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Leadership in Early Education in Times of Change. Research from five continents

Opladen; Berlin; Toronto : Verlag Barbara Budrich 2019, 308 S. - (International Leadership Research Forum Early Education (ILRFEC) Research monograph; #3)

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International Leadership Research Forum
Early Education (ILRFEC)
Research monograph #3

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Verlag Barbara Budrich
Opladen • Berlin • Toronto 2019

This publication was sponsored by the Robert Bosch Foundation and the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences.

This book is available as a free download from www.barbara-budrich.net (https://doi.org/10.3224/84742199) and from www.ilrfec.org. A paperback version is available at a charge (https://shop.budrich-academic.de).
The page numbers of the open access edition correspond with the paperback edition.

ISBN 978-3-8474-2199-3 (Paperback)
eISBN 978-3-8474-1224-3 (ebook)
DOI 10.3224/84742199

Verlag Barbara Budrich GmbH
Stauffenbergstr. 7. D-51379 Leverkusen Opladen, Germany

86 Delma Drive. Toronto, ON M8W 4P6 Canada
www.barbara-budrich.net

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from
Die Deutsche Bibliothek (The German Library) (http://dnb.d-nb.de)

Jacket illustration by Bettina Lehfeldt, Kleinmachnow – www.lehfeldtgraphic.de
Typesetting by Ulrike Weingärtner, Gründau, Germany – info@textakzente.de
Printed in Europe on acid-free paper by
Books on Demand GmbH, Norderstedt, Germany

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Foreword

Eeva Hujala, Finland

As an Emerita Professor based on my long academic carrier as a researcher and trainer, I affirm the importance of leadership in Early Childhood Education (ECE) for daily work practice in ECE settings. Likewise, the demand for ECE leadership research and training has been growing over the past few decades and today, there is more clarity about the directions we need to take into the future. Both academic researchers and EC leaders on all levels of ECE governance have demonstrated this growing importance of EC leadership work. But still, leadership research has taken only its first steps.

The demand for increasing research-based knowledge on EC leadership is huge as being experienced by leadership actors and specialists on the ECE field including the academic and professional organizations. This book offers research-based knowledge on EC leadership at an international level. The authors are international specialists on leadership in ECE. Their up-to-date articles challenge the readers to dialogue with EC leadership practice and renew their understandings, knowledge and skills based on contemporary leadership research.

My preliminary experience on EC leadership research goes back to 1990s. It was a period of slow beginning on research concerning leadership issues in ECE. This research and its status was not at all highly considered among academic researchers within the ECE field. In 1990s I was leading the International Leadership Project (ILP) where ECE researchers from Australia, Britain, USA, Russia and Finland were involved in exploring EC leadership within a cultural context. My co-operation and friendship with editors of this book Doctor Jillian Rodd and Professor Manjula Waniganayake began during ILP established in 1997. The rapid growth and new challenges in ECE as well as the emergence of new EC leadership researchers such as Doctor Johanna Heikka and Professor Petra Strehmel, today in 2018, EC leadership is not questioned any more. Some twenty years on, in most academic contexts in ECE today, leadership knowledge and understanding is highly appreciated. Doctor Jillian Rodd is recognized globally as an international pioneer on EC leadership. Doctor Rodd wrote her first leadership book in 1994 "Leadership in Early Childhood. The Pathway to Professionalism". She has continued to be an active writer and trainer mentoring both novice and experienced leadership researchers. I dare to say that Doctor Rodd is one of the most well-known, read and quoted ECE leadership researchers among ECE students in the whole world. She has inspired many EC leadership researchers in

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219901

numerous countries. Dr Rodd also encouraged me to engage in ECE leadership research. I'm very thankful for her enthusiasm and support over the years. Since the 1990s she has been travelling around the world as "a leadership ambassador" in order to convince the importance of leadership in developing high quality early childhood education.

Manjula Waniganayake is a Professor at Macquarie University in Australia, a Docent of EC leadership as well as honorary Doctor of ECE at the University of Tampere, Finland. She has contributed to the internationalization of ECE leadership through her collaborations with IRLF researchers. She is a globally appreciated leadership researcher. Professor Waniganayake has renewed leadership paradigm through her studies. In her culturally oriented EC leadership research she has replaced the narrow leader centered thinking by opening the dialogue on distributed leadership paradigm involving the whole EC governance into leadership. She also continues to serve as a mentor for many ECE students interested in studying leadership issues around the world.

Doctor Johanna Heikka from the University of Eastern Finland and Professor Petra Strehmel from Hamburg University of Applied Sciences in Germany have courageously opened new perspectives into EC leadership discourses. Doctor Johanna Heikka is a highly appreciated ECE specialist who has emphasized pedagogical leadership and teacher leadership as core issues in EC leadership. She argues that these leadership roles are key to the development of high quality ECE. Professor Petra Strehmel has opened the view of leadership by considering leadership within broader contexts involving staff development as a core responsibility in the leaders' role.

My own background for leadership research is grounded on researching on pedagogical practices and quality evaluation in ECE. These themes convinced me that developing pedagogy and its quality without developing the leadership as the foundation for them is like "building in the sand". I am also convinced that one of the best ways to develop sustainable leadership is to establish it on research-based evidence focusing on leadership. This was the reason why in 2011, I invited all known ECE leadership researchers around the world to Tampere University to establish the International Leadership Research Forum (ILRF). At that time there were 20 members in our ILRF network. Today we have more than triple the number of members representing 19 countries from five Continents (Asia, Africa, Australia Europe and America). International Leadership Research Forum early education (ILRFec) has had a crucial role in developing leadership research in ECE. In addition to supporting and strengthening researchers' study intentions, the ILRFec has published two edited research monographs on EC leadership in the years 2013 and 2015 as well as a special journal issue on leadership in the Journal of Early Childhood Education Research in 2016.

The reason for the increasing growth of the ILRFec was the researchers' own desires for networking and getting together with others with similar interests in researching EC leadership. At the beginning of this century, the few EC leadership researchers were quite "lonely riders" with little or no support from others in the ECE field. The urge to research on leadership had been found through the ILRF and all kinds of support for researchers were more than welcome in our network. After the Tampere research meeting, ILRFec members have got together in Porto, Sydney, Trondheim, Savonlinna and Hamburg. This book is the written outcome of the Hamburg meeting organized by Professor Petra Strehmel in 2017. EC leadership researchers presented their current research there at the Hamburg meeting and this book represents excellent international co-operation and learning we experienced through listening to each other's leadership research. Now in this book we, as ILRFec members, want to share the research findings presented in Hamburg with all of you who are interested in EC leadership. I appreciate the research work through which the authors in this book have contributed to making the world a little bit better for our children.

Leadership in early education in times of change – an orientation

Johanna Heikka, Eeva Hujala, Jillian Rodd, Petra Strehmel & Manjula Waniganayake

Leadership in early education in times of change depicts topical issues of leadership within the context of Early Childhood Education (ECE) from various perspectives. It aims to contribute to the advancement of ECE leadership preparation and training as well as leadership enactment and governance by presenting current research and innovative ideas from five continents (Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and North America).

Societal and educational reforms as well as increasing research on ECE leadership and pedagogy call for transformational and active leadership. The chapters in this book explore local solutions, innovations and leadership activity that respond to contemporary expectations and challenges in a timely manner. The studies presented in this book provide windows for proactive, advanced leadership enactment, governance and training, which renew local educational communities, the ECE profession and leadership itself. Varying functional environments presented in these studies expand and diversify our understanding of leadership processes in changing operational contexts. Even though the contexts of leadership vary, the universal essence of leadership as reflected in the chapters in this book appears to be collaborative, participative, inclusive, learning focused as well as developing capacity by building on existing knowledge.

This book presents current ECE leadership research from five continents. It advances the knowledge base of ECE leadership through research collaboration and dissemination of research findings. The authors of this book have discovered leadership phenomena from four perspectives comprising of:

i) Leadership preparation and training: Leader preparation is among the high importance topics in ECE today. The chapters in this section present innovative approaches in preparing ECE leaders and teachers involved in daily practice of ECE as well as working at universities. They share commonalities in their practice through their contributions to mentoring, training and by participating in development projects. This section also presents chapters focusing on the current status of human resource and personnel development and professional learning in ECE.

ii) Enacting and Developing Leadership: The chapters focusing on enacting and developing ECE settings present the implementation of new leadership mod-

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219902

els and approaches to strengthen leadership in diverse contexts. These include, for example, innovative ways of organizing ECE leadership as well as participative ways in which leaders enhance learning and a shared working culture in their settings. In addition, this section suggests how to advance knowledge development in ECE settings or how to improve develop staff in ECE. The chapters within this theme provide support for contemporary challenges of leading – how to create leadership cultures which enhance staff' capacity to develop their own capabilities and professionalism by themselves.

iii) Leadership and governance. Leaders in ECE encounter numerous challenges in staff' attrition, lack of supply and preparation for leadership roles. These challenges are connected with unclear policies and the absence of planning. It is also possible that these challenges may be difficult to foresee and can result in the leader losing the grip on his/her work. The chapters addressing *governance* present solutions for the challenges that exist in the complex operational environments of people, policies and practice

iv) International comparisons: This book offers a cross-section of current ECE leadership policy, practice and research reflecting on how ECE centre directors' work is structured and supported in a number of countries. These international snapshots also show that leadership attracts researchers globally and indicates the main trends and differences in research traditions found across different countries. This section concludes that the main purpose of ECE leadership research is universal – to maintain and develop quality of ECE services.

How the book came about

The five editors and the majority of the authors of this book are all active members of *International Leadership Research Forum (ILRF),* a group of university academics and researchers interested in ECE leadership from five continents. Most of us are responsible for the preparation of early childhood teachers and leaders at our universities. Most of the studies included in this book were presented in an ILRF meeting in September 2017, which was hosted by the University of Applied Sciences in Hamburg, Germany. The free online publication of the book was made possible by the generous sponsoring of the Robert-Bosch-Foundation – many thanks to this institution, which is very active in the field of early education in Germany. In addition the preparation and editing of the publication was funded by the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences[1].

In the regular meetings of the ILRF group, the members disseminate current research findings to share knowledge and learnings. With this book those

1 We thank Sarah Häusgen for the careful review of the texts and her engaged support in the final preparation of the book.

interested in developing and researching leadership can easily get up to date with what's new in research and become aware of policies and practice in the participating countries. Earlier this group published two research monographs and a special journal issue in Journal of Early Childhood Education Research (JECER). These publications offer an online, multi-national resource bank reflecting on the work of the ILRF members and are available for free.

This book is comprised of chapters written by authors who are at different stages of professional development in their careers. That is, along with the experienced researchers in the field, the ILRF group also consists of members who are doctoral candidates. This book includes chapters also written by them. The editors read and offered feedback on all chapters and a few chapters marked with ** on the contents page, were submitted for blind peer review.

The organization of the book

Eeva Hujala in her foreword refers to the history and formation process of the International Leadership Research Forum Early Education. As mentioned before, the research papers are organized in four chapters, themes, which focus on different perspectives on leadership in early education: leadership preparation, enactment and development, governance and international comparisons.

Each paper begins with an abstract in English, followed by a German and Finnish translation – German since Hamburg was the place of the conference in 2017 and Finnish because Finland is the homeland of the International Leadership Research Forum and the leading country in early education leadership research. In her epilogue Jillian Rodd summarises the research results, draws conclusions about the current scientific insight on leadership in early education and further need for research and development.

Finally you find short vitae of all authors including the email addresses to ease orientation and networking for further research and development in the field of leadership in early education.

To whom this book is intended

This book is intended to inspire and support researchers, students and ECE professionals in advancing development of ECE leadership practice and research. In particular, we hope that ECE leaders will find this book useful in advancing their thinking on pedagogy and practice. The chapters were written so that they offer relevant and viable strategies connected to the daily practice of ECE.

For students and researchers this book offers easy access to current ECE leadership research. The studies presented in this book employ various research approaches and methods as well as interesting new theoretical perspectives in

investigating leadership phenomena. We hope that this book will build and advance the knowledge base and academic development of ECE leadership research, and thereby contribute to the advancement of the ECE profession in a variety of ways.

Hope you enjoy the book.

SECTION I:
LEADERSHIP PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Shadowing as a method in leadership preparation in teaching practice in early childhood teacher education in Norway[1]

Karin Hognestad & Marit Bøe
University of South-Eastern, Norway

Abstract

This chapter argues that qualitative shadowing is a powerful resource in leadership preparation in early childhood teacher education. This chapter emerged through the discussion of the experience from two doctoral studies and the benefit of qualitative shadowing as a research methodology in studying leadership practices. Our analyses demonstrate that qualitative shadowing can be translated and adapted to new, local contexts of work-based learning and thus strengthen research-based education. The main findings are that shadowing as an explorative, reflective and ethical practice can facilitate reflective engagement between students and practitioners and further enrich leadership preparation and development. To better understand how leadership preparation takes place we have discussed leadership learning from the community of practice perspective.

German Abstract

Dieses Kapitel argumentiert, dass qualitätsvolles Shadowing eine wirkungsmächtige Ressource für die Vorbereitung auf Leitungsaufgaben in der frühen Bildung ist. Das Kapitel entstand aus der Diskussion der Erfahrungen von zwei Doktorandinnen über den Nutzen qualitativen Shadowings als Forschungsmethode bei der Untersuchung von Leitungspraktiken. Die Analysen zeigen, dass qualitatives Shadowing auf neue lokale Kontexte arbeitsbezogenen Lernens übersetzt und angepasst werden und daher eine forschungsbasierte Ausbildung stärken kann. Die Hauptergebnisse sind, dass Shadowing als explorative, reflexive und ethisch begründete Praxis den reflektierenden Diskurs zwischen Studierenden und Praktizierenden erleichtern und damit die Vorbereitung auf Leitungsaufgaben und Entwicklung bereichern kann. Um besser zu verstehen, wie die Vorbereitung auf Leitungsaufgaben stattfindet, wird das Erlernen von Leitung aus der Perspektive einer Lerngemeinschaft (Community auf Projektes) diskutiert.

1 This chapter is a translated version of Hognestad & Bøe (2017)

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219903

Finnish Abstract

Tässä luvussa perustellaan kvalitatiivisen varjostuksen olevan tehokas menetelmä johtajuuteen valmistautumisessa varhaiskasvatuksen opettajankoulutuksessa. Tämä luku syntyi kahden väitöstutkimuksen kokemuksesta sekä laadullisen varjostuksen eduista tutkimusmenetelmänä johtamiskäytäntöjen tutkimisessa. Analyysimme demonstroivat, että kvalitatiivinen varjostus on muokattavissa ja mukautettavissa uusiin, paikalliseen/alueelliseen työperustaisen oppimisen konteksteihin, ja näin ollen vahvistaa tutkimusperustaista opetusta ja oppimista. Keskeisimpien tuloksien mukaan varjostus voi tutkivana, reflektiivisenä ja eettisenä käytäntönä helpottaa reflektiivistä sitoutumista opiskelijoiden ja ammatinharjoittajan välillä ja lisäksi rikastuttaa johtajuuteen valmistautumista ja sen kehittymistä. Ymmärtääksemme paremmin, kuinka johtajuuteen valmistautuminen ilmenee, olemme käsitelleet johtajuuden oppimista käytännön näkökulmasta.

Introduction

This chapter argues for the use of shadowing as a method in leadership preparation in early childhood teacher education (ECTE) courses. By using material from our early childhood education (ECE) doctoral studies (Bøe, 2016; Hognestad, 2016) that explored shadowing as a participatory method in research, this chapter discusses shadowing as a method of learning about leadership enactment by teacher education students in ECE at a university in Norway. Shadowing is a research method that in short can be described as "observation on the move" (Czarniawska, 2014, p. 43). This involves someone shadowing or following one particular professional in their daily work during an agreed-upon period of time, with the purpose of seeing what is actually done (Czarniawska, 2007, 2014; McDonald, 2005; McDonald & Simpson, 2014). The results of the doctoral theses showed that shadowing as a research method contributed to new, practical knowledge about ECE leadership, and that shadowing inspired reflections on one's own leadership practice (Bøe, 2016; Hognestad, 2016). Following the completion of our doctoral studies, an interesting question arose about our academic work in teacher education: how can qualitative shadowing contribute to leadership preparation in teaching practice in ECTE? There are demands and expectations that higher education teaching should utilize research knowledge to create innovative ways of learning and teaching (Meld.St.16, 2017, p. 45). Further explorations of shadowing touches upon an important area concerning how research results can be implemented and adapted to new local contexts, and in this way strengthen research-based education in ECTE.

The interest in shadowing as a method in leadership preparation ties in with the increasing focus on leadership and leadership education in ECTE. Following the evaluation of ECTE and the need for the education to better prepare students for their role as pedagogical leaders (NOKUT, 2010), leadership has been em-

phasized in the National Framework plan for Early Childhood Teacher Education (Forskrift om rammeplan for barnehagelærerutdanning, 2012) Rammeplan for barnehagens innhold og oppgaver [*The Norwegian Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens*] (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017) uses the professional title of *pedagogical leader* to target ECE teachers who have responsibilities as leaders at room level. Pedagogical leaders are front-line leaders with pedagogical leadership responsibility for both staff and children in their unit. Consequently, leadership has been elevated to a separate area of competence within ECTE: "Leadership, Cooperation and Developmental Work" (Ledelse, samarbeid & utviklingsarbeid, LSU), where knowledge of pedagogical leadership, leadership theory and leadership processes within organizations is an explicit learning outcome. With the increased focus on leadership in the bachelor education, the goal is for the education to better equip ECTE students to face the leadership demands and expectations of their field of everyday practice.

Research has raised critical issues with regards to the theories and models presented in ECTE and their efficiency in handling pedagogical leadership. The theories may be too generalized and not sufficiently context specific (Ødegård, 2011, p. 237). Other fields have also faced criticism over whether leadership theories are able to live up to the leadership challenges professionals meet in their daily work (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Irgens, 2011; Mintzberg, 2009; Tengblad, 2012). The focus on knowledge relevant to practice is emphasized and requested in the new white paper "Kultur for kvalitet i høyere utdanning" (Culture for quality in higher education) (Meld.St. 16, 2017). Within research traditions with a practical perspective on leadership, Tengblad (2012) finds it important to look at leadership as a social practice and a contextual process, and to look at how leaders use their practical knowledge in their handling of the complexities of leadership. Tengblad (2012) sees leadership as a social practice and as a craft that requires experience, skills and artistry (p. 5).

By understanding leadership as social practice, and as being shaped by the daily work of pedagogical leaders, this chapter explores leadership preparation in practicum embedded in in ECTE. The chapter further elucidates reflective shadowing as a learning method, before the analysis of the evaluation of the programme is presented. Subsequently, by using Lave and Wenger's (1991) understanding of learning within the communities of practice, we discuss shadowing as a method for learning.

Shadowing as method

McDonald (2005) found that three forms of shadowing were most prominently featured: 1) shadowing as a method to document behaviours and tasks, 2) shad-

owing as a method for experience-based learning, and 3) shadowing as a method to understand roles or perspectives. These perspectives on shadowing provide a framework for understanding how shadowing can be a method that is situated in a tension zone between everyday practice, learning and research.

