived. Their stories recounted that, later on, they formed meaningful relationships in the work community. The emotional atmosphere was described as making it appealing for the teacher to come to work and where collaborations went smoothly. For teacher leadership, this was significant because it seemed that a positive emotional climate led to dedication to the community and an experience of vigour among the protagonists and the other school staff. On a theoretical level, this can be understood mainly from the perspective of work engagement (Hakanen et al., 2006), as terms like vigour, dedication, joy of work, and commitment were used in the stories. The positive mood provided energy that helped people work towards a common goal:

> My co-workers are a great bunch … Our cooperation works very well, and you never have to feel alone in facing a problem at work. There's a big blue sign on the staff room door that says 'stress-free zone'. I walk in, smell the freshly brewed coffee and I hear someone talking cheerfully. They wish me good morning while sitting on the couch next.

Appropriate Workload: Well-Functioning Routines

Like appropriate material and human resources, teachers described good routines as enabling the development of their own and joint work. These routines created predictability and controllability. Above all, they freed up energy for work outside the teacher's basic duties to participate in school development:

> We have our routines and essential things in order, so we have the opportunity to be agile and participate in unexpected experiments. We have resources … for development because the foundations are solid.

Teachers' Own Actions: Teacher's Personal Reflection, Responsibility, and Participation in Continuous Education

Teachers often described the drivers of development in both positive and negative stories, especially from an environmental point of view; in the negative stories, environmental factors hindered inclusion in and agency for leadership activities. In the positive accounts, those factors promoted inclusion and agency. However, in some stories, teachers also highlighted their growth and reflection as significant in teacher leadership development. The student teacher in the excerpt below cited it as the most crucial factor. Although environmental factors play a significant role, the teacher's desire for development, reflection, and attitude serves as the most critical resource:

> The most important thing [in positive change] has been my motivation for change and keeping a positive attitude despite the challenges—attitudes break structures. Closer cooperation between home, pupils and other school actors and researching and studying has given me perspectives for reflecting on my teaching.
>
> We have had opportunities for continuing education that have helped us in our professional development. A while ago, we were in training on new technological tools and the use of versatile teaching facilities and now we are no longer just teaching on school premises, but have developed teaching in other learning environments to offer students diverse learning experiences.

The Two Core Stories of Teacher Leadership

After completing our thematic analysis of the student teachers' texts, a narrative analysis was conducted (Polkinghorne, 1995). Ultimately, it was possible to gain a nuanced understanding of how the students' narratives were constructed, their

commonalities, and where they diverged. Through encapsulating these nuances, two core stories were formed.

Unsuccessful Teacher Leadership Story

At the beginning of my career as a teacher, I was full of new ideas and enthusiasm. Instead of including us (new teachers) in school development, we were taught the ways of the house and to avoid extra work. The atmosphere in our work community has been uninspired and stale. I have not been able to push through any reforms in our school. If I ever suggest anything, there are always those who oppose things and want to continue with that same old formula: 'No, we don't want to do it, it will increase workload'. And yes, the workload is very high, since we have to live with scarce resources in terms of both staff and materials. It is also partly due to the chaotic operating culture, where I feel that we are always pushed from the outside by projects that we did not want or think up ourselves. Basically, we do not have a say in where our school should go and how. The principal does not listen to us either, and it seems that teachers have no room for agency and participation in the authoritarian culture that the principal has created and sustains. A lack of appreciation from the leadership towards some of us is also apparent in the school's everyday life. That weakens team spirit and our experience of communality. The only reason I am still working as a teacher is the students. I am concentrating solely on my classes and pupils and no longer have any desire to participate in the development of the school. I had high expectations for myself and the school; now, I feel that I have let myself down.

