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Dear Readers

Dear Readers, this issue of Contemporary Educational Leadership (CEL) contains a series of six papers. Two papers that open it, have been written by Robin Precey from Canterbury Christ Church University in England. The first one raises the issue of challenges that school leaders face in a rapidly changing context. It argues that future is uncertain, unpredictable, ambiguous and complex, which brings new tasks for schools and school leadership that has to transform schools in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, but also transform education in general and educational system, to be able to prepare young generations for such a challenging world. This thought-provoking paper by Robin Precey will be followed in the next issue by a second paper developing ideas about better preparation of school leaders for the 21st century.

Fiona Stephens, in her article, shows how a group of Master’s students of educational leadership in England perceive external evaluation in their settings. Her paper is richly illustrated with the results of a group interview that was focused on participants’ experiences and thoughts on how external examination system impacted the practice and sense of professionalism of teachers and school leaders in the contemporary English context.

The third paper by Monika Kaczmarek-Śliwińska from Koszalin University of Technology in Poland deals with the issue of social media and their influence on schools. The author argues that contemporary school leaders should possess competencies of managing school’s communication in the context of new media and social media in order to assure the image and reputation of school. She proposes that educational leaders should develop Social Media Policy for their schools to prevent negative behaviours that result from crisis situations that negatively influence the school’s image and reputation in the local community.

Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz and Joanna Trzópek-Paszkievicz from the Jagiellonian University, in their paper, present the results of the research on perception and understanding of leadership competencies among Polish school heads. They concentrate on a small part of that research that was focused on how school heads in Polish schools of different type perceive their competencies of cooperation. The presented research was used as the starting point for the design of a
new model of school heads preparation in Polish educational system that is being developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. It can then be a good example to be taken into consideration by those who undertake similar tasks.

The last paper by Mualla Aksu, Türkan Aksu and Gülnar Özyıldırım from Akdeniz University, Turkey, deals with the problem of the views of school administrators concerning theory – practice relations. The authors present the results of research that show how school administrators try to link theory and practice in their everyday work despite the constrains that come from the bureaucratic and centralised educational system in Turkey that make it difficult to use some theoretical inspiration in everyday school work. The paper seems to be a good example showing how similar contemporary educational leadership and management problems manifest in different contexts.

The last part in this issue is a review of the book edited by Gerry Mac Ruairc, Eli Ottesen and Robin Precey ‘Leadership for inclusive education: Values, vision and voices’ published by Sense Publishers in Studies in Inclusive Education Series. The review was written by Marta Shaw from the Jagiellonian University.

It looks that the content of this issue is a good mixture of themes important in the discussion on the challenges of theory and practice of educational leadership in the contemporary context. With hope that all readers will be inspired and ready to discuss, we invite them to read.

Roman Dorczak
Editor-in-Chief
The Future is not what it used to be: School Leadership Today for Tomorrow’s World (Part 1).

Robin Precey  
Canterbury Christ Church University, England

Abstract

This article argues that as we move through the twenty first century school leaders need to lead differently to the way many do currently. The future is becoming more unpredictable, uncertain, ambiguous, complex and globalised as each day progresses. This has profound implications for education and what our young people learn in school. If indeed schools are to have credibility and a role in the future changes need to be made to the curriculum, pedagogy and perhaps structure of education. The article focuses in particular on what successful school leaders will need to be like in this environment. Most importantly it advocates the importance of school leadership development and this will be followed up in an article in the next education of this Journal. This will look at tried and tested approaches to equip those who are called to school leadership now and in the future to be able to do their best in ways that really do make a positive difference to young people.

Keywords: leadership, complexity, future, transformational, transformative, learning

1. The Future is probably unpredictable?

Imagine a child who is born today. What sort of world will they inhabit and what will their life be like in the future?

Most people might agree that much is unpredictable but this does not stop pundits from trying to forecast what the future will be like. This child may live to be over 100 years old and may still exist on earth in 22nd century. Their children may live into 23rd century. They
may have many different jobs in their lifetime. Electronic communication will probably become an even greater feature in their lives. They may retire much later that pensioners do today. Will there be such things as “retirement” and “pensions”? Will the gap between rich and poor widen? Will the world overheat? What about resources? How will they travel? What about conflict within and between countries? Such predictions are problematic but in general terms most might agree that the world that this child will live in will be increasingly complex, uncertain, inter-connected and moving at a faster and faster pace of change.

2. Learning in the Future: Knowing the Unknown

One thing that is more certain is that this child born today will need to be an enthusiastic and effective learner in order to not just survive but to thrive in this future world. What, why, how and when they learn is a matter of great debate in many countries as people wake up to the fact that their world will be different from ours. For example Curriculum 21 is the work of a group of educators worldwide attempting to help colleagues transform curriculum and school designs to match the needs of 21st century learners. As they examined patterns emerging across the United States and overseas it became evident that curriculum and ways it is taught remains dated although both students and teachers recognize the need to become forward thinking in our planning.

As the instant electronic availability of information becomes more part of life, then education will need to refocus away from the acquisition of knowledge towards developing critical faculties. Attitudes and skills will become more significant in the formal and informal curriculum. Young people will need, among other qualities, a positive “can do” attitude, enhanced resilience, a passion for learning, an awareness of meta-cognition (learning about learning), to be adaptable so they can be team players as well as leaders, be comfortable as independent and interdependent learners, be technophiles, and above all, have strong emotional and social intelligence.


If the world is changing rapidly and if learning needs to change then what about leadership of such learning? Leadership is important ((Leithwood & Levin, 2005).

The McKinsey report, for example, claims to have identified the reform elements (including leadership development) that are replicable for school systems everywhere as well as what it really takes to achieve significant, sustained, and widespread gains in student outcomes. This includes the gains governments strive for in relation to improvement in performance in tables such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The behaviour
and underpinning attitudes of the person who leads a school are a key element in the quality of that. Behind a good school, there is a good leadership (Muri-llo, 2006). Leithwood et al (2006) affirm that internationally we are in a “golden age” of school leadership, since there is a confidence in understanding that leadership is one of the keys to school success.

The way leaders lead is also highly significant as this strongly influences organisational culture and the learning that goes on within the place we call school. For such an unpredictable, rapidly changing, increasingly complex, uncertain, inter-connected environment, leadership cannot be infused with transactionalism or managerialism that seeks to achieve performance by the use of contingent rewards or negative feedback. However it can be argued that this is the current approach to education in many countries e.g. England. This Standards Agenda is based on a simplistic notion of organisations and the real world is much more complex. (Sahlberg, 2010) argues that this approach has been spreading across the world as a Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) as governments become seduced by notions of national curriculum with tests, tight monitoring through inspection, a focus on what is thought to be measurable and the educationally inappropriate language of “delivery”, “targets” and “impact” (Fielding, 2004). More inclusive and sustainable forms of leadership within schools have been and are being stifled ((OECD, 2006, Precey, 2014). Those in charge of schools often feel suffocated and unsure about whether to just do as they are told or to display real leadership and do what they feel is morally right. Effective leaders in an increasingly complex world need to understand the principles of complexity. It is a way of thinking and of understanding the reality of our world and if school leaders take this on board then they will change the way they lead their schools. This is tough as often those in charge of schools today they have been trained and told to work in a managerial manner.

So what approach to leadership is required for success in education in the twenty first century? Leadership can no longer be a solitary activity. Marsh (2000) for example, claims that solitary leadership blocks the development of the collaborative working necessary for success in the recent reforms in many countries and it assumes that reforms can be aligned and packaged in outdated and rigid ways. Mulford (2006) clarifies that for leadership to obtain positive results it needs to be distributed. The OECD (2006) has expressed a keenness to address the issue of future challenges for school leaders through collaborative approaches. This type of leadership is based on leaders valuing people, on developing and nurturing talent and sharing leadership throughout schools (Leithwood et al, 2006). Leaders require followers. Thus leaders need to discover, learn and develop the competencies, skills, knowledge and atti-
tudes that encourage others to follow. Followers in such schools sometimes become leaders and leaders on occasions assume the role of followers.

If we seek to develop such leaders then we need to understand what an ideal might look like bearing in mind that context will vary significantly and this may affect what is achievable. This way of leading is sometimes labelled transformational. Shields (2009) describes it as being founded on:

• building a compelling vision of a better future underpinned by high moral confidence
• establishing shared organisational goals
• displaying high levels of interpersonal engagement with a deep understanding of personal, team and organisational learning
• offering individualised support;
• modelling best practices and important organisational values
• demonstrating expectations of high performance
• providing intellectual stimulation for others and seeking best practices
• creating a productive culture with a commitment to community
• developing structures to foster participation in decision-making and distributing leadership throughout the organisation
• personal resilience

A linked approach is that of transformative leadership (Shields, 2009) that seeks to change communities beyond as well as within a school building. This - is founded on critique & promise
- has key values of democracy, equity, justice, liberation
- emphasises social justice & equity
- contains within it processes of deconstruction & reconstruction of
- social/cultural knowledge
- has a goal of individual & organisational transformation
- is where a leader lives with tension & challenge and requires moral courage & activism

In both transformational and transformative approaches, leaders recognise complexity and build openness and trust. Karseth (2004) calls this propensity to be open and inclusive “Raus”. Such a leader values diversity, practical approaches and new ways of thinking. Their work is characterised by generosity rather than greed (Gronn, 2003). They make room for experimentation and taking risks. “The paradoxical conditions necessary for educational transformation are individual freedom of choice and collective responsibility for the whole - and individual and group autonomy and interconnections.” Marshall (1996). Leaders celebrate this. Trust is an essential key component to this (Covey, 2006), Bottery, 2004), Precey, 2012) and this builds from the integrity of leaders—this means that leaders do what they say and say what they think. Karsath (2004) writes about Redelig where ethical and democratic rules are followed. People are treated with respect.

In simple terms the leaders for the
twenty first century require four inter-related elements:

- **Values** that motive and direct the leaders as to why and how they do the job
- **Knowledge** of how to do the job such as pedagogy, budgets
- **Skills** to do the job such as chairing meetings
- **Competencies** to do the job. These are the behaviours based on the leader’s social and intelligent (Goleman). Leaders have to truly know themselves so that they can manage their behaviour appropriately, they need to understand the behaviour of others and then they can work effectively with these others. These behaviours are displayed often unknowingly but can be purposefully developed (see also Graph 1 below).

These can be analysed through three main questions:

1) **Why do this leadership job?**

The need for constant values in changing times. Principals need principles. It is values that provide the rudder when the storms threaten to blow an organisation off course. Much is written about the need for a values-based approach to school leadership (Fullan, 2003, Hammersley-Fletcher, 2015). Less has been written about how in practice leaders can to be trained to think more deeply about their moral purpose and

**Graph 1. Elements of leadership for twenty first century**

![Graph 1. Elements of leadership for twenty first century](source: Own elaboration)
their values. Robbins & Trabichet (2009) helpfully explore ethical decision-making by educational leaders and Rayner (2014) describes headteachers’ values being tested by changing policy context. But leaders need to go deeper and explore the way in which ethics affects every aspect of their lives as they seek to model, monitor and engage others in dialogue (Southworth, 2008). Take for example the elusive yet fundamental concepts of “equality” and “equity” (Espinosa, 2007). Are these fully understood by school leaders and how can they be applied in schools? Do school leaders understand the concept leadership for public value (Leadbetter and Mongon, 2012). How do leaders lead in an increasingly globally interconnected world. Biesta (2013) helpfully distinguishes between the current responsive management and the need for responsible in a global networked society. A responsive approach is where education simply adapts to the demands of a global networked society. A responsible approach demands a more critical position “vis-a-vis the different manifestations and demands of such a society” (Biesta, 2013, p. 733). He argues for the latter from school leaders on the grounds that education should always be understood as more than just a function of existing social and societal orders because it comes with a duty to resist. This is inherently both educational and democratic.

Educational leadership is essentially a moral calling and profession. So twentieth century leaders need thought-through values that enable ethical decision-making that keeps the organisation on course with a sharp focus. This has always been so but it is more so as the future waters of education become more turbulent.

2) What is this education leadership job all about? It’s learning, learning, learning.

Most important in such complex situations is that the leader has a sharp focus on the school’s core purpose and in particular student learning. This may well be infused with other fundamental values such as liberation, democracy, equity and justice depending on context (Shields, 2010). The learning of students in the school is paramount. To enable this staff need to be active, effective learners in order to reinforce and model its significance. Moreover, parents/carers need also to be involved in the process both as teachers and learners particularly if a leader is seeking to be transformative. Most importantly the leaders themselves need to learn and display learning.

Leaders who learn quickly from mistakes and encourage that learning in others can be highly effective. They do not resolutely punish failure. At present, in GERM infected countries, this is counter-cultural and here a climate of professional football has developed where public results matter and failure means swift removal of managers and coaches from high profile jobs. The name, blame, shame, tame of culture in England for
example has been a consequence of the Standards Agenda as perceived mistakes within this tight agenda are not tolerat- ed. Yet this approach is unintelligent and wasteful. All leaders make mistakes at some point and it is these that provide the most valuable learning experiences. In their book “Wounded Leaders” Ackermann and Ostrowski (2002) explore what happens to leaders who are disoriented (Mezirow, 1978) by events. The ones that get stronger as leaders and people do not ignore them or let them overwhelm their professional and personal sense of self but rather use the events with support to grow as better leaders. Joseph Campbell (2008) describes in “Hero’s Journey” how a hero “ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural won- der: fabulous forces are there encoun- tered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious ad- venture with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man” (Campbell, 2008, p. 2). In laying out his monomyth, Camp- bell describes a number of stages or steps along this journey which we can use to try to understand the realities of leadership in schools today. The hero (headteacher) starts in the ordinary world, and receives a call to enter an unusual world of strange powers and events - a call to adventure (to become a school leader). If the hero accepts the call to enter this strange world (of school leadership), the hero must face tasks and trials (a road of trials), and may have to face these trials alone, or may have assistance. At its most intense, the hero must survive a severe challenge (school accountability systems), often with help earned along the journey. If the hero survives, the hero may achieve a great gift (the goal or “boon”), which often results in the discovery of important self-knowledge. The hero must then de- cide whether to return with this boon (the return to the ordinary world), often facing challenges on the return journey. If the hero is successful in returning, the boon or gift may be used to improve the world (the application of the boon). Along the way the hero learns from their mistakes but importantly with support from men- tors usually those who have been on the journey themselves before. Sadly in high accountability school systems, too many leavers find themselves removed from the journey or decide that the pressure is such that they want to leave the journey themselves. If they survive, their skills and knowledge are not always appreci- ated or disseminated. Mistakes maketh man and woman. It is wise to acknowl- edge how the fallen are often mighty.

3) How can leaders do a better job in the future? Smart, fit principals with attitude.

a) Attitude

The attitude that leaders take and develop in their roles is critical to their success. In more uncertain times ahead, attitude becomes even more significant. These include:

- Bravery and courage. This means
leaders who are hard headed with a focus on making a positive difference regardless of unreasonable opposition and challenging circumstances. Shields (2010) makes the point that leaders have to demonstrate moral courage and to effect deep and equitable changes. Karsath (2004) uses the term “Robust” in that they can tackle challenges in a climate of uncertainty and a spirit of critique. Making a positive difference is being pre-occupied with the care of other human beings, long term transformational change and a co-operation and emulation rather than competition and denigration. Harris (2012) states that bravery is looking in the Inspector’s eye and keeping your head when all about are losing theirs.

• Passion. Without passion we will not easily sustain our commitment or convey our enthusiasm and commitment to others. Davies & Brighouse (2010) claim that passionate leadership is about energy, commitment, a belief that every child can learn and will learn, a concern with social justice and the optimism that we can make a difference. Such leaders, they say, articulate the vision, share their values, set examples and standards, are committed to the long term and they care and celebrate. In his research Day (2004) links passion to successfully overcoming the obstacles in headship over time.

• Hope. Wrigley claims that teaching is a profession of hope and this is even more so leadership. “The desire to improve education arises naturally from an engagement with the future” (Wrigley, 2003 p.1). Flintham (2003), through his research, describes the way that all leaders need to have a reservoir of hope. This needs topping up since much of the job involves irrigating others with hope and if leaders do not refill the reservoir inside of themselves they will run dry.

• Humility. School leaders are public servants but not servile. They are committed to positive change but always remember that it is not about them. It is about the students, staff, parents/caters and communities they work for. Writing about the life of a top brain surgeon states: “You will inevitably make mistakes and you must learn to live with the occasional awful consequences. You must learn to be objective about what you see and yet not lose your humanity in the process (Marsh, 2014, p.19)”. Although not as immediately life changing as the work of a surgeon, a school leader nevertheless is involved in saving and changing lives. Humility may be seen to be countercultural in a market-driven education system where hero heads, image massagers and empire builders may receive the public plaudits.

b) Smartness

Future leaders need to be smart in a number of ways. As the world becomes more complex there is need for leaders to:

• understand and learn to lead in complexity

We handle complexity all the time in intuitive ways and often fall foul to its consequences. For leaders, including those working in highly complex
systems such as schools, much is not knowable. But we can be smarter. To be so, leaders (and managers) need to try to recognise and respond appropriately to the essential elements of complexity theory. This is a way of thinking and understanding the reality of our world. Leaders need to be able to deal with real life and all its rich complexity.

Fullan (2004, p.55) states that “leaders must resist the temptation to try “to control; the uncontrollable”. Scharmer (2007) maintains that this requires repetition to be able to understand and work in situations of emerging complexity where:

- The solution to the problem may well be unknown
- The problem itself is frequently still unfolding and
- The key stakeholders are often not clear

Radford (2008) writes about a growing need to be comfortable with complexity and its resultant ambiguity and uncertainty and sees schools as places that by their nature verge on the edge of chaos. Smart leaders, who thrive in increasing complexity, have their fingers all over the political, economic, social and psychological pulses. They scan the horizon looking for the elements of complexity – points of bifurcation, connectivity, feedback, evidence for self-organisation and emergence, attractors and recursive symmetries, lock-in, feedback and post-event rationalisation. They exploit their benefits and try to reduce their dangers.

- learn to be comfortable with ambiguity.