Shadowing allows the researcher to move with and to follow the professional in actual time, and offers opportunities to create detailed data relating to everyday practice:

(McDonald, 2005, p. 457). One quality of shadowing is the ability to have an ongoing dialogue about shared first-hand experiences, and to reflect jointly on them (McDonald & Simpson, 2014). According to Nicolini (2013), shadowing gives access to actions, but that this is not sufficient to gain an understanding of intentions and meaning in the observed action. An action contains knowledge, therefore attention must be paid both to what the participant/practitioner does and says.

Dialogue can be ongoing in the form of spontaneous contextual interviews, and/or afterwards, through planned stimulated recall interviews.

Contextual interviews do not always offer the opportunity to delve further or deeper into interesting things that may occur in the moment (Bøe, Hognestad & Waniganayake, 2016). Especially in early childhood centers which are characterized by a high tempo, complexity and lots of movement. Stimulated recall interviews can complement shadowing observations and contextual interviews and give a deeper insight into the meanings and intentions of observed actions (Burgoyne & Hodgson, 1984). In this context shadowing becomes a participatory method and a methodology for tying action and reflection together.

Method and analysis

Our two doctoral studies on which this chapter is based, are qualitative shadowing studies of pedagogical leaders in early childhood centers. In the doctoral research we have studied leadership through video observations, contextual interviews, video-stimulated recall interviews and one focus group interview (Bøe, 2016; Hognestad, 2016). In this chapter, the doctoral theses form the foundation for a secondary analysis (Heaton, 2008). Secondary analyses involve the use of existing data gathered with a different purpose, that is now used in the context of a new research interest differing from the original research context (Heaton, 2008). While the original analysis had its focus on shadowing as research methodology, the secondary analysis focuses on shadowing as a method for learning. The same research team was responsible for both analyses.

With the original analysis as a starting point, a new content analysis was done on the material (Creswell, 2013). A theory-driven content analysis of the material focused on the difference between shadowing as a method for research

and as a method for learning. Knowledge of shadowing as a research method guided our secondary analysis. During the process of analyzing, we looked at all the material that dealt with the characteristics of qualitative shadowing as a research method. This led to the creation of three new categories of shadowing as a method for leadership preparation. Table 1 shows the phases of the process we used during the secondary analysis:

Table 1. Secondary analysis based on the original analysis

Phase 1 **Focus on the original analysis of qualitative shadowing as a research method**	**Phase 2** **Focus on the secondary analysis of shadowing as a method for learning in ECTE**	**Phase 3** **Findings**
Empirical basis: • Qualitative shadowing with video observation, contextual interviews, video-stimulated recall interviews and focus groups interview. • The use of video in shadowing captures leadership as a response to situations. • Contextual interviews gave important insights into the leader's reflections on what was said and done, but researchers would have wanted more room to follow up and elucidate these reflections. • Qualitative shadowing gives data on practical knowledge. • Shadowing captures practice as something more than action. • Qualitative shadowing is a powerful research method that can give a new understanding of leadership. • Video observation and video-stimulated recall interviews give data on the understanding of leadership practice. • Shadowing can contribute to professional training programs with a focus on leadership. • Knowledge of the leadership context is significant when it comes to ethical considerations in research. • Qualitative shadowing as interpretative method opens up for the researcher and the participant to engage in conversations where leadership practices are constructed. • Shadowing highlights educational leadership as hierarchic and democratic leadership actions.	Empirical basis: • Two qualitative and interpretative shadowing studies (ph.d.) • Stimulated recall interviews open up for understanding of practice and practical knowledge. (Video-) observation can capture details in leadership practice. • Shadowing can strengthen reflective practice and professional development in leadership. • Contextual interviews provide information on how the leader confronts actual situational requirements, and the leader's considerations in their actions. • Knowledge of the leadership context is significant when it comes to ethical considerations in leadership training. • Shadowing highlights educational leadership as hierarchic and democratic leadership actions.	• Shadowing as explorative practice. • Shadowing as reflexive practice. • Shadowing as ethical practice.

Findings

The three categories of findings that emerged through the secondary analysis were (1) Shadowing as explorative practice, (2) Shadowing as reflexive practice, and (3) Shadowing as ethical practice. Each of these will be elucidated next.

Shadowing as explorative practice

Shadowing reveals how staff combine the roles of leader and early childhood teacher. The following example from the thesis by Bøe (2016) and Hognestad (2016) shows what kind of leadership actions take place when the pedagogical leader spontaneously calls for an informal meeting in the center where the children are playing and doing different activities:

It's early morning in the toddler room in the center. The pedagogical leader and two assistants are seated on the floor in a circle with the kids, who are busy playing with toy cars, building blocks or reading in books. One of the boys is sitting in the pedagogical leader's lap, and tells her he is doing sit-ups. As this is happening, the pedagogical leader sees Trude, one of the assistants, entering the room. They greet each other and chat a bit about the weather before the assistant sits down on the floor with the others.

The pedagogical leader seizes the opportunity, with everybody present, to inform the assistants about the plans of the day. Because it's too cold to be outside with the smallest kids, she proposes a change in plans. She suggests that they can have paint and play groups. They discuss what the contents of the play groups should be, and how they should distribute the children. The leader explains how the content of these play groups ties in with future plans, before she goes on to assign the assistants to their respective groups. At the same time as the spontaneous meeting takes place, the personnel also engage in dialogue with the children and with each other.

During this situation, practical knowledge was expressed through action. The leader arranged the informal meeting on the floor with her assistants to discuss necessary changes to the day's plan. Because shadowing is explorative in its nature, it can uncover more leader actions that are tightly interwoven during an informal meeting. At first, the leader made a strategic decision to make changes to the day's plans, before she informed other staff about this. The leader invited a dialogue about the new plan before she went on to distribute resources by delegating different assignments to the assistants. Shadowing as explorative practice brings the researcher closer to the everyday leadership work, as the leader communicates, thinks and acts alongside her co-workers. Shadowing allows for rich, full descriptions of actions that arise in the moment, and that cannot be planned for. This allows for the leader's experiential knowledge to emerge clearly. As an

explorative practice, shadowing gives access to how leadership actions are created as responses to new and unforeseen situations.

Shadowing as reflexive practice

During the shadowing process, contextual interviews were initiated both by the researcher doing the shadowing and the practitioner being shadowed. At the start of the process these contextual interviews were mostly focused on facts and organization, but as the researcher and the practitioner became better acquainted, the contents of the interviews shifted towards thoughts and reflections about leadership. One example from our observational data in the thesis (Bøe, 2016; Hognestad, 2016) showed that as the pedagogical leader got up to leave a play-setting with a group of children, the simultaneous conversation clarified her reason for doing so:

> *As a leader, it is important for me to get around and see that everything is ok. I get an overview of the children and adults in my classroom. Sometimes I will sit down with the children, but I have to keep walking around to get that overview.*

By having a dialogue there and then, the leader was able to immediately explain to the researcher the reasoning behind her observational rounds, and that this was an important leadership action that gave her an overview of the workplace or her ECE setting.

Quite often there was insufficient time to share reflections on actions, due to the busy nature of the workday. Our PhD studies showed that stimulated recall interviews were productive as a way to recall reflections that the researcher and the informant had experienced at the time of action. In the previous passage we presented observational data that showed an informal floor meeting. In a stimulated recall interview that followed, the same leader elucidated her actions by demonstrating her thinking about the situation:

> *What I was thinking, was that I could take that discussion with all three of them, as we had all arrived at work. That worked out as I had planned. I had a plan with asking Trude to start that painting activity yesterday, because I know that she does that in a positive way. I could have asked the other assistant, but she wouldn't have done it with the same degree of enthusiasm, because she doesn't have that interest in painting that Trude has. She is more concerned about spills and mess and that the kids should sit on chairs while they paint. Trude is uninhibited, she doesn't care if paint gets everywhere, that's not what's important. What matters to her is the activity and that the children enjoy it. So, I was very conscious in my choice of her. (Bøe, 2016; Hognestad, 2016)*

When the researcher showed the documentation of the action to the pedagogical leader, it offered her an opportunity to explain and give a professional justification for how the employees' interests and competence were central to her resource allocation. As the pedagogical leader reflected on her leadership action, in this case resource allocation, shadowing had the reflexive quality of tying action and intent together.

Shadowing as ethical practice

Ethical considerations during the shadowing process included the researchers' need to be sensitive to the methods used during the shadowing to gather information about the leadership actions. The use of video was demanding, because it required technical equipment and competence, and because it necessitated continuous ethical considerations about what should and should not be filmed. Video observations were used in the doctoral works, and video clips were later utilized as stimuli during stimulated recall interviews. Being able to see the actions and situations anew on video along with the participant, offered an opportunity for knowledge-sharing and shared reflection between the researcher and participant. Even though gathering data with pen and paper through field notes was challenging, due to the hectic tempo and the overlapping and complex nature of the leadership actions, the field notes did turn out to have an important role. Through field notes, leadership actions were registered and assigned comments that were helpful when it came to recall certain situations that were of relevance in subsequent discussions. In ECTE students' leadership training in the early childhood center, the use of video can accentuate ethical and practical concerns relating to privacy and data protection. From an ethical perspective, in the practicum contexts, field notes can be advantageous and give sufficient documentation for subsequent reflection.

Other ethical considerations could concern how closely the researcher should shadow the pedagogical leader without getting in the way of her work. One example of this occurred when the researchers had to figure out when and where to talk to the pedagogical leader so as to impact her work as little as possible. Ethical practice also involved considerations of how the shadow should relate towards both children and the rest of the staff. Because the pedagogical leader interacted with both children and adults, ethical responsibilities became especially important with regards to documentation of particular episodes, such as contact with parents, staff and children from other classrooms, as well as pedagogically challenging situations that arose. For instance, in the toddler room we learnt to position our bodies in ways that did not seem threatening or invasive to the children. By seating ourselves on the floor and responding to the children with smiles and eye contact, and discreetly answering their questions, it seemed we were accepted by the children. In the classrooms with the older children we

were more withdrawn and passive towards the children, and thus became rather uninteresting, rather than being intimidating. While the staff had been informed by their leader that she was the one we would be shadowing, it was also important for us to be considerate and respectful to all staff.

During the shadowing process it became clear that the shadowing experienced, not just the practical side of research ethics, also showed that ethical challenges and considerations were a part of practical work ethics in the leader's everyday work. This could for instance relate to how the leader adapted her leadership to different co-workers and to complex situations where the leader had to balance and use her professional instincts to resolve ethical dilemmas. In this way, shadowing as ethical practice offers opportunities to explore and learn about professional ethics in early childhood centers.

Shadowing as a method in leadership preparation

The three categories of shadowing, as explorative, reflexive and ethical, are a starting point for our discussion of shadowing in leadership preparation in ECTE practical training. In leadership preparation, ECTE students are given practical training in a center to learn about leadership with the workplace as a learning arena. The foundation of this chapter is leadership understood as a social practice where leadership is shaped by the daily work. This understanding has consequences for the way in which students learn about leadership. With a perspective on leadership as social practice as the starting point, the focus is on leadership training through participation in the practice community. This approach entails seeing the foundation of all leadership activities in practical work, and not just as activities performed by a single person. The process whereby students acquire knowledge about practice, can be understood through Lave and Wenger's (1991) term *legitimate peripheral participation*. This elucidates the way in which novices learn in a social community. Through this process students may access expert knowledge that is perpetuated within the social community through daily practice. This includes norms and values that give direction and discipline to the professional work. Legitimate peripheral participation sees learning not only as a cognitive process, but as a social process related to belonging, engagement, cooperation and identity development (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 95). As the student starts her period of leadership practice, she will not just absorb or reproduce new competences.

To teach leadership is a question of participating in the professional community, and to question what happens (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The student is in a learning situation where on the one hand she must engage in the existing practice to be able to understand it and to participate in it. On the other hand she must explore and challenge the existing, to develop her own leadership identity. Frers (2017) argues, that a method of learning requires more than the pure

passing down of knowledge. It must engage and give room for exploration. It requires the student to put herself out there and expose herself to breakdowns and disturbances. Shadowing as a method for leadership preparation is attentive to learning that occurs through embodied, experiential actions that can instigate an active, explorative movement in the student who shadows her practice teacher witch has the position as a pedagogical leader.

As a core member of the professional community, the practice teacher is as a mentor and a role model for the ECTE student. Her leadership actions are explored by the student and become an important source for developing knowledge. As a role-model she is being observed by the student, who familiarizes herself with, and explores, the ECTE teacher's practical knowledge. Biesta (2009, p. 41) refers to Freire and argues that education must be based on processes where the student develops independence and autonomy in thoughts and action. The practical knowledge of the experienced practice teacher is of great significance to what kind of leadership actions the student teacher gains insight into. When the practice teacher is the role-model during shadowing, the purpose becomes something other than a mere copying and emulation of her actions. The practice teacher functions as an agent of learning (Schön, 2009, p. 224) who enters into a dialogue with the student teacher both during and after the process. The strength of shadowing can very well be that the dialogue occurs simultaneously with, and in the context of, what the student observes and becomes conscious of there and then. Shadowing gives occasion to share reflections, whereby intuitive reflections that may fall between the cracks in the daily hustle and bustle can be given attention and articulation. If the student teacher and practice teacher lack methods to reflect on their actions both during and after the event, considerations that were made in preparations for an action may be lost.

By reflecting along with the practice teacher both during and after the process, opportunities arise to gain insight into the meaning and purpose of the actions. This gives the student teacher insights into the pedagogical leader's knowledge that is embedded in the leader's patterns of action. Leadership encompasses more than just using leadership tools from a pre-determined toolbox (Klev & Vie, 2014). As the student teacher and the pedagogical leader utilize the opportunity for dialogue during the process, the student's understanding of what it means to be a pedagogical leader broadens.

During shadowing there is, however, a danger that the power of expertise, belonging to the one who is shadowed, can dominate and steer the conversation with taken-for-granted truths. If independence and autonomy of thought and action is to be nourished in the student, shadowing must allow for conversations where the practice teacher is not concerned just with her own interpretations of practice, but also with acknowledging the thoughts and interpretations of her shadow, the student. The true value of the dialogue is realized once the conver-

sation is aligned with ethical practice. Kinsella (2012) emphasizes dialogue as a criterion for ethical practice (p. 49). This is significant in terms of the learning process during shadowing, in as much as both the person being shadowed and the one doing the shadowing are responsible for finding reasonable meaning in the other person's utterances, and for posing questions and engaging themselves in finding new ways of encountering the practice situation. When shadowing is used in leadership preparation it is especially important that both parts feel a responsibility to acknowledge each other's interpretations and to reflect on these together so that the focus remains learning and not evaluating the practice of the ECTE teacher.

Through shadowing the student experiences proximity with the ECTE teacher's practice, one that deals with continual changes and situations that arise. This is where practical knowledge is realized. Biesta (2015) is concerned with the importance of developing practical knowledge within education, and he thinks that students can develop this through "studying the virtuosity of experienced educators, trying to see how it functions, how it is embodied, where it is done explicitly, where it is held back precisely for educational reasons, and so on" (p.21).

Schön (2009) explains that this kind of knowledge as reflexive knowledge, where the professional utilizes theoretical knowledge and experience, and uses and adapts the knowledge to the situation. You cannot teach this knowledge in a classroom setting by using theoretical explanations and models only. Shadowing as a method for learning ensures that leadership training encompasses more than just acquiring theoretical knowledge. The closest you can get to this in a classroom setting is, according to Nussbaum (Nussbaum in Gustavsson, 2000, p. 193), is to use fiction or narratives from the literature as a tool on the way to becoming a professional. She argues for the use of fiction in knowledge development, because through fiction you encounter other people's thoughts and considerations, and their experiences, borne out of actual situations. Narratives of professional ethics and practice narratives can, based on this argument, be of importance to leadership education where direct experience is not an option. Shadowing allows for a shift of perspective, from theory, techniques and recipes used as a starting point for professional action, to a practical knowledge that involves communicating, forming opinions and interacting with other people and situations as they arise.

Conclusion

With a perspective on leadership as social practice, we have argued for EC pedagogical leadership training that unfolds within the proximity of professional practice (Mintzberg, 2009; Tengblad, 2012). The specific focus has been on how shadowing as a method in leadership training within ECTE courses that can con-

tribute to developing practical and applicable knowledge about leadership. Experiential learning as a basis for leadership training highlights the practice teacher/pedagogical leader as a role-model, as well as the learning potential embedded in the practice teacher's leadership style and expertise within the professional community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As the student teacher and the pedagogical leader share first-hand experiences and jointly reflect on these, the desired outcome is not for the student teacher to become like the pedagogical leader, but for her to explore and investigate her own view of leadership in cooperation with the practitioner.

By acknowledging shadowing as an *explorative*, *reflexiv*e and *ethical practice,* shadowing can further the development of practical leadership knowledge. Sell and Vala's (2017) study shows how shadowing gives student teachers insights into a pedagogical leader's experiential leadership knowledge. Because shadowing is intimate and relational by nature, it requires an ethical consciousness about the relation between the practitioner and the student teacher, ensuring an actual explorative approach rather than ending up with a conversation about right or wrong practice.

Implications of the study can be tied to the *National Curriculum Regulations for Early Childhood Teacher Education (2012)*, that emphasize students' access to a leadership training that enables participatory, explorative and observational pedagogical activities in early childhood centers, as well as the ability to reflect on practice (p. 8). For practical teaching, this implies a recognition that higher education institutions and the professional field must engage in a responsible collaboration that is not about taking over each others' roles, but rather exploring and further developing leadership knowledge from both fields. A shared responsibility for student teachers' leadership training can support and develop the possibilities of using shadowing as a method in leadership training in ECTE.

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Supervising and supporting grade R practitioners in South African schools

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Abstract

This paper highlights the importance of supervision and support for improving the quality of teaching and learning in Grade R classes in South Africa. To achieve this objective, a qualitative case study approach using semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups was employed to gather data from 33 purposefully selected participants. Data from 12 Heads of Departments (HoDs), 16 practitioners and 5 school principals was collected using observation and document analysis. The selection criteria were population samples from rural, semi-rural, semi-urban and farming areas. Data was analysed using ATLAS.ti software and an observation schedule. Findings from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations revealed that practitioners of Grade R experienced the absence of instructional leadership from the School Management Team (SMT) members, especially the Head of Department (HoD), as an immediate supervisor. The HoDs' challenges of work overload and lack of training in Grade R practices, affected the quality of teaching and learning in the Grade R classrooms. Observations by the researcher also revealed some malpractices by the Grade R practitioners due to lack of professional training in Early Childhood Development (ECD). Recommendations are that ECD practitioners and SMT acquire professional training on ECD management and classroom practices.