Successful Teacher Leadership Story

Instead of teaching us enthusiastic young teachers about the ways of the house, we were given a warm welcome and a chance to help develop the work community. Here, everything is based on our open and continuously learning work community, where everyone's strengths are used in a meaningful way. Any difficulties are easy to bring up in the community in an accepting atmosphere, and we cope with stress very well. Because of good routines and structure, we all have energy to participate in teaching development activities and take responsibility for teaching-related positions of trust. This has led to several projects for the school, increased the school's resources and facilitated the ongoing growth of the school. This is why we have managed to keep the workload appropriate over the years. We also have a systematic culture of joint development where we, as a work community, define needs, goals and strategies for development in workshops and where we monitor the changes together using a variety of data collection and analysis tools. This does not increase our workload because it is all well-structured and planned by the principal and other leadership figures.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study aimed to examine student teachers' views on leadership as an aspect of their future profession as teachers. We approached teacher leadership as informal leadership that is realised as teachers' participation and active agency in school development and leadership processes. The results of our study show that student

teachers see teacher leadership as a natural part of their professional identity, subject to certain prerequisites. When school culture is supportive, demands and resources are balanced and teachers are allowed to strive for a commonly defined goal, and they become dynamic agents and participate in school development and leadership. Successful leadership socialisation depends, to a great extent, on these factors. Student teachers seldom question their participation and role in teacher leadership for other than environmental factors. The student teachers' stories about factors preventing leadership were firmly based on key issues in the Finnish school debate. Stress, workload, a fragmented job description, high standards, and the resulting individual- and community-level exhaustion are real challenges for schools and threats to young teachers.

In general, the leadership concepts found in the student teachers' stories and distributed leadership were preferred. This is in line with the current idea of school leadership as a distributed process in which both the school principal and the teachers take part (Lahtero et al., 2017; Ahtiainen et al., 2019). Student teachers preferred a low-hierarchy organisation at school, an approach that is antithetical to authoritarian leadership. In addition, recent research (Oppi et al., 2022) has indicated that innovative and change-oriented school culture and the possibility of distributed leadership support teachers' readiness for leadership. Our research results support that shared expertise and distributed leadership are essential for teacher participation and agency.

Current discussions on the possibilities for the broader involvement of teachers in school leadership activities and pilots of teachers' working time reform in Finland that aim at distributed leadership and management arrangements (Hautamäki, 2015) demonstrate the strong need to bolster teacher leadership. In the student teachers' stories, instead of describing formal positions and a clearly delimited job description, leadership appeared as a natural and self-organising element based on teacher autonomy and expertise. Student teachers perceived teacher leadership as a natural and, ideally, inspiring part of their future work. However, the negative stories show that some student teachers see their students and class teaching activities as a priority in their work. They may have chosen the teaching profession because teachers have traditionally worked alone, which is why these narratives showed community-level duties as a burden on classroom work and building relationships with the pupils. These features in the negative stories correspond with the perceptions of Soini et al. (2020) on Finnish teachers' experiences on professional agency emphasising their own teaching and classroom.

The descriptions of work in schools that appear in the students' narratives correspond to the current picture of the teaching profession as interpersonal and knowledge-intensive expert work in changing circumstances (Toom, 2017). Based on the student teachers' narratives, teacher leadership is an intrinsic part of the teacher's professional practices (Metsäpelto et al., 2021). As stated earlier, teachers are expected to participate in school leadership collaborative processes in many ways. Therefore, in the future, it is essential to treat educational leadership as a collective endeavour and emphasise the importance of structures that enable teachers to

participate in the development of schools, both in initial teacher education leadership studies and in studies that lead to qualification as a principal.