So much of the predict and control managerial culture is based on the false notion of certainty in education. This lulls leaders into a false sense of security and means they and others are surmised or resigned when events do not follow a script. Much is, in reality, unknowable. Leaders who are effective in the real world of complexity are comfortable with the not knowing. They have to learn this and this is often by trial and error and reflection and analysis. On occasions, it may also involve “failure” in managerial terms.

- be self-reflective. Twentieth century leaders need to be self-reflective. Scharmer (2007) suggests that leaders of organisations need to provide space for and facilitate a shared seeing and sense-making of the newly emerging patterns. He calls this “co-sensing”. This requires leaders at all levels to establish places of deep reflection (“co-presencing”). This is difficult in the busy life of school leaders but, he would maintain, essential. He also suggests that we need places and infrastructures for hands-on prototyping of new forms of operating in order to explore the future by “co-creating”. In an increasingly complex world leaders need to create opportunities for shared observation and reflection to which one might add experimentation. Without this, Scharmer argues, we will continue to have schools that prevent our children from unfolding their capacity for deeper learning as we will be relying on past experiences to solve new, previously inexpe-
rienced problems. Shields (2010) agrees arguing that leaders need to “deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that generate inequity” (p563). Such leaders are more likely to spot black swans (Taleb, 2012) and avoid being a turkey.

In his research on school leaders Flintham (2003) states that “This study worked to the principle that school leaders develop best when given the opportunity to reflect on their existing practice, to analyse in detail critical incidents within their on-going leadership story with a view to identifying strengths and weaknesses, to examine alternative models of good practice and to identify developmental ways forward appropriate to their existing contextual situation……. Successful engagement with this principle enables development of leadership qualities not by directive input but by reflective awareness and consensual agreement, leading to ownership of action and a thirst for further engagement” (Flintham, 2003, p.26). Successful twenty first century leaders are learning leaders as well as leaders of learning and they as a consequence can grow in self-confidence, self-awareness, capacity to take risks and in “being” rather than simply “doing”. Critical incidents are particularly important in powerful learning.

- be realistic and not naive e.g. about power. This is not to suggest a Machiavellian approach but rather to understand the political nature of all organisations including schools. Haslam et al (2011) argue that we are now in a new position with regard to the psychology of leadership. Great men and women and the cult
of personality is no longer appropriate (although still visible in some school systems). They call for a new approach to leadership in terms of social identity and self-categorisation. From this point of view leaders become in-group prototypes and champions as well as entrepreneurs and embedders of identity. To lead effectively means leaders have to be politically smart. They also need to be adaptaptive (Heifitz & Grashow, 2009).

b) Fitness for Purpose

In this increasingly turbulent education sea leaders need to ensure they are fit in all senses of the word. This means leaders need to take their own fitness for purpose seriously. The prevailing Standards Agenda in many countries has produced a self-sacrificial leadership culture. Leaders are worked relentlessly by the system and its manipulators and are often physically, emotionally and intellectually exhausted as a result.

- *proper selfishness*. To be effective in the real world of school complexity requires leaders to place the oxygen mask over their own faces before applying them to others on the education flight. Handy (1997) calls this “proper selfishness”. This is a tough mind-set change for leaders and even if minds change then action often does not follow. But unless leaders ensure they are fit for purpose and ready for action then they are doomed to disappointment and disaster.

Senge (2004) argues that “...if you want to be a leader, you have to be a real human being. You must recognize the true meaning of life before you can become a great leader. You must understand yourself first.” (Senge, 2004, p.186). “In this sense, the cultivated self is a leader’s greatest tool...It’s the journey of a lifetime.” (Senge, 2004, p.186). Effective leaders are effective people and as Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) express it: “...the process of becoming a leader is much the same as the process of becoming an integrated human being...leadership is a metaphor for centeredness, congruity and balance in one’s life”. (Goldsmith, 1997, p.8). So leadership development is a process of ‘Self-Invention’ (Bennis, 1989, p. 50) that is directly linked to the creation of personal authenticity. Guignon (2004) describes this as: “...centering in on your own inner self, getting in touch with your feelings, desires and beliefs, and expressing those feelings, desires and beliefs in all you do...defining and realizing your own identity as a person”. (Guignon, 2004, p.162). In other words it is important that leaders ’get a life” and balance personal development and happiness with professional growth and enjoyment. As discussed, an important aspect of this is intrapersonal intelligence or ‘meta-learning’ – the ability to become profoundly reflective and change and grow as a result of that reflection.

- *well-being*. Well-being and achieving a balance between the professional
and personal entail a deliberate personal strategy to ensure that all aspects of a fulfilling life are met. School leadership is intellectually, emotionally and physically demanding work so it is essential that leaders invest time in their own personal development and growth. “... high levels of wellbeing mean that we are more able to respond to difficult circumstances, to innovate and constructively engage with other people and the world around us. As well as representing a highly effective way of bringing about good outcomes in many different areas of our lives, there is also a strong case for regarding wellbeing as an ultimate goal of human endeavour.” (www.nationalaccountofwellbeing.org, p.1). Wellbeing is not just about the leader. It is important that the leaders model appropriate well-being strategies with integrity, for example “Do as I do” rather than “Do as I say”. This may require major life style changes from existing leaders.

• developing resilience and an inner strength. Resilience is increasingly seen as a key part of an effective leader’s make-up in the twenty first century (Arond Thomas 2004). Resilience is strength of character, adaptability, buoyancy, flexibility and the ability to bounce back. It is very much linked with the former point about learning quickly from poor decisions. Through the trials and tribulations of leadership resilience can be developed (Ackermann al, 2002). The journey can make one a better leader (Campbell, 2008). In his important previously mentioned work “Reservoirs of Hope” Flintham (2003) tells us of the importance of hope in school leadership. “The successful headteacher, through acting as the wellspring of values and vision for the school thus acts as the external ‘reservoir of hope’ for the institution. In the face of burgeoning demands for change, colleagues look to the headteacher for spiritual and moral leadership, to provide the necessary coherence and unity of vision and to maintain its underpinning integrity of values” (Flintham, 2003, p.3). This reservoir has a spiritual and moral basis and may come from a combination of background and upbringing (generational imperative), religious beliefs (religious imperative), egalitarian imperative and a belief that everyone should have the chance to benefit from education, a vocational imperative and desire to do the job to the best of their abilities, and a transference imperative (“Would I be happy if this were happening to my own children?”). The reservoir of hope needs to be constantly refilled as leaders are giving hope to others all the time especially in a world of complexity. The reservoir can be topped up by self-belief, faith, feedback, support networks (family, friends, colleagues and sometimes external sources

Resilient leaders have realistic goals in their lives. They are thoughtful rather than impulsive and they are good communicators. They feel positive about themselves and others for whom they care. They are energetic optimists. They take control of their own minds and
lives. They develop effective support networks which they use and contribute to. They have a sense of humour.

In a follow-up piece of research “When Reservoirs Run Dry (2003) Flintham looks at the human and professional costs when these support networks are inadequate or even non-existent and leaders leave their jobs early. ‘Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?’ - who cares for the carers? is a very important question in the real world of schools today.

4. Conclusions

Values awareness with moral purpose, pedagogical focus, attitude, smartness and fitness for purpose are then some the main elements of successful leadership in the twenty first century. Apart from the “Why”, “What” and “How” questions there are “When” and “So What” ones that are important but the answers to these depend very much on cultural context

Leadership matters. Leadership that values people matters. As the twentieth century rolls on with its uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity, the development of leaders who value people matters. In order to achieve this we need clarity over what type of leadership values people most. This article has argued that transformational and transformative leadership are more likely to be inclusive and also effective and sustainable over time than that which is transactional. This inclusive leadership happens through a transformation of the school culture and implies a deep change in the values, norms, beliefs and in the social relations and power that cannot be imposed, but it must be born from a conviction of all involved. Such leaders must be supported to develop to be prepared and able to stride into the twenty first century mist with integrity, intelligence, passion, bravery, hope and humility. In that way they can try their best to enable that child born today has a bright future as a result of the education we have provided.
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Perceptions of how external evaluation affects institutional culture and experience in Further Education settings in South East England.

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Abstract

This article explores how a group of lecturers from Further Education colleges (post-compulsory 16-19 education) in South East England, who are Masters students of educational leadership, perceive external evaluation of their workplace settings. Their experiences and ideas on how ‘the metric’ (Donaldson, 2016), encouraged by systems of external evaluation, impacts on their practice and sense of professionalism is considered through a group interview and a rich picture methodology. Their aspirations for and concerns over the new Common Inspection Framework from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in England are also explored. Questions arise about these lecturers’ roles in preparing for and experiencing Ofsted Inspection and how this impacts on the authenticity of their practice and their sense of professionalism.

Keywords: Further Education, external evaluation, Office for Standards in Education, Common Inspection Framework, professionalism, rich pictures.

Introduction - The External Evaluation Context in England

Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) in England has been described as delivering a ‘vigorous’ form of inspection (McNamara & O’Hara, 2008). The effect of the inspection body on practice in education and on teachers has also been described as ‘an attack on the autonomy and respect traditionally granted to professionals (O’Neill, 2002). Along with the campaigning role Ofsted has taken with regard to improvement in educational settings and the raising of stand-
ards has been an understanding that, in the drive to raise and secure these standards, the organisation and its inspection remit have ‘weaved its way into lecturers’ and managers’ lives, making an impact on careers, classroom practice and, for some, decisions on whether to remain in the sector (Burnell, 2016). There is recognition that this policy causes lecturers a considerable amount of stress, which creates negative attitudes towards evaluation of practice when, in fact, this evaluation should be an opportunity for genuine professional development.

Coffield et al (2008) observed Ofsted as ‘a closed system… (that) treats the workforce as another lever to be pulled rather than as creative and socially committed professionals who should be involved in the formation, enactment, evaluation and redesign of policy’ (Coffield, 2008, p. 37). The reality, though, that should be recognised, is that Ofsted is just one influence on further education settings; ‘colleges are expected to be increasingly accountable to a wider range of constituents, including communities and employers. This broadening of mission is set against a background of severe funding cuts’ (Forrest, 2016, p. 297). This challenging and ever changing context sharpens the inspection experience which in evaluating standards takes little account of the broader contextual background impacting on the sector.

In September 2015 the new Common Inspection Framework was introduced by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in England. Ostensibly it appears that there has been a shift in focus for this inspecting body, with a commitment to evaluate ‘effectiveness of leadership and management’, ‘quality of teaching, learning and assessment’, ‘personal development, behaviour and welfare’ and ‘outcomes for learners’ (Ofsted, 2015). This new framework that identifies welfare and personal development as priorities has the potential to impact significantly on current experiences of education professionals in both school and further education settings, perhaps changing this system hereto seen as ‘highly visible, deeply mistrusted by teachers and widely contested’ (Hall & Noyes, 2008). However Ofsted’s grading of education institutions will remain part of the evaluation experience and further education colleges will be continue to be categorised after inspection as either, outstanding, good, requires, improvement or inadequate. This categorization has huge impacts on colleges and their staff and students and outcomes that are less than outstanding result in increased internal evaluation, producing ‘uncontentious technologies of hierarchical observation… which become ‘for some teachers the everyday conditions which mould their professional identities and sense of purpose’ (ibid, 2008, p. 856).

The continued focus on ‘outcomes for learners’ (Ofsted, 2015) or student attainment, including in Maths and English, which must be a part of the further education curriculum for any student not achieving prescribed levels in GCSE
public examinations, presents challenges in the sector too as well as creating a culture of ‘managerialist positivism’ (Smith and O’Leary, 2013) where the processes of teaching and learning become ‘reduced to the presentation of quantitative performance data’ (Gleeson et al, 2015).

The context for the research

As a lecturer in higher education involved in teaching a Masters in Transformational Leadership to a group of newly qualified lecturers in the further education sector, I was interested to see how they perceived the inspection process and how they considered that Ofsted’s new Common Inspection Framework may change the way inspection happens, its effect on themselves as professionals, their contexts and their students. In this article I describe some of the perceived challenges of Ofsted, and explore issues that might impinge on perceptions that teachers in this sector have regarding the experience of being inspected. How this research was integrated into a Master’s curriculum, the research design itself and key themes emerging from the rich pictures and their annotation will also be discussed. The way in which these pictures reflect issues with the inspection process as perceived by the research participants, my Master’s students, has ramifications for the teachers themselves as well as the leadership of the colleges in which they teach regarding how it responds to and mediates the Ofsted experience.

The curriculum for the MA Transformational Leadership (CCCU, 2012) involves a range of modules to support professional development in the leadership of learning and encourages reflective practice on themes such as professionalism and a values-based approach to leadership, of both learning and organisations. I was curious to discover how these newly qualified professionals, my students, might configure the Ofsted experience and its impact on themselves in their settings and their students. To do this I took the opportunity to construct a small scale qualitative research project involving the creation of rich pictures and the discussion of these pictures. The methodology really had a twofold purpose; as well giving the Master’s students opportunity to consider their own professionalism in the light of the questions I asked about their ideas on how Ofsted impacted on them, their colleges and their students, they also had an opportunity to explore the rich picture method, its strengths and weaknesses and to enhance their critical methodological perspectives as they began to design research for their Masters dissertations which they were due to begin within weeks.

The ten students involved in the research all work as lecturers at a variety of further education institutions in South East England. Individually they teach a range of academic subjects from Mathematics, Art and Design, Literacy and English as well some vocational subjects including Information and Communic-
tion Technology and Engineering. Their own further education students within these settings range in their age and purpose for post-compulsory study. However since 2015 the law in England has stated that young people need to be in education and or training until the age of 18 and this means that the further education sector can no longer strictly be described as post-compulsory. School leavers continue their education in Further Education college and are sometimes reluctant receivers of this extended education opportunity. This factor can influence their commitment to study and also have a negative impact on the attainment and qualifications that Ofsted are keen to analyse in their categorisation of colleges as outstanding to inadequate (Ofsted, 2015).

Although these students were relatively new to the sector, having only qualified in July 2015, they had all had experience of Ofsted. Six of the students had experienced an Ofsted inspection and four students were in colleges which were anticipating imminent inspection. What was interesting was that they all experienced a range of evaluation processes on a regular basis in their colleges which were there as preparation for Ofsted. These have involved lesson observation and feedback for improvement, scrutiny of student work, analysis from tests and examinations and departmental reviews, including the activities mentioned. These activities were usually carried out by department leaders and/or other members of the college’s senior leadership team. The criteria used in these evaluations of practice were all based on Ofsted criteria and those who hadn’t yet experienced Ofsted were well aware of preparations ongoing in their institutions to prepare for inspection.

The Methodological Approach

The research that I undertook with this group of students focused around four key questions. I asked them to draw and annotate a picture to share their perceptions of how they perceived that Ofsted affected them, their settings and their students. As the fourth question I also asked them to write a brief answer explaining how they felt the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (2015) may make a difference compared to inspection priorities and practice before this time. I asked them to be fair in their comments and acknowledge any positive perceptions as well as negative ideas towards the inspection process that had been articulated as we began the activity. They were well aware of the new framework and had seen the documents in their colleges and had experienced staff meetings and had discussion with colleagues and line managers about the new requirements and focus for inspection.

As this activity was also an extension of Master’s learning in terms of research methodology, I gave the group a period of 45 minutes to complete their rich pictures individually, aware that there would be potential to discuss how framing this activity within a set time might
affect the opportunity it presented for deep thinking. I also asked the group to ensure that pictures were annotated to support clarity of interpretation and there was some opportunity for individuals to discuss their pictures as I tried to ensure that my perceptions of what had been presented were as accurate as possible.

Rich pictures are a qualitative research that could be conceived as ‘soft science, journalism, ethnography, bricolage, quilt making or montage’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 5). Rich pictures use ‘brief images to create a clearly defined sense of urgency and complexity’ creating and bringing ‘psychological and emotional unity to an interpretive experience (ibid, p. 7). The researcher becomes the interpreter understanding that the research is then shaped by her own understanding, experience and possible bias. The opportunity of drawing a rich picture, using paper pencil and coloured pencils offers an opportunity for intensive self-reflection and a dimension to thinking that may produce results which can surprise both the research participant and researcher. This methodology, a picture drawing exercise, allows participants to explore, reflect on and review themes and underlying causes, ambiguities and also the concept of content and message (Bell & Morse, 2013). Rich pictures can be analytical tools for ‘an enhanced dialogue’ (Fougner & Habib, 2008) and indeed a dialogue between researcher and participant is necessary to really support understanding of the images, the writing and the themes they convey. Ethical issues in such a research involve voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity as well as the impact of the researcher, a Master’s tutor to the group. Although participation was voluntary the Master’s students were keen to experience this methodology and to consider how useful it may be as a method in the future research they were designing and all chose to participate. However it was important that neither they nor their colleges could be identified through the process so the exact name for the cohort of this Masters has not been shared, neither have their college names. Participants were asked to choose a pseudonym so that their ideas through the contents of their pictures could be shared without their identities being disclosed.

I was aware that my role as participant researcher might an issue in this activity with my Masters’ students and that my own ‘subjectivity has no free and independent existence… the researcher does not speak the archaeology; the archaeology speaks the researcher’ (Schurich, 1997, p. 171), but again as with the method itself, discussing these issues presented itself as an opportunity to prepare the students for their own future research and to be aware of their own bias and role as participant researchers.

**Key Issues from the Rich Pictures**

The ten rich pictures produced by the group appeared to share many similarities. The time given for this activ-
ity seemed exactly right and students felt they had sufficient time to engage with the set task. Participants in the research drew and annotated themselves, students, colleagues and buildings to represent their colleges. The annotations revealed a great deal about perceptions of Ofsted. In representing the findings from the research it is probably best, in the interest of clarity, to share some pertinent written comments as well as an idea of the images depicted and then to describe more generally the arising themes.

Rudiger’s picture depicted a college decorated with banners to welcome Ofsted and outward images of perfection; a smiling principal and students. Around the corner troublesome students were being shooed away and around the other side of the building a teacher lay on the floor with the speech bubble, ‘I give up’. In a window a manager can be seen flogging a teacher and a weather vane crowns the building and is labelled ‘obsessive measurement of the ‘climate’’. Clouds in the sky raise the questions, outstanding or inadequate?