German Abstract

Dieser Aufsatz stellt die Bedeutung von Anleitung und Unterstützung zur Verbesserung der Qualität der Lehre und des Lernens in Grade-R- Klassen in Südafrika heraus. Um dieses Ziel zu erreichen wurde eine qualitative Fallstudie mit halb strukturierten Interviews (individuell und in einer Fotokursgruppe) durchgeführt, um Daten von 33 gezielt ausgewählten Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmern zu erhalten. Beobachtung und Dokumentenanalysen wurden ebenfalls genutzt, um Daten von zwölf Abteilungsleitungen, 16 Praktikerinnen und Praktikern und fünf Schulleitungen zu sammeln. Selektionskriterien waren Bevölkerungsstichproben aus ländlichen, halb-ländlichen und halbstädtischen sowie landwirtschaftlichen Gebieten. Die Daten wurden mit der ATLAS-ti-Software unter einem Beobachtungsbogen interpretiert. Die Befunde der halbstrukturierten Interviews und der Klassenbeobachtungen zeigten die fehlende Führung und Anleitung durch die Mitglieder des Schulmanagement-Teams (School Management Team (SMT)) insbesondere durch die Abteilungsleiter als direkte Vorgesetzte. Die Überlastung der Abteilungsleiter und das Fehlen von Anlei-

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219904

tung für die Lehrenden in den R-Klassen hatte Einfluss auf die Qualität des Lehrens und Lernens in diesen Klassen. Beobachtungen ergaben ungute Praktiken der Lehrenden, bedingt durch das Fehlen eines entsprechenden Trainings hinsichtlich der Entwicklung früherer Bildung. Es wird empfohlen, dass Lehrende im Bereich der frühen Bildung und Mitglieder des Schulmanagement-Teams professionelle Trainings zu Management und Praxis der frühen Bildung erhalten.

Finnish Abstract

Tämä artikkeli korostaa ohjauksen ja tuen tärkeyttä opetuksen ja oppimisen laadun parantamiseksi esikoululuokissa Etelä-Afrikassa. Tämän saavuttamiseksi tutkimuksessa käytettiin kvalitatiivista tapaustutkimusta, joka sisälsi puolistrukturoituja yksilöhaastatteluja ja focus group haastatteluja. Tutkimukseen valittiin 33 osallistujaa: 12 osastonjohtajaa, 16 ammatinharjoittajaa ja 5 koulun rehtoria. Aineistonkeräämiseen käytettiin myös havainnointia ja dokumenttien analyysia. Valintakriteerinä oli saada populaatio-otannat maaseudulta, puolimaaseudulta, taajama-alueilta ja maatila-alueilta. Aineisto analysoitiin Atlas.ti -ohjelmalla ja havainnointirungon avulla. Puolistrukturoitujen haastatteluiden ja luokkahuonehavaintojen tulokset paljastivat, että esikoulussa työskentelevät kokivat ohjauksellisen johtajuuden puuttuvan koulun johtoryhmän jäseniltä (School Management Team, SMT), varsinkin osastonjohtajalta, joka on heidän lähin esimiehensä. Osastonjohtajien haasteet ylityöllistymisestä ja esikoulun käytäntöihin liittyvän kokemuksen puutteesta vaikuttavat opetuksen ja oppimisen laatuun esikoulu luokissa. Tutkijan tekemistä havainnoista huomattiin myös joitakin esikoulun työntekijöiden menettelyitä, mitkä johtuivat ammatillisen koulutuksen puutteista varhaislapsuuden kehityksessä (Early Childhood Development, ECD). On suositeltavaa, että ECD-ammattilaisten ja koulun johtoryhmän jäsenet ovat suorittaneet ammatillisen koulutuksen varhaislapsuuden kehitykseen ja luokkahuone-käytäntöihin liittyen.

Introduction

Provision of Early Childhood Development in South Africa

Early Childhood Education (ECE) provisioning in South Africa was intended to correct the education imbalances created by the previous apartheid government. The intention of the Department of Education (DoE) now the Department of Basic Education (DBE) was to plan and deliver Early Childhood Development (ECD) services, in particular, Grade R programmes, in a co-ordinated manner. Grade R in South Africa is a pre-formal class in primary schools catering for children aged 4 ½ to 5 years. In 2001, after the ECD interim policy of 1997 was produced, the 2001 Education White Paper 5 (EWP5) on ECD was developed. The EWP5 provided policy guidelines on unqualified ECD practitioners (teachers), lack of operational structures, centre-based organisations, school-based Grade R classes and the need for quality programmes among others (DoE 2001: 7).

An important component of this programme is the human capital, namely, the teaching and the management of teams. In South Africa, ECD focuses on protecting the holistic growth and development of children from birth to nine years of age (DoE 2001: 7). It was for this reason that the DBE developed an action plan to ensure the delivery of ECD programmes and training aimed at addressing early learning problems (DoE 2001: 29). The realisation that children in the Foundation Phase (primary school classes from Grade 1 to Grade 3) still experienced learning challenges even after the introduction of the 1997 ECD interim policy, prompted the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to focus more on Grade R.

In South Africa, it is a requirement by all primary schools to have Grade R classes as part of the foundation phase. Majority of primary schools have Grade R classes adjacent to them, those that do not have Grade R may have the challenge of space to accommodate such classes. The statement outlined in the seven pillars of the EWP5 (DoE 2001: 4) registered the concern of the DBE about the prevalence of children who repeat grades, drop out of school or need remedial services due to a lack of a good foundation for learning in the first months and years of their lives. It then became necessary for the South African government to improve the quality and access to ECD programmes. High levels of increased budget allocations and political commitment were then directed to the services for South African ECD children as compared to the past apartheid regime (Biersteker 2010: 3).

Access to quality ECD programmes was increased by the DoE to provide South Africa's youngest citizens with a solid foundation for lifelong learning and development in the 21st century. To universalise ECD programmes, especially Grade R (Pre-Grade 1 class), classes were established as part of foundation phase in South African schools. The staff and the management dealing with early learning, in particular, school-based Grade R classes needed to be trained and equipped for quality outcomes.

However, the contention in this study is that not enough emphasis is put on the quality of supervision and support for practitioners (teachers of these Grade R classes). Grade R classes situated in primary schools in the Gauteng North District Office are supervised by the foundation phase Head of Department (HoD) under the leadership of the principal. These schools are the focus of this study. Even though there are ECD studies that have been conducted in South Africa by Clasquin-Johnson (2011), the National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa (2008), Lenyai (2006) and the South African Institute for Distance Education (2010), there is minimal focus on the nature of supervision and support provided to practitioners for quality teaching in school-based Grade R classes.

This is the shortcoming that has prompted this study. At the same time, I wish to acknowledge the effort made by the Gauteng Department of Education

(GDE) and the University of Witwatersrand to address the issue of providing support for Grade R practitioners (GDE 2009: 181-184). This study therefore is intended to answer the following research question: '*What is the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District by the HoDs?* To be able to answer the research question the following sub questions needed to be addressed:

- *What are the benefits of supervising and supporting Grade R practitioners?*
- What are their experiences in supervising Grade R practitioners?

Research Methodology

A qualitative approach using a case study was employed to gather data. Semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis were used to collect data from purposefully selected participants. This approach was chosen as it allows interaction with participants and asking probing questions. Established strategies for real-life inquiry as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Hoepf, 2007: 4), was exploited as a research design. The target population of the study consisted of school principals, Heads of Department (HoD), and Grade R practitioners from the five selected primary schools of Gauteng North District, Department of Education. The criteria for selection of participants has been based on the following: defined as disadvantaged based on the low socio economic status, i.e. rural, semi–urban and farm schools. The study used the constructivism and interpretivists approaches. Wahyuni, (2012: 71) and Creswell, (2014:11) suggests that constructivism and interpretivism are connected and are hardly separated. Constructivists'/ interpretivists' paradigm is based on the principle that the world is made up of multiple realities that can best be studied as a whole, while at the same time recognising the significance of the context in which the understandings occur, Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007:27). By adopting constructivist/interpretivists framework in this study, the researcher was able to ask open ended questions which allowed participants to construct individual meaning of their experiences of the phenomena at hand. Typical of studies conducted within constructivists/interpretivists' paradigm, the researcher depended on the views of the participants regarding the phenomenon under study to deepen understanding and also interpret participants' experiences (Creswell, 2014:20.16). Thematic data analysis was used. The theory of Kadushin – Agency Model of Supervision (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014:18) underpins this study.

Theory of Kadushin – Agency Model of Supervision

This study made use of Kadushin's agency model of supervision that describes a supervisor as someone who has a delegated authority to enhance, evaluate and coordinate supervisees' on-the-job performance s/he is accountable for, (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014:13). In educational supervision the primary issue for Kadushin is the HoD knowing how to perform their job well and to be accountable for work performed, and developing skills through learning and feedback. The objective being to increase understanding and improve skill levels by encouraging reflection on, and exploration of the work (Tsui 2005:13). In implementing their responsibilities, the supervisors according to Scott and Furrow (2008:37), should perform administrative, educational, and supportive functions in interaction with the supervisee in the context of a positive relationship.

In supportive supervision the primary issues are teacher morale and job satisfaction, as well as dealing with challenges. Workplace challenges can affect work performance and the achievement of outcomes. The HoD's role is therefore to help the Grade R practitioners overcome challenges more effectively and provide re-assurance and emotional support. This theory emphasises supervisor's knowledge of on-the-job performance; accountability for work performed, and development of skills through learning and provision of feedback.

Findings

Grade R practitioners, HoDs and principals provided valuable insights into their experiences of supervision and support of Grade R classroom practices in primary schools of the previously marginalised communities. The findings were that: HoDs' supervision of Grade R practitioners was not regularly and effectively carried out because of their lack of Grade R knowledge and practices. Responses from Heads of Departments regarding support to practitioners are that they are overloaded with the work in middle management. While they are class teachers, they are not capacitated in Grade R practitioner support.

Similar to the challenges experienced by HoDs, Grade R practitioners received minimal support or guidance, and were never empowered by HoDs as their supervisors. Although there are some of the Grade R practitioners who managed to rise above these challenges, it became clear that most of them, that require professional development, do not get the needed support in actual teaching skills.

There were few practitioners who projected some pedagogical leadership, where improvement of classroom layout was noted in some of the classes, and collaboration amongst practitioners was present through the use of team work.

Some practitioners developed themselves by enrolling with accredited higher institutions to attain appropriate academic qualifications in ECD. However,

many of these practitioners, after studying privately and obtaining their qualifications, would leave teaching in Grade R classes for better opportunities in other foundation phase classes such as Grade 1 to 3. In South Africa, compared to other professionally qualified teachers, Grade R teachers are paid a stipend less than a living wage. This move of Grade practitioners to other grades left the ECD sector poorer, because they would leave the sector with their vast experience that they accumulated over the years teaching in Grade R classes.

Implications

Untrained HoDs in ECD pedagogy and lack of instructional leadership compromised the quality of teaching in Grade R classes. Lack of appropriate supervision leads to non-improvement in practitioners' contribution in achieving the school or organisational goals. It is recommended that incompetent teachers are either removed or asked to undertake further studies as a matter of some urgency so that at least minimal standards of quality education can be maintained.

It is recommended that incompetent teachers are either removed or asked to undertake further studies as a matter of urgency so that minimal standards of quality education can be maintained. The level at which the Grade R practitioners are appointed needs to be improved, from matriculation (completion of Grade 12) to a professional qualification in ECD, such as a three-year Diploma or four-year Degree. It is also recommended that experienced Grade R practitioners be supported to undertake additional training for managerial positions and be considered for Grade R supervision and support. The Deputy Principal should also be involved in monitoring and supporting HoD's Grade R work.

Discussion

For supervision and support of practitioners at school to be successful, there should be collaboration and continuous communication between the supervisor and the supervisee (Sills, Rowse & Emerson 2016: 313). HoDs are middle managers in schools and are responsible for developing and supporting foundation phase teachers from Grade R to 3. From ECD studies conducted in SA (Clasquin-Johnson 2011), the National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa (2008), Lenyai (2006) and South African Institute for Distance Education (2010), there is minimal focus on supervision and support to Grade R practitioners.

The Grade R practitioners are therefore required to engage in supervisory functions as part of their daily routine and to create conducive teaching conditions for learners. HoDs play an instructional role in supporting and supervising practitioners in their day to day classroom practices, namely: teaching and learn-

ing, content training and practical implementation of ECD policies. They should give recommendations about:

- professional development matters,
- positive criticism and feedback about performance, and
- Information on training needs (Rodd 2006: 45).

Mahfooz and Hovde (2010:7) define supervision as overseeing of individuals periodically and using evaluation outcomes to direct and enlighten action of those overseen. They make a distinction between, inspection, supervision, evaluation, and support. The 2009 review by Mahfooz and Hovde states that some teachers (particularly new teachers) may attend induction programmes organised by mentors or experienced teachers. Mentoring periods and induction programmes have gained recognition for being able to improve teacher retention and quality. In South Africa, the question may be: who should do the induction of the newly-appointed Grade R practitioners? Should it be their immediate supervisors (HoDs) or the Senior Education Specialists (Districts officials), and do the responsible HoDs and officials have experience of Grade R practices?

Supervisors are expected to "provide instructional leadership to practitioners based on the increased attention given to the quality of ECD programme and curriculum and instruction" (Rous 2004: 266). A bone of contention here is whether the School Management Teams (SMT) are experienced in Grade R practices in such a way that they can provide supervision that will impact practitioners' classroom practices positively.

Supervision is a process aimed at supporting, assuring and developing the knowledge, skills and values of the practitioners. It provides accountability for both the supervisor and supervisee in exploring their practice and performance. Supervision enhances and provides evidence for annual performance review or appraisal. HoDs should therefore be knowledgeable and understand ECD policies and practices in order for them to be in a better position to provide required supervision and support. If there is quality supervision and support to practitioners, teaching and learning in Grade R classes will be enhanced.

Conclusions

The challenge with supervision and support of Grade R practitioners is that untrained HoDs in ECD pedagogy are unable to deliver the supervision and support expected of them. Through proper supervision and support there will be: effective use of good problem-solving skills; reflection about the support and supervisory process they received; development of confidence about the work they do and knowledge development of both practitioners and HoDs.

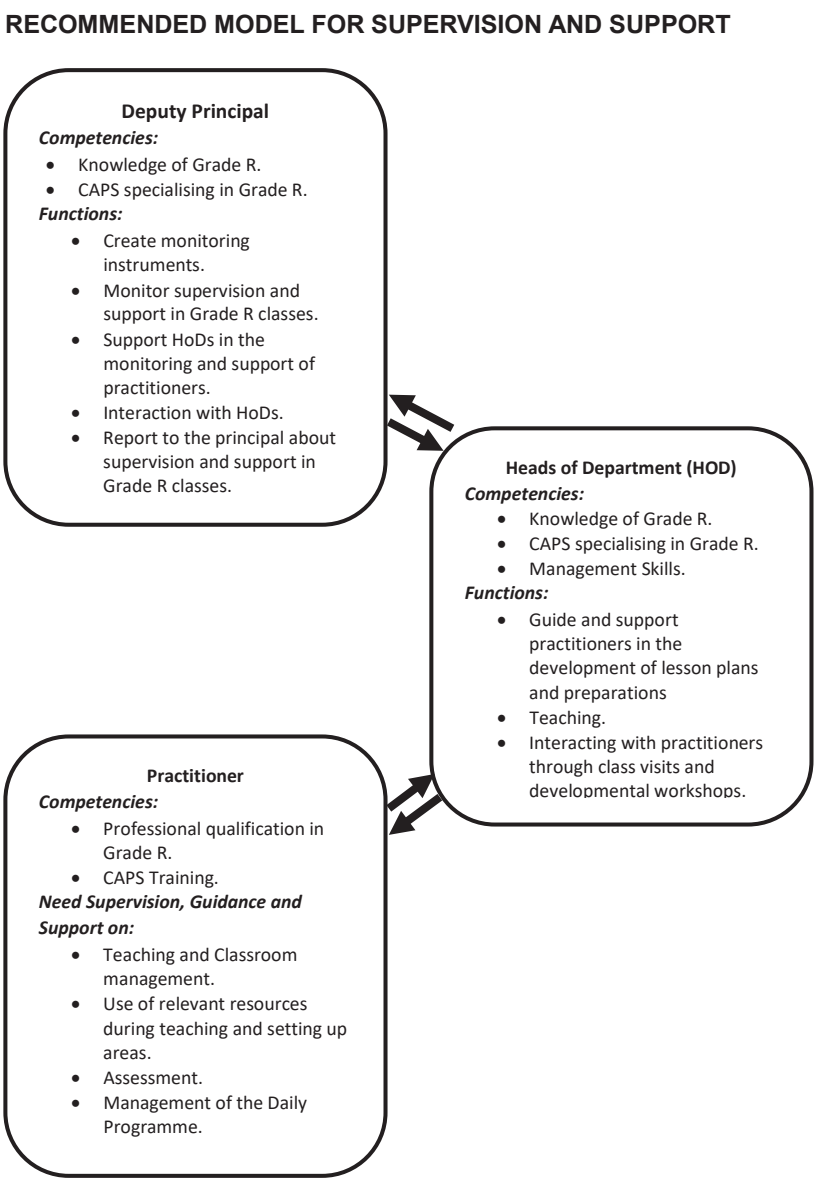

Figure 1. The structural representation of the recommended model of supervision and support.

It is important that supervision and support be prioritised as part of the human resource development for ECD. This will have a positive influence on the quality of teaching and learning. Deputy Principals, HoDs and Grade R practitioners have to work as a team and coordinate their efforts to enhance the supervision and support of Grade R classroom practices.

Recommendations

The DoE in South Africa should put policies guiding the supervision and support of Grade R practitioners in place. HoDs need to be trained in ECD pedagogy and instructional leadership in order to assist Grade R practitioners. Government to fully subsidise school based and community Grade R practitioners to acquire the relevant qualification. Officials at the DoE at District level, the HoDs and Deputy Principals need to collaborate in supervising and supporting Grade R practitioners. Appointment of Grade R practitioners to be based on the relevant Grade R qualifications i.e. Professional ECD 3-year Diploma or 4-year Degree.

The functions and competences of the Deputy Principal in relation to the roles she/he can play in supervising and supporting Grade R activities are represented in the first block of the structure. It is expected of the Deputy Principal to monitor and support the HoDs in their role of monitoring and supporting activities in Grade R classes in order to improve the quality of teaching in Grade R classes.

The second block characterises the competencies and the functions of the HoD for supervising and supporting of the practitioners' activities in the class rooms. HoDs are the key people in the whole structure. Their role is to make sure that they assist and guide practitioners in the planning and presentation of lessons, monitor assessment of learners, using the correct scale, and make effective use of resources. They should also make sure that routine activities are correctly carried out by doing class visits.

The HoDs' support is expected to improve the practitioners' performance to that of good quality. HoDs should be a functional link between the practitioners and the Deputy Principal by reporting to the Deputy Principal on their work in Grade R. To ease the HoDs' workload, practitioners could also be developed and appointed to be HoDs for the Grade R practitioners based on the classroom experience they have. To prepare them, they could also be trained on the managerial aspect or leadership roles.

In the last block the author presents the proposed competencies and areas of needs for the practitioners. The nature of help that must be accorded the practitioner who has to produce learners envisaged in the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document is reflected. Grade R practitioners should also be the type of teachers envisaged by South African Cur-

riculum. Communication should flow between the practitioners and the HoDs, and Sullivan and Glanz (2013:41) argue the roles of HoD, Deputy Principal and Principal in supervision to be the process of engaging teachers in instructional dialogue for the purpose of improving teaching and increasing learner performance.

New Developments

Currently, the Gauteng Department of Education has started to avail bursaries for Grade R practitioners to acquire the 3 year ECD Professional Qualification. The first group will be graduating this year in 2018. There has since been two intakes of HoDs training into Grade R Introductory Programme.