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Part V
Conclusion

Chapter 19
Challenges and Reflections for Developing Leadership in Educational Contexts

Raisa Ahtiainen, Eija Hanhimäki, Jaana Leinonen, Mika Risku, and Ann-Sofie Smeds-Nylund

Abstract This volume was inspired by the observation that over the past 20 years, the educational system and public administration in general have changed enormously due to ideological, political and structural transformation. In practice, the mode of operation in educational organisations is characterised by a complex interplay between political and administrative objectives, negotiations and promotion of various perspectives, cultural features, professional sights and aims to adapt to external and internal pressures and influences. This has affected educational leadership that should also be seen from a complex perspective that includes relationships and active social interaction in various networks. However, there have been very few publications of the specifics of leadership in educational contexts with a wide-ranging perspective for the radically evolving operational environments and written by researchers in educational leadership and governance. Therefore, this volume has presented a joint effort for positioning, conceptualising and describing the

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nature and future of Finnish educational leadership for both the international and Finnish readers.

This volume was inspired by the observation that over the past 20 years, the educational system and public administration in general have changed enormously due to ideological, political and structural transformation. In practice, the mode of operation in educational organisations is characterised by a complex interplay between political and administrative objectives, negotiations and promotion of various perspectives, cultural features, professional sights and aims to adapt to external and internal pressures and influences (Pont, 2021). This has affected educational leadership that should also be seen from a complex perspective that includes relationships and active social interaction in various networks (e.g. Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2007). However, there have been very few publications of the specifics of leadership in educational contexts with a wide-ranging perspective for the radically evolving operational environments and written by researchers in educational leadership and governance. Therefore, this volume has presented a joint effort for positioning, conceptualising and describing the nature and future of Finnish educational leadership for both the international and Finnish readers.

Our main purpose has been to provide a comprehensive overview and in-depth coverage of contemporary aspects of leadership in the field of education. Furthermore, we have congregated scholars to critically explore and discuss leadership in education in the Finnish education system in relation to international discourses around the topic. This volume strengthens the perspective of leadership in Finnish educational research by positioning leadership in education from the perspective of educational policy and governance. In addition, this volume has examined the key changes, strengths and challenges of the conceptualisation and practice of educational leadership – not forgetting the international research and theorising of the phenomenon linked to the findings and further implications.

Scholars contributing to this volume have discussed the nature of the Finnish approach to educational leadership in theory and in practice as well as investigated the national characteristics and composition of leadership, policy and governance. The chapters with their linkages to the international discourse around leadership in education provide a reflection surface and an opportunity for readers to increase their understanding about existing variation in transnational contexts in terms of the development and position(ing) of leadership within educational policy and governance.

Elements of the three dimensions – *macro and policy*, *local and organisational and a micro dimension* – tie together investigations reported in the chapters. In turn, the dimensions of leadership are connected to the theoretical and empirical perspectives of leadership in education forming the basis of this volume, that is, the *contexts*, *conceptual approaches*, *school community and collaboration, and leadership profession*. First, the macro and policy dimensions exist at the international and especially national policy levels that have been investigated especially in the chapters in the first two sections. The authors of these sections have considered

leadership in educational contexts in a wider framework both internationally and within Finland and with various conceptual approaches by positioning and defining educational leadership in relation to both the educational policy and governance in Finland and international theoretical education theories. Second, the local and organisational dimensions are presented at the municipal and school levels and have been reflected mainly in the fourth section of this volume that focused on school communities and collaboration. Third, the micro dimension at the individual level has been investigated especially in the third section of this volume by considering educational leadership and the newly demanded competencies and practices.

The Macro and Policy Dimensions of Context and Conceptual Approaches

The development of the educational system in Finland is closely linked to the development of society and vice versa; society has changed as the level of education within the population has increased (Sahlberg, 2014; Jantunen et al., 2022). The educational policy and administration can be described as fluctuating from highly autocratic and hierarchical government via a decentralised period into a widely delegated form of governance, and then reverting somewhat towards centralisation (e.g. Moos, 2009). This fluctuation can be called 'the pendulum effect', and it is in connection with the overall development of Finnish society. It seems that there has been and still prevails an unstable and unsystematic balance between the autonomy of the Finnish educational system and the direction by the state. This consistent off-balance connected with the evolving operational environment has created a role for the research-based experimental educational policy which is continuously increasing. The Finnish educational system has been described as a national experimental laboratory with a lot of diversity lurking below the surface, which the autonomy of the Finnish education policy and governance allows (Chap. 2). For example, the mindset of developing and testing of new ideas can emerge through research-based experiments for the professional development of educational leadership and applying service design thinking in educational leaders' problem-solving (Chaps. 4 and 5).