Fenella’s picture depicts various floors of a college with the ‘God’ of Ofsted beaming from the sky above saying, ‘You must do what I say or you will be destroyed’. Classrooms in the building present a range of images annotated with the words, ‘Ofsted encompasses our very being in education and focus is removed from the students’. ‘Practice is severely impacted’. ‘Less time is spent planning and preparing for teaching. ‘Ofsted inspections do not demonstrate a realistic view of education. Having survived one, I felt that I was living in a charade in which we were all fearful of our downfalls and being punished’. ‘Inspectors expect teachers to bow down to Ofsted’ by engaging fully and pretending to love the process’. ‘Teachers feel they have too much to do and can’t cope’.

Gerald’s picture was of an iceberg, visible below and above the sea. The ‘visible’ part of the iceberg represented what was obvious to Ofsted, the presented practice in college and a small picture to the side illustrated this as a series of hoops to be jumped through, with a side comment, ‘I’m a professional, I know what I’m doing’. The submerged part of the iceberg was annotated with reflective comments on ‘me’, including ‘anxiety’, ‘disenfranchised from my professionalism’ and a split between ‘what I consider important’, and ‘what my employers considers important (for Ofsted)’, as well as the question, ‘Does a good Ofsted equal a good education?’.

Kay’s picture was of a hand with a thumb in a support bandage. Questions surrounded the detail on the drawing. On the fingers was written, ‘each is different but all are expected to be the same (conformity). A wedding ring is labelled with the words, ‘til death us do part: the social ‘norm’. The bandage is labelled with the words ‘corrected growth to the expected form’ and ‘constraint based on expectation, both narrow and painful’. 
Sam’s picture showed the outline of a person surrounded by hands to represent Ofsted, labelled ‘the guiding hands’. The following words accompany the drawing: ‘The ideal practitioner is a malleable entity, flexible to all and every possible change in expectation. In the ideal case a teacher can be formed by the modelling hands of Ofsted. There is a feeling of lack of trust and autonomy, a lack of individuality and personhood’. There is a positive comment too; ‘I finally experienced the real value of building a plenary into my lesson (from Ofsted). Might I have understood this eventually though through reading and peer evaluation – undoubtedly yes’.

Doris drew three seemingly disconnected small pictures, a road or pathway with a sign reading ‘To Hell’ and a figure (identified as Ofsted) leading another (identified as vocational education), along this path. A hangman’s noose is also represented and labelled with the words, ‘strangling practice with needless duplication and paperwork’. A newspaper has also been drawn and its headline states, ‘Hanging Judge Ofsted condemns college’ This student had also written some suggestions about ‘ideal external evaluation’ and articulates this as, ‘No judgement but advice and guidance’ and ‘don’t worry about the results...How are your students feeling, progressing, developing and enjoying the experience?’.

Zoe’s picture shows a large figure channelling light from the sun through a magnifying glass on to two suffering ants. The figure is labelled Ofsted and those ants suffering under the lens are ‘teachers, the obeying ants who are under Ofsted’s current threat. They are miserable and victims to ideas of standards’. A thought bubble from the ants reveals a happier looking ‘teacher’ who ‘just wants to help others and create a fun learning environment’. A comment has been added to the label, ‘a naïve thought when first embarking on teacher training’.

Glenda’s drawing shows quite simply a face labelled with a range of ideas that reflect her responsibility not just for students’ achievement but also the work of other staff including, ‘Will other staff prepare enough? What will the students say? Will they behave? Will they ‘clam up”? Should Ofsted make judgements when they lack subject expertise; what’s the point? We are only putting on a show’. The point that there needs to be some kind of evaluation is also raised.

Elsie’s response included a few small drawings, an eye, ‘Big Brother, a tick, representing a tick box exercise and a pair of glasses annotated ‘Great Gatsby’s glasses’ that refer to the large threatening, all-seeing image from the Scott Fitzgerald novel. There is also a ghost hovering over a rough sketch of a building identified as a college of Further Education. Writing around the drawings makes the points; ‘College observations are geared around Ofsted requirements and do not allow for professional development. There is anxiety over the observation process as you are doomed if you get a bad result. It is not a true reflection of our everyday practice,
it is extra hard work. We are trapped in a box and not encouraged to take risks in our teaching practice or try out new approaches and ideas. Ofsted reduces creativity. Ofsted’s phrase ‘best practice’ suggests there is only one preferred way of doing something. Quality assurance needs to be there but it needs to be positive and the focus should be on development. No one sees this as a positive experience’.

Sally’s response was not pictorial but she has divided her paper into three sections; Society, Practitioner and Masters Student. In the ‘Society’ section she asks the questions; How good is my college? Are teachers teaching properly? Are leaders leading properly? The practitioner section evidenced comments that Sally has heard in her own college, ‘you need to show evidence of…’, ‘to get to grade 1 we need to…’, ‘Use the time before Ofsted come to….; That department will bring our grade down.’ ‘Will the grade affect my future job prospects?’ Make sure your lesson plan includes…’. The Masters student section deals with questions that she asks herself; What is the alternative to Ofsted, Why has it become so influential, How can we ensure teachers will want to keep teaching in this context?’.

The results of the rich picture activity were more alarming than I had expected. Pictures of teachers being flogged, teachers and students as ants suggested real concerns over the Ofsted process seeing it as punitive and a huge factor in college life, creating inauthenticity in practice and, as teaching and learning was prepared for inspection, it seems a particular view of college life and attainment was created for the inspectors. Internal evaluation in college follows the same Ofsted criteria and the factors that Ofsted would focus on become paramount. This echoes points made by Burnell (2015) who describes how many colleges use the Ofsted grading system, mentioned earlier, to make judgements about the quality of teaching in the classroom and these processes restrict creativity and freedom as well as autonomous professionalism. While they may support the raising of standards in narrow measurable criteria they inevitably will restrain innovation and genuine professional development. The rich pictures from my research also suggested a context in which practitioners are not happy; this has implications for a toxic work place culture and the continuity of the profession itself.

Following the rich picture activity and discussion the participating lecturers in further education were asked to jot down any thoughts they had about the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (2015) and how they felt it might improve their and their colleges experience of inspection. The following comments were made:

‘It is interesting that Ofsted will be looking at 16-19 study programmes as a whole and no individual departments will be accountable for grades’

‘The new framework is more focused
on student experience. This might force teachers to make lessons more student centred but it might also mean that teachers do some pointless activities’.

‘The shifting posts still don’t reflect what’s really going on with the teaching’.

‘Adding British Values to the inspection remit is problematic. It is an ambiguous notion and in conjunction with ‘diversity’ will just increase confusion and difficulty’. (Author’s note: education settings have a duty, inspected by Ofsted, to ‘actively promote’ (gov.uk, 2014), the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These values were first set out by the government in the ‘Prevent’ strategy in 2011.

‘It’s all more ‘smoke and mirrors’ and the new framework will make no real difference. Our work will still be Ofsted cantered, not student centred’.

‘We will see more emphasis on starting points and student destination and work experience, on top of teaching and learning’.

‘The fact that lesson observations won’t be graded is a small step forward, but there will still be the same pressure and anxiety over the prospect of Ofsted inspection’.

‘I think a stronger focus on student well-being is positive but I fear it might be another ‘tick box exercise’. How can they possibly measure these factors?’

‘I feel that the new framework has no made no real difference as Ofsted as a whole is a negative experience’.

‘The Common Inspection Framework should move the onus from what happens in the classroom to what happens in the wider college’.

Some of the expressions used in these comments are idiomatic but ‘smoke and mirrors’ suggests deceit and the creation of false impressions that bear no relation to reality. ‘Shifting posts’ reflect the constant changes to priorities and criteria for inspection, as well as methods, time frame, make up of inspection teams that there have been since Ofsted’s creation in 1992, and its extended remit, in 2000, to inspect further education colleges. Generally, although there are some improvements identified, for example ‘small steps forward’, these comments are not positive but suggest further disenchantment with the inspection process and a sense that the real business, and challenges, of college will still not be appreciated by the inspecting body and the stress and anxiety of the experience of inspection is unlikely to change a great deal. Relief that ‘individual departments will not be accountable’ still doesn’t appear to detract from a sense that the new Ofsted framework won’t really make a huge difference to how these lecturers feel about the processes. New
inspection focuses and policy reform just continue a sense that these professionals are excluded from this aspect of policy creation which happens ‘to them’ rather than ‘with them’ (Burnell, 2016, p. 7) suggests ‘many lecturers would favour being more involved in policy-making, especially at the consultation stage… as they are effecting the changes that the policies are designed to bring about’. But none of the participants in research mentioned this possibility of involvement, suggesting that such ideas were far from their practice and experience.

**Conclusion**

Implicitly and explicitly in the rich pictures and comments from my Masters students teaching in the further education sector there is a sense that there needs to be some form of quality assurance, but a workplace culture in which the principles and practice of continuous improvement in teaching and learning can flourish is what is needed (Burnell, 2016) and this, albeit small scale research, suggests that current external inspection is not authentic in this respect. Interestingly the research also indicates an acknowledgement on the part of these newly qualified teachers in further education, that there needs to be some fun, engagement and enjoyment in the process of learning in this sector. Lumby (2011) recognises the role of enjoyment in learning as fundamental in achieving a sense of belonging and a sense of satisfaction in what has been achieved but warns that ‘if enjoying learning is to be a priority, then the focus needs to move from attainment and its relationship with satisfaction, to learning and its connection to flow states. The latter do not sit comfortably with the current standards-driven and attainment-focused element in policy’ (Lumby, 2011, p. 263). The contents of the rich pictures present an idea that innovation and creativity in learning is a risky business in a high stakes accountability agenda and this detracts from these professionals enjoyment of their work and sense of value in what they achieve with their students. Ideas about the limiting effect of the phrase ‘best practice’ are interesting and convey the limitations of the inspection model as currently configured. One student has written ‘no one sees this as a positive process’ over her rich picture of a ghost hovering over a college of further education. Until professionals and students perceive external evaluation as something that genuinely supports, and has the potential to develop, teaching and learning, the sceptre of Ofsted will continue to demoralise the profession and make real innovation and progress unlikely.
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Educational leadership in a changing media space. Social Media Policy as an element of an educational institution’s activity management.

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Abstract

Traditional media space understood as institutional media (press, radio, television), through a controlled distribution of messages, on the one hand was an obstacle for educational institution, and on the other hand was a guarantor of content concerning the school appearing in the environment. With the development of internet technologies the method of the distribution of content has also changed the existing recipients of content can also become its broadcasters, and the institution itself can create its own media.

In such conditions an educational leader should possess awareness and competencies in the management of school’s communication in order to effectively protect its image and reputation. These competencies should constitute a preventive function of crisis management. The rules and regulations of an institution formalized in the form of statutes (Social Media Policy) could be helpful in this, and therefore the ability to construct guidelines and rules setting desirable and unacceptable behaviours within an educational institution in the area of new media, especially social media becomes an important element.

Keywords: educational leadership, media world, social media

Introduction

Traditional media space understood as institutional media (press, radio, television), through a controlled distribution of communicates, on the one hand was an obstacle for an educational in-
stitution, and on the other hand was a guarantor of content concerning the school appearing in the environment. With the development of internet technologies the method of distribution of content has also changed—the possibility for the existing recipients of content to become its broadcasters has appeared, and the institution itself can develop its own media, retaining independence from institutional media.

This situation can be a source of potential crises, because each member of the institution’s internal environment (teachers, non-teaching workers, students, parents of students, etc.) as well as external (public institutions, media, private individuals, etc.) may become an agent distributing contents about its activities.

An educational leader should be aware how to manage an institution in order to minimize the risk of a crisis, and if such a thing occurs, have competencies in the field of its management. Hence also the ability to construct guidelines and rules setting desirable and unacceptable behaviours within an educational institution in the new media, especially social media, becomes an important element. Such rules, often formalized in the form of regulations (Social Media Policy) are within the range of preventive actions for managing the communication of educational institution.

**Informational and educational actions of institutions and the distribution of content in media**

It would be a truism to say that a modern school should communicate with its environment. On the one hand, this issue seems to be indisputable because such are the expectations of its environment. Students, parents, teaching staff and non-teaching workers as the internal environment of the institution, but also entities from its external environment: superior institutions, local governments, media, society, graduates or potential candidates often want to obtain information on the scope of its activities. Thus, there is a need for information, and educational institution should try to fill this gap. On the other hand, there are formal requirements obliging schools and institutions to conduct informational activities. The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7 October 2009 on pedagogical supervision should be noted here (Journal of Laws No. 168, item 1324), as it mentions tasks that include: the concept of a school or institution to be known and accepted by students and parents (since it should be known and accepted, the process of communication, transfer of information and possible explanation of actions must occur earlier); a school or institution to be positively perceived in the environment and the value of education to be promoted. In the aforementioned Regulation the analysis
of the attractiveness of the offer of the institution and implementation of changes on its basis was also indicated. Also the environment of an educational institution is recorded by taking into account possibilities and needs of the environment.

It follows from the above that both the demands of an educational institution’s environment, as well as formal and legal requirements, may be a reason for communication. Depending on the competencies and awareness of the headmaster-leader-educational leader concerning the risks associated with the communications of members of an educational institution, the risk of a potential crisis situation may vary.

Management of communication processes.

Organizations operating in the market implement management of processes of communication with the environment through public relations activities. According to the definition formulated by Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center and Glen M. Broom: “Public relations is the management function that establishes and sustains mutual beneficial relationships between the organization and its environment, on which depends its success or failure.” (Cutlip, Center, Broom, 2000). One of the leading figures of the Polish PR, Krystyna Wojcik, points out that PR is a management function with a continuous and planned nature thanks to which the organization acquires and sustains the understanding, sympathy and support of those in whom it is interested now, or may be interested in the future - by testing their opinions about the organization, in order to maximally adapt its goals and business to them, to achieve - through planned, wide dissemination of information - better cooperation with the community, and better achievement of its objectives (Wójcik, 2015).

This approach to the communication with the environment, assuming care for dialogue with respect for the ethics of communication, should be one of the strategic activities of an institution, included in the framework of its operation. Then it would have the chance to be an effective action that allows the determination of objectives in accordance with the vision and mission of an educational institution, through the construction of a strategy, as well as identification of tactics and implementation programs (Kaczmarek-Śliwińska, 2013).

One of the important components of the aforementioned communication strategy will be to determine the environment of an educational institution that seems to be particularly important for the effective achievement of goals. The figure below (fig. 1) shows a simplified typology of an institution’s environment and assumes the existence of two groups: internal environment, understood as direct members of the organization (students, parents, teachers, management, and others) and external environment understood as entities that currently are not direct members of the organization, but have a
relationship with the institution now, in the past or in the future (candidates for students, graduates, media and others).

There are many typologies of an institution’s environment (Kaczmarek-Śliwińska, 2015), but from the point of view of the subject matter under discussion - managing the communication of the institution in a changing media space - it is worth mentioning the typology aimed at communication with the environment in crisis situations. It presumes the relationship of an institution with three groups in the environment, namely (Kaczmarek-Śliwińska, 2015):

1. Priority - groups from the organization’s environment, which should be strictly taken into account in crisis communication, as they are directly involved in the crisis (e.g. a crisis situation such as students injured in a school bus accident; the priority environment certainly includes students, their parents and carers).

2. Important - groups from the organization’s environment which in the case of having sufficient resources (staff, time and financial) should be included in scenarios of crisis situations (referring to the aforementioned crisis they may be groups of potential candidates to the educational institution).

3. Possible to omit - groups from the organization’s environment the lack of which in crisis situation scenarios should not lead to negative consequences (an example could include social groups associated with the pro-health movement).

Familiarity with environment groups is a particularly important aspect of an institution’s strategy of communication because incorrect definition of groups with which communication should be maintained can lead to weakness or lack of effectiveness in reaching and under-

**Figure 1.** Environment of an educational institution in view of the subject of communication.

![Environment of an educational institution](image)

**Source:** own elaboration
standing the message.

The consequences of changes in media space in the context of content distribution and potential risks of crisis situations.

Together with their use in the activities of organizations of various types, the internet and its services also appeared in the sphere of communication. Initially in the mid-1990s, and from today’s perspective, these forms were very limited in terms of interaction, as well as active participation of recipients. This was related both to technical limitations and the costs of using the Web, as well as a lack of preparation of Internet users for maintaining active communication through the creation and distribution of their own content.

Less than a decade later the internet social space was completely different: improved technical and computing competencies of users, greater availability of easy-to-use applications, lower costs of using the internet, but above all much greater awareness of users and their activity in the processes of creating own content, and distribution of the content of other network users, both institutional and individual. Conditions for carrying out activities related to the communication of organizations (in the paradigm of public relations, as well as for formal and legal reasons), including educational institutions, had earlier often been pointed out but due to the awareness, competencies and capabilities of the internet’s infrastructure, in reality, they could not be created until after 2000. F.P. Seitel, in relation to the activities of commercial organizations, indicated three main reasons, namely: the need for information experienced by consumers, action in real time and the need for individualized messages (Seitel, 2000). It quickly turned out that the information needs of customers in relation to organizations offering commercial goods are similar or even identical to those of customers of other types of organizations, which probably contributed to the use of practices familiar in the commercial property market in relation to the educational services market.

The change caused by supplementing the traditional media trinity (press, radio, television) with internet space on the one hand led to an expansion of communication opportunities of organizations but also to a greater risk of potential crisis situations. These two reasons—greater opportunities for the distribution of an institution’s content supporting its PR activities and promotion of education, and a higher risk of crisis—should serve as an occasion to supplement the competencies of an educational leader.

Paul Miller pointed to changes in the area of the internet as a medium, and expressed his thoughts in the following manner: “Web 1.0 led people to information, Web 2.0 led information to people.” (Rahiman, 2010). An educational leader should be aware of the fact that this leading of information to people, and then distribution of content in a completely arbitrary manner (without any control
on the part of the institution) and without an organization’s (educational institution’s) influence on its form, manner, time and context, may cause threats.