Future Research

Further research could be conducted on: the nature of training provided to practitioners and HoDs, its impact in the quality of teaching in Grade R classes, comparative practices in other provinces (South Africa has nine provinces and the study was conducted only in one province, Gauteng). Further research to establish if the Grade R introductory training provided to the HoDs is aiding them in providing instructional leadership, supervision and support practices in Grade R effectively.

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Mentoring of graduate teachers by educational leaders in early childhood settings: A systematic review of leadership studies from Australia and Finland

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Abstract

Mentoring of graduated teachers is becoming an important component of developing an effective workforce in the Early Childhood (EC) sector in Australia. However, a national mentoring system is yet to be established. The purpose of this systematic review is to gain insights about mentoring available to new EC graduates, and to consider these within the context of leadership research conducted in Australia and Finland. This review uses systematic review methods from the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI) and its Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) to highlight the nature of mentoring available and the role of educational leaders in mentoring novice practitioners. It raises implications for mentoring involving the educational leaders in Australia.

German Abstract

Mentoring von frisch ausgebildeten pädagogischen Fachkräften ist ein wichtiger Teil einer effektiven Strategie zur Qualifizierung des Personals im Bereich der australischen Kindertagesbetreuung geworden. Allerdings ist die Verankerung eines nationalen Mentoringssystems noch unklar. Der Zweck dieses systematischen Reviews war es, Einblicke in Mentoringssysteme für Berufseinsteigerinnen in der australischen Kindertagesbetreuung zu erhalten und diese mit dem System in Finnland zu vergleichen. Unter Nutzung des EPPI-Zentrums und seines CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) wurden zehn relevante Studien über Leitungskräfte, Fachschulabsolventen und Mentoringssysteme aus Australien und Finnland für diesen Review ausgewählt. Er stellt fehlende Definitionen und Verständnis für über Leitungsaufgaben und Mentoring in Australien heraus. Der Überblick ergab keine Studien, die über verschiedene Typen des Mentoring, Arbeitsbedingungen, Dauer oder Qualität der Programme Auskunft geben. Weiterhin ergab der Review kritische Implikationen für weitere Forschung in diesem besonderen Bereich.

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219905

Finnish Abstract

Vastavalmistuneiden opettajien ohjaaminen on tulossa tärkeäksi osatekijäksi tehokkaan työvoiman kehittämistä varhaiskasvatuksen sektorilla Australiassa. Kansallinen mentorointijärjestelmä ei ole vielä kuitenkaan vakiintunut käytäntö. Tämän systemaattisen katsauksen tarkoituksena on koota tietoa vastavalmistuneille varhaiskasvatuksen saatavilla olevasta mentoroinnista, ja tarkastella niitä Australiassa ja Suomessa viime vuosina suoritetun johtajuustutkimuksen kontekstissa. Tässä katsauksessa on käytetty systemaattista katsausmenetelmää Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre:stä [EPPI] ja sen Critical Appraisal Skills Programme [CASP] on käytetty korostamaan saatavilla olevan mentoroinnin luonnetta ja koulutussalan johtajien roolia vastavalmistuneiden ammatinharjoittajien mentoroinnissa varhaiskasvatuksen piirissä. Luku nostaa ajatuksia mentoroinnin kehittämisestä Australian varhaiskasvatuksessa.

Introduction

The mentoring of graduated EC teachers by educational leaders is the main-focus of this systematic review. Inclusion of mentoring in national policy established under the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), is seen as an important endorsement of the need to support new EC graduates. Specifically, mentoring has been included in the *National Quality Standard* (NQS) as a part of Quality Area 7- Governance and Leadership (ACECQA, 2017). Mentoring is included in the role of an educational leader, established under national policy and included within the NQS as noted (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). There are many reasons for this appointment being established, including the implementation of national policy reforms and emerging research, as will be discussed in this paper. This sets the context for the discussion of mentoring of new graduates in Australia.

Historically, administrative and management functions have dominated the work of those such as centre directors who held leadership roles. The focus on educational leadership is a relatively new conceptualisation. Since 2012, it is a mandatory requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011) and the *Education and Care Services Law Act 2010* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010) to have an educational leader in every EC centre.

According to the *Research Report on the Early Childhood Development Workforce* (Prepared for the Australian government by the Productivity Commission (PC) in 2011), retention and recruitment are the critical problems due to poor wage and working conditions. In Australia, mentoring is perceived to be an effective workforce and leadership strategy whereby experienced and qualified teachers support new graduates by sharing their pedagogical experience and knowledge (Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Handley & Shepherd, 2017).

In the recent legislative changes in teacher accreditation system in the state of New South Wales (NSW), all new or returning teachers need to be allocated an Accreditation Supervisor, to work towards their accreditation (NSW Education Standards Authority, 2018). This reinforces the importance of mentoring and the need for management support in providing ongoing professional development.

Mentoring by educational leaders has become a critical part of professional development and quality assurance. International studies (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2012; Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2010) found that the role of an educational leader, also known as a pedagogical leader (Sergiovanni, 1998), has been highlighted as being significant in mentoring teachers for leading quality education. Sergiovanni (1998) defines a pedagogical leader as one who "invests in capacity building by developing social and academic capital for students, and intellectual and professional capital for teachers" (p. 38). These sentiments are reflected in ACECQA guidelines (2018) which describe the role of the educational leader as consisting of "building the knowledge, skills and professionalism of educators... building a culture of professional inquiry with educators, coordinators and staff members to develop professional knowledge" (p. 2).

Globally, the EC sector in Finland has been historically regarded as having a number of strengths in the provision of high quality programs. For instance, the level of qualifications, teachers' autonomy and professional training are set at a high standard (Taguma, Litjens & Makowiecki, 2012). According to the *Act on Qualification Requirement for Social Welfare Professionals* (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2005), in Finland a kindergarten teacher must hold either a Bachelor of EC Education or Welfare. In contrast to Finland, the Australian EC sector comprises of diverse qualifications. Australian practitioners may obtain qualifications ranging between a vocational Certificate that could be completed within a few weeks to a three or four year Bachelor degree or a two year Masters of Teaching degree (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). It is important to find out what type of strategies and systems of mentoring practitioners are being established and their effectiveness in supporting new graduate teachers entering the EC sector.

Methods

The objectives of this systematic review was to gain insights into mentoring of EC practitioners available in Australia and Finland, particularly the educational leader's role in mentoring, and the benefits of mentoring. The EPPI-Centre (Gough, Oliver & Thomas, 2013) and the CASP (CASP, 2017) were used to evaluate the quality and relevance of studies.

Search strategy

Five major electronic databases were used: ERIC, Tayler & Francis Online, Elsevier Science Direct Journals, Informit Australian Public Affair and EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier. All studies were searched based on these key words: mentoring, graduate teacher, educational leader (pedagogical leader) and qualifications. Synonyms of each key word were used to identify and expand relevant publications. The search was completed in June 2017 as a part of the author's postgraduate study at Macquarie University in Australia.

Date extraction

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Mata Analyses (PRISM) flow diagram (PRISMA, 2015) was used in the selection process. As shown in Figure 1, initially 2242 identified studies were found in multiple databases and another 86 articles were added through other sources. In the first screening, all titles and abstracts were screened and a total of 329 studies were identified. Duplicate research studies were also removed. In the next step, 329 studies were examined for their relevance and appropriateness of the review using inclusion criteria. A total of fifteen full-text, peer-reviewed research articles remained in the analysis of this study.

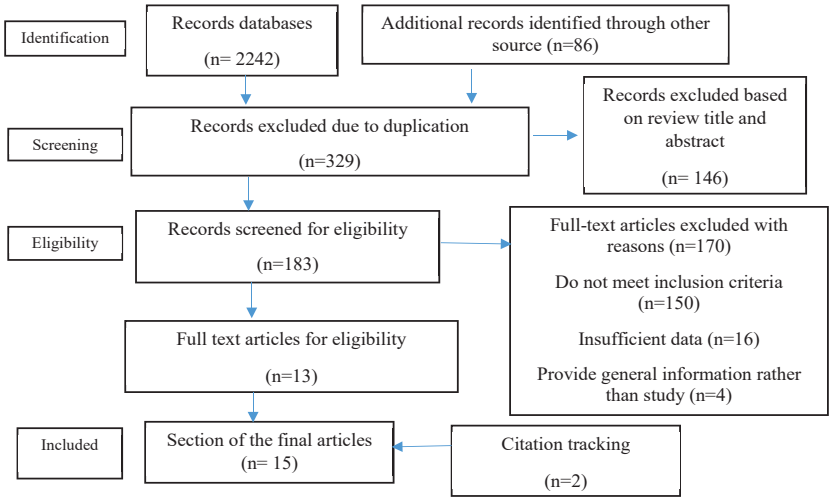

Figure 1. PRISMA Procedure

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

This review focused on articles referring to research conducted in Australia and Finland. This review also excluded studies that were published before 2012, when the appointment of educational leaders became a mandatory requirement in Australia. Table 1 indicates the inclusion-exclusion criteria used in selecting articles for this review.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Eligible articles	Excluded articles
1) Published journal articles from Australia and Finland	1) Published journal articles from countries other than Australia and Finland
2) English language	2) School
3) Peer-reviewed journal	3) Family day care
4) Relationship with NGTs and ELs/ PLs	4) After school and vacation care
5) Mentoring system and length in EC	5) Curriculum and development
6) Qualifications of the ELs/PLs	6) Studies published before 2011
7) Interview of NGTs regarding mentoring and outcomes	7) Books
8) Primary research studies	

Notes:
EL= Educational Leaders in Australia;
PL= Pedagogical Leaders in Finland. These are equivalent jobs with different terms
NGT= Newly Graduated Teacher

Quality assessment

During the assessment process, the checklists from CASP (2017) and PRISMA (2017) were used to assess the fifteen selected studies against the set principle questions and criteria. The PRISMA checklist (2017) was used to rate each study. The fifteen studies that had identified specific research purposes and explicit methodologies received higher marks for strong conclusions and findings.

Data analysis

Following the EPPI-Centre's guidelines (Gough et al, 2013), a combination of coding and mapping was used to collect information. As detailed in Table 2, all fifteen studies used non-randomised sampling techniques such as snowballing and purposive sampling to collect data. The number of participants in these were

highly variable with the majority comprising of a small number of participants (5 -13) to large numbers of over 100+ who completed surveys and reflected a mix of qualifications and other characteristics.

Table 2. Research publications selected for this review

Author/Year/ Country	Methods	Participants
1. Barber, Cohrssen & Church (2014) Australia	Survey	**N=9** Kindergarten teachers; N=2 NGTs • Roles: Kindergarten teachers • Qualifications: Bachelor degree (n=6); post-graduate (n=3); Diploma (n=2) • Ages: between 18 and 30 years old
2. Colmer, Waniganayake & Field (2014) Australia	Case study Survey Interviews Reflective research journal	• Centre A: n=16; Director/ EL (EC degree); ECT (n=3); Diploma (n=7); Certificate (n=5) No EC qualifications (n=1) • Centre B: n=16; Director/ EL (non EC degree); ECT (n=0); Diploma (n=6); Certificate (n=8) No EC qualifications (n=2) • Ages: not specified
3. Semman & Madden (2015) Australia	Survey Interview with ELs Focus groups with ELs & group with non-ELs	**N= 206**: 96 % of female and 4 % of male EC practitioners • ACT: 85% were born in Australia; 100% speak English at home; EC Diploma =37.5%; EC Degree = 29.2%; Masters = 4.2%. ELs=47.1% • NSW: 76% were born in Australia and 98% speak English at home; EC Diploma =18.3%; EC Degree = 54%; Masters = 20%. ELs= 75% • Ages: between 21-66 years old
4. Grarock & Morrissey (2013) Australia	Interviews	**N=11**: Female kindergarten teachers • Roles: none (n=9); deputy (n=1); owner (n=1); coordinator (n=1) • Qualifications: Degree from within Australia (n=6); degree from overseas (n=5); Studied a Diploma prior to degree (n=5) • Ages: not specified

Author/Year/ Country	Methods	Participants
5. Hadley, Waniganayake & Shepherd. (2015) Australia	Interviews	**N=25** Participants from a total 5 EC organisations; • Roles: unknown • Qualifications: Master's degree (n=3); Bachelor's degree (n=13); Diploma (n=7); Certificate III (n=2) • Ages: not specified
6. Heikka, Halttunen & Waniganayake (2016b). Finland	Interviews	**N=13 Participants from 3 EC organisation** • Roles and qualifications: From each centre, EC teacher (n=1), Child care nurse (n=2), Director (n=1 who held a degree) as well as Pedagogical Leader (n=1) from one EC organisation • Ages: not specified
7. Hujala & Eskelinen (2013). Finland	Questionnaires	**N=90** • Roles: Full time directors (n=56); Part-time directors (n=18) in EC organisations; leaders (n=16) who work in offices • Qualifications: unknown • Ages: not specified
8. Hujala et al., (2016) Finland, Japan & Singapore	Questionnaires	**N=100** • Roles: EC principals/centre directors • Qualifications: unknown • Ages: not specified
9. Krieg, Davis & Smith (2014) Australia	Questionaries Record analysis	**N=12 stories randomly from EC practitioners** • Roles: EC teacher; directors; managers from EC organisations; school leaders from birth to eight • Qualifications: unknown • Ages: not specified
10. Kupila, Ukkonen-Mikkola & Rantala (2017) Finland	Narrative analysis Interviews	**N=36** Finnish preschool teachers who was part of mentor training participated in narrative analysis; **N=5** of those teachers participated in the group interview • Roles: EC teachers • Qualifications: bachelor degree • Ages: not specified

Author/Year/ Country	Methods	Participants
11. Morrissey & Nolan (2015) Australia	Interview	**N**=unknown • Roles: representatives of mentoring programs; EC students • Qualifications: unknown • Ages: not specified
12. Nolan, Morrissey & Dumenden (2013) Australia	Survey Record analysis	**N=61** responses from NGTs and professional isolated teachers • Roles: EC teachers at Kindergartens or Long Day Care organisations • Qualifications: EC degree • Ages: not specified
13. Nolan & Molla (2016) Australia	Record analysis Interviews Focus group discussion	**N**= mentees (n=60-84) and mentors (n=21-26); group discussion (n=15) • Roles: EC coordinators; managers and EC teachers • Qualifications: EC degree • Ages: not specified
14. Onnismaa, Tahkokallio & Kalliala (2015) Finland	Survey	**N= 216** (only 57.4% responded) Finnish students • Roles: Students • Qualifications: enrolled to complete an EC Bachelor degree • Ages: not specified
15. Rouse & Spradbury (2016) Australia	Interviews	**N=5** ELs • Roles: room leader; floater and deputy • Qualifications: Postgraduate to Certificate III • Ages: not specified

Findings

i) Benefits of mentoring

The review found that mentoring has numerous outcomes in increasing graduate teachers' professional confidence (Barber, Cohrssen, & Church, 2014; Nolan, Morrissey, & Dumenden, 2013), improving teacher retention (Onnismaa, Tahkokallio, & Kalliala, 2015), overcoming professional isolation (Nolan et al., 2013; Nolan & Molla, 2016) and enhancing outcomes for children through understanding of curriculum and regulatory requirements (Barber et al., 2014). Mentoring can influence the development of teacher competence and profes-

sionalisation of the sector, and enable teachers to become future leaders (Morrissey & Nolan, 2015).

Four Australian studies (Barber et al., 2014; Morrissey & Nolan, 2015; Nolan et al., 2013; Nolan & Molla, 2016) and two Finnish studies (Kupila, Ukkonen-Mikkola, & Rantala, 2017; Onnismma et al., 2015) found that there were a number of benefits in mentoring for both new graduates and educational leaders. The study by Nolan and Molla (2016) was based on EC teachers who were involved in the State-wide Professional Mentoring Program. This program was funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Training for mentors and new graduate teachers through face to face and online sessions. By the completion of the program, the teachers who reported a lack of confidence in their roles gained self-confidence. Likewise, Australian and Finnish leaders found it useful to reconceptualise their roles as co-learners through external training (Krieg, Davis, & Smith, 2014; Kupila et al., 2017). They identified mentoring as a peer-support strategy and explored the ways to support new graduates.

ii) Educational leaders' mentoring responsibilities

Three Australian-based studies (Fleet, Soper, Semann, & Madden, 2015; Krieg et al., 2014; Rouse & Spradbury, 2016) found that many educational leaders were uncertain about their leadership responsibilities. Fleet et al. (2015) found only 58% of the educational leaders were given specific job descriptions by their management, and most of those educational leaders were appointed by their management without explicit agreement about their responsibilities. It was notable that their past experience was slightly favoured over qualifications when appointed as an educational leader.

In contrast, the Finnish studies showed that pedagogical leadership, was seen as the most important leadership responsibility (Heikka, Halttunen, & Waniganayake, 2016b; Hujala & Eskelinen, 2013; Hujala et al., 2016). The majority of childcare nurses with vocational certificates believed pedagogical leadership to be the Kindergarten teacher's responsibility. Finnish Directors perceived pedagogical leadership encompassing a strong pedagogical knowledge and confidence to guide others to deliver quality programmes. However, the authors (Heikka et al., 2016b; Hujala & Eskelinen, 2013) pointed out that there was no formalisation of this pedagogical leadership role in Finland.

The Australiana studies (Hadley, Waniganayake & Shepheard, 2015; Nolan and Molla, 2016) found that some participants described their mentors as 'authoritarian' using a top-down approach. The graduate teachers in the following studies (Barber et al., 2014; Colmer, Waniganayake, & Field, 2014) reported that a desire for their mentors to accept graduate teachers' new ideas. Moreover, new graduates preferred a trailed mentoring program for their individual needs and

interests. This result implies that educational leaders need to review their mentoring approach.

iii) Type of research on EC mentoring

This review investigated the length and type of mentoring available to new graduates. However, none of the studies found any evidence of mentoring specifically available to new graduates by educational leaders in Australia or Finland respectively. There were only three studies reviewed that focused specifically on mentoring and the benefits of mentoring for new graduates (Morrissey & Nolan, 2015; Nolan et al., 2013; Nolan & Molla, 2016). These Australian participants included some mentors or teachers who were professional isolated due to geographical distance. The studies were conducted on a small scale and used either purposeful or snowball sampling, making findings difficult to generalise to the whole EC sector (Johnston & Christensen, 2012). Importantly, these mentoring programs were provided by external training providers and not by the educational leaders. Furthermore, two of the Australian studies (Hadley et al., 2015; Morrissey & Nolan, 2015) addressed the lack of formal examination of external mentoring programs, indicating a need for clarification of quality programs and outcomes for educational leaders.

Discussion

There is a need to review the conceptualisation of mentoring and the identification of mentors as a necessary first step in planning for the future development. This is important for beginning teachers in their early years of employment as they are required to make a rapid transition to pedagogical processionals with an increased amount of legislative responsibility.

Conceptualisation of mentoring

There were many factors which impacted effective mentoring of new EC graduates. The lack of understanding or awareness of the importance of mentoring can influence the employment of new graduate teachers (Barber et al., 2014). It was found that Australian participants had diverse needs connected to their qualifications, interests and experience (Hadley et al., 2015). There was also a gap between mentoring and mentee's needs (Morrissey & Nolan, 2015).