As in Western countries, and especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, also in Finland, the educational policy and system have been influenced by global administrative trends, paradigms and global organisations. The OECD and EU Commission are organisations that have played in the global field of educational politics and shaped national educational policies and developed alternative methods to influence the thinking and regulation of education in member states (Moos, 2009). The trend towards neoliberal and market politics and new public management ideology has emphasised daycare centres, schools and educational systems that are characterised by freedom, autonomy, competition, accountability and strong leadership (Moos, 2009; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2019). Schools are viewed as self-governing

organisations, and consequently, this has broadened the range of school leaders' tasks and responsibilities and set school leaders as strategic actors and performance-focused managers. The Finnish policy around the enhancement-led evaluation of educational matters is a milder form though, as educational leaders have the possibility to experiment and develop without being punished with economic consequences. Chapter 3 has focused on positioning the Finnish principalship including an international perspective which has provided an opportunity to compare principalship in one's own national setting with that of Finland.

In the twenty-first century, the whole public sector, including education, has undergone enormous changes. A so-called governance wave has affected the decision-making structures both vertically and horizontally and has increased the voice of various stakeholders at the local level (Christensen, 2012). The ideology of governance emphasises networks, collaboration and participation, and in education, school-to-school networks and partnerships are understood to be powerful means for achieving knowledge creation and sharing and solving complex challenges (Crosby et al., 2017). As stressed in the chapters of this volume, school leaders are the key actors in developing and implementing collaborative, participative and network-based actions at the community level (e.g. Ainskow, 2016).

The Local and Organisational Dimensions of School Communities and Collaboration

Simultaneously with the global and national development and development of new ideologies and changes at all levels of the education system, there has been a discourse about how to define educational leadership in the Finnish context. For example, if one wants to improve a school according to a Learning Outcomes Discourse, the focus is on the correct and effective enactment of goals set at the national level emphasising national and transnational tests. However, in a Democratic Bildung Discourse, the aim is to empower professionals and students to learn as much as possible and develop non-affirmative, critical and creative interpretations and negotiating competencies (Moos et al., 2020). The Finnish educational leadership discourse follows the latter which means a culture of trust in the professionals of schools without national accountability measures. However, autonomy and responsibility in the dynamic and complex governance system challenge educational leaders, their ethical leadership and competencies constantly. Thus, there is a genuine need to develop competencies and education in educational leadership, so that it can better help leaders to cope with the consistent challenges and continuous changes (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021). The culture of trust is visible in how the multilevel educational leadership governance is structured.

Schools and other educational communities are in constant interaction with their local environments, and local municipal ecosystems and educational leaders are the foremost networkers and collaborators operating in the context of the whole local governance. This collaboration has been investigated especially in the fourth section

of this volume. Consequently, the ideal of collaboration and sharing responsibilities forms a backdrop for the understanding of leadership in education (e.g. Eisenschmidt et al., 2021; Lahtero et al., 2019). Furthermore, collaboration and distribution of responsibilities are central and depending on the aim made of various compositions of people working in the public sector at the municipal level. These features have been included as one means for service provision in legislation that regulates education, pupil and youth welfare and healthcare (Basic Education Act 1998/628; Healthcare Act 1326/2010; Pupil and Student Welfare Act 2013/1287). Therefore, the ethos of collaboration has been embedded in the public sector through introduction of joint effort and collaborative practices that form the prerequisites for providing the services (Chap. 15). This is a phenomenon that is identifiable in the research designs and empirical findings indicating the existence of language of collaboration being one of the main methods for realising education at various levels and forums within the Finnish system (Chaps. 15, 16, and 18). These themes become visible through the leadership structures (groups, teams) and other forms of collective practices. One aspect of these is the structures providing the framework for a variety of encounters within the educational communities, and the other is related to behaviour of and interaction between the educators involved in these processes (Chaps. 16 and 17).