Changes in media space result primarily from changes in the role of existing recipients of media. Those people who until now were only recipients (and if they were also broadcasters of messages or their creators, then it was to a very limited extent) were given the opportunity to create and distribute their own content, as well as content obtained from other internet users or entities on the internet. In practice, in many cases this may mean that on the internet there are entities which have the nature of an old medium, such as editorial offices. Unfortunately, the threat may be the fact that while editorial offices respect the rules of applicable law or professional industry codes, internet sources can act on self-appointed terms within the law, and sometimes act outside of it.

The diagram above (fig. 2) presents a simplified method for the distribution of messages in media space. Two entities - institutional media and educational institution (organization) - in addition to traditional forms of content distribution to their environment also have communication channels on the internet. There is public opinion, which in all kinds of ways, and often dependent only on its decisions, can become a source of distributed content. Finally, there is the opinion leader, who has also appeared in offline communication processes (e.g. as an expert in a TV programme or in the press), but in today’s media system he may be an entity with a significantly different role and functions. While in the space of offline media the opinion leader was mostly an entity with a recognized professional role, in online space he may be an entity with any professional position but with significant impact on the environment around the internet instruments used by him (e.g. around a blog or account on social network). Media space defined in this way is characterised by the possibility of high activity of all entities but from the point of view of the discussed subject matter - public opinion, opinion leader and educational institution. Through the use of online tools they can become a source of information independent from traditional journalistic channels. This can lead to considerable facilitation of the transfer of content to the facility’s environment, which is particularly important when this content seems unattractive to editorial offices. However, it may be a cause of an organization’s problems because functioning within social media requires specific competences, and perhaps also regulations within the institution.

Possibilities of regulations associated with the distribution of content of an institution’s environment

Observing the communication of educational institutions, there is a clear tendency to take example from entities of the market environment. Although in the case of educational institutions we should
not talk about the product in a commercial sense but about values and promotion of education, instruments and methods of implementation can be identical. Taking on the practices of a commercial market is probably related to the realities of the educational services market—increasingly fierce competition between entities, demographic decline and the search for savings through elimination of institutions.

Certainly there are three areas that could be a challenge for an educational leader, namely:

1. The impact of content distributed by an educational institution (from the managerial level) on its image and reputation.

2. Activities of the society of an educational institution in the field of media having an impact on its image and reputation.

3. Activities of the environment of an educational institution in the space of media having an impact, negative or positive, on the way it is perceived.

While in the traditional media (newspapers, radio, television) the above-mentioned problems could exist marginally, in the space of social media they can be a source of crisis situations. Therefore, relations with the media, including activities in social media, should be recognized as part of the strategy of an institution’s activities within preventive and regulatory measures.

Regulations and principles that engage expected and undesirable actions in the relations of an institution with its internal and external environment may include components (Kaczmarek-Śliwińska, 2013):

1. Relating to the relationship with the external environment:

   a. provisions determining principles of moderation, or lack thereof, of user activity (e.g. posting comments after prior moderation by an administrator representing the educational institution).

   b. rules that raise the issue of users anonymity (experience shows that some institutions choose to leave considerable freedom to users and the right to be anonymous, appearance is apparent in reality, since the user can be identified through IP); some institutions require logging in preceded by registration or using a social network account due to the possibility of so-called self-disclosure (Valkenburg, Peter, 200) and disinhibition (Johnson, 2001).

   c. information related to legal regulations (e.g. issues of defamation, insult, or any violation related to the goods of another entity or the institution itself; the issue of minimum age for users in the processes of communication).

   d. rules determining user culture (the culture of criticism relating to the subject of discussion, the adoption of

   e. principles of substantive criticism, exclusion of any form of electronic aggression (Pyżalski,, 2012), and thus:

   f. information on desirable and exclusive content

   g. determination of the consequences of non-compliance with the rules presented by the institution (e.g. blocking users, and in extreme situations taking legal action).
2. Relating to the relations with the internal environment, the execution of which - from the point of view of an educational institution - is facilitated because the organization’s members (students, teachers, etc.) remain in a relationship with the institution which is specified by law. These components can be specified as:

   a. **behaviour towards the organization**
   (e.g. an appropriate method of criticism, involvement or lack of involvement in discussions about the institution),

   b. **behaviour towards colleagues and other members of the institution** (e.g. students) especially relating to the method of commenting on their behaviour and actions (e.g. acceptable forms of criticism of a student by a teacher and vice versa),

   c. **behaviour towards competitors**. It is worth remembering that—in the case of criticism of actions—we should remember to maintain the form of referring to facts and avoid comments in a situation where it is not possible to confirm the heard opinions. A special case is the critique of competitive institutions struggling with a crisis situation, where a crisis situation may be transferred to the industry, and thus the institution may be affected by the crisis (e.g. critique of another school for lack of supervision of pupils during a school trip, during which students used drugs. This problem may be raised by the media, because it is “attractive,” it will arouse interest of recipients, but it can also transfer the questions of the media and environment to the institution itself),

   d. **behaviour of members of an educational institution towards the external environment**. The role of educational leaders is also to draw attention to relations between the internal environment and entities from the external environment that constitute a hazardous element especially in the face of a crisis situation. Then one of the elements of the external environment’s behaviour is thorough observation of the institution and attempts to obtain information related to the crisis situation. Both school staff and parents should be familiar with the information policy of the institution in order to create one message and not give out information that may be causing the so-called growing crisis (Kaczmarek-Śliwińska, 2015).

   Two more aspects are also important in relation to the internal environment of a facility:

   e. rules determining the desired level of worker/student culture, and expressed in two perspectives as:

      i. **behaviour as representative of the institution** - teachers and students represent a school; on their profiles there is information about their belonging to a particular institution, etc.

      ii. **behaviour as a private person** - on this issue rules should be determined taking into account the fact that management of the institution has the right to require certain behaviour but they cannot violate the rights of members of the institution, for example, the freedom of expression, criticism and others.
f. Professional standards in terms of:

i. guidelines on ethical issues (e.g. for teachers - the matter of professional ethics; for students - ethical issues contained in the statute of a school),

ii. guidelines referring to values and norms of an educational institution.

The analysis of the activities of organizations, not only educational institutions, shows that the Social Media Policy regulations, which have been created as a result of joint work and agreements between management and members of organizations, are effective. It is the educational leader who should stimulate and guide the work, but at the same time he should try not to impose solutions which are comfortable or safe from the point of view of management of the institution. Such rules should be the result of a consensus, arrangements arising through understanding the needs of members of the organization (e.g. needs of self-presentation, the right to freedom of expression, etc.), and on the other hand there should be awareness and understanding among members of an organization that actions taken by them may affect its position, image or reputation.

Summary

The changing media space will set new tasks for educational leaders. Ten years ago, media coverage and content distribution were limited to a situation in which the leader managing an institution was its main representative. Today, when every internet user can be a creator and broadcaster of content, it should be assumed that each member of an institution is its face, and can affect—positively or negatively—the perception of the institution in the internal and external environment, as well as represent the values with which it will be associated.

Due to the fact that media space is not constant, but is subjected to constant transformations, we must acquire competencies that will allow the creation of institution media space through which the distribution of content will create the smallest risk of a crisis situation.
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The concept of discrete management as a proposal for the style of a school headmaster in leading a team of teachers

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Abstract

The paper presents a unique concept of managing a team of teachers. The article consists of two parts: theoretical, which discusses basic assumptions of discrete management concept with regard to teams of teachers, with reference to trends occurring in the literature on the subject (in humanities and social sciences), conducted studies, and empirical literature presenting opinions (diagnostic survey) of teachers about the presented concept.

Keywords: discrete management of teachers’ teams, headteacher, leadership

Introduction

School management is the management of a community of students, parents, teachers and administrative staff. This management involves maximum mobilization of a school community, especially teachers, within the scope of taking actions in favour of the process of learning and teaching and implementation of jointly shared values. These teachers see a particular school as a place of learning and working that is friendly, allows them to pursue their interests, needs, and career and life goals. Awareness of the headmaster concerning the need to care for the development of community members should inspire and lead to innovative actions: creative from the point of view of individuals and innovative in relation to school as an organization. One important
entity that the headmaster should be concerned about is certainly teams of teachers. The increase in public awareness of the importance of the role of teachers and institutions related to education of social capital observed during the last few years, greater and ever-growing awareness concerning the management of teachers and staff of strategic importance for the organization which is a school, care for their development, job satisfaction, and welfare require continuous efforts towards the development of optimal management style. It aims to ensure maximum but realistically recognized harmony and integration of the objectives of the values and needs of those teachers as well as the mission of school.

The presented article aims to develop an optimal approach to the management of teachers’ teams and is an attempt (pilot studies) at its empirical verification.

**Key assumptions of the concept:**

Discrete management is an eclectic management concept, which refers to the philosophical direction of *conventionalism*[^1] (Lat. Conventionalis - based on the agreement), as well as a psychological, humanistic concept of a human which is characterized by the use of “discrete control” over knowledge workers and especially gifted workers in order to enable them the need to implement autonomy in their work, value of subjectivity, self-esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1990; Rogers, 2002) and emotional comfort in their work.

The concept of discrete management also refers to the theory of positive potential of an organization (Glińska-Neweś 2010), which aims to refer to the strengths of the workers employed in it.

So the great importance of a sense of meaning in the performed work for its creativity was indicated by many other authors (e.g. Bakker et al.; Drazin et al., 1999), also positive psychologists as well as representatives of a positive organizational theory (Glińska-Neweś, 2010; Henry, 2007; Joseph, Linley, 2007; Weisburg, 1993). These authors emphasize the motivating importance of sense of meaning of the performed work as a factor that triggers commitment to the performed work. In their opinion the aforementioned sense of meaning is a key factor determining the activity of knowledge workers.

A sense of meaning of employees’ activity is based on two assumptions. One of them has the nature of a logical cause-and-...
effect dependence, as it leads to the effective implementation of objectives, which in case of this type of work should also have a long-term nature (Obuchowski, 1993). On the other hand, sense of meaning of the performed work is associated with the implementation of recognized values. These values define actions with a more hierarchical and generalized nature and do not necessarily translate into concrete actions, although in the long run they lead to them (Obuchowski, 2000).

From the point of view of individual workers, a sense of meaning in performing professional work has the following functions:

- It strengthens self-esteem and the feeling of agency
- It provides positive feedback
- It initiates and allows maintenance of a certain activity in a situation where this activity is burdensome and cumbersome
  - It allows for the deferral of gratification for the executed task
  - It is a factor that builds positive self-esteem, regardless of the position.

Discrete management in relation to teams of teachers can be presented in the form of a following diagram.

Although discrete management in relation to teams of teachers involves no formal manifestations of power, so that the way to exert an influence by the school headmaster is not directly visible and recognizable. At the same time it requires a special attitude on the part of teachers: commitment, emotional maturity, as well as specific distance of the headmaster to the outer signs of his power.

![Figure 1. Model of discrete management of teams of teachers](image)

*Source:* own study
Discrete management does not resign completely from the position of leadership, the leader should inspire the team but he is a leader who is “not visible.” This concept, however, refers to and uses the assumptions of authentic leadership style.

Discrete management relating to teachers’ teams does not mean the introduction of radical changes in organizational culture of the school, it also does not exclude the presence of leaders in a team of teachers or other persons with a high social prestige and authority. For the determination of managerial function, which is limited, and if it differentiates positions arising more out of processes than from traditional division between managerial and non-managerial jobs, instead of the traditional headmaster the term “coordinator” seems to be more appropriate.

Another element of the presented management concept is the simplification of communication channels which is connected with greater availability of the headmaster for teachers who at almost any moment can turn to him or her; at the same time it also requires emotional maturity on the part of the latter, their sense of shared responsibility for achieved organizational results, mutual kindness and high self-discipline.

Another factor—psychological contract is the first significant step on the way to building trust between teachers forming teams and the employer-headmaster because it does not result from the realization of the consequences of failure to comply with a formal contract but is a result of the identification of teachers with the school, as well as concern for them by the headmaster. Thus it is the basis and condition for the achievement of the highest level of mutual trust, referring to emotional bonds between entities (Dunn, Schweiter, 2005). Trust, in turn, occurs as a result of mutual understanding, acceptance of intentions, and identification of the needs and aspirations of the other party. On the other hand, understanding is a result of effective mutual representation of each other’s interests.

Psychological contract can be, and is, the area within which the agreement of teachers’ expectations takes place in a team and in relations with the employer, headmaster. It concerns a number of commitments the nature of which is not written down in the employment contract but which are psychological, and which relate to teachers’ teams and the school headmaster as people interested in acting in the interests of the school and the whole community. On the other hand, it is about the possibility of understanding possible difficulties and continuing dialogue among interested parties, both within the team and outside of it.

Assuming that the psychological contract that meets the hopes placed in it is based on the principle of adaptation of the employer to the individual expectations of employees, mutual benefits, voluntary decision of both sides and mutual loyalty, it can be considered as a specific area for dialogue between school headmaster and knowledge teachers because it is
• a source of knowledge about mutual expectations of the headmaster and teachers because it gives the opportunity for an open presentation of the interests of both sides,

• a method of neutralization of potential divergences—as a result of an unwritten agreement between the parties

• a tool for building confidence in the organization—school (Schoorman, Mayer, Davis, 2007, p.344-354).

The concept of transactional psychological contract involves a high degree of flexibility and adaptability of teachers that are part of the team for situations of the school and the whole school community that creates it. Within this contract the teacher assumes responsibility for himself and the team. The commitment of a headmaster and school community, in turn, is to create conditions conducive to the development of his or her competences.

Transactional psychological contract assumes the existence of a special relationship of teachers and the headmaster because it accepts a relatively high independence of teachers’ teams and taking over responsibilities for the relatively structured tasks related to the operation and further development of school as an organization carrying out a specific mission and the ensuing values.

Another factor that co-creates discrete management is authentic leadership. This concept is an expression of concern of the headmaster for maintenance of a balance between the mission of the school, specific tasks that it wants to pursue, and the broadly understood pursuits, interests, professional aspirations of members of teachers’ teams, which is reflected in worker’s sense of job satisfaction, resulting in their increased involvement, and even enthusiasm at work (Gardner et al., 2005). An authentic leader is characterized by transparency and consistency in action, in accordance with shared values (Bartkowiak, 2011; Bartkowiak, Krugielka, 2012). Transparency of a leader is associated with his or her high level of openness, transparency and trust in close relationships.

The concepts of authentic leadership are deeply rooted in positive psychology and mainly focus on particular components of leadership, enabling the development of employees and leader (Luthans and Avolio, 2003). Avolio, Gardner and Walumbwa (2005, p. 12) they define such development as a process that takes place thanks to “positive psychological competences” of a leader and other members of organization, leading to a greater self-awareness and creation of positive behaviour of a leader and his subordinates (see also Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Luthans and Avolio, 2003). According to Avolio, Gardner and Walumbwa (2005, p. 13) authentic leaders “know who they are and what they believe in.” The basis of such a perspective oriented at authenticity has become Kemis’s (2003) concept concerning “optimal self-evaluation.”

In case of discrete management an authentic leader performs management functions in a way that minimizes control,
and is characterized by transparency and consistency in action in accordance with shared values. In addition he or she is strongly focused on improving his or her positive qualities such as trust, optimism, hope and confidence. These features play a key role in his personal development as well as in the development of the whole team and organization (see Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Seligmann, 2002). A condition for the transparency and stability of own behaviour is consistent and integrated functioning in all areas of life. As these authors emphasize, you cannot be authentic if, depending on the situation (job responsibilities, family life, etc.), you have to wear a different mask each time. Other researchers (Gardner et al., 2005) emphasize that genuine behaviours are a consequence of the real “Self” of a leader, reflected in his or her beliefs and feelings, independent from environmental influences and the pressures of others. Transparency of a leader is associated with his or her high level of openness, transparency and trust in close relationships.

The result of a style based on authentic leadership is undoubtedly the increase in trust, and also commitment, satisfaction, enthusiasm and welfare of subordinates (Harter et al., 2003; Ryan and Deci, 2000). When it comes to trust, the authors (Gardner et al., 2005) indicate that authentic leadership related to transparency increases trust of a subordinate in him- or herself and the entire organization. Through a sincere assessment of their own abilities authentic leaders build relationships based on trust, which are essential in the development of skills of coping in difficult times for the organization. Hence, workers guided by authentic leaders have a higher level of trust in relation to superiors. One of the key factors, according to Gardner et al. (2005), serving as a mediator between authentic leadership and effects for subordinates, is commitment. The term “employee commitment” here refers to the “personal commitment to work” (Harter et al., 2002, p. 269). Authors point out that internal integration of authentic leaders, coupled with personal development, mental sense of security and sense of purpose of work increase the commitment of subordinates. Authentic leaders contribute to the inducement of employees’ commitment by helping them discover and use their talents and through support in matching their own objectives to those arising from their professional role (May et al., 2004).

Another element characterizing an authentic leader is openness to feedback, even when it takes the form of criticism. The leader cannot afford to ignore his or her weaknesses and limitations. Therefore, it is important for him or her to be aware of his or her own value system, as well as strengths and weaknesses.

An important issue is also the ability to motivate yourself to act, i.e. having internal motivation, based on factors such as: satisfaction from the measures taken, personal development, sense of helping others and awareness of conduct in accordance with the shared values, which in
the case of school is of particular importance. Gardner et al. (2005) stress that authentic leaders who are characterized by optimal self-evaluation and good indicators of mental health, i.e. great optimism, trust, hope, communicate this attitude to their subordinates. In addition, authentic leaders have a strong sense of morality, hence all their actions are consistent with the principles that they believe in and thus constitute a model for other employees (May et al. 2003). Processes through which leaders influence their employees rely primarily on positive modelling (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004; Gardner et al., 2005). True leaders know that leadership is not about personal success, but about the success of people which they affect by their leadership. Hence, authentic leaders are focused on how to help others in achieving their goals as well as the transfer to them of more and more responsibility and authority.