In acknowledging mentoring as an effective professional development, Barber et al. (2014) concluded:

> *The creation of professional learning communities and networks should be a deliberate goal of the professional learning process in order to support early childhood educators' reconceptualisation of their pedagogical practice and to facilitate the achievement of high consensus, high-quality EC programs. (p. 26)*

In contemporary EC contexts, mentoring should be a collaborative practice between the mentor and mentee (Kupila et al., 2017). Nolan and Molla (2017) view mentoring as a social process, shifting from a notion of mentor as superior to one of collegial. Cohesive mentoring relationships are the key for transformative change in new graduates to become future leaders.

Mentoring responsibilities of Educational Leaders

Finnish leaders understood the importance of pedagogical leadership. However, they found it difficult to find time away from administrative work to focus on pedagogical leadership (Hujala et al., 2016). Australian educational leaders wanted more recognition for their roles and hours available for them to mentor graduate teachers and lead a quality curriculum (Fleet et al., 2015; Grarock & Morrissey, 2013; Hadley et al., 2015).

Findings highlight two crucial issues which impact the mentoring capabilities of educational leaders in Australia. Firstly, there is currently no formal requirement for qualifications required to perform this leadership role. As a result, numerous educational leaders have been appointed based on their experience rather than on their qualifications, (Fleet et al., 2015) and many have not been confident in their own capacity to perform the role (Grarock & Morrissey, 2013; Krieg et al., 2014; Rouse & Spradbury, 2016).

The recent national and international studies (OECD, 2012; Productivity Commission, 2011) conclude that having highly qualified EC teachers makes the EC sector stronger and more sustainable. Having qualified mentors assists new graduates to connect their prior pedagogical knowledge to the EC setting (Kupila et al., 2017) and to enhance their abilities and confidence (Morrissey & Nolan, 2015). The findings assert that mentoring should be delivered by the most qualified and experienced pedagogical expertise, educational leaders.

Support from management

Nolan and Molla (2017) define Bourdieu's concept of habitus as "guides, actions and interactions in a field (EC sector) of practice" (p. 4). They perceive the structure and culture of EC organisations as a crucial factor that influences the professional development and personal growth of practitioners, including graduate teachers. Their study proposes EC leaders to consider the structure of the organisation to enable educational leaders to mentor other practitioners as teacher leaders.

The findings of this review suggest that EC centre directors in both Australia and Finland had multiple issues which constrained them as pedagogical leaders. It is important for EC leaders to consider how their mentoring is incorporated within their centre's management structures, allocation of hours and explicit leadership responsibilities. There should be more clarity in the way

leadership responsibilities are distributed among all practitioners from the classroom to management level. Some studies from Finland (Heikka, Halttunen & Waniganayake, 2016a; Keski-Rauska, Fonsén, Aronen & Riekkola, 2016) affirm that having shared responsibilities can enable the creation of a learning culture. With increased responsibilities on centre directors, it is critical for all leaders to reframe leadership and organisational model through distributed leadership which enacts the role of the educational leader and development of learning culture (O'Gorman & Hard, 2013).

Management support for mentoring could be endorsed through access to professional development and establishing policies on mentoring in the budget and philosophy statement (Nolan & Molla, 2017). Providing networking opportunities with mentors enables graduate teachers and educational leaders to engage in continuous professional development. This review found the effectiveness of developing professional networks outside of the workplace or attending professional training increases teachers' confidence. Centre management must also provide educational leaders with resources so they can develop their pedagogical expertise. These suggestions align with the *National Quality Framework* (ACECQA, 2017) and the expected responsibilities of educational leaders in Australia.

Limitations

This review was not able to locate specific studies which examined mentoring that was available for graduated teachers delivered by educational leaders. The findings of this review cannot be generalised to the whole population of graduate teachers and educational leaders because the structure of organisations, locations and qualifications were highly variable in the research that were reviewed. This review included research completed within two countries that are very different from each other in terms of their EC policies, history, social and economic status. These multiple differences mean that findings of the Finnish system cannot be easily transferred to the Australian EC sector.

Conclusions

In order to recruit and retain those with strong leadership potential, more attention is needed for mentoring of new graduates. The results indicate an urgent need for the Australian Government to review mentoring programmes, strategies, funding, and resources for EC practitioners. This also includes a thorough examination of mentoring of new graduates, to establish a clear national guidelines for educational leaders. When appointing educational leaders, qualification and pedagogical confidence should be required. Further, EC leaders need to

analyse own leadership and organisational structure and to clarify the responsibilities of educational leaders through mutual understanding and collaborative practice among all practitioners. This will help establish a nurturing learning organisation, invest in aspiring leaders, and contribute to long term quality outcomes.

This review highlights the limited nature of research on mentoring in the Australian EC sector and the absence of research focusing on mentoring new graduates. Further studies in this particular area should be conducted using experimental and longitudinal methodologies. Through these implications, the Australian EC sector can strengthen and support future leaders, and influence future national policies and quality practice.

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Knowledge transfer in German early childhood education settings: the role of leaders

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English Abstract

In spite of tremendous efforts for training and further education for educators in ECE-settings in Germany recent studies revealed that pedagogical quality is the same average or low as 20 years before. The study is based on the assumption that the transfer of knowledge from training is the "missing link" to explain these unsatisfactory results. A successful transfer of knowledge requires leadership skills to create a learning environment on the job after the training. According to the theoretical model of transfer research by Baldwin and Ford, data on trainees, training designs and transfer environment were collected in two training settings for ECE-educators and primary school teachers. The data revealed a lack of motivation for transfer by both leaders and trainees, poor encouragement to explore new methods in practice and not-sufficient opportunities to change routines. As a consequence leaders should be qualified to effectively take up knowledge and methods acquired in training and further education to improve the pedagogical quality in their centres.

German Abstract

Trotz der enormen Anstrengung in der Fort- und Weiterbildung von Erzieherinnen und Erziehern in deutschen Kindertageseinrichtungen ergaben neue Studien, dass die pädagogische Qualität in den Kitas ähnlich mittelmäßig bis schlecht ausfällt wie vor 20 Jahren. Die Studie basiert auf der Annahme, dass der Transfer von Wissen aus Fortbildungen der „Missing Link" zur Erklärung dieser fortgesetzt negativen Ergebnisse sein könnte. Eine erfolgreiche Umsetzung des Wissens erfordert Leitungskompetenzen zur Schaffung einer adäquaten Lernumgebung im Anschluss an Fortbildungen. Entsprechend dem theoretischen Modell aus der Transferforschung nach Baldwin und Ford wurden Daten über Trainees, Trainingsdesigns und Transferumgebungen in zwei Fortbildungssettings – mit Kita-Erzieherinnen und Erziehern und Grundschullehrkräften – gesammelt. Die Daten ergaben eine fehlende Motivation für die Umsetzung des Gelernten sowohl bei den Fortbildungsteilnehmerinnen und -teilnehmern als auch ihren Leitungskräften, wenig Ermutigung durch die Leitung und die Teams, neue Methoden in der Praxis zu erproben und unzureichende Gelegenheiten, Alltagsroutinen zu verändern. Als Konsequenz sollten Leitungskräfte geschult werden, neu erworbenes Wissen und neue Methoden aus Fort- und Weiterbildung aufzugreifen, um die pädagogische Qualität in den Kitas zu verbessern.

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219906

Finnish Abstract

Valtavista varhaiskasvattajien koulutuksen ja täydennyskoulutuksen satsauksista huolimatta viimeaikaiset tutkimukset paljastavat, että pedagoginen laatu on Saksassa samalla tasolla tai heikompaa kuin 20 vuotta sitten. Tutkimus perustuu olettamukseen, että tietämyksen siirtäminen koulutuksesta on puuttuva lenkki, jolla selitetään näitä epätyydyttäviä tuloksia. Onnistunut tiedon siirtäminen vaatii johtamisen taitoja oppimisympäristön luomiseksi työpaikalla koulutuksen jälkeen. Baldwinin ja Fordin siirtotutkimuksen teoreettisen mallin mukaisesti aineistoa kerättiin koulutettavista, koulutusmalleista ja siirtoympäristöistä kahdessa koulutusympäristössä varhaiskasvattajia ja peruskoulun opettajia varten. Aineisto paljasti motivaation puutteen siirtämiseen sekä johtajien että koulutettavien puolelta, heikkoa sitoutumista uusien menetelmien tutkimiseen käytännössä sekä riittämättömiä mahdollisuuksia muuttaa rutiineja. Tämän seurauksena johtajien pitäisi olla päteviä hyödyntämään tehokkaasti koulutuksesta ja jatkokoulutuksesta hankittua tietoa ja menetelmiä parantaakseen pedagogista laatua päiväkodissaan.

Introduction

Twenty years ago an empirical study by Tietze (1998) about the quality of daycare centres for children was the first wake up call for the system of early education in Germany. The study revealed the pedagogical quality in day care centres to be average or poor – measured by rating scales translated and adapted from the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) developed by Harms, Clifford & Cryer (1998). A second impetus was given by Germany's shock performance in the world rankings of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), run by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2000, where the German school system was listed as below average (Artelt, Baumert, Julius-McElvany, & Peschar, 2003). The discussion in Germany, among other possible reasons –, came to the conclusion, that early childhood education (ECE) is a necessary first step in establishing a successful educational pathway for every child.

In the following years, the governments in the 16 German states made every effort to improve the quality of early education. This included the development of new educational concepts, programmes and standards by the states (Strehmel, 2016a). There was a growing public interest in evaluation and control of pedagogical quality in ECE-centres. Provider organisations as well as professional associations developed handbooks on quality standards and suggested ways to improve the pedagogical work in ECE centres. Large amounts of money were spent for further education and training of the educational staff in the centres, for creating new Bachelor study programmes (see www.weiterbildungsinitiative.de) and for the extension and improvement of the vocational education for the staff in the centres (Autorengruppe Fachschulwesen 2013). But in spite of all

these activities new empirical studies did not show improvements in pedagogical quality. The *National Study on Early Education and Care in Germany* (NUBBEK) again resulted in mostly poor or average quality in day care centres (Tietze et al., 2013). How could these – again upsetting – results be explained?

As a first possible reason, the lack of sufficient structural resources was identified. Compared to other European countries Germany spends less money on early education (OECD 2006, 2017) and the staff to child ratios are worse and not sufficient to enhance pedagogical quality (Viernickel, Nentwig-Gesemann, Nicolai, Schwarz, & Zenker, 2013; Viernickel & Fuchs-Rechlin, 2016). In addition the tasks, roles and necessary time resources for leaders were not clarified and support for leadership and management varied between the 16 states (Strehmel, 2016b).

A second reason for the unsatisfactory quality ratings could be that the ways leaders and teams could cope with the gap between necessary resources for a high pedagogical quality and professional demands are diverse, and many centre leaders and their teams were not sufficiently well prepared for the challenges of new programs and curricula. A qualitative study by Viernickel et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of team leadership to deal with the stresses of insufficient resources. They described the centre teams experiencing a dilemma in on the one hand balancing the demands of fulfiling curriculum requirements and at the same time responding to children's needs and on the other hand the lack of appropriate resources (especially staff and time). The researchers found three types of teams: First teams that based their pedagogical attitudes and routines on reflected core values and thus were able to integrate new requirements into their concepts and practice. Second, teams that felt under pressure from the expectations of their leaders to fulfil external requirements of the respective State's educational curriculum. They sometimes focused more on the contents of the curricula than on the needs of the children. Third, teams that rejected the new programs and requirements without being able to refer to their own pedagogical concepts. These teams were also under stress and missed having pedagogical guidance from their leaders. Thus, the different types of teams might be connected to different professional attitudes and styles of the leaders who are responsible for the pedagogical work in the centres.

A third reason to explain the stagnation in quality development in German early education is the lack of effective transfer and implementation processes to bring knowledge from training and further education into practice (Strehmel & Ulber, 2012, 2017). From the perspective of transfer research, training for the educational staff will not be effective if the learning processes which begin in the training sessions are not continued in everyday practice at the ECE settings. To work on pedagogical quality, increasing educator competence is important, but even more crucial is the reality of their actual work or practice. The readi-

ness for change, the shared discussion of goals at the centre, the preparation of training in the team and most important, the transfer environment, are factors that improve everyday practice as a result of participating in training and further education.

Organisational leaders are responsible for providing well-matched learning opportunities at the workplace and for creating an effective transfer environment. Team members have to be enabled to change routines, use new methods, reflect on their experiences and through all this contribute to organisational development and improvement. It is challenge for the centre leaders to facilitate and promote these change processes. It can be assumed that the successful guidance of transfer processes is not a matter of course, due to heterogeneous organisational cultures as well as unclarified leadership roles and competencies in German daycare centres. That is why knowledge and competencies achieved from training and further education are often stuck in individual learning processes without being transferred into practice. In spite of the focus on training and further education, the centres have not been able to develop and improve their pedagogical quality.

Our review of the literature on the attempts to improve pedagogical quality in early education in Germany indicates that managerial competence to promote the transfer process is probably the missing link to explain the stagnation of pedagogical quality in German ECE-centres. That is, there is a big gap between the tremendous efforts for professional training and further education for the staff in early childhood education and adequate implementation measures to bring newly acquired competencies into practice. This raises the question which transfer processes can be observed in ECE practice. Some theoretical considerations will sharpen this presumption.

Theoretical framwork of the study

Baldwin and Ford's (1988) well-known model from transfer research was chosen as a theoretical framework for this study. This model proposes that training transfer is influenced by three training input factors: trainees, training design and work environment. The particular goals and targets of each of these three factors will impact the results.

Individuals' motives, personal strivings and interests of the trainees, the trainers' learning targets and the organisational goals when sending employees to participate in a particular training or course have to also fit together and shape the process of learning and transfer (figure 1).

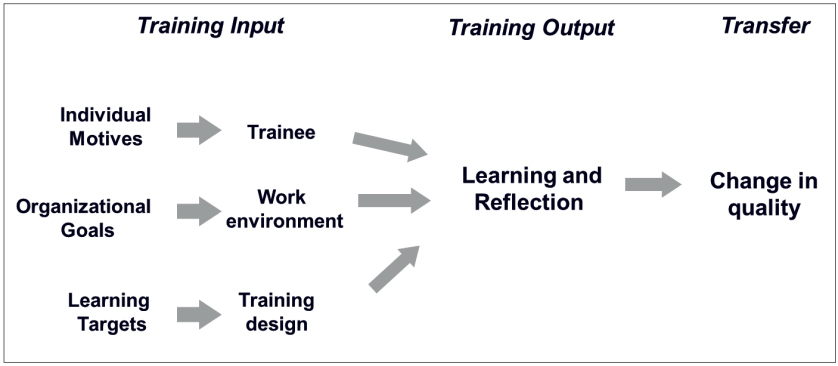

Figure 1. Extended theoretical model: variables influencing the transfer process (Baldwin & Ford, 1988, modified)

To change pedagogical quality by effective transfer of knowledge and skills acquired in training and courses, leaders should consider these factors:

- trainee characteristics, such as motivation, professional knowledge and experience and personal abilities or skills?
- training design, including considerations about transfer conditions in the trainee's workplace and appropriate content;
- the work environment with a need for innovation, opportunities for use as well as openness and support of transfer by the team and other stakeholders in the centre.

These factors influence both:

- the training output: learning, reflection and retention, and
- the training transfer in terms of generalization, maintenance and sustainability.

For an effective transfer of knowledge and skills, the training has to be well prepared by communicating and reflecting on organisational goals, personal motives and opportunities for testing and evaluating new tools and methods in practice and reflections on further implementation in the team. All these factors apply to training transfer in general, specific conditions of the pedagogical field such as meaning of communication, need for cooperation of professionals and parents may play an important role too.

From an organizational view on the process, centre leaders are responsible to organise the course of events like this (see figure 2):

The first steps are to set goals (together with the team) and conduct a training needs analysis. If a need for a personnel development measure is diagnosed, the leader selects a setting for the training: inhouse or off-the-job, the participation of a single employee, a tandem or the whole team, the selection of a trainer and a training design with a special program or course etc. Trainer, training design and employees' characteristics influence the increase of competencies as described before.

After the training, the implementation phase starts. The acquired competencies have to be taken up in the teams and realised at the workplace e.g. in new pedagogical routines. Leaders are responsible for ensuring that this happens on the job. Leaders should have an intensive look at the pedagogical planning, implementation and teamwork with regard to the acquired competencies. If product and processes are not adequate, readjustments have to be made, for example in terms of giving more resources. External support as reflection, supervision and counselling may be useful in this phase and could be a part of the training measure (Figure 2). After this process, an advancement in the educational practice, matching the institutions need, can be expected.

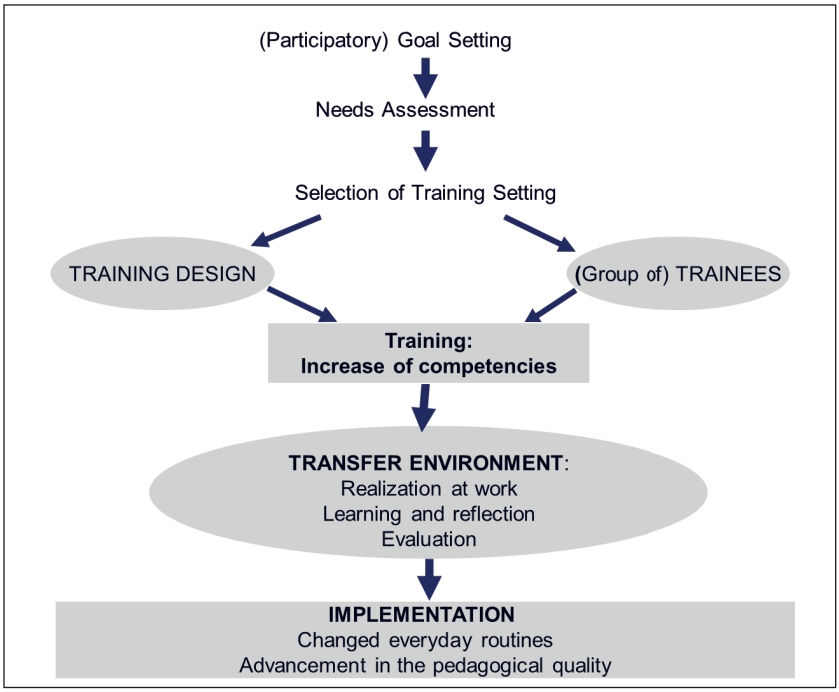

Figure 2. Efficiency of training and implementation

In our empirical study we investigated in the following research questions:

- What are the trainee's motives to participate in the training?
- What are the targets assumed for the organisation to make the participation possible?
- To what extent did the trainees aim to change their practice?
- What did the trainees expect to transfer into their daily practice?
- What support did the trainees expect from their management and colleagues?
- What possible barriers did they anticipate to the transfer into daily practice?

Methods

Design

The research project is designed as a multiple-case design (Yin 2009) with comparable assessments of settings in an early childhood centre and a primary school. Educational personnel from both settings, who participated in a further education course, were accompanied in their learning processes and the implementation of new knowledge into practice. This was embedded within a longitudinal design over three waves. Not only the educational personnel but also the learning context in the training course, as well as the working context were tapped through surveys.