The Micro Dimension of Leadership Profession

The role of the educational leader is to be one of the actors co-designing and co-promoting services, well-being and collaborative networks, which, according to some views, have caused complexity and nonlinearity in educational settings. For example, Snyder (2013) has described education as a complex field, as a space of constant flux and unpredictability with no right answers, only emergent behaviours. Along with collaboration within schools, to gain goals that are composed of multiple elements (e.g. school-aged children's well-being) actors representing several sectors within the public services are required. The studies in this volume also depict principals as leaders of collaborative practices and engines for the distribution of leadership and responsibilities. Further, principals are depicted as collaborators both within their schools and with outside school partners. Both dimensions require an understanding of the complexity of practices, regulations and actors related to the whole one is participating (Chaps. 15, 16 and 17).

Over the years, the professional development of educational leadership has changed from merely administrative leadership via a shared leadership within the schools towards an educational and pedagogical leadership ethically based on core values developed, jointly accepted and continuously processed by the members of the school community. New forms of sharing power over the educational system in the country are being developed. Those changes will be decided in open democratic processes in constantly ongoing debates, and other forms of governance will arise to meet the coming societal circumstances.

In this volume, we have illustrated the complexity and the fragmented nature of Finnish educational leaders' work especially in the third section. The educational leaders and educational leadership are directed by regulations, rules and institutionalised, traditionalised practices as well as global leadership ideologies, values and administrative paradigms. Though, the position of the educational leader and the content of the leader's work is constructed and institutionalised in a way that does not fully support or provide the necessary tools to work in today's constantly changing environment and situations. The complexity and the dynamic nature of the educational leadership require skills and competencies such as ability to seek new solutions and methods for coping with the uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of the complexity, affecting educational leaders' work and challenging their leadership (Ahtiainen et al., 2022).

In general, wicked problems resulting from the complex interaction among social, economic, institutional, political and social systems have increased and set demands in educational leaders' work. Because of these internal and external unexpected interactions and their fluctuations, educational leaders are regularly pushed into 'the edge of chaos situations' (Morgan, 1997) where they are invited to view constantly changing situations as emergent properties and asked to abandon traditional modes of control and management and, instead, create conditions for systemic self-organisation and emerging situations. School leaders should have both problem-finding and problem-solving skills to address various challenges and unique issues (Nelson & Squires, 2017). In adaptive leadership, leaders should be able to adapt to constant change and to be able to change their actions and behaviour in response to different situations (Nelson & Squires, 2017; Bagwell, 2020). This requires professionalism and resilience and creates the need to possess new knowledge and competencies. In addition, this requires stepping out from the role of the traditional administrator or school manager into the role of the inspirer, motivator and collaborator.

Future Reflections for Developing Leadership in Educational Contexts

Based on the main ideas stemming from the findings in this volume and considerations of the past, present and future, we present the future reflections for developing leadership in educational contexts. We have gathered these reflections with the help of the main concepts of *sustainability*, *professional agency* and *holistic understanding*. We see these concepts as uniting signposts for the future and as ways for developing leadership in educational contexts. However, these concepts do not exist in a vacuum but in the middle of *social reality*. In addition, sustainability, professional agency and holistic understanding are the signposts of educational leadership which we need to strengthen and develop at different levels from macro to micro dimensions especially in relation to the guiding educational *policy and ideals* described in the middle of Fig. 19.1.