The result of a style based on authentic leadership is undoubtedly increase in trust and commitment, satisfaction, enthusiasm and welfare of subordinates (Harter et al., 2003; Ryan and Deci, 2000). When it comes to trust, the authors (Gardner et al., 2005) indicate that authentic leadership related to transparency increases trust of a subordinate in him- or herself and the entire organization. Through a sincere assessment of their own abilities authentic leaders build relationships based on trust, which are essential in the development of skills of coping in difficult times for the organization. Hence, workers guided by authentic leaders have a higher level of trust in relation to superiors. One of the key factors, according to Gardner et al. (2005), serving as a mediator between authentic leadership and effects for subordinates, is commitment. The term “employee commitment” here refers to “personal commitment to work” (Harter et al., 2002, p. 269). Authors point out that internal integration of authentic leaders, coupled with personal development, mental sense of security and sense of purpose of work increase the commitment of subordinates and their motivation to cooperate in teams of employees, which is particularly important for the work of teachers. Authentic leaders contribute to the inducement of employees commitment by helping them to discover and use their talents and through support in matching their own objectives and their implementation arising from their professional role (May et al., 2004).

Welfare of employees is also closely related to commitment, which is expressed by good adaptation, satisfaction with life and good mental health (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Waterman (1993) emphasizes that the so-called “eudaimonic” concept of welfare encourages people to live in harmony with their true “Self,” which is connected with authenticity. There is empirical evidence suggesting a significant relationship between authenticity, commitment and “eudaimonic” welfare (Kahneman et al., 1999; Kermis, 2003; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Sheldon et al., 2004). The authors emphasize
Harter et al., 2003) that the welfare of workers, and in relation to the situation—schools, appears as a natural consequence of the authenticity of a headmaster and other members of the community. Another element of the model is deinfluentization as a phenomenon of deliberate deprivation of the impact of a leader on behalf of a person or team members that have greater competences at this moment, due to the performed task. At the same time it is an action leading to the implementation of postulates of subjectivity and improving efficiency of the team (Kożusznik, 1996). In school practice the headmaster resigns from exerting an influence on the course of tasks if he or she is convinced that there are professionals to whom the task can be appointed. At the core of a leader’s—school headmaster’s actions targeted in such a way is the belief in a large contribution of work of individual teachers in the work of the entire team. Thus, the headmaster treats his or her “lack of impact” as an instrument for achieving greater involvement and mobilization of the team for the implementation of the community’s joint purpose.

Organization and area of studies

The second part of the article was devoted to the analysis of the views of teachers on the importance of individual elements in the model of discrete management concept in educational leadership.

The following research problem was formulated in the article:

How do teachers evaluate the proposed model, and how does the ranking of importance of each of its elements manifest itself in their opinion?

In order to verify the research problem formulated in such a way, studies which were involved 62 teachers from primary and secondary schools in a large city (population of over 500 thousand inhabitants) were designed. The main task of the participants was to assume an attitude towards factors proposed in the model of discrete management.

Each teacher received a written proposal of the model and its discussion together with a request to assign the importance of each factor on a scale of 1–5 (five was the highest evaluation) in the submitted, original concept of managing a teacher team. In addition to making the assignment, people were asked for brief explanations of their decision. In the next stage discussions were carried out in three groups of teachers, consisting of less than 20 people. The study was conducted in the first half of June 2014. The acceptance criterion of the model’s element was its selection by a minimum of 51% of respondents.

\[2 \text{ Eudaimonia} \text{ understands happiness differently than hedonism, or sybaritism (typically sensual pleasures) not as subjective satisfaction, but as a certain condition that occurs as a result of proper conduct of people and creating the correct meaning of work}\]
Results of the studies

The study revealed the existence of a relatively large variation in rankings of the point value attributed to individual elements.

As indicated by the obtained data, teachers participating in the studies recognized *authentic leadership* as the most important element of the concept, and in particular such aspects (which results from the discussions) as ethics, feedback, transparency, mutual trust and concern for the welfare of all members of the school community. Interviewed teachers stated that having a headmaster who implements authentic leadership allows increased motivation to work and life, and in particular, participation in the process of self-improvement and creating a creative team. Teachers also stressed the importance of absence of formal manifestations of power as a factor in their positive mobilization. Some of them mentioned that, actually, there is already such a tendency in school but they expect more and want the introduction of such workplaces where there would be no division of occupied territory (desks) associated with the position.

Similarly, a high position was obtained by an element of simplification of communication channels. The point is that there should be channels of communication which are almost constantly open and allow teachers to contact each other and exchange opinions with the school headmaster in the same way. At this point writing down the dates of meetings in a schedule should be regarded as an inadequate procedure. However, during the conducted interview only the need to extend the time of direct con-

### Table 1. Ranking of the importance of various elements of concept of discrete management in the opinion of surveyed teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of concept</th>
<th>Sum of assigned points</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authentic leadership</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>90,32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricting formal manifestations of power</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>90,32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplification of communication channels</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>62,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deinfluentization</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>61,29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional psychological contract</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>56,45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of objectives and cooperation in a team</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53,22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: own study*
tacts devoted for the time of talks with the team of teachers was considered.

In next place there is the phenomenon of deinfluentization, subjective disposition of a school teacher to transfer power to the person or team that has more competences in relation to managed issues. Teachers participating in the study almost unanimously stressed that in the school in which they are employed such practices have existed and that they fully accept them and believe that this reflects the maturity of the headmaster, for whom the most important thing is to settle the problem using the most competent persons and not emphasize his or her position in the organizational structure and maintain the appearance of prestige.

In the penultimate place in the study teachers participating in the study mentioned transactional psychological contract, consisting of the mutual agreement of teachers’ and headmasters’ expectations. The headmaster leaves teachers freedom in structuring tasks, the execution of which is transferred, allowing the possibility of their implementation according to their own scenario. In addition, he or she accepts the fact of the dynamics of achieving mutual expectations, and attitudes towards implementation of common values, and assumes the existence of trust between the parties and mutual conviction about positive motivation. Members of the contract have the common good of the school community in mind all the time.

The element of the system which was associated with integration of commonly shared goals and undertaking creative collaboration in a teachers’ team was placed by teachers in last place. It must be remembered that in a teacher’s work it is not important how he or she implements his or her role as a leader but to what extent he or she can initiate cooperation in the team. In this way the team may create a process of sharing knowledge and new values may be developed as a result of the commitment of each teacher, and his or her individual competences.

**Summary**

The presented hierarchy of preferences is consistent with tendencies in leadership in education described in the literature (e.g. Dorczak, 2013; Mazurkiewicz, 2011, 2014). There is absolutely no place in it for the headmaster administrator, which does not mean that he or she should ignore all the procedural requirements; of course they require knowledge of the Teacher’s Charter, Labour Code, tracking any changes that appear on the websites of the Ministry and the Board of Trustees; but his or her most important role is to initiate cooperation, build a team of teachers which is most fully involved and creates the process of teaching and education in line with the school list of values.

According to the author of this article, further items of the phenomenon of deinfluentization and transactional psychological contract may result from their incomplete diagnosis and treatment of the latter as new concepts, which, however, refer
to the previously known phenomena. The lowest valued integration of objectives and attitudes to creative cooperation with the team of teachers in a particular school may stem from having a relatively large group of teachers, people with seniority above 20, 25 years, not a very positive experience within the scope of teamwork. As the teachers themselves have admitted, or at least a significant proportion (approx. 35%), prior to studies, cooperation in a team for them was an idea with not very positive connotations and some teachers simply stated that as teachers they have little positive experience within the scope of cooperation in a teachers’ team.

This condition does not mean, however, that the integration of objectives and focus on creative work as part of a discrete management is not important.

In summary, statements of teachers both in written form and formulated during the discussions confirmed the validity of highlighting components of discrete management as a proposal for managing teachers’ teams by the headmaster but the concept itself still requires, according to the author, theoretical elaboration.

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Cooperation is crucial in educational context. Erikson says that ‘cooperation is the fundamental key of human development’ (Erikson, 2013, pp. 26-27). Schools are treated as institutions responsible for preparing young people to be self-regulated and responsible human beings able to cooperate for the sake of their own development (Mazurkiewicz, 2014). Head teachers as school leaders initiate and organize these processes. Sennett thinks that cooperation requires the competences, especially social competences - dialogical competences (listening well to each other, finding common views, conflict management etc.) (Sennett, 2013).

The paper presents the results of research showing how school heads perceive their competencies that will be taken as a starting point for designing proposals of new type of training for school leaders in Poland. More than 2800 principals of different types of schools were asked to assess their competencies in six broad areas. The research aim of this paper is to analyze the perception of cooperation by the principals.

The research shows that competencies related to cooperation are important for principals and they declare that they have them. We can conclude as well that cooperation with other entities is more important for principals of school located in smaller cities and in villages.

Keywords: cooperation, educational leadership, competences, principals, research
**Introduction**

The current complex contemporary educational context increases the difficulty of leadership tasks. In order to be able to face expectations set for schools, educational leadership demands changes in theoretical approach and (mostly) in everyday practice. In multiple voices heard in the discourse of educational leadership, the need for cooperation and participatory leadership is particularly stressed but it could be said that the real transformation takes place when the necessity for the change is visible for practitioners, not only for researchers. This is why we have decided to take a closer look at leaders’ mind-sets concerning the issue of cooperation.

**Interactive leadership**

A democratic society requires democratic schools and the latter require democratic structures and processes. A democratic school requires democratic leadership. It is important to accept that education is a group investment, not an individual contract leading to the acquisition of a right to work or obtaining a degree which results in receiving higher wages. Education is an element of social life, especially of its public dimension. Although pessimistic visions of social development emphasise the collapse of a certain relational model, consisting of trust, cooperation and responsibility for the common good and order (Bauman, 2006) – that specifically demanding approach, seeing education as a mechanism of social change, sets the direction which the educational leaders should follow: to work for the collective order and cooperation.

Bottery (2004) points out dangers which pose threats to civil society driven by the ideology of having and buying, where consumption has been taken to absurd levels, which the school not only does not oppose but participates in it. Educational leaders have to arrange values and objectives of school in a new hierarchy. There are numerous issues that may and should be discussed while talking about educational leadership. There are plenty of perspectives, theories, research and tasks. In this paper, we would like to focus only on one of the important areas - cooperation. One of the tasks of contemporary leaders is to show the members of the organisation that there are group objectives, which are worth working for, even while devoting part of the focus to individual needs. Without talking about what is important for everyone there will be no school and without an open communication process the educational process will not proceed.

The school needs modern leadership that supports cooperation and permanent communication with people, and needs leadership that effectively uses diverse actions, attitudes, behaviours and values present in every organisation. Leadership must be a process where actions are taken and situations which determine organisational initiatives are created, where others are empowered to act and relations between people are shaped.

Leadership can be truly understood only in a relational context. Theoretical
deliberations and practical requirements for school principals have brought, so far, more misunderstanding than support as they focus mainly on an individual and its predispositions and duties, and underestimate the role of the group. That is why it is worth stressing that even though there are many different ways of conceptualising leadership, its key components are always connected to cooperation and the influence of people on others, and appear only in the context of a group (Northouse, 2007).

Educational leaders share their power and encourage cooperation while helping their co-workers increase their self-esteem and potential. In the face of enormous numbers of new tasks and duties, sharing power is one of the most promising mechanisms of dealing with reality. It is important to re-define the principals’ role into that of designers and creators of school culture allowing for the learning of all. Hoerr (2005) uses the concept of distributed intelligence, which implies that our intelligence cannot be limited to what is inside us but is also determined by the skill of using external resources.

Leadership involves the ability to build a team whose members cooperate and are orientated towards the achievement of objectives (Reinhartz & Beach, 2004) which were generated by the team from inside the institution. In this case, the leader is not understood in a traditional way. He or she does not come with a vision of changes and does not lead a procession showing heroically that what he or she suggests is possible. Leadership is about helping others to build self-esteem, to see and use their own potential and jointly develop a vision and strategy of actions. Leadership in education is a long and difficult journey with many diversions, turning points and asking for directions. It is about connections.

Educational leaders must very often face a culture of fear (Palmer, 1998); doing so involves the necessity to question the traditional approach to interpersonal relations in a professional context. A culture of fear manifests itself in priorities and practices concentrated mainly on guaranteeing one’s own safety by proving one’s own usefulness and infallibility. It is closely connected with a problem that is the crisis of interpersonal relations. It is the reason why social life suffers. Democracy does not depend only on the arrangements of the political system, manner of voting, control, human rights etc. Democracy is based above all on trust in others and on the belief that persons who take decisions on our behalf do that on the basis of sensible opinions and judgements (Meier, 2000). When that trust is missing the democratic system starts to be failing. The same applies to the school. It is absolutely essential to build trust and the sense of security in schools.

Education is about opening eyes and seeing for yourselves the world as it really is in all its complexity and then finding the “tools” and the strength to participate fully, even to change some of what you find (Ayers, 2000). Education is the process of releasing your potential, imagination, joy, energy; it is a process of releasing people, which will never be fair if it involves only a part of society. If we
dare say that teaching needs to ensure security, full involvement and the sense of identity among students, and when we agree that learning is a process of taking responsibility, then we also have to agree that it should involve everyone.

Nothing should restrain us from introducing changes that could make the teaching process an authentic and democratic dialogue between students and their teachers. The school that cultivates the dialogue is an alternative to the present educational system basically oriented towards systematic and reproductive collection of data. A dialogue in education is a sort of relation between persons who talk to each other. It is impossible to occur in a situation when there is one-way communication only. It is impossible to occur when we always try to avoid ambiguity either.

Development and change are difficult to design and to implement. Unfortunately, very often those who are responsible for implementing new reforms do not remember that every change is not only a structural or procedural intervention, but mainly a cultural one. Expecting immediate results and expressing frustration is a sign of lack of understanding of social processes. Every suggestion for change needs to take under consideration the level of awareness and preparation, the culture, the level of understanding of the system and also civil maturity, expectations, mental models, ambitions, infrastructure, finance and cultural software deciding about the style of interactions, hierarchy of values and customs in a particular environment.

**Educational leadership and cooperation**

When we talk about educational leadership today two main aspects are especially important. First is concentrating leaders’ efforts on learning, designing and creating learning situations and conditions (Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2005; Hattie, 2011). The second one is connected to teamwork, participation and cooperation in the decision making process.

We will focus here on the second aspect. People need each other. We are a part of the living ecosystem and life is a complex phenomenon. People are not able to exist individually; we always build a network of dependency. The dynamics of the human race development are not linear and depend on our abilities and are a result of the game that is influenced by external conditions.

Nowadays, we are facing the threat of the end of economic growth, as we understand it today, mainly because of the burden of knowledge. Paradoxically, the more we know as a human kind the harder it is to access that knowledge; the more we need to use that knowledge the less we are able to reach information that we want. What we need the most is to cooperate with those who know other things that we know. We will not solve the problems of overpopulation, global warming, aging, diseases, scarcity of resources and water without cooperation.

Sennet (2013) divides cooperation into two kinds: cooperation of everyone with everyone, which he calls „difficult cooperation,” and cooperation within a group – „tribal cooperation” when we cooperate with people who are similar to us, but against others. We show sol-
Idarity to “ours” and hostility to “oth-
ers.” The tribe is necessary to survive but in societies that type of relations may lead to disastrous outcomes. Aristotel
called that the state is a commu-
nity of people with origins from differ-
ent family tribes. The state contains not
only more people but also people who are
different because the state cannot arise
from identical people (Sennet, 2013).

Cooperation takes many forms, some-
times cooperation is inevitably connect-
ed to competition, like in the market,
in politics or diplomatic negotiations;
sometimes cooperation is an autotelic
value like in religious or secular ritu-
als; sometimes, cooperative exchange
may lead to negative outcomes for oth-
ers, like in agreements between banks.

It would be very healthy for socie-
ties if we were able to decrease harm-
ful, “tribal” cooperation where “we”
cooperate against “you.” The difficul-
ty, as Sennet calls it, is that cooperation
demands competencies (in the meaning
of abilities to do something with high
quality). In this case, he means social
and dialogical competencies, which
are visible in good listening, appropri-
ate behavior, finding common points in
different standpoints, conflict manage-
ment, avoiding frustration when discus-
sion becomes difficult (Sennet, 2013).

The main challenge lies in the abili-
ty to interact with other people on their
conditions. It is openness as an ethical
attitude that decides about that interac-
tion and also openness as a very practi-
cal activity. Cooperation is hard work,
and demands interaction with people
who are different from us; it has always
been a rare and difficult skill to acquire.

Additionally, cooperation is harder be-
cause of inequalities (which globally have
increased in the 21st century) because of
changes in the labor market, structure of
modern organizations where people work
in isolation from each other, changes in
common working times (decreased by
short contracts), superficial relations,
and constant desire to reduce uncertainty.
We are not prepared for the difficulty of
cooperating and we need to understand
that useful balance between cooperation
and competition in different areas of life
(from business to entertainment) cannot
be reached without serious efforts (Sen-
ett, 2013). However, we have no choice –
in order to live, people have to act to-
gether. Together we create reality through
interactions, communication acts, work,
thinking and reflection. Nobody would
be a human being without other hu-
mans. Organizations are outcomes of
social perceptions and contexts. Cooper-
ation is our fate and we need to learn it

Formal educational system for years
had to prepare people to be part of the so-
ciety so that they would not be a burden
as adults for that society but would serve
it when needed (as workers, soldiers,
citizens). Today the aims of education
are diverse and contextualized, and also
more individualized. Education today
is often understood as a process of em-
powerment, developmental, inspirational
and encouraging to ambitious inquiries
that lead to freedom and change, both
individual and social. Could we learn to
cooperate? Could we learn it in school?

The public school is one of a few pub-
lic institutions that still exist and have a
strong influence on societies (although
the risk of its disappearance is quite prob-
able). If we require a difficult task from a school, we should also provide support. Among the possible support tools are well-prepared, aware, professional leaders. How are educational leaders able to influence the process of learning cooperation? We investigated the mental models and opinions of Polish headmasters in this matter, on the assumption that what they believe will allow us to predict potential success or failure in the process of improving cooperation on two levels: school organization and students’ skills.

**Table 1. Structure of research group (1st stage).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>2214</td>
<td>78,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>21,7</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 36</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40 years</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>6,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45 years</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>17,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50 years</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>29,7</td>
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<td>1190</td>
<td>42,2</td>
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<tr>
<td>more than 60 years</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3,4</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience as head teach</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 5 years</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>26,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>31,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>23,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 15 years</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>19,7</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the village</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>43,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the city below 25 000</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>18,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the city between 25 000 and 100 000</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>16,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the city over 100 000</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>21,9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** own research

**Methodology**

In order to answer the question about the ability of school leaders to support constructing the cooperative organization cultures and the processes of developing the skill of cooperation, we stated two research questions:

1) to what extent do school principals share the conviction that their personal skills of supporting cooperation in the educational context are important for school functioning?
2) to what extent do school principals believe they personally have developed these skills?