Field access and study groups

This project compares two study groups – one group consisted of early childhood educators from an early childhood centre and the other of primary school teachers from a primary schools. A non-university training on the topic of health promotion was offered and carried out for specialists in children's day care centers. 24 participants from different ECE-centres were oberved and questioned in the study. Furthermore, questionnaieres were given to 19 primary school teachers who attended a course on the subject of intercultural education. Despite the diversity of the two institutions comprising children's day care center and a primary school, both groups of educational personnel were concerned with pedagogical tasks and faced similar challenges.

Research methods

The teaching, learning and transfer processes, context conditions and transfer success were assessed at different times using qualitative interviews and questionnaires. Prior to the training, participants and managerial staff were interviewed about their motives, objectives and concrete concerns about the training.

Questionnaires for the participants and trainers were given immediately after completing the training. Follow-up questionnaires about the transfer realised – adapted to the respective settings – were sent to the participants two months later.

Questions were asked about the three dimensions of the expanded model of Baldwin and Ford (see Figure 1): the trainee, the training design and the institutional transfer environment. Along the theoretical considerations of the transfer process, the focus was on the goals, input factors, learning and transfer processes and output.

Results

Personal goals and assumed objectives of the institution

Regarding personal goals, the majority of both groups (early childhood educators and primary school teachers) named the acquisition of new information and ideas as well as expert suggestions for pedagogical work. In addition, the scientific foundation of pedagogical concepts and their own professional development and the learning of concrete work practices were important personal goals for the participants of the study.

As an objective of the organisation more than half of both groups of participants supposed that information and impulses on new concepts were important. Above that many participants wished to learn concrete methods for pedagogical work in the institution. The managerial goal to motivate them in their personal pedagogical practice by giving them the opportunity to take part in the respective training was assumpted more often by the primary school teachers than the early childhoof educators.

Ideas of transfer and resources needed

More than half of the study's participants expressed only vague ideas about the implementation of their newly acquired competencies in their institution. Only a fifth of the early childhood teachers and one third of the school teachers reported concrete ideas about the transfer.

To transfer their newly acquired knowledge more than half of both groups wanted to discuss new ways of working in the team. As suitable means for the implementation of newly acquired methods about one fifth of the early childhood educators and almost half of the primary school teachers suggested support by the management or team, organisational development processes to support the transfer as well as the guidance by trained professionals as experts (Figure 3).

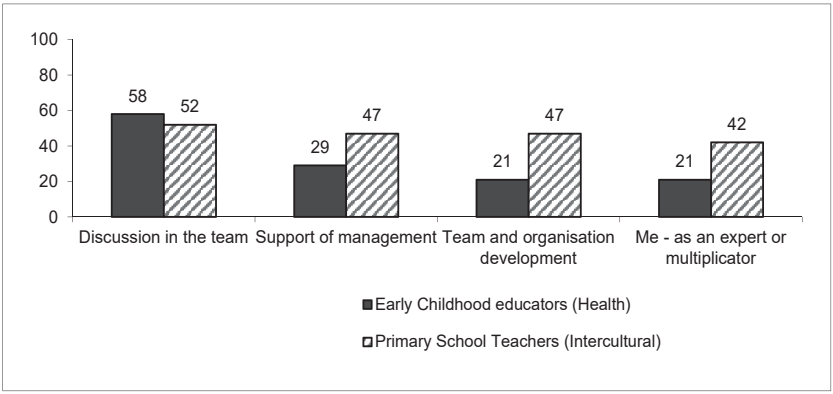

Figure 3. Ways of transfer (% of responses)

In order to achieve successful implementation, the data indicate that the training participants need time, financial and spatial resources as well as additional staff support whereby time and personnel was regarded as most important by both groups. Other necessary resources are special work aids for practice (e.g. materials, manuals), professional guidance (e.g. expert advice) and professional skills (e.g. to implement new methods in the team).

Expectations about the transfer process

The majority of participants expected to be supported by the management as well as by the team. Almost three-quarters of the school teachers saw the support of individual colleagues as important, and two-fifths hoped to get help from the trainer who presented the course they attended.

Regarding future problems that could occur, the majority of the study participants felt that the lack of resources (in terms of the lack of time, unsufficient working conditions) and tasks competing with the goals of applying new methods as problematic. In addition, the school teachers believed that the lack of interest on the part of management, colleagues and the children were a hindrance to the transfer process. It is striking that 13 % of the professionals from childcare institutions did not mention any problems at all.

Discussion

The theoretical model from Baldwin and Ford (1988, see figure 1) and our model specifying the necessary steps for the successful transfer (see figure 2) describe the tasks of leaders and managers in the transfer process. Leaders have to set developmental goals for their centre, select adequate training settings as well as

suitable pedagogues who are motivated and able to acquire new competencies and to play an active role in the transfer process. The leaders have to provide a sufficient transfer environment with learning opportunities for the trainees to continue their learning processes gained through training, to test and evaluate new methods and reflect on experiences with their team colleagues. For this, to occur, they do not only need time but also the support and encouragement of the management to change and improve practice in their teams and in the whole organisation.

The results of this study show that the transfer of knowledge acquired through training is not always the primary intention of the trainees but also not of their respective institutions. They wanted to get new ideas, to make sure they understand the scientific basis of their professional knowledge. However, they seldom expected concrete methods to change their everyday routines with the children. About half of the trainees did not assume that their organisations would expect changes in practice. Especially many school teachers thought that their opportunity to take part in the training would be an incentive to increase their personal motivation to improve pedagogical quality in general.

According to these results, the ideas of transfer of the training contents were mostly vague. Only a small number of the trainees reported concrete ideas: a little more than a half of the training participants would inform their teams and discuss the impact of the training for their common work in the team. Less than half of the school teachers and only a fifth of the trainees from daycare centres expected support from the leaders in a potential transfer process. Only few of them believed that their personal increase of competencies could be an impulse for organisational development, and even fewer believed that their expertise would be required in their institution as a means of informing and inspiring others as multiplicators. Many participants assumed that the leaders and team members would support them in their individual attempts to transfer newly learned methods into practice. The lack of time, unsatisfactory working conditions and the lack of interest in changes by the management were seen as most serious barriers for the transfer process.

Conclusion

The results show that in early education settings as well as in primary schools, leaders seem not to be interested or able to promote organisational changes to improve pedagogical quality by implementing new ideas and methods acquired through training. The trainees did not report that they had been given any instructions to bring information and competencies back to the workplace. Instead, the trainees' participation was based on individual motivation and some of them believed that the training was meant as an incentive from the manage-

ment independent on the content. Most of them expected support for individual transfer in the limited space of their everyday activities. However, many trainees also did not expect support but in addition felt that they would be hindered from achieving sustainable changes in everyday routines. The trainees' subjective views revealed organisational cultures in early education settings as well as in primary schools which did not strive for an improvement in pedagogical quality by means of professional training or further education.

The lack of understanding or missing motivation and competence of early education leaders and primary school directors to develop their organisation might explain the stagnation in the pedagogical quality assessments revealed by the German studies discussed earlier. The resources for the training fell flat if an adequate transfer was not promoted by creating an adequate transfer environment and supplying sufficient resources to continue the pedagogues' learning processes which had begun in the training. To improve pedagogical quality, leaders have to be encouraged to develop visions and goals for their institutions together with their team, and be qualified to plan personnel development closly connected to organisational changes to take up the knowledge and acquired competencies from trainees, and to effectively manage transfer and implementation processes to improve pedagogigal practice.

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Which personnel development measures do companies operating daycare centers in Germany use?

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Abstract

One area of responsibility for management in the early childhood education (ECE) field is personnel management. This area includes personnel development. Currently, no empirical findings exist on the state of personnel development in Germany. To approach this new research field, 15 ECE providers operating daycare centers (public, church-based and private) were surveyed in and around Karlsruhe (Germany). This pilot study, using semi-structured interviews, attempts to answer the question: which human resources development measures are required and actively encouraged by the providers. The evaluation of the qualitative analysis suggests that further training and continuing education as well as performance reviews are well-established personnel development measures. But by and large, this study illustrates that no systematical personnel development exists. Even measures which focus on women´s needs (who make up the vast majority of early childhood education workers with 95%), such as re-entry after parental leave, are not applied in a targeted manner.

German Abstract

Ein Aufgabenbereich von Leitungskräften in der Frühpädagogik ist die Personalführung. Sie umfasst u.a. auch die Personalentwicklung. Zu dem Einsatz von Personalentwicklungsmaßnahmen in Kindertagesstätten gibt es in Deutschland keine forschungsbasierten Erkenntnisse. Um sich dem Forschungsfeld zu nähern, wurden in einer Pilotstudie 15 Träger (öffentliche, konfessionelle und freie Träger) im Raum Karlsruhe mit Hilfe eines leitfadengestützten Interviews befragt: welche Personalentwicklungsmaßnahmen von Trägerseite gefordert und gefördert werden. Die Auswertung der qualitativen Analyse ergab, dass sich Fort- und Weiterbildung und auch das Führen von Mitarbeitergesprächen als Personalentwicklungsmaßnahmen weitgehend etabliert haben. Insgesamt zeigt sich, dass von einer systematischen Personalentwicklung nicht gesprochen werden kann. Gerade Maßnahmen die den hohen Frauenanteil (95%) in der Frühpädagogik berücksichtigen (z.B. Wiedereinstieg nach Elternzeit oder Altersteilzeit) werden von Trägerseite nicht gezielt eingesetzt.

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219907

Finnish Abstract

Yksi johdon vastuualue varhaiskasvatuksen kentällä on henkilöstön johtaminen. Tämä osa-alue sisältää henkilöstön kehittämisen. Tällä hetkellä Saksassa ei ole empiiristä tietoa henkilökohtaisesta kehittämisen tilasta. Lähestyäksemme tätä uutta tutkimuksen kenttää, 15 varhaiskasvatusta tarjoavaa päiväkotia (julkinen, tunnustuksellinen ja yksityinen) osallistui tutkimukseen Karlsruhen alueelta. Tämä pilottitutkimus, jossa käytettiin puolistrukturoitua haastattelua, pyrkii vastaamaan kysymykseen siitä, mitä henkilöstön kehittämistoimia palveluntarjoaja vaatii päiväkodilta ja mitä aktiivisesti rohkaisee käyttämään. Kvalitatiivisen analyysin arvioinnissa tuli esille, että henkilökohtaisista kehittämistoimenpiteistä jatko- ja aikuiskoulutus sekä kehityskeskustelut ovat vakiintuneet hyvin käytäntöön. Kuitenkin yleisesti ottaen tämä tutkimus havainnollistaa, että systemaattista henkilökohtaista kehitystä ei ole. Jopa järjestelyjä, jotka keskittyvät naisten tarpeisiin (jotka muodostavat huomattavan enemmistön varhaiskasvatuksen työntekijöistä 95% osuudella), kuten esimerkiksi paluu vanhempainvapaalta, ei sovelleta kohdennetusti.

Introduction

The field of early childhood education (ECE) has changed significantly in the last decade. The massive expansion of childcare places in Germany is combined with rising expectations on the quality of the pedagogical work and on the professionalization of educational staff (Rauschenbach & Berth, 2014). One possibility for supporting the professionalization of educational staff and center leaders is personnel development. Personnel development is a task assigned to both center leaders, defined as executive management (c.f. Strehmel & Ulber, 2014), as well as a task of the providers who own the centers. Very little research exists in Germany as to which personnel development measures are implemented in ECE and whether providers have a personnel development framework (c.f. Strehmel, 2016; Nentwig-Gesemann, Nicolai & Köhler, 2016). This lack of research in the ECE field differs considerably to the areas of work and organizational psychology as well as business administration, where extensive studies exist about personnel development practices (i.e. Gourmelon, Treier & Seidel, 2014). With this in mind, the question presents itself as to whether studies relevant for the area of ECE exist and which findings from this field can be applied to the area of ECE.

Due to the lack of significant research findings about personnel development measures from providers in the area of ECE, the goal of this explorative study was to question providers inductively about their use of such measures. Their answers provide a first estimate about the use of various measures. Perhaps certain measures are used by all ECE providers while other measures are used rarely? The semi-structured interviews (open and partially standardized) should answer two questions: 1. Which personnel development measures are available to and implemented by providers in the ECE field? And 2. Does a personnel

development framework already exist to accompany these measure? This study focuses on the individual responses of the providers. A theoretical model served as an orientation for structuring the interviews, but only when providers did not address certain areas. The model and theoretical background of this research will be presented in the following chapter.

Theoretical Framework

From a non-profit perspective, personnel development includes "(…) all measures, which are directed at the qualification and the individual professional development of all employees, and which consider both the present and future operational requirements as well as personnel interests in the desired effects" (Lerche, Krautscheid & Olejnik, 2001, p. 15) or more generally speaking: "all measures in education, promotion, and organizational development, which (…) is planned, realized, and evaluated in a targeted, systematic, and methodical manner" (Becker, 2009, p. 5). Both definitions focus on a systematic professionalization of employees.

The literature describes various criteria for classifying personnel development measures. The theoretical foundation for this study is the *temporal* orientation of personnel development measures, which Friedrich (2010) developed for organizations in the non-profit area. In her systematization, Friedrich describes sequential phases of a career in an organization: beginning with the induction phase (*into the job*), which includes both educational staff as well as center leadership. After the induction phase, change within the same workplace and current position (*on the job*) and the preparation for taking-on new tasks and responsibilities (*near the job* and *off the job*) are possible. *Along the job* refers to measures, which take place over an extended employment phase for young talent and leadership. An example of *along the job* measures is career planning. Measures used at the end of employment, (*out of the job*) also belong to the area of personnel development, "(…) [because] the handing down of practical knowledge is receiving more attention as part of the concept of the learning organization (…)" (Friedrich, 2010, pp. 82-84). Personnel development measures overlap in certain places and the differences are not always clear-cut. In addition, they can be combined with one another. An overview of personnel development measures and examples are given in the chapter Analysis and Results.

Research Questions

Due to the heterogeneity of providers and kinds of institutions in the area of ECE, the parties responsible for personnel development varies from center to center. On the one hand, personnel development can be understood as the task

of the providers, and on the other hand, as the task of the individual center leadership. Another possibility is that the provider and center leader share personnel development tasks. The questions guiding this study are therefore:

- Which professionalization measures, specifically personnel development measures, do ECE providers implement and support?
- Do ECE providers have a written personnel development framework as a foundation for personnel development? And if yes, which areas are included?

Methodology

First, a short explanation of the political situation of ECEC in Germany and a description of this study's geographic framework will be given. Then the methodical procedure will be described.

The ECE field in Germany is part of the voluntary sector, and does not belong to the national education system. ECE policy decisions are made at the state-level (Germany has 16 states), and ECEC are not national organized. The providers belong to different sectors including the church, independent non-profit (i.e. providers of social welfare work), independent for-profit (i.e. company day care centers, or private commercial organizations), and parent-run kindergartens (c.f. also Lange, 2017, 23). For this reason, providers of ECE in Germany are very diverse.

The survey was carried out in the city of Karlsruhe. This prospering city, located in the south-west part of Germany, near to the French border, has a relatively young population of about 310,000 inhabitants.

First I contacted all ECEC providers in the Karlsruhe (N=20), requesting that they participate in a survey about personnel development measures in their ECE centers. 16 providers were willing to take part in the semi-structured interviews. Ultimately I conducted 15 interviews, which covers 75% of providers in the Karlsruhe area.

I conducted the interviews early in the summer of 2017, using qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2010). Mayring's qualitative content analysis is systematic and follows a specific theoretical methodology: First I transcribed the interviews and analysed them with assistance from the software MAXQDA. This software for analysing data is suitable for qualitative and mixed-methods research. In the analysis process, researchers first reduce their material. Then they form various inductive categories based on the providers' topics or statements, which are then combined into codes. The final step is to interpret the knowledge gained.

First, I asked providers for details about their specific situation including the number of ECEC within their provider network, the type of centers (i.e. nursery,

day-care center, after-school centers etc.), the number of employees as well as the number of children.

The ECEC providers in Karlsruhe were very heterogeneous: the varying number of centers and the corresponding varying number of staff members and the number of children cared for by each provider illustrate this heterogeneity.

Table 1. Numbers of providers with numbers of centers, employee and children

	Size of providers	Numbers of centers	Numbers of staff	Numbers of children
11x	Small providers	1-3 centers	4-50	20-200
3x	Medium providers	15-18 centers	80-250	600-1060
1x	Large providers	46 centers	650	3000

The number of centers per provider varied between 1 and up to 46 centers. The number of employees varied from 4 to 650 people, depending on the size of the providers, and the number of children ranged between 20 and 3,000 children per provider. The high variance arises from the differing types of centers (i.e. nursery, day-care center, after-school center) and the type of employment (full-time or part-time work). For example, the following exists at small providers: a provider can have a center with a group of 20 children and four employees. Another provider has three centers with 10 groups and thus many employees (f. e. 50 staff, including many part-time employees) and 200 children.

After details about the providers' specific situation, the first open question in the survey was: "which personnel development measures do you use with your educational staff"? The providers' answers differed substantially. I asked follow-up questions about Friedrich's categories, if the providers did not refer to them. Due to the lack of empirical data for this area in Germany, I left the questions very open in order to pick-up previously unidentified aspects. In addition, I encouraged the providers to describes examples of personnel development measures which they currently use of have used in past.

Analysis and Results

This chapter will present the results of the qualitative content analysis. Before this presentation, an overview of the temporal orientation of various personnel development measures in professional practice will be illustrate in Table 2.

Table 2. Temporal orientation of personnel development measures

Temporal Orientation	Examples
Into the job	i.e. training/education, internships, new employee induction programs, instruction and direction, trainee programs
On the job	i.e. performance reviews, substituting, job enlargement (quantitative task enlargement), job enrichment (qualitative task enlargement), job rotation (change in tasks, change in workplace), E-learning, job-sharing, group and team work, semi-autonomous work groups
Near the job	i.e. learning workshop, coaching, supervision, case-advising, collegial consulting, project work, quality circle, and idea management
Along the job	i.e. career planning, succession planning, leadership-development, mentoring
Off the job	i.e. lectures, workshops, conferences, conventions, specialists forums, further- and continuing education, observation visits at another institution
Out off the job	i.e. part-time work for people approaching retirement

In the following, I will present exemplarily one measure from each of the personnel development areas described by Friedrich (2010) from the analysis of the interviews. Included here are verbal citations of interviewed persons, which serve to illustrate the respective areas. The citations have been made anonymous. The labels "T1-T15" represent the interviewed persons; each was assigned a number.

Into the job

New center leaders, as well as new employees, were usually assigned a contact person (sponsor, mentor, coordinator), who stays by their side for the first few weeks. Who this contact person is depends on the position of the new employee. For center leaders, this person is usually the provider themselves, i.e. a person from the personnel department, manager, or expert advisors. For educational staff, a colleague from their assigned group or the center leaders usually assumes this role.