Fig. 19.1 The main concepts of sustainability, professional agency and holistic understanding as uniting signposts for developing leadership in educational contexts
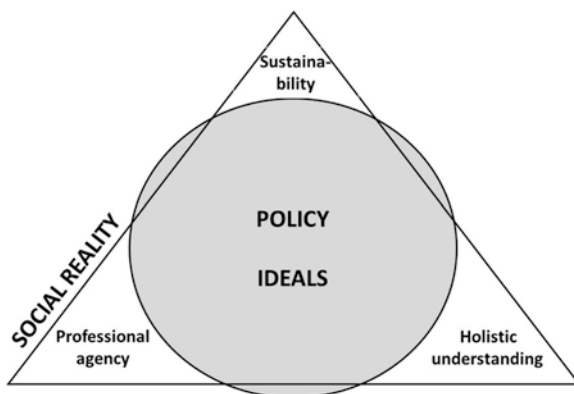
According to previous research results on ethical educational leadership in Finland, the main values and ethical principles are equality, caring and multi-professional collaboration (Hanhimäki & Risku, 2021). The meaning of fair leadership is remarkable in creativity and trust of the workplace (Collin et al., 2020). According to Rinne (2021), one of the explanatory factors of the Finnish educational success is sustainable political and educational leadership. *Sustainability* and a sustainable way of life are also mentioned in the educational policy documents, such as in the 2014 National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022a) and in the 2018 National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022b). In addition, school leaders should support the capacity building for sustainable school success (Conway, 2015).

In the everyday practices of the educational communities, both ethically easy and difficult dilemmas often concern the members of the educational staff, which emphasises the meaning of human resource management also in educational leadership (e.g. see Chap. 10). Previous research on sustainable leadership and work has underlined leaders' remarkable role as promoters of an ethical organisational culture and of an ethically sustainable way to work (e.g. Pihlajasaari et al., 2013; Kira et al., 2010). Ethical and sustainable educational leadership increases the commitment of the members of educational communities and strengthens their well-being. Even if sustainability is not yet so well recognised in the everyday life of educational communities, it will be a future challenge and potential to strengthen it in educational leadership.

In the various contexts of educational leadership described in this volume, educational leaders influence, make decisions and in this way affect their own work all the time. In addition, educational leaders' agency relates to the other members of the educational communities and wider networks. According to Eteläpelto et al. (2013, p. 61), 'professional agency is practised when professional subjects and/or communities exert influence, make choices and take stances in ways that affect their work and/or their professional identities'. Eteläpelto et al. (2013) have further conceptualised professional agency within a subject-centred sociocultural framework:

professional agency is both intertwined with professional subjects (e.g. their work-related identities including ethical commitments and motivations, professional knowledge and competencies and work history) and sociocultural conditions of the workplace (e.g. material circumstances, power relations, work cultures and discourses).

Educational leadership is still deeply framed and adjusted by institutional regulations, guidelines and administrative culture that impose the educational leader to work in a certain manner or through hierarchical means. This view neglects the complex nature of *social reality*, the nonlinearity and the dynamic nature of leadership and the speciality of each educational context. This contradictory setting may cause the feelings of frustration or anxiety among educational leaders. Educational leaders are operating in the arena of complex encounters, and foremost, educational leadership is a situated activity. It is constructed and evolved in a complex system of interactional, cultural and structural settings and is shaped by a range of stakeholders.

On the whole, the results of this volume indicate the variety of the tasks and roles educational leaders should hold. Traditionally, the role of the educational leader has been a rule-oriented administrator following educational policies, rules and regulations. The educational leader has been responsible for executing certain addressed administrative tasks. Today, first and foremost, the educational leader is a collaborator and an enabler operating in a context of local governance solving various wicked problems in different networks and collaborative groups. Competencies such as having a strategic eye, the ability to understand and predict the dynamic nature of the educational system and the whole of the governance system (micro- and mega-trends) as well as the ability to understand cause-and-effect relationships are essential. Educational leaders are operating in an evolving and situated social systems in which multiple demands and competing interests are the norm rather than the exception. In these systems, it is remarkably important to take to account and develop a rich and *holistic understanding* about own and others' views and life worlds (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2017).

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