Data used for analyzing principals’ opinions about cooperation were collected as part of a wider investigation for a project aimed at reforming school leaders’ preparation and development in Poland. In the first stage of our research more than 2800 school principals (11% of the total number of principals in Poland) answered the questionnaire (CAWI) focusing on the importance and possession of selected competencies.

A questionnaire asking about head teachers’ assessment of competencies was based on the analysis of lists of competencies taken from the vast leadership literature. The whole questionnaire consisted of 86 different questions grouped into six broader areas of competencies (Educational leadership, Management of learning, Educational policy, Management of people in organization, Strategic management in the context of social, legal and economic challenges and Self-manage-

Table 2. Structure of research group (2nd stage).

<table>
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<td>132</td>
<td>77,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22,8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50 years</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 years</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>32,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 60 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience as head teach</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 5 years</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 15 years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kindergarten</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>primary school</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>37,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high school</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary school</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocational school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other schools</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no data</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own research
ment of the professional development).

Head teachers taking part in the study were asked to assess the importance of each competency for school functioning and the level of acquisition of the particular competency. The structure of research group from the first stage of research (quantitative) is presented the table below.

The second stage of the research (qualitative) comprised in-depth interviews (IDI) with 200 respondents selected randomly from among the participants of the first stage. The sample was stratified by the duration of a respondent’s tenure as head teacher, the type of a community in which a school is located and a respondent’s gender.

The assumption of this second stage of research was to find out the understanding of chosen competencies and check how these competencies are applied in practice (all respondents had a right to discuss competency of their choice). At the end 171 interviews were analyzed.

The structure of research group from the second stage of research (quantitative) is presented below.

For this paper, only these competencies connected to cooperation were selected:

1. Understanding the importance of cooperation (by leaders),
2. Creating opportunities for everyone to join cooperation (by leaders within institution),
3. Cooperation with the various stakeholders of the school (students, parents, authorities),
4. Inspiring and organizing cooperation with local environment (citizens, neighborhood),
5. Selecting methods and forms of cooperation on the basis of the context (adaptability to the group and aims),
6. Organizing the schoolwork with other external organizations (supporting and not supporting education like professional development centers, libraries, companies, offices, etc.),
7. Organizing own development through cooperation with other leaders,
8. Awareness of own predispositions and choices (related to cooperation).

Findings: working without precise target

It needs to be stressed that we were aware that the main source of information were “only” personal opinions, understandings and approaches to the issues of our interest. It is a quite typical dilemma for the majority of social science research that interpretation is always a struggle with questions about what is real and what is not real, what is objective and what is not. While following the constructivist paradigm (Berger & Luckmann, 2010) in looking at social reality, as in this paper, we accept that everything that people believe in is real. Our convictions and individual theories are materials used for building social reality through the multiple processes of interaction, so every opinion shared by the respondents is, in a certain way, objective or at least we treat it as objective.

It was possible to find out some patterns in principals’ answers to specific questions about competencies connected to cooperation:

- Gender was the variable radically impacting answers: competencies connected to cooperation were more important for women than men.
- The main variable affecting answers in four of the eight competencies was geographical location of the school: competencies connected to cooperation were more important for principals from bigger towns and cities, less important from villages (only organizing the cooperation with the local environment was more important for those from villages).
- Age impacted answers in the case only of two competencies (of eight).

In general, as to the level of importance, gender and school location were important and as to the level of acquisition experience, age and school location were important.

When asked about acquisition of the competencies assumed to be important for cooperation, more than 80% of principals agreed that they would be able to use these competencies (besides organizing their own development). It was also possible to find variables that impacted principals’ answers in the second category – the level of acquisition of the competencies connected to cooperation:
- The strongest variable in the case of acquisition of competency was work experience (five of eight competencies were impacted): together with experience, the number of principals declaring the acquisition of these competencies increased
- Second variable was the geographical location of school (four of eight competencies were impacted): those from big cities declared having the competencies more often than those from villages.
- Age and gender were also important variables: in a case of age only, the acquisition of three competences were connected to the variable; for gender only one competency: females declared higher competency than men in organizing cooperation with external agencies.

General findings from the quantitative data were that: principals believe that “everything is important.” Both, when we look at all 86 competencies included in the survey and when we analyze only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differentiating variables</th>
<th>Relevance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authentic leadership</td>
<td>8 of 8 competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School location</td>
<td>4 of 8 competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2 of 8 competences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differentiating variables</th>
<th>Acquisition level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>5 of 8 competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School location</td>
<td>4 of 8 competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>3 of 8 competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1 of 8 competences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** own research
Figure 1. Opinions of school principals about importance of competency

The importance of the selected competencies in principals’ opinions (%) (n=2824)

- Awareness of own predispositions and choices (related to...)
  - Very significant: 63.2%
  - Rather significant: 58.5%
  - It is hard to say: 34.4%
  - Rather insignificant: 40.7%
  - Completely insignificant: 31%

- Organizing own development through cooperation with other...
  - Very significant: 58.5%
  - Rather significant: 62.8%
  - It is hard to say: 34.4%
  - Rather insignificant: 40.7%
  - Completely insignificant: 31%

- Organizing the school work with other external organizations
  - Very significant: 53.6%
  - Rather significant: 62.3%
  - It is hard to say: 40.7%
  - Rather insignificant: 40.7%
  - Completely insignificant: 31%

- Selecting methods and forms of cooperation on the basis of...
  - Very significant: 62.8%
  - Rather significant: 62.4%
  - It is hard to say: 34.1%
  - Rather insignificant: 28.3%
  - Completely insignificant: 25.3%

- Inspiring and organizing cooperation with local environment
  - Very significant: 62.8%
  - Rather significant: 62.4%
  - It is hard to say: 34.1%
  - Rather insignificant: 28.3%
  - Completely insignificant: 25.3%

- Cooperation with the various stakeholders of the school
  - Very significant: 62.8%
  - Rather significant: 62.4%
  - It is hard to say: 34.1%
  - Rather insignificant: 28.3%
  - Completely insignificant: 25.3%

- Creating opportunities for everyone to join cooperation
  - Very significant: 62.8%
  - Rather significant: 62.4%
  - It is hard to say: 34.1%
  - Rather insignificant: 28.3%
  - Completely insignificant: 25.3%

- Understanding the importance of cooperation
  - Very significant: 70.5%
  - Rather significant: 68%
  - It is hard to say: 34.1%
  - Rather insignificant: 28.3%
  - Completely insignificant: 25.3%

Source: own research
Figure 2. Acquisition of competencies

Possession of the selected competencies in principals' opinion (%) (n=2824)

- Awareness of own predispositions and choices (related to cooperation)
  - I have sufficient knowledge and skills and I use this competency in my work: 4,5
  - there occur some difficulties with the application of this competency, but if it becomes necessary, I can use it: 10,1
  - it is hard to say/ I have not thought about it: 38,3
  - I do not have this competency/ I know the components of this competency: 47,2

- Organizing own development through cooperation with other leaders
  - I have sufficient knowledge and skills and I use this competency in my work: 7,4
  - there occur some difficulties with the application of this competency, but if it becomes necessary, I can use it: 13,9
  - it is hard to say/ I have not thought about it: 28,4
  - I do not have this competency/ I know the components of this competency: 40,3

- Organizing the school work with other external organizations
  - I have sufficient knowledge and skills and I use this competency in my work: 1,6
  - there occur some difficulties with the application of this competency, but if it becomes necessary, I can use it: 6,4
  - it is hard to say/ I have not thought about it: 33,8
  - I do not have this competency/ I know the components of this competency: 54,6

- Selecting methods and forms of cooperation on the basis of the context
  - I have sufficient knowledge and skills and I use this competency in my work: 7,1
  - there occur some difficulties with the application of this competency, but if it becomes necessary, I can use it: 11,6
  - it is hard to say/ I have not thought about it: 32,3
  - I do not have this competency/ I know the components of this competency: 48,9

- Inspiring and organizing cooperation with local environment
  - I have sufficient knowledge and skills and I use this competency in my work: 5,1
  - there occur some difficulties with the application of this competency, but if it becomes necessary, I can use it: 18,6
  - it is hard to say/ I have not thought about it: 41,2
  - I do not have this competency/ I know the components of this competency: 45,1

- Cooperation with the various stakeholders of the school
  - I have sufficient knowledge and skills and I use this competency in my work: 4,8
  - there occur some difficulties with the application of this competency, but if it becomes necessary, I can use it: 6,9
  - it is hard to say/ I have not thought about it: 40,6
  - I do not have this competency/ I know the components of this competency: 47,7

- Creating opportunities for everyone to join cooperation
  - I have sufficient knowledge and skills and I use this competency in my work: 1,1
  - there occur some difficulties with the application of this competency, but if it becomes necessary, I can use it: 9,1
  - it is hard to say/ I have not thought about it: 42,3
  - I do not have this competency/ I know the components of this competency: 55

Source: own research
these competencies connected to cooperation, these competencies seem to be very important for school principals. In the case of competencies connected to cooperation, more than 90% of principals declared that all are very important. It would be great if we accept the result as a picture of their mental models, however that conclusion is controversial when one considers all competences – there are almost no differences (or very few) between different kinds of competences. That result did not allow us to create a hierarchical list of the importance of competencies or decide what is or should be prioritized in leaders’ work. One of the possible explanations for this is the lack of a defined principals’ role, lack of established priorities, and overall lack of public discourse about priorities in leaders’ work. This is the situation of Polish school principals – loneliness and separation, lack of a supportive network or supportive agencies.

From the results of the survey, it is also possible to say that the importance of a competency was assessed higher than the level of acquisition of it in every case (although principals were still claiming that they have all these competencies). When we think about possible explanations for principals claiming in huge majority that they have all competencies, the principals’ fear comes to mind. Perhaps people are not able to admit that they are not able to do something, are not secure, need to prove something, or are afraid of unjust assessment. We believe that this situation that Polish school principals find themselves in has impacted the general results of the survey. Principals work under social pressure, facing difficulties to fulfill expectations and demands. Polish school principals feel that it is not appropriate to admit they have any deficits or need help in any area.

To understand the importance and level of acquiring a particular competency, the qualitative individual interviews were conducted. Principals were free to nominate their strongest and weakest competency and talk about them. In general, choices were scattered among multiple competencies and it was difficult to identify consistent strong and weak competencies. Very rarely did more than 17 respondents (of 171) hold the same opinion, and the majority of strengths and weaknesses were typically shared by fewer than 10% of principals.

During the interviews, 14 principals decided that understanding the importance of cooperation for effective organization was their strength and also stated that it is important for school operation. Cooperation was understood as conducting common activities with teaching staff, parents, students and environment. One of the respondents said: *When we are aware that everything what happens here is our common effort it becomes obvious that it is our destiny to cooperate.*

In practice, the understood meaning of cooperation is visible in involving teachers in different school duties and creating task teams: *I use deputy principals as support in working with different teams.* Principals claimed that this competency results in meetings with parents and students and also with local environment representatives. Those 14 principals believed that the meaning of this competency is clearer for more experienced leaders.

Creating conditions allowing everyone involved in the teaching and learn-
ing process, as well as parents and other stakeholders, to join the cooperation was selected as a competency by 11 principals interviewed. Eight of them thought it was their strength and three said that it was their weakness. Nine thought it an important competency. The word “condition” was understood in different ways – from climate to money. Principals mentioned that in practice they see an urgent necessity for motivation. They also slightly changed a meaning of the sentence – from creating conditions – open space, to almost ordering people to be involved: I organized a festival and allowed every teacher to join with his/her class or it is important because it decreases the amount of work on principal’s side. They saw a significant resistance against cooperation and team projects. Those who said that this competency is their weakness claimed that they still do not know their school.

Cooperation with different stakeholders and partners for supporting students’ development was selected by 24 of the participating principals. Twenty-two of them said it is their strength, making it one of the most common strengths and two mentioned it as a weakness. Eighteen of the 24 declared it as an important competency for school functioning.

Respondents understood cooperation as inviting different stakeholders to different activities but they admitted that cooperation with stakeholders and external partners for students’ development is usually difficult to achieve: Yes, it looks like... different institutions... Principal has to cooperate... So, they see value in organizing common initiatives, but have problems with detailed explanations and examples – the difficult part is: support of students’ development. More easily, they gave examples of initiatives serving integration with the community, believing that this is also beneficial for student development: We organize together with local community for example Seniors’ Day, Christmas etc.

Cooperation with the external world is important for creating a public image – a school has to care about its image in the local community, and a network also provides a feeling of security: I believe it is important to create a positive climate around the school (...) so later it is possible to ask for help when needed. It is understood mainly as short-term cooperation about a specific issue or project, which sometimes may transform in something bigger.

The competency named: “inspiring and organizing cooperation within local environment” was selected by 14 principals interviewed. Twelve said it is their strength and 11 said it is important. Principals assumed that the most important element of that competency is building a network of support and sustainable cooperation: I would like to connect different institutions in order to solve our problems. Respondents were sure that cross-institutional support enriches the school’s educational offerings.

Organizing cooperation among different external institutions was found as their strength by 10 principals and by one as weakness. They claimed it was connected to school’s important task, especially in rural areas: In such a small village we need to help students to integrate with external world – this was an opinion of one of respondents. Another said: sooner we start it, sooner stu-
Figure 3. Selected strengths and weaknesses

The number of choices of the competencies related to cooperation - the respondents' opinions of their strengths and weaknesses (n=171)

Inspiring and organizing cooperation within local environment
Organize your own development through cooperation with other educational leaders
Organizing cooperation between different institutions
Cooperation with the various stakeholders of the school
Creating opportunities for everyone to join cooperation
Understanding the importance of cooperation

Source: own research
students will benefit from it, it is important for students to be able to participate in different initiatives, visits, workshops.

Again it was noticed that external cooperation would positively impact the image of school. Principals believe it is about presenting an open attitude towards the environment because it allows going into the environment and creating ties, and is also about exchange: I always say it is fifty-fifty: we will give something away it will be easier to get something from others. They also reported negative aspects: it should not be based on papers, that I will receive letter and I will respond, this is not cooperation, but they do not have time to establish more serious cooperation. Principals also see the necessity for being active in this relationship: I am here to be inside community, to talk to them. Many want to work on this competency further.

For the largest number of school principals, their weakest competency was building a network for support of personal development. Fourteen principals told us they are not using cooperation with other leaders for their improvement but nine of them believed it was an important competency. They also understood “other leaders” not only as school principals but expressed a need to network with local authorities. Respondents stressed the difficulties coming from lack of time, money and skills, lack of opportunities and cooperation. They talked about lack of trust among schools and principals because of the completion, unequal relations and cheating. As one principal stated: every school is struggling to survive individually and I feel internal resistance when I am supposed to ask anyone for help. They declared that any kind of professional networks or teams supporting principals’ work would be very beneficial and is necessary.

**Conclusion: uncertain professionals**

We need cooperation on at least two levels: organizational and societal. It is expected that schools will not only use cooperation for improvement but also to prepare people for further cooperation. It is leaders’ obligation to support a cooperative culture and values because strong and positive school culture serves several beneficial functions: fostering effort and productivity, improving collegial and collaborative activities, supporting successful change and improvement efforts, building commitments, amplifying energy and motivation focusing attention on what is important (Fischer, Frey & Pumpian, 2012).

Educational leaders need a well-articulated knowledge base, which is a prerequisite for developing expertise in a systemic way within any domain. Education has experienced a significant growth in its knowledge base, particularly regarding effective pedagogy but also motivation and cooperative learning. Increasing students’ engagement and establishing and maintaining effective relationship with students are the keystones of teaching, which is difficult to achieve without collegiality and a positive environment (Marzano, Frontier & Livingston, 2011).

In order to be able to develop the knowledge base needed for competencies connected with leadership, Polish school principals also need appropriate attitudes towards cooperation. What
we know from our research is that respondents understand the necessity of cooperation and that a significant majority of them declared that these competencies are important for school functioning and also are important for them as individual leaders – they declared that they possess these competencies.

We also may state that more female principals are aware of the importance of cooperation than male principals. We also know that school principals from big cities more often admit that competencies connected with cooperation are important for school functioning and that they have these competencies than it is the case of principals from smaller towns and villages. Although experienced principals declared the acquisition of mentioned competencies more often than these with shorter experience in leader position, during the interviews it appeared that it is difficult to show any pattern in selection of the strongest and the weakest competencies.

To summarize we may conclude that on the surface, principals are aware of the meaning of cooperation, however their enthusiasm seems a little bit superficial. We suggest this it is a result of their uncertainty or even fear of public scrutiny. They need support and acceptance so that they would be able to focus more on co-workers with empathy, curiosity towards others and dialogical approach that allows openness and freedom.
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Abstract

This study aims at determining the views of school administrators concerning theory-practice relations. This is a qualitative research with a phenomenological design. Ten participants were chosen through homogeneous sampling technique. A semi-structured interview form was used for collecting data. Descriptive and frequency techniques were used for data analyses. Results show that administrators try to benefit from theories in their daily practices despite all the disadvantages of a very centralized system in Turkey. Administrators mostly complain about frequent system changes generated by the political interferences and superiors’ distance from theory due to their lack of knowledge. Main implications of this study include contribution of theoretical knowledge to the practice at both top and local administrative level and the clear need for bridging theory and practice in Turkish education system.