In addition to the opportunity for exchange and asking questions, many providers also use documents for induction (i.e. induction plan, work aides, checklists, welcome folders etc.). Some providers also carry out a meeting with supervisors after a set period of time (i.e. 100 days, or 3 months). Contrary to existing literature, which gives little consideration to this induction period (cf. Friedrich, 2010), all providers see the induction phase as a relevant phase worthy

of support, especially for center leadership. But the design of the induction phase varies in intensity of the personnel and written mentoring. Friedrich emphasizes that the induction phase should feature an interrelation: instead of a one-sided adaption process, the institution receives "the opportunity for a productive examination of its structures and process" through the feedback of the new employee (Friedrich, 2010, p. 83).

On the job

For learning on the job, many providers use performance reviews as their main method. *All* providers used this personnel development measures, mostly compulsory, sometimes voluntarily. Meetings with centers leaders are carried out by managers, department leaders, or specialist leadership. Center leaders (sometimes in cooperation with supervisors) carry out performance reviews with educational staff themselves. The meetings usually take place once a year, or as necessary. The conversations in these meetings include a review of the last year (which agreements could be realized, which not and for what reason). Together both parties develop common agreements on goals for the next year and discuss development opportunities (general and professional), need for further education, cooperation inside the working team and with the center leader, general satisfaction, and individual strengthens and weaknesses. The meetings are planned systematically, are prepared for by both sides content-wise, and a protocol is written afterwards. Here a statement from one provider:

> *"The manager has a conversation with the employee. Both have prepared ahead of time. After the interview, the manager draws up a report that the employee is later presented, if it is correct then both sign it. And one year later you can pull out the report again. Sometimes certain aspects have not changed at all. It's amusing, because sometimes it is already the third year in a row. The colleague says, I want that and that but nothing has changed. But there are also some things you really see: Aha, development. But it's also formal stuff, we have a lot of part-time staff, people say, I want to work full time now or vice versa, I want to reduce "(T2).*

Near the job

Near the job personnel development measures are not always directly related to daily work, but are important for the employee's commitment and motivation, and their ability to work in a team. Included in this type of personnel development measure were the areas of coaching, supervision, or case advising. Providers named supervision most often. The majority of providers deploy this type of advising when a team needs clarification:

> *"We already use coaching or supervisions in different situations. This can mean both individual coaching, for example, also done by center leaders, but also the classic supervision when a new team comes together, or when the center leader believes, that a team is going through a "team-finding phase" at the moment, just still has some difficulties, [when] there are spoken or unspoken problems (…)" (T11).*

Another provider explains the use of supervision as follows: "Well, right now we have in one kindergarten, so I'm talking now as a provider, we have a supervision going on. The management has recently changed and some dirty laundry is being aired out. Unfortunately, it is sometimes like this, and so that the team does not completely split apart, we currently have a supervisor attending the staff meetings Every 14 days an external coach comes" (T6).

This study suggests, that regular supervision is rarely implemented in ECE, usually only in specific circumstances and by request. Thirteen out of fifteen providers use supervision as needed to improve pedagogical work and teamwork. Two providers do not see any need for supervision in their facilities or have not used it yet. The same is true for coaching, which is often reserved for center leadership. Here management has leadership problems with team members. For this purpose, an external coach is employed who works with the center leader. In general all providers present themselves as open to supporting teams and center leaders with supervision units. Almost all of them saw supervision as a helpful support during the team establishment process.

Off the job

The interviewed providers named further and continuing education most frequently. They make both forms available for employees where possible; sometimes the provider requires them. In general, providers present themselves as very open to the continuing education needs of their employees as long as it pertains to the pedagogical work. The budget for further and continuing education varies somewhat between individual providers and depending on the costs, 3 to 10 days of continuing education is allocated for each employee. A provider's representative made this open attitude clear:

> *"it depends on both what the employees want, and also what is perhaps most fitting for the employee right now and then in each individual case we look and make the most optimal fit possible" (T5).*

The interviewed providers expressed great interest in the continuous further development of employees. They support continuing education courses that take place over a longer time period (i.e. Montessori-diploma, business administrator,

theater pedagogy, college degree in early childhood education or social pedagogy) financially and/or through more flexible working hours whenever possible. But the interviewed providers also have greatly differing opinions about external continuing education vs. in-house continuing education courses. Whereas as external continuing education courses make a wider spectrum of topics possible, some providers also complaints of a lack of "practical feedback" (T14) to the team. With in-house lectures everyone is "on the same level" and questions and consequences that come up later can be processed in the team.

Along the job

Career planning for center leaders is not easy in ECE settings. The combination of many professional and family-related influencing factors make long-term planning difficult. Some providers do not see the necessity of career planning in their institution(s). The majority though, would like to promote their own young talent, but do so in a "situational" manner:

> *"When I see, there is someone, who has real interest or in my opinion, which is always subjective, also the ability (…), then I already have an eye on them and then I have a meeting with them and just ask them" (T7). "It is, I say more situational, the right moment, perhaps here and there also coincidental occurrences. A real career planning, we don't have that" (T15).*

The providers agree that up-and-coming leadership require additional qualifications or additional competences, especially in the area of attitude, motivation, and approach, but also in the area of administration.

Out of the job

Retirement and dealing with employees over 60 years old has been up to now rarely a part of providers' current issues. For this employee group, part-time work for people approaching retirement could be a possibility, provided that it is finically feasible for the employee. The interviewed providers, who have dealt with this topic, try to provide individual solutions such as a position as a "reserve-pool employee", or the possibility to take on less responsibility as a main attachment teacher for new children. In the literature, possible overlapping or sharing of positions is referenced, especially for leadership (Friedrich, 2010). Experienced colleagues could act as an advisor shortly before or after retiring. Providers with older employees offer special meetings (i.e. 55+ or 60+). The majority of providers said that they have not yet dealt with the topic of retirement because they mostly employ young people and this topic is not relevant for them yet.

Discussion of Findings

The evaluation of the qualitative analysis suggests that the handling the responsibility for personnel development measures differs between providers. Rarely are the providers left with the sole responsibility for personnel development measures. The majority of providers take a collaborative approach to personnel development together with the center leadership.

Personnel development concepts and measures on the providers' side are (theoretically) widely known, but none of the providers has a written framework for the personnel development of leadership or employees. Despite this lack of written frameworks, internal regulations and guidelines, for example for further and continuing education courses, for assessment of competences, for salary based on performance, or development programs for leadership do exist. These regulations and guidelines cover aspects of personnel development.

The providers in this study often understood personnel development as only further and continuing education. It was the most frequently and firstly named measure in the interviews; this fact illustrates the providers' limited understanding of personnel development. Performance reviews and induction programs for new employees followed further and continuing education. These three areas are very important for personnel development but only a small part of the diverse possibilities.

Interestingly, the providers' representatives realized how diverse personnel development measures can be during the interviews, that they could offer more or different measures than they thought was possible. Many expressed that they still have room for improvement. The high level of willingness to participate in the interviews about personnel development shows the general openness of providers towards this topic.

Finally, the providers often think of personnel development is in moments rather than as a process (cf. also Friedrich, 2010). This short-term perspective on personnel development can be applied to further and continuing education. The courses often lack a theory-practice transfer and are used more frequently in an institution specific context, planning only for the next few years. The lack of emphasis on processuality is also exemplified in the unsystematic career planning for leadership and employees.

In addition to the need for better process quality, the analysis of the semi-structured interviews indicates that measures which take into account the high percentage of women in early childhood education (i.e. easing re-entry after parental leave) as well as measures, which systematically promote staff retention are not explicitly integrated into or named as personnel development measures by providers. This deficit is surprising, given the personnel shortage in the ECE branch, where employees have a wide selection of job opportunities.

Due to the fact that none of the surveyed providers have a written framework for personnel development, the question presents itself as to how necessary a written personnel development framework is or could be. A critical examination upfront in the development of a personnel development framework could make transparent presentation of personnel development policies possible within the institution as well as for the general public. This transparency would demonstrate the importance of employees for the provider. Especially in regard to staff retention, this step could send a clear signal to potential employees about their value to the provider. An explicit presentation of one's own personnel development framework would also make a transparent exchange about targeted approaches possible. Otherwise, the goal of personnel development remains indifferent and non-specific.

The following arguments make a case for the creation of a personnel development framework:

- Targeted personnel development plays an important role in the area of quality management
- A personnel development framework can show regard for employees by providers, because a framework is transparent and goal-oriented.
- A personnel development strategy can lead to higher work satisfaction for individual employees and thus to less fluctuation in staff.
- A consequent personnel development strategy promotes continual personnel development processes which build on one another, instead of stand-alone measures. This can ensure sustainability.
- Only with a well-formulated personnel development framework can regular evaluation take place in the future so that the framework can be further developed. Without a clearly formulated goal, evaluation cannot take place.

Here Friedrich (2010) emphasizes, that "Personnel development fulfills here a double role: it ensures on the one hand the survival of the organization with its continually changing parameters, and on the other hand it supports the employees in their development of professional skills" (p. 93). It is important to make clear, that targeted and transparent personnel development strategies can contribute significantly to staff retention, which is very important in the current climate of increasing personnel shortages.

Summary and further prospects

The debates over recent years about professionalization have mostly referred to the interaction between educational staff and children, and with parents, in the form of parenting and educational partnerships practices. But professionaliza-

tion must also include the expansion and strengthening of the expertise of pedagogical workers and leadership. The question of the quality during the massive expansion of ECEC in recent years has led to an examination of HR development policies of ECEC providers. In an exploratory study, 15 organizations were asked about their use of personnel development measures. It turned out that all providers are already using some of the measures. Nevertheless, the results presented above indicate that providers are still not using many of the tried-and-true personnel development instruments are and one can cannot (yet) speak of a systematic approach to personnel development.

At this point, further research is needed to investigate whether providers' measures in the Karlsruhe region are exemplary for other providers in Germany. In the near future, a further study will include interviews with additional providers from other parts of Germany in order to obtain a more in-depth insight into personnel development measures.

Depending on the size of the providers, the interviewed representatives could only make rather blanket statements about personnel development measures in their institutions. Therefore it is all the more important to also include center leaders and expert advising in the future, because they can give detailed reports about which personnel development measures are actually used in practice. This is especially true for the areas of job enrichment, job enlargement, instruction, and visiting other institutions. In addition to a broader number of providers, the research will also focus on center leaders. Based on the results, recommendations for supervisors and managers can be made to support and promote systematic human resource development.

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Measures of personnel development in different types of German early childhood education (ECE) enterprises

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Abstract

Early childhood education centres are run by provider organisations, which are employers and at the same time responsible for the Human Resource Management and Personnel Development of their staff. This study investigates measures of personnel development in different types of organisations running ECE centres in Germany in a qualitative multiple case design. The study reveals a large variety of measures for personnel development on two levels: measures for the group of ECE centre leaders on the one hand and those for the other pedagogical staff. Important aims were to gain qualified staff and to improve pedagogical quality. Organisation managers provided learning opportunities for centre leaders by means of trainings in leadership skills, team work in the group of centre leaders and the leaders' mutual advice as well as participation in the organisational development of the ECE enterprise. At the same time they cared for a motivating organisational climate and work environment for leaders and other staff. The managers delegated tasks of personnel development for the educators to the centre leaders, who cared for an appreciative team climate and appropriate learning opportunities on the job as well as training for the educational staff in their centres.

German Abstract

Kindertageseinrichtungen werden von Trägerorganisation betrieben, die als Arbeitgeber verantwortlich für das Personalmanagement sind. Die Studie untersucht Maßnahmen der Personalentwicklung in verschiedenen Typen von Trägerorganisationen für Kindertageseinrichtungen in Deutschland in einem qualitativen Multiple-Fallstudien-Design. Die Studie zeigt eine große Vielfalt in den Maßnahmen zur Personalentwicklung auf zwei Ebenen: Zentrale Ziele sind dabei – neben der Weiterentwicklung der Qualität – die Gewinnung qualifizierten Personals durch interessante Arbeitsbedingungen. Die befragten Geschäftsführungen der Träger stellten Lerngelegenheiten für die Leitungskräfte ihrer Einrichtungen zur Verfügung, zum Beispiel durch Führungskräftetraining, Teamarbeit im Kreis der Leitungskräfte und durch gegenseitige Beratung sowie Partizipation in der Organisationsentwicklung des Betreiberunternehmens. Gleichzeitig sorgten sie für ein motivierendes Organisationsklima und eine interessante Arbeitsumgebung für Leitungskräfte und das pädagogische Personal. Die Verantwortlichen in den Trägerorganisationen delegierten Aufgaben der Personalentwicklung für die pädagogischen Fachkräfte an die Leitungskräfte,

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219908

die meistens für ein wertschätzendes Teamklima und passende Lerngelegenheiten in der Arbeitssituation (on-the-job) sorgten wie auch für Fort- und Weiterbildungsmöglichkeiten für das pädagogische Personal.

Finnish Abstract

Päiväkoteja johtavat palvelua tarjoavat yritykset, jotka toimivat työnantajina ja samaan aikaan ovat myös vastuussa henkilöstön johtamisesta ja kehittämisestä. Tutkimuksessa selvitetään kvalitatiivisella monitapaustutkimuksella henkilöstön kehittämisen järjestelyitä eri tyyppisissä yrityksissä, jotka johtavat päiväkoteja Saksassa. Tämä tutkimus paljastaa suuren vaihtelun henkilöstön kehittämisen järjestelyissä kahdella tasolla: järjestelyt päiväkodin johtajille ja muulle pedagogiselle henkilökunnalle. Tärkeänä tavoitteena oli koota pätevää henkilökuntaa ja parantaa pedagogista laatua. Yrityksen johtajat tarjosivat päiväkodinjohtajille oppimismahdollisuuksia ja koulutusta johtamiseen ja ryhmätyöskentelyyn päiväkodin johtajien kesken. Lisäksi heille tarjottiin mahdollisuuksia osallistua organisaation kehittämiseen. Samaan aikaan huolehdittiin myös organisaation motivoivasta ilmapiiristä. Johto delegoi päiväkodinjohtajille henkilöstön kehittämisen tehtäviä. Päiväkodinjohtajat huolehtivat työpaikan arvostavasta ryhmähengestä ja tarkoituksenmukaisista oppimismahdollisuuksista, samoin kuin kasvattajahenkilökunnan koulutuksesta päiväkodissa.

1. Introduction

The improvement of pedagogical quality in early education is on top of the agenda of German policies for children and families. Professionals and policymakers not only focus on pedagogical processes in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres , but more and more attention is also focused on leadership and management inside the ECE-centres (Strehmel & Ulber, 2014, 2017; Strehmel, 2016) as well as on the management by the provider organisations, which are responsible for the working conditions of the staff and structural frame conditions for the pedagogical work. Experts demand standards for qualifications held by centre leaders, allocation of sufficient time resources to fulfil their leadership tasks and call for professionalisation of the provider organisations (BMFSFJ / JFMK, 2016).

In Germany social services as well as early childhood education centres are organised in the subsidiary system. That means that non-governmental organisations have the first run in developing daycare centres. Municipalities are only allowed to offer early education if there are not enough places supplied by these organisations. Many day care centres, which are run by non-governmental non-profit organisations, but also (smaller) municipalities, are managed by volunteers – often without professional knowledge on how to run a daycare centre. Other provider organisations are not specialised in early education. This raises questions about the quality of management and leadership in those organ-

isations and their impact on pedagogical quality and the professional development of their staff. To get first-hand insights into this widely unknown field of human resource management in organisations providing early education, a qualitative analytical study – funded by the German Youth Institute – was conducted in a multiple case design with in-depth analysis of personnel development in four early childhood provider organisations (Strehmel & Overmann, 2018).

2. Research questions and theoretical framework

The research question shaping this study was: How do provider organisations of ECE centres conceptualise and enact personnel development in their ECE-centres in Germany? To approach this question a qualitative multiple case study was designed to explore measures and strategies for personnel development in different types of organisations which supply early education. Such a multiple case study design requires a theoretical framework to structure the case studies in a way that the results can be compared (see Figure 2). Thus in the following section personnel development with its different aspects will be defined and the theoretical model based on activity theory (Engestrøm, 2008) will be explained.

Personnell development (PD) is defined as a managerial task to promote *learning and developmental processes* of the staff if an organization. On the one hand these processes contribute to realising organisational goals and on the other hand the employees get the opportunity to expand their professional competencies and personal skills. Personnel development covers a wide range of coordinated measures:

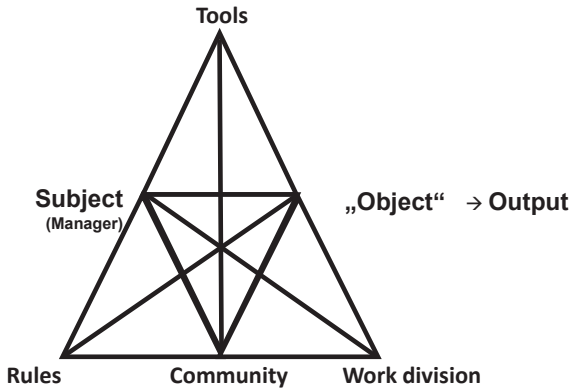
- the recruiting, selection and onboarding of staff, which might contain the support of onboarding processes for new employees to get to know about the special ways of working in the centre and to integrate them in the team (e.g. by mentoring). In addition, the leaders can discuss training for the newcomers when there is a lack of necessary qualifications or specialist knowledge.
- leadership – in a sense of "leading learning" (Siraj-Blatchford & Hallet, 2014; Granrusten et al., 2018) – means for example, to motivate the team members to participate in the development of pedagogical concepts for the centre and to enable the pedagogues to reflect and learn from each other while developing learning opportunities for the children. Leaders should promote the professional and personal development of each member as well as team building and working together in a learning community of practice (EU, 2011).
- Professional development by motivating the pedagogues to take part in training and further education and promoting the transfer by providing working conditions and resources to learn and reflect on the job (Ulber & Strehmel in this book). This demands considerations of organisational goals as well

as personal strivings and career goals of the participating pedagogues, the selection of competent trainers and the availability of suitable training designs (e.g. on-the-job, in-house with the team, off-the-job for a single persons or tandem etc.). Leaders are responsible to provide a transfer environment, where trained staff can reflect their experiences with new pedagogical ideas and methods.

The managers of provider organisations are responsible for the personnel development of centre leaders and other pedagogical staff and thus should offer guidance and leadership for the centre leaders and create inspiring working conditions for learning and development of the other staff in the ECE-daycare centres.

To describe the strategies and measures of personnel development adopted by the managers and leaders in detail, activity theory as used in work psychology (Engestrøm, 2008) was chosen as a fruitful approach (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Activity approach by Engestrøm (2008)



Leaders and managers are perceived as *subjects* who are concerned with the *object* of personnel development and initiate measures to reach their Personnel Development (PD) goals. These may include – as discussed above – for example, recruiting and onboarding, leading learning, reaching job satisfaction and commitment, motivating for professional training and the support of transfer. They use *tools (methods)* to initiate PD processes (e.g. by motivating and encouraging communication with pedagogues, team development, etc). The context of their enactment of personnel development is shown on the bottom of the triangle: *rules, community* and *work division*. *Rules* can be laws, curricula as well as internal or external contracts or guidelines that form the basis of the work. *Com-*

munity means the professional or scientific community providing professional resources such as knowledge and standards for early education as well as for the management of an organisation. *Work division* refers to internal agreements e.g. on distributed leadership , but also to cooperations with external institutions and the support system of early education (e.g. for professional advice and consulting, vocational education, scientific inputs and policy).