Keywords: school administrator; theory-practice relation; phenomenological design; qualitative research

Introduction

As a term, theory can be defined in various ways. According to Bursalioğlu (2003), “theory is the most reliable tool that leads us to reality … successful administrators act in accordance with the theory deliberately or not, and try to ben-

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1 This paper was presented in ENIRDELM 2013 Conference held in Portoroz, Slovenia.
efit from it” (Bursalıoğlu, 2003, p. 95). Bacharach (1989) defines theory as “a statement of relations among concepts within a set of boundary assumptions and constraints” (Bacharach, 1989, p. 496). Theory is seen by researchers as the bedrock of the scientific research used to answer relevant questions for the benefit of mankind (Schneberger, Pollard, and Watson, 2009). According to Hall and Lindzey (1957), “theories function to prevent people from being confused by the full-blown complexity of natural or concrete events” (as cited in Bacharach, 1989, p. 496). Schneberger et al. (2009) claim theories have a vital role in scientific research to answer practical questions. They consider some theories to be better suited for specific applications or situations due to differences in their general characteristics. Walker (1965) asserts that “the real distinction lies not between theory and practice, but between good theory and bad theory. Good theory … has potential for explaining and predicting events …” (Walker, 1965, p. 18).

According to Gunter (2004), “theory is metaphor and metaphor is theory” (Gunter, 2004, p.31). This viewpoint resembles Mullen, Greenlee, and Bruner’s (2005) study where educational leadership students explored theory-practice relationship through Mullen’s binocular/integration metaphor and Schön’s architect/builder metaphor. In their study, some metaphors developed by students were clothes closet, ocean beach, prism, mountain climbing, and journey. Bush (2010) views that theory and practice are separate aspects of leadership and management, that practitioners shun using theories because they view them as being remote from real school situations. Baldridge et al. (2004) tie academic quality and practical relevance to the question “Are managers from Mars and academicians from Venus?” and they conclude that the managers and academicians hold very different worldviews. On the other hand, Ginsburg and Gorostiaga (2006) tend to reject this dichotomy stating that theorists and practitioners cannot be thought separately and that they are not homogeneous even within themselves. Hoy and Miskel (1987) suggest that theory and practice are directly connected in three ways: first, theory provides a frame of reference for practitioners; second, theory usage offers a general mode of analysis for practical events; and third, theory ultimately provides the knowledge base for practical and rational decision making.

The literature shows an ongoing sense of concern regarding the gap between theory and application (Mays, 2009). Meyer (2003) points out the discussion in the literature that the field of educational administration has paid insufficient attention to the knowledge and skills required of leaders for their jobs. There is a fundamental gap between science and action in professional academic programs preparing people for organizational leadership positions and especially in the 1990s, the balance of theory and practice has tilted too much towards theory, espe-
cially towards the wrong kinds of theory (Meyer, 2003). Similarly, Duhamel (1982) points out school administrators’ complaints that theory is an academic pursuit with little or no relevance for their daily activities while academics and theorists charge that practicing administrators mostly make no effort to understand and apply organizational theory.

The gap between theory and practice has been examined in three ways. One is a knowledge transfer problem, another is distinct kinds of knowledge that theory and practice represent, and the third is viewed a knowledge production problem (Van de Ven and Johnson, 2006). To deal with this challenge, Cummings (2007) proposes research-based knowledge to be relevant and useful for the success of management profession. This could be achieved when academics as the professional embodiment of the field are engaged with the real world. Van de Ven and Johnson (2006), too, propose “a method of engaged scholarship for addressing the knowledge production problem, arguing that engaged scholarship not only enhances the relevance of research for practice but also contributes significantly to advancing research knowledge in a given domain” (Van de Ven and Johnson, 2006, p. 802). On the contrary, Perriton and Hodgson (2013) believe that “recent theoretical shifts in management learning have emphasized the relational, site and context specific conception of knowledge and practice and engaged with individuals, (whatever their role) in exploring how they come to experience and develop new ways of being and acting in the world” (Perriton and Hodgson, 2013, p. 144).

“Preparing thoughtful practitioners requires moving away from the apparent dichotomy of theory and practice and moving toward the synergistic combination of the two. Thoughtful practice is informed by the complements of theory and practice” (Mays, 2009, p. 1). Sherman suggests a partnership between universities and districts and equal attention to theory and practice to prepare a new generation of transformational school leaders (as cited in Cunningham & Sherman, 2008). Vanderlinde and Braak (2010) conducted a study with teachers, school leaders, researchers, intermediaries and educational research professors. They found that the gap between educational research and practice should be approached as a complex and differentiated phenomenon and all participants perceive the need for more cooperation between researchers and practitioners. Bush (2009) suggests that the development of effective leaders in education not be left to chance and be a deliberate process designed to produce the best possible leadership for both schools and colleges. This requires preparation of leaders not only through theoretical but also practical education. This could be achieved, as stated by Bush et al., by bridging the work situation and learning situation required for the most successful learning experiences (as cited in Bush, 2009).

In this context, different approaches
and suggestions for bridging theory-practice are found in the literature. For instance, Mays’ (2009) research highlights significant theory-application relationships of undergraduate management education. In order to prepare students for the world outside school, Mays suggests providing a link, building a bridge, or making a connection. Lesser and Cooper (2006) developed a model with five components - the practice class as laboratory, the integrative journal, clinical supervision, the clinical agenda, and faculty field advisement - to help graduate students master the skill of integrating theory and practice. They found that the model was versatile in its application and relevant to a variety of social work curricula at not only graduate but also undergraduate level.

In Australia, many universities prioritize the incorporation of work-based, experiential learning opportunities into undergraduate programs. The University of Newcastle initiated a study integrating business curriculum and business world through a course designed to bridge the theory-practice gap (Yap, 2012). Similarly, a scenario-based project with criminal justice students conducted by Bulen (2010) brought out that participants perceived the project to be of great help to bridge the gap between the theory learned in the classroom and the simulation of the real situation. Stating there are attempts to bridge the theory and practice in Singapore, Hean and Tin (2008) indicate the need for competent senior faculty staff in conceptualization and implementation to develop school leadership programs. Furthermore, Bevins and Price (2014) see collaboration a realistic opportunity for reducing the gap between theory and practice, in the form of either joint research or continuing professional development.

**Turkish Context**

The Turkish educational system has a centralized governance structure. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is responsible for education system. MoNE is represented in eighty-one provinces of Turkey all of which have their own district level directorates in order to support the implementation of education policy. Turkey’s highly centralized system and bureaucratic structure limit the capacity of schools to address their challenges (OECD, 2013).

School administrators in general are thought to have limited theoretical background in Turkey. According to Şimşek (1997), universities do not assume responsibility of training and educating administrators because national education organization has a tradition of “training administrators through apprenticeship”. For this reason, theory and practice in education remain two fully separated domains (Şimşek, 1997). However, most universities offer graduate programs in the field of educational administration. Courses in this field focus more on theoretical knowledge rather than actual school practices. As Şimşek (1997) states, a large majority of academics working in the field of education develop only theoretical suggestions which are far from the real school problems because, in most cases, academics lack the knowledge of
practices at schools. As a result of this, MoNE makes its own decisions without seeking any academic perspective.

MoNE does not require a graduate degree in the field of educational administration from candidates before they are assigned to an administrative position. All candidates regardless of the educational degree or experience are evaluated through an oral examination. A committee assigned by the provincial directorate of national education from among local administrators conducts the oral examination. Current administrators before reassignment are also subjected to a set of criteria determined by MoNE. An assessment sheet is filled by ten people representing administrators, teachers, parents, and students. According to the related regulations, the evaluation sheet lists criteria which could be objectively measured. Some examples include personal traits and management roles such as “the ability to make urgent decisions by taking initiative in problem-solving”, “having research publications in the field of educational administration and supervision”, and “announcing evaluation and performance criteria, procedures and rules to all staff”. However, majority of the criteria is difficult to measure objectively such as “awareness, understanding and respecting of others’ differences and preferences”, supporting and modeling students to develop national and universal values”, “acting fairly in administrative issues and increasing employee’s morale”, “using and encouraging an administrative approach which is both participative and open to criticism, creating an emotional impact based on trust at school”, and “identifying and guiding when the employees do not perform effectively, taking measures and initiating necessary procedures”. It is clear in these sample statements that some items include more than one criterion. This might make the measurement difficult and confusing.

As for the oral exam, this includes to evaluate candidate’s knowledge on legislation, capacity for representation and level of qualification, capacity of reasoning and level of comprehension, communication skills, self-confidence and ability of persuasion. Oral examination committee consists of five local administrators determined by the provincial director of national education. Both methods of selecting future administrators are seriously criticized by teacher unions and academicians for being open to subjectivity and favoritism.

Starting with the selection and assignment of administrators, there seems a lack of theoretical approach in Turkish educational system at both central and local level practices. This situation leaded the researchers to get in-depth understanding of administrators with knowledge of theory. The underlying belief was that they could be able to view the organizational policies and implementations in school administration in Turkey from the window of theory.

This study aims at determining school administrators’ views on theory-practice relations. In the light of this aim, the research problem is determined as “How do educational administrators see the relations between theory and practice?”
Method

This is a qualitative research with a phenomenological design. In phenomenological research methods, according to Moustakas (1994), “the researcher describes the structure of the experience based on reflection and interpretation of the research participant’s story. The aim is to determine what the experience means for the people who have had the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 1). Creswell (2003) defines phenomenological research as “the researcher identifies the ‘essence’ of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 17). Interviews, discussions and participant observation are used to gather in-depth information and perceptions in human studies (Lester, 1999). This research aimed at gathering views, perceptions and experiences of school administrators on theory-practice relations through individual interviews.

Sampling

Homogeneous sampling, a technique in purposive sampling method, was used based on the criteria that all the participants had administrative experiences and had either completed or had been attending a graduate program in the field of educational administration and supervision. Creswell (2012) suggests that the researcher might select samples purposefully within certain sites or people possessing similar traits or characteristics in homogeneous sampling. Except one participant who worked in a non-formal education centre, nine participants worked in different types and levels of schools in Antalya, Turkey. Participants consist of four females and six males. Half of them specialize in classroom teaching while the rest are subject teachers. They have experience on average for 6.5 years in administrative position and for 14.5 years in teaching career. They have worked either as principal/director or vice principals.

Ethical Procedures

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study prior to the interviews. All participants were informed that the study would be conducted on a voluntary basis and their names would be kept confidential by using codes P1 through P10. A written permission form was signed by the participants for recording their voices and publishing the results.

Data Collection and Analyses

A semi-structured interview form was developed to collect the data. Interview form consists of ten following questions: (1) What is your definition of theory? (2) To what extend can theory be applied? (3) What experiences did you have during master’s education? (4) Which theories do you use more often in practice? (5) How does theoretical knowledge affect your practice? (6) What is the relationship between theory and practice? (7) Which problems do you encounter in administrative process while using theory? (8) What solutions do you develop for the problems you encounter? (9) What differences does graduate education make in an administrator’s behavior? (10) How
can the theory-practice bridge be built? Interviews were conducted in April and May 2013. The interviews lasted 45-60 minutes and were recorded via computer. After transcribing of interviews had been completed, the data were subjected to descriptive and frequency analyses. Based on ten interview questions, codes and sub-themes were identified under ten themes.

**Validity and Reliability Procedures**

Participants were interviewed at their work places when possible. Researchers had a chance to observe the participants in their actual environments as suggested by Kirk and Miller (as cited in Şimşek, 2013). Participants were asked to confirm the transcripts after the completion of decoding. Later, two researchers separately coded data and checked the codes together. Thus, analyst triangulation was applied as suggested by Patton (1999) for verification and validation of qualitative analysis. Lastly, two Ph.D. students in the field of educational administration were asked independently to match the codes defined by the researchers with the related response segment within the transcribed text of one interviewee. Cohen’s kappa coefficient (.886; p<.001) was calculated after pairing procedures. This kappa value is accepted as almost perfect agreement by Landis and Koch and as excellent by Fleiss (Cohen’s kappa, n.d.).

**Results**

Findings obtained from this study were organized and presented within ten themes. Findings from eight themes were presented in tables with frequencies and percentages. The numbers in frequencies exceed the number of participants because some participants stated more than one opinion in the same topic. The other two themes were given in text with direct quotations.

**Definition of Theory**

Ten participants defined “theory” in their own words (translated by the researchers). Their definitions are given below:

- An abstract knowledge formed scientifically and methodologically and through observations to explain a phenomenon or a situation (P1-male)
- Something that is criticized and debated in terms of its applicability (P2-male)
- Set of intertwined concepts (P3-male)
- Ideas and concepts put forward as result of scientific research (P4-female)
- A viewpoint including reliance, communication and frankness in order to make people work (P5-female)
- Facts that are put forward by scientists as result of experiments (P6-male)
- All the tools used in organizational management (P7-female)
- A tool for generalizing current practices to the related field after scientific research are conducted (P8-male)
- A way demonstrating how to behave as administrators (P9-female)
- A concept that is not sufficient by itself since it is limited to a particular point of view (P10-male)
As seen in the definitions, participants understanding of theory differed. Four participants (P1, P4, P6, and P8) focused on the scientific side of theory emphasizing terms such as methodology, research, generalizing, and experiment. Other four participants (P2, P5, P7, and P9) viewed theory as the base for practice in management process. P3 approached theory in terms of connectedness in a set of concepts while P10 referred to the term’s insufficiency in embracing all kinds of viewpoints.

**Applicability of Theories**

Participants’ views on applicability of theories are divided into two sub-themes:

### Table 1. Participants’ views on applicability of theories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applicable</strong></td>
<td>Theories can be applied if they are selected in accordance with the situation and the person</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrators are able to benefit from theories to solve problems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some administrators act in accordance with theories without knowing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application of a theory depends on cohesive team members in the organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classical theories are more prevalent in practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A theory can be applied only when an administrator has internalized it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social exchange theory works well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inapplicable</strong></td>
<td>Administrators’ attempts to use theories are limited due to the lack of autonomy and centralized structure of the system</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theory do not correspond with the practice in real environment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theories are inadequate to identify administrator’s behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Since the administrators have limited knowledge of theories, they cannot use them in problem solving</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** own research
aplicable and inapplicable. Table 1 illustrates the codes and their frequencies in parentheses under each sub-theme. Administrators mostly (72%) agree that theories are applicable. The highest frequencies in the sub-theme “applicable” were obtained from the codes stating the compatibility of theory with the situation and the person followed by the views on theory being beneficial for solving prob-

Table 2. Experiences in graduate education process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive</strong></td>
<td>Transferring knowledge into practice</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approaching situations and people with an administrative perspective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inclination towards having an administrative position</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-contentment as an educated administrator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting social needs of the staff at school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More sensitivity to private lives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking pride of high expectations by superiors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Realizing the resemblance between theory and administrator’s behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative</strong></td>
<td>Being disturbed when an administrator reprimands subordinates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Witnessing teachers’ exploitation of the administrator’s humanistic approach</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Witnessing teachers’ disapproval of decisions dictated by the administrators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regretting previous mistakes as an administrator with no theoretical knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reacting to differences between theoretical knowledge and the practice at school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Witnessing that school quality management team’s efforts are disregarded</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being aware of the principal’s professional inadequacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criticizing the school administration unjustly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** own research
lems. Participants also stated that some administrators act in accordance with theories without knowing they do so. On the other hand, three participants view theories inapplicable, something that can be attributed to lack of autonomy and centralized structure of system. Two participants consider that theories are incapable of meeting the needs of real environment.

**Experiences in Graduate Education Process**

Participants’ experiences differed based on their position during graduate education. At the time they attended the graduate program, eight participants were full-time teachers, one participant was principal, and one was vice-principal. Participants’ experiences were discussed under two sub-themes: positive and negative. Table 2 illustrates the codes and their frequencies in parentheses under each sub-theme. Administrators’ experiences were mostly positive during their master’s education. Regarding positive experiences, the codes “transferring knowledge into practice” and “approaching situations and people with an administrative perspective” each have five frequencies. Each of the remaining codes of either positive or negative experiences has one frequency.

**Theories Used at Work**

Table 3 illustrates which theories participants use in their administrative practices. As seen in the table, eight out of ten prefer contingency theory while only one participant makes a mention of motivation theories.

**Effect of theoretical knowledge on practice**

The effect of theories on administrative behavior of participants is discussed within four sub-themes: self-actualization, communication, conflict manage-

---

**Table 3. Participants’ preferences of theories used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theories</th>
<th>P1-Male</th>
<th>P2-Male</th>
<th>P3-Male</th>
<th>P4-Male</th>
<th>P5-Female</th>
<th>P6-Male</th>
<th>P7-Female</th>
<th>P8-Female</th>
<th>P9-Female</th>
<th>P10-Male</th>
<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory X and Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Exchange</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** own research
ment, and decision making. As shown in Table 4, administrators express that their administrative behaviors are mostly affected in the areas of self-actualization and communication. They consider the effect of theories on their behavior as quite positive in all four sub-themes.

**Relationship between Theory and Practice**

The relationship between theory and practice was analyzed within five sub-themes. As illustrated in Table 5, the sub-themes “MoNE’s unscientific approach to decision-making process” and “administrators’ lack of theoretical knowledge” have the highest frequencies. The next

**Table 4.** The effect of theories on administrative behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-actualization</strong></td>
<td>More leadership less administration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justice and equality in administrative processes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater perspective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More positive and constructive behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internalized theoretical knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivating teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Using “I language”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calm and rational act</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive approach in human relations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exchange of knowledge and experience with veteran administrators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict management</strong></td>
<td>Utilizing theoretical knowledge in problem solving</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building a successful team</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision making</strong></td>
<td>Ensuring teacher involvement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: own research*
sub-theme with high frequency reads as “lack of autonomy due to centralized system”. Other sub-themes are the following: “use of metaphoric expressions and “political influences and pressures”. Among all the codes, “no scientific standpoint in decisions” and “using theory unconsciously and to the extent of their

Table 5. The relationship between theory and practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MoNE’s unscientific approach to decision-making process</td>
<td>No scientific standpoint in decisions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes not based on research results</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ignoring to benefit from both theory and practice in decision-making</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators’ lack of theoretical knowledge</td>
<td>Using theory unconsciously and to the extent of their knowledge</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Falling behind recent developments in the field</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using peers’ suggestions and regulations rather than theory when faced with problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refusing and ignoring the use of theory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of autonomy due to centralized system</td>
<td>Limiting school administrators’ theory usage by regulations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viewing principals those who follow only MoNE’s orders with limited leadership roles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practitioners’ limited participation in decision-making process</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The gap between local needs and theoretical knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of metaphoric expressions</td>
<td>Seeing the world through two lenses- theory and practice- of a binocular</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeing theory as basis for practice as constitution is basis for regulations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political influences and pressures</td>
<td>Obstacles created by politics for practitioners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Top administration’s unreal expectations on school strategic plans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** own research
Table 6. Problems encountered when using theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political interference in education</strong></td>
<td>Frequent system changes in MoNE invalidate strategic plans</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whenever a new minister is appointed, implementations at schools also change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political interventions might prevent the use of theory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems arising from superiors</strong></td>
<td>Traditional superiors tend to interfere with decisions at the teachers' committees</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superiors value experience more than theoretical knowledge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superiors fall short of motivating their subordinates</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superiors' negative attitudes demoralize employees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional superiors view those with master's degree to have unrealistic perspectives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems arising from employees</strong></td>
<td>Teachers tend to see duties imposed by changes and out of class activities as burden</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees unaware of theories cannot empathize with knowledgeable administrators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledgeable administrators encounter with resistance from teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees tend to exploit administrator’s humanistic approach</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem arising from parents</strong></td>
<td>Parents do not want frequent changes since they feel uncomfortable with new roles expected of them</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem arising from practices</strong></td>
<td>Theories’ promises might be incompatible to solve problems of education system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem arising from system</strong></td>
<td>Neither regulations nor theories are able to be fully implemented because the system lacks consistency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** own research
knowledge” were the two most repeated codes.

**Problems Encountered When Using Theory**

Problems encountered when using theory was analyzed within six sub-themes. As illustrated in Table 6, the sub-themes “political interference in education” and “problems arising from superiors” have the highest frequencies. The next frequency is obtained from the sub-theme “problems arising from the employees”. Other three sub-themes are related to problems arising from parents, practices, and system each with one frequency. The highest frequency was obtained from the code stated as “Frequent system changes in MoNE invalidate strategic plans”.

**Solutions for the Problems Encountered When Theory is Used**

Solutions offered by the participants for the problems they encounter when theory is used are listed based on the gender. Table 7 illustrates the codes obtained from males and females separately. Female administrators talked mostly about motivation, leadership, and empathy while their male counterparts mentioned communication, confidence, theory usage, and support. One male and one female administrator’s choice was discouraging such as quitting the administrative position or withdrawing from conflict.

| Table 7. Solutions for the problems encountered when theory is used |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| **Male**               | **Female**             |
| 1. Trying to come to an agreement with staff through knowledge | 1. Motivating employees through creating an award-winning team |
| 2. Trying to be more patient and energetic when encountered problems | 2. Improving employee’s success through leadership and sharing knowledge |
| 3. Providing the necessary conditions for the implementation of theory | 3. Motivating sub-ordinates through supporting their efforts |
| 4. Gaining people’s confidence by acting properly with respect to attributes of employee and the work environment | 4. Empathizing with employees when discussing issues |
| 5. Taking advantage of theory to behave differently with different people when a compromise is needed | 5. Withdrawing from conflict with superiors despite the fact that she herself is right |
| 6. Ensuring the support of both superiors and subordinates through good communication | |
| 7. Supporting and guiding continuous development efforts of employees | |
| 8. Quitting the administrative position fed up with the issues of system changes | |

**Source:** own research
Differences Graduate Education Makes in Administrator’s Behavior

As indicated earlier, all the participants of this study have a master’s degree in the field of educational administration and supervision. Eight participants indicated the difference between traditional administrators and themselves. Some examples of the statements in their own words (translated by the researchers) in regards to the differences are presented below:

Yes, there is difference. I think they realize that I made a difference with my educational background. (P2-male)

Certainly, there is difference. Things are getting done with no scientific data. First, our perspectives are quite different. Then, master’s education helped me figure out where I could use the theories and look at things more professionally. I always say to my staff. I learned this in graduate courses. I mean, the team spirit, motivating people to work. (P3-male)

We have more up to date knowledge. Our administrative approach is more scientific and more professional. I detected this difference during our meetings and conversations with others. However, there are colleagues who improved themselves over the years. There are exceptional people who indeed investigate and read publications in the field and try to materialize innovations. We cannot ignore this. (P4-female)

The difference is unbelievable. You can look at things with eagle eye and see things differently. You are able to comprehend what people are really saying. My colleague who also has a master’s degree shares a parallel viewpoint. (P5-female)

There is certainly a difference. You are able to communicate better with people with graduate education. I decided to be principal one day while I was working with this principal who was the best example of motivation breaker. (P6-male)

I am different in a way that I can identify which behavior is a reflection of which theory. I mean, I can make sense of what I observe. Others act instinctively based on their background and experiences. (P8-male)

Yes, there is difference. I trust people’s ideas, actions, and their ability to make decisions. I care about my staff. I mean, I value people working with me but others do not feel the same way, unfortunately. (P9-female)

It would have been a lot easier, if I wasn’t a knowledgeable and educated administrator.” (P10-male)

Two participants stated that it is also possible to meet administrators with no graduate education reading a lot and developing themselves on their own. Their statements are as follows:

It is very important to improve himself personally even for those with education. We automatically take a scientific way in solving problems without naming it similar to driving a car. Graduate education is not necessary. The success of a princi-
Table 8. Suggestions to build a bridge between theory and practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions to MoNE</td>
<td>Those with a master’s degree in educational administration should be preferred for administrative positions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s degree in the field of educational administration should be a criterion for administrative positions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous professional development of teachers and administrators should be provided</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Top administrators in MoNE should have knowledge and experience in the field of education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative assignments should be independent of political interventions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative positions should be rewarding for those with a master's degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational institutions should be given more autonomy.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for partnership between MoNE and universities</td>
<td>Cooperation and collaboration between MoNE and universities should be developed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate education should facilitate face to face interaction and integration with practice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctoral programs for practicing administrators should also be provided</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academicians should leave their ivory towers and be visible in schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academicians and practitioners should work in cooperation to in research projects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for local administrations</td>
<td>Academic and professional development of administrators and teachers should be supported.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Those who have theoretical knowledge should be encouraged to share their knowledge with colleagues.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newly appointed administrators should observe the current situation before making any changes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrators should try to involve all stakeholders in decision-making.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own research
pal could be determined by the training of his/her staff and the environment. (P1-male)

There is a difference. When we get together with colleagues who have master’s degree, I notice that we engage in in-depth conversations with broader perspective. However, some colleagues without a graduate degree are still able to renew and update their knowledge. They follow up the developments in education closely. We cannot just sit around without doing anything. We need to attend to the problems. (P7-female)

How to Build Theory-Practice Bridge?

Participants’ suggestions to build a bridge between theory and practice were analyzed within three sub-themes. As illustrated in Table 8, participants mostly made suggestions to MoNE, followed by suggestions for partnership between MoNE and universities. Thirdly, they made suggestions for local administrations. Among all the codes, the highest frequency was obtained from “Cooperation and collaboration between MoNE and universities should be developed”. The next high frequency codes are related to preferring those with master’s degree and setting the master’s degree as a criterion for administrative positions. Support for academic and professional development of administrators and teachers was suggested by eight participants.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results of the present study, participants’ definitions of theory seem to differ based on their experiences. Four participants emphasized scientific methods in the definition of theory while other four view the theory as the base for practice in management process. These views are consistent with the statement of Schneberger, et al. (2009) who emphasized both scientific and practical aspect of a theory. Two participants criticized theories in terms of non-applicability and insufficiency for being limited to a particular point of view. Bacharach (1989), in the same way, pointed out that many organizational behavior theories fail to accomplish the purpose of parsimoniously organizing and clearly communicating concepts.

Regarding applicability of theories, administrators had mostly positive views. Similarly, their experiences at work tended to be more positive in general. These results might be linked to their having a master’s degree in the field of educational administration and having conscious knowledge about theories. Because all the participants were working at schools as they attended a graduate study, they had the opportunity to transfer knowledge into their daily practices. Moreover, they were able to approach situations and people with an administrative perspective. However, some believed that theories fail to provide answers for practitioners to handle real life situations and identify administrator’s behavior.

Although all participants have learned about various theories as classified under three categories in the literature-classical theories, neoclassical theories and the latest theories- they only mentioned six neoclassical theories. Research participants seem to use the contingency theory to a
great degree. Considering the fact that new generation of administrators is relatively younger and more educated, it is striking to see them disregarding the latest and the newest theories and approaches. This might be attributed to the lack of authority they have in a heavily centralized system as well as their superiors’ lack of theoretical knowledge. Further, the low number of well-educated young administrators might feel lonely among others, under-appreciated by their colleagues and superiors, and unsupported for their efforts.

Administrators believe that theories affected their behavior in positive ways. From studying theories, participants in this study emphasized several personal and professional gains as self-actualization, positive communication, conflict management and decision making. Pointing at practitioners facing problems on a daily base, Schneberger et al. (2009) suggested they broaden their perspective through such activities as reading books and articles, attending conferences, and taking classes. Because all participants in this study had graduate degree, it is considered that they might have purposefully utilized theoretical knowledge to cope with daily problems as reflected in their behaviors.

As for the relationship between theory and practice, administrators pointed out that, in most situations, practice is negatively affected by top management’s lack of theoretical knowledge, disregarding scientific findings, lack of autonomy at local level, and political influences and pressures. Stating theory-practice relation in England as satisfactory, Gunter (2003) concluded that the reason behind this is a very close partnership between academic environment and practitioners. Contrary to the situation in England, the gap between theory and practice continues in Turkish system. Politics are known to play an extremely interfering role in Turkish educational system generally and in administrators’ behaviors specifically. When trying to work with theories as knowledgeable administrators, they mostly face problems with their superiors who might have been assigned through political preferences.

Majority of the participants believed that graduate degree makes a great deal of difference for successful school administrators. Two participants, on the other hand, indicated that having a graduate degree is not critical all the time if people keep learning and continually develop themselves. An intriguing come out from some of the participants was that as knowledgeable administrators they even experienced discouraging situations when they faced with certain problems. As one participant stated, education did not help to deal with issues and he ended up quitting his principalship position. Another one chose to withdraw from conflict situations with her superiors even when she thought she was completely right.

One crucial purpose of this study was to explore the ways to build a bridge between theory and practice from the knowledgeable and young administrators’ viewpoint. It is evidenced in the views of study participants that closing the gap between theory and practice is the mutual responsibility of MoNE and universities as well as local authorities. In a similar way, Ginsburg and Gorostiaga (2006) pointed out that more extensive
and effective communication between policy makers/practitioners and theorists/researchers are vital to make policy-practice and theory-research relevant.

Raelin (2007) concluded that there is a need to synthesize theory and practice in order to prepare thoughtful practitioners. More formal, collaborative, and long-term relationships between universities and school districts were suggested by Cunningham and Sherman (2008) to develop future leaders’ capacity for continuous educational improvement. This kind of cooperation between research and practice was also recommended by Vanderlinde and Braak (2010) through establishing ‘professional learning communities’ or promoting a ‘design-based research’ model. Cummings (2007) offered “a closer partnership between researchers and practitioners to produce knowledge that is both scientifically valid and practical” (Cummings, 2007, p. 355). Cummings also considered forging closer links between research and practice is a key part of mission and values.

Schneberger et al. (2009) suggested practitioners be proactive in understanding the scientific inquiry cycle by getting involved in academic courses, conferences, and publications. Findings of this study have parallels with the above-mentioned suggestions.

According to Schneberger et al. (2009) “practitioners may not call their presumptions about their environment ‘theories’, they serve the same purpose and resemblance to academic theories” (Schneberger, 2009, p. 59). Along these lines, Meyer (2003) claimed that vision, commitment, sense of identity, tolerance for ambiguity, and trust in problem solving skills were such traits which could not be necessarily acquired by academic knowledge. One participant in this study similarly indicated that some administrators with no graduate degree could still possess those traits despite the big difference education makes.

This study might pose some valuable implications for policy makers, academics, practicing and future educational administrators. One implication is that theoretical knowledge has a potential to contribute a great deal to an administrators’ approach to both educational policies at top and daily practices at the local level. This is evident in the study participants’ comments of how they benefitted from theory and how they had experiences of conflicts and dilemmas with their superiors or peers unaware of knowledge of theory. Another one signals a clear need for bridging theory and practice in Turkish system. This could be done through partnership between MoNE and universities in the form of either graduate/certification programs or intensive in-service training with academic credit.

This study has such limitations as the low number of participants, purposefully chosen administrators with graduate education, using only face to face interviews with the determined set of questions, and the views and experiences of participating administrators. Notwithstanding the limitations, it can be concluded that top-down administrators in Turkey can make rewarding differences in educational system through theoretical knowledge. Future researchers could be interested in conducting studies with a focus on policy makers, district administrators, traditional school administrators without theoret-
ical knowledge, and academics of education faculties.

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The volume edited by Gerry Mac Ruaird, Eli Ottesen and Robin Precey aims to contextualize the definitions and operationalizations of inclusive education, with contributions originating in the national contexts of Ireland, Norway, England, Poland and Spain. The editors set out to analyze and challenge the implications of how inclusion is conceptualized and practiced for educational leadership. In contrast to previous comparative writing on inclusive education policies and practices, this volume steers clear of reducing the aims comparative analysis to seeking “transferrable solutions.” Instead, the authors of the sixteen chapters provide insight on the highly diverse – and frequently contested – meanings of inclusive education, problematizing the notion of transferability or “best way” to lead an inclusive school.
The three sections of the book follow a framework of inclusive leadership as a function of the contextual, sociocultural, and leadership domain. In the first section, Gerry Mac Ruairc, Alison Ekins, Antonio Portela and Roman Dorczak enter into a conversation on the meaning and objects of inclusion. Who defines the “whole” of which diverse others are made a part? What normative assumptions underlie the compartmentalization of regularity and deficit, the practices of “othering” certain groups for the preservation of others’ privilege? Taking independent routes of reasoning, they share the conclusion that moving forward requires more than the inclusion of new “others” into existing “wholes” of normative structures; but a deep cultural change fostering new meanings with regard to diversity. Antonio Portela makes the most explicit link between the problematic definitions of otherness and the practices of leadership, stressing the role of the process of joint meaning-making as essential to the outcome. He argues that promoting new understandings of the center and the periphery require the actors to be involved in conjoint meaning-making as co-creators. The associated developments to a sense of identity is what leadership is contingent on, resulting from and providing a vehicle for collective agency. Portela makes a strong argument for school leaders both framing and depending on co-created social identity frames.

In the second section of the volume, Robin Precey, Gerry Mac Ruairc, Eli Ottesen, and Tor Colbjornsen apply reflections on inclusive leadership to the level of policy, particularly in the context of the global uniformization of competitive accountability regimes. The findings and reflections offered by the four authors all point towards Precey’s argument that while inclusion may be a popular buzzword, its contextualization and meaningful application in the current environment depend on bottom-up transformation of school leaders infused with moral purpose.

In a surprising juxtaposition, Ottesen shows how “inclusion” is only surpassed by “quality” in European Union discourse; yet the same is not the case for the OECD, as evidenced by recent policy documents reviewed by Mac Ruairc and related to a major study of school leadership. Mac Ruairc found no overt indication that equality or justice were included as criteria for evaluating policy levers or identifying promising programs and practices in developing school leaders in the OECD. The effectiveness of schools is conceptualized as achievement and operationalized as numerical scores, and the model of leadership promoted by OECD furthers that agenda with little regard or stock for a person-centered approach.

From an editorial standpoint, the lack of analysis as to the roots of such discrepancy between the EU and the OECD discourses is one area where the policy section of the book could have been improved. On the one hand, Mac Ruairc claims that that OECD discourse is already impacting national and internation-
al developments in school leadership policy; on the other, evidence from the EU cited by Ottesen as well as Precey and Mazurkiewicz suggests that democratic and inclusive discourses continue to shape education agendas across Europe. A nuanced analysis of the roots and implications of these diverging directions would have added interest and substance to the policy section of the book. This appears especially significant in light of Colbjørnsen’s finding that between 1999 and 2009, despite the rise of global competition the primacy of academic achievement scores as measures of accountability, there were no signs of reduced democratic preparedness for students in the 38 countries participating in the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study.

The final section of the volume promises to bring the concepts and policy contexts from earlier sections to bear on school leadership practice. The bridge towards practice, however, appears to be built only three quarters of the way. Precey and Mazurkiewicz begin by taking the problematization of identity a step further than earlier authors, pointing towards the fragmented nature of postmodern identity and the multiple meanings of inclusion. While appropriate as a postscript to the context outlined before, it sets the reader up to become suspicious of any attempts to construct a bridge to practice without knowing the specifics not just of a national system, but a specific school, classroom and single student with multiple and fragmented realities.

The authors go on to review transactional, transformational and transformative approaches to leadership and suggest that “there are reliable ways to plan, facilitate and indeed evaluate leadership development for inclusion” (p. 117) – a promise they leave the other authors to fulfill, and one they do not fail to meet.

Ottesen builds a substantial pillar towards planning and facilitating inclusive leadership development in stressing tolerance of tension and creating safe spaces for conflict necessary for “communities of difference” (p. 125) as key leadership competencies to be emphasized and evaluated in a school context. Portela argues against framing leadership as a “role” that relegates those being led to a passive status, and calls for practices “antagonistic to policing” (Ranciere, 1999, cited on p. 171). The central pillar allowing the bridge to practice to pass the half-way point is an excellent framework of transformative learning proposed by Precey, Rodriguez Entrena and Jackson. They establish the tension of trust and criticality as the essential thrust for the learning process, and argue for an interplay of new identity as a cornerstone of agency. Crucially, they provide examples of how the framework has been applied, and the lessons that have been learned.

While their contribution and those that follow deliver on the promise of reliable ways of planning leadership development for inclusion, the final chapters of the volume say little on the ways it can be facilitated and evaluated – and apart from
one excellent chapter, provide few examples illustrating the complexities of planning change across cultural and national contexts represented by the authors. The strength of the book therefore lies in what Mazurkiewicz describes as “calibrating the compass” – the first and central priority without which no desired effects of educational reforms can be facilitated or evaluated in the first place. The missing part of the bridge towards practice remains a gap to be filled by those who take the insights in this thought-provoking volume as a springboard for further research.