3. Empirical Methods

In order to investigate into organisational structures and processes the differentiation between the research units and the subjects of research is necessary. Research units are the provider organisations for ECE. The research subjects are individuals, who can be interviewed and are able to provide information on the structures and processes inside the organisations. In our case these are persons who are responsible for PD, e.g. organisation managers or centre leaders.

Design

The study was conceptualised as multiple case study (Yin, 2009, p. 57, see Figure 2). In a multiple case study a number of cases (persons, organisations, etc.) is analysed on the basis of a common theoretical framework and with the same methods for data collection and analysis. That means that the case studies are conducted in a comparable way to enable for revealing the variety and range of activities and describe common and different characteristics of the cases.

On the basis of the theoretical framework the selection of cases and methods for data collection are described. In the next step case studies are conducted and analysed. Finally these are compared, interpreted and discussed. Generalisation is difficult in a case study design, but the comparison of findings from the particular case studies can e.g. reveal the variety of strategies and measures in the different organisations as well as aspects of PD which are common for the cases. This enables for recommendations for practice and for policymakers.

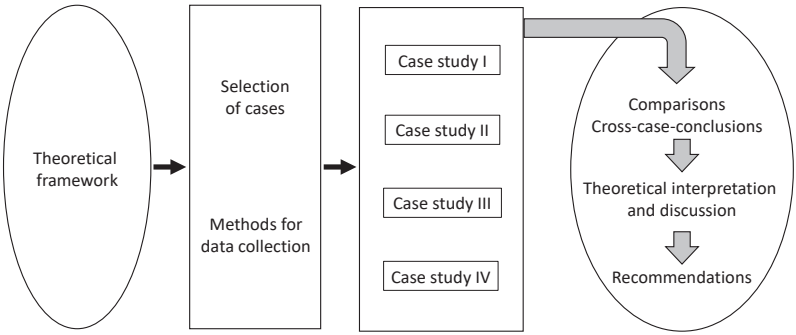


Figure 2. Multiple Case Design (own design following Yin, 2009, p. 57)

Selection of Cases

There is a large variety of organisations that supply early education in Germany, and the majority of these are non-profit organisations. They vary in size, some organisations are organised by nonprofessional volunteers, some employ professional managers. Some organisations run different social services (e.g. counselling, daycare centres for children and for the elderly, homes for handicapped people) and thus are not specialised in early education. Most of the enterprises which supply early education join together in umbrella welfare associations with different values and traditions: some of these belong to the Catholic or the Protestant church, others feel committed to ideas of social justice and some of these contain organisations with a large variety of ideologies and pedagogical concepts. In spite of the subsidiary system, nearly a third of the German ECE centres are run by municipalities, another third by the churches and others by non-governmental non-profit organisations, which are mostly members of welfare associations or other networks. To date, there exist only a few privatly-commercial enterprises for early education in Germany (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of Different Kinds of Provider Organisations for ECE in Germany Source: Own calculations with data from Statistisches Bundesamt 2017 (Strehmel & Overmann, 2018, 18)

Type of organisation	%
Municipalities	33
Secular non-profit organisations	31
Church non-profit organisations	33
Privatly-commercial organisations	3

Inside each group of organisations a tremendous heterogeneity can be found: There is a large variety regarding the size of the organisations (from 2 to 4 employees up to more than 5000), the status of the managers of the particular organisation (professionals or volunteers) or the organisational structures. In addition, curricula and frame conditions such as child-staff-ratio, qualifications and working conditions of the staff and leaders, and financing also vary between the 16 German states (see Fonsén et al. in this book, Strehmel, 2016). Because the landscape of provider organisations is heterogeneous and little is known about the structures and strategies at the management level of these organisations the field was initially explored by analysing documents (e.g. homepages in the Internet) and conducting qualitative interviews with experts for the early education system as well as managers and representatives from different umbrella organisations and associations (Figure 3).

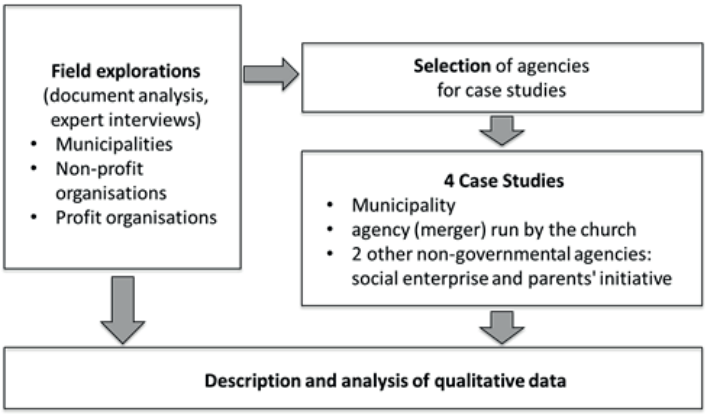


Figure 3. Selection of Cases by Field Explorations
(Source: Strehmel & Overmann, 2018, translation by Petra Strehmel)

Finally, four organisations as cases were selected for the case studies:

- a middle-sized municipality running about 10 ECE centres
- a non-governmental non-profit social enterprise which runs less then 10 ECE-centres, but also other social services
- an ECE provider organisation run by the church with about 30 centres and occupying a professional manager
- a non-profit parents' initiative running one small ECE centre carried on by parents as employers for the professional team.

The cases were selected from large, middle sized and small cities as well as in rural areas and located in different parts of Germany.

Data collection: Qualitative interviews

The first person interviewed in each case was the superior of the centre leaders, who was also responsible for the human resource management for centre leaders and staff. In organisations with more than one centre these persons were to be found at the organisational level above the centre leaders. In addition, in each organisation a sample of centre leaders, professional consultants, experts from umbrella organisations and team members were interviewed. Following the theoretical framework the guidelines for the interviews contained questions on

- the qualifications and vocational background of the interviewed persons (subjects)
- organisational objectives (goals) and subjective definitions of personnel development
- concepts and measures (tools) for
  - recruiting and selecting staff
  - onboarding
  - leadership and caring for the staff
  - professional learning, training and further education
- Work division inside the enterprise or with other organisations
- strengths and weaknesses in personnel development measures as viewed by the person being interviewed
- developmental tasks for personnel development in the respective organisation.

Rules and resources from the scientific and professional community for early childhood education were assumed to be the same for all organisations in the German context.

The interviews were transcripted and qualitative data analysis (structured content analysis) was conducted (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) by referring to the dimensions given in the theoretical model (objectives and subjective goals, tools, rules, professional resources from the community and work division in different fields of PD) that formed the design of this study as discussed previously (Strehmel & Overmann, 2018).

4. Results

The organisation managers had different motives to initiate personnel development measures: the lack of qualified staff, the necessity to improve pedagogical quality or the promotion of the centre leader's competencies to guide and manage their centres and at the same time commit to the development of the entire provider organisation.

Personnel recruitment

Due to the *lack of qualified staff* the organisations focused on efforts to avoid vacancies and motivate the pedagogues in their centres to commit and identify with the organisation. Team trainings, workshops and further education courses were often combined with opportunities to meet colleagues from other centres, exchange experiences and for mutual support in an appreciating environment. The organisation strived to be seen as attractive to employees with good working conditions and an organisational culture, where pedagogues had the possibility to work according to their pedagogical ideas and to be offered career choices. In order to reach this the managers tried to improve the visibility of their organisation as an attractive employer and initiated the "branding" of their enterprise. In addition they worked on the growth of a corporate identity for the leaders and other staff for example by means of welcome workshops for new employees, onboarding concepts, mentoring programs for newcomers and appreciative leadership for leaders and staff. In the municipality for example a programme for branding was developed, the church run organisation focused on close and friendly relationships between leaders and staff, and the managers of the social enterprise encouraged their centre leaders to develop interesting profiles which could also attract new staff.

In sum, the ECE organisations discovered professional human resource measures which had not been used commonly in times when there were enough professionals on the labour market. More and more they felt in concurrence with other provider organisations and had to enact public relations strategies to advertise for their enterprise not only to win parents to bring their children to the entire centre, but also to convince qualified staff to work in their ECE- centres.

Quality development

Quality development was an aim e.g. to transfer new or extended rules for early childhood care and education as the rights of children, child protection, and inclusion. It was also intended to create opportunities for interesting pedagogical work at a high level. This included the development of common goals for the organisation which fitted to the concept of each particular centre. They encouraged leaders and staff to take advantage of professional advice by experts inside the organisation or conduct team trainings, or to initiate organisational

development in their centres. In the organisations participating in this study, in order to plan training and further education, the centre leaders sent suggestions to the organisation management, which accepted or modified the schedule. They steered the participation in trainings by supplying time and money and encouraging the transfer of knowledge into practice (see Ulber & Strehmel (2018) in this book) Supervision and coaching was not found in all centres participating in this research, but reflection and learning to improve quality was a matter of course. For example, in the municipality, the superior of the leaders promoted teambuilding in the group of leaders to encourage mutual feedback and support. Professional advisers organised a "knowledge pool" to use the expertise from special trainings of individual team members for different centres. The organisation run by the church initiated working groups and quality circles to develop and improve concepts and solutions in the pedagogical work. The social enterprise worked on their quality handbook and in the parents' initiative, the leader motivated the team to rework the pedagogical concepts and by this reflect and improve their own work.

Learning opportunities for leaders

The aim to *improve the leader's competencies* was closely connected with the participation of leaders in the organisational structures. To promote leadership skills and enable the centre leaders e.g. to improve the professional pedagogical work of the staff as well as their well-being and commitment to the organisation, the management initiated a number of measures. For most of the leaders it was a duty to visit leadership trainings at the beginning of their leadership activity. The managers responsible for PD delegated responsibility for PD of the staff to the leaders and at the same time granted the leaders high autonomy for the human resource management in their centres.

The interviewed organisation managers worked together intensively with the centre leaders to support them in their activities to promote the pedagogue's job satisfaction, well-being and commitment in the centres, the prevention of stress and burnout and care for their employees. They organised regular opportunities for feedback and dialogue between management and leaders. In the larger organisations the leaders were informed about the organisation policy and involved in making decisions about the organisational development of the enterprise. By this their knowledge and experience was considered important for the organisation. The leaders could participate in decisions on concepts and organisational goals and take up opportunities for exchange and mutual advice with other centre leaders. In the church based organisations for example, the leaders met for a workshop on developmental goals of their enterprise. In the social enterprise the organisation managers gave models for appreciative leadership and thus created an organisational culture and climate which supported the commit-

ment and identification of leaders. The organisation manager supposed that this transformational leadership style would spill over to the centres. They supported and enabled centre leaders for staff oriented leadership on the one hand, and quality development on the other hand. In the parents' inititiative it was the other way around: the high qualified leader discussed with the parents, who were at the same time the employers, what was important for the team, stood up for the team and defended it against particular parents' interests. The leader promoted the team members' professional learning and development and cared to provide sufficient resources by negotiation with the parents.

In sum the central target group of PD measures were the centre leaders. The organisation management in each organisation participating in this study delegated PD-tasks concerning the other staff to the leaders, who were at the same time responsible for pedagogical quality and team climate inside their entire centre. In larger organisations they initiated measures to strenghthen the commitment of the centre leaders. The qualitative data revealed a tension between trying to find a balance between autonomy of centre leaders and the teams on the one hand, and the obligatory professional and organisational demands on the other hand.

5. Discussion

This qualitative multiple case study gave insights into an ECE field in Germany which has not been researched up to now. The field exploration before selecting the cases was important to get ideas on thinking about personnel development in ECE provider organisations.

The model of activity theory (Engestrøm, 2008) proved to be useful to analyse the measures in different fields of PD and made possible the structured analysis of qualitative material. The results show a large variety of vocational backgrounds and subjective goals of the human resource managers responsible for PD, shaped by the values, traditions and the cooperate identity of the entire organisation. The goals and key aspects of their measures for personnel development focused on comparable goals, but the tools to reach them were different. One important issue was the lack of qualified staff on the labour market and thus the necessity to find ways to be attractive to employees. Other important goals were the improvement of pedagogical quality and organisational development to face the challenges of a changing environment in the field of early childhood education. To reach these goals the organisation managers optimised the frame conditions for the work in the centres and stimulated a friendly and appreciative organisational climate affiliated with an idiosyncratic cooperate identity. Other tools were e.g. welcome workshops for newcomers or workshops and training for the staff from different centres combined with social events. Ways to get the

leaders supported and committed were e.g. regular team meetings, participation and teambuilding for mutual advice and counseling between the centre leaders. In each organisation in this research the centre leaders were authorised for the personnel development in their centre team. They reported a large variety of measures to train the team members on the job, in the team and beyond, dependent on the respective challenges. Work division between the organisation in the centre leaders was dependent on the staffing for professional advice and administration at the organisation level.

Due to the qualitative design and the exploratory character of study there are limits in the scope of the study: Four cases can only represent a small part of possible measures of personnel development in ECE enterprises. The cases were part self-selected by organisations who reflected on their human resource management probably more than other provider organisations. They were open to talk about unsolved problems and challenges for the future and perhaps give examples of good practice.

Thus the case studies provide initial findings about the variety of measures used for personnel development in different types of ECE enterprises. In future research, systematic approaches in identifying best practice in personnel development within different types of ECE organisations are needed. A parallel quantitative study, based on a large and representative sample of ECE-centres with questionnaires on personnel development measures will supply important additional information (Geiger, i.p.). Organisation managers need orientation and professional knowledge on human resource management in ECE-organisations. Due to the very different professional backgrounds of the responsible persons in the organisations providing early childhood education, including many volunteers in the role of superiors for leaders and staff of ECE-centres, it is necessary to develop trainings for managers with different status and qualifications.

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SECTION II:
ENACTING AND DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP IN ECE SETTINGS

How do early childhood education directors in Finland see themselves?

Selected findings based on the orientation project

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Abstract

The Orientation Project is a research and development project that has been conducted in Finland, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan since 2008, and is concerned with early childhood education (ECE) (http://blogs.helsinki.fi/orientate/). The main purpose of the project is to discover what actually occurs in early childhood education and care (ECEC) in these four countries. The method used comprised of observations of the children in day care centres, accompanied by questionnaires for the teachers. In Finland, there were also self-evaluation questionnaires for the directors of the day care centres that took part in the project. An SPSS program was used to analyse the answers, along with factor analysis to group the scaled responses of the directors. Six clusters of answers were observed from the directors: high-quality pedagogy, the leader as developer, weak pedagogical leadership, organisational structures, roles and division of labour, and leadership challenges. The research showed that those directors who responded had a strong vision of pedagogy. They were willing to develop early childhood education and infrastructures such as shifts in personnel and meeting procedures and were well organised in their day care centres. Also, the "thesis of a good leadership" model was found.

German Abstract

Das „Orientierungsprojekt" ist ein Forschungs- und Entwicklungsprojekt, das seit 2008 in Finnland, Hongkong, Singapur und Taiwan durchgeführt wurde und sich mit früher Bildung befasst (http://blogs.helsinki.fi/orientate/). Hauptzweck des Projektes ist es herauszufinden, was gerade im Bereich der frühen Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung in diesen vier Ländern passiert. Die dabei verwendeten Methoden umfassten die Beobachtung von Kindern in Kindertageseinrichtungen, begleitet von Fragebögen für die pädagogischen Fachkräfte. In Finnland kamen auch Selbstevaluationsfragebögen für die Leitungen zum Einsatz. SPSS wurde für Faktorenanalysen bei der Datenauswertung genutzt, um die skalierten Antworten der Leitungskräfte zu gruppieren. Sechs Antwortcluster wurden bei den Leitungskräften beobachtet: die Schwerpunkte lagen auf einer hohen Qualität der Pädagogik, Leitung als Entwicklerin, schwache pädagogische Leitung, organisationalen Strukturen, Rollen und Arbeitsteilung sowie den Herausforderungen in der Führung. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die teilnehmenden Leitungskräfte eine klare Vorstellung von Pädagogik hatten. Sie wollten frühe Bildung und Infrastrukturen sowie Veränderung im Personal- und

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219909

Besprechungswesen weiterentwickeln und waren in ihren Kindertageseinrichtungen gut organisiert. Auch fand sich das „Modell der guten Führung" in den Ergebnissen.

Finnish Abstract

Orientaatioprojekti on tutkimus- ja kehittämisprojekti, jota on toteutettu Suomessa, Hong Kongissa, Singaporessa ja Taiwanissa vuodesta 2008 ja joka keskittyy varhaiskasvatukseen (http://blogs.helsinki.fi/orientate/). Pääasiallinen tavoite on selvittää, mitä varhaiskasvatuksessa tapahtuu näissä neljässä maassa. Metodina käytettiin lasten observointia päiväkodeissa sekä kyselylomaketta opettajille. Suomessa oli käytössä myös itsearviointilomake niille johtajille, joiden päiväkodit osallistuivat projektiin. SPSS-ohjelmaa käytettiin analysoimaan vastaukset, ja johtajien vastauksesta muodostettiin summamuuttujat. Kuusi summamuuttujaa havaittiin: korkealaatuinen pedagogiikka, johtaja kehittäjänä, heikko pedagoginen johtajuus, organisaation rakenteet, roolit ja työnjako sekä johtajuuden mahdollisuudet. Tutkimus osoitti, että johtajilla, jotka vastasivat kyselyyn, oli vahva näkemys pedagogiikasta. He halusivat kehittää varhaiskasvatusta sekä rakenteita, kuten työvuoroja sekä kokouskäytäntöjä sekä organisointi oli hyvin hoidettu. Myös "hyvän johtajuuden teesit" löydettiin tutkimuksessa.

Introduction

Very often, directors in early childhood education and care (ECEC) say that they have no time for pedagogical leadership. According to the research by the Trade Union of Education in Finland, over 50 per cent of directors needed supplementary training for pedagogical leadership (OAJ, 2017, p. 17). The new National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care was published in October 2016 (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016). According to that, the aim focuses on "*the entity of education, instruction and care with a pedagogical emphasis*" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016, p. 24). It continues: "*The heads of ECEC centres and family day care promote an operational culture that encourages active participation by creating structures for professional discussion*." (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016, p. 31.) The operational culture within centres has to change because there is new ECEC legislation and for the first time there are set goals for personnel and for ECEC.

The new legislation also defines that each provider has to assess its own actions and the contents of its ECEC. Each provider is also required to give the opportunity to parents/guardians and children to plan, carry out and assess ECEC. When discussing ECEC, it is rather difficult to exactly define its quality. Does it have something to do with enrolments and to what extent the centre is full? Or is it the ratio between children and adults? How can we verify that every child has had a good day in a safe environment each day? Usually, when we talk about assessment it means that a provider sends a customer satisfaction survey

to families and waits for the results. However, the survey is just one part of the assessment of quality provisioning.

In Finland, there are some quality management frameworks for ECEC. There is however no definition of quality assessment at the national level. The 2015 ECEC Act specifies that at the national level the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is responsible for the national evaluation of education (www.karvi.fi). FINEEC has been defining the assessment of ECEC over the last two years, and the field of ECEC is waiting for the instructions. According to the FINEEC survey (Mikkola, Repo, Vlasov, Paananen & Mattila, 2017), 30 per cent of municipalities who responded to the survey did not use any kind of quality management framework. This is worrying because the ECEC Act came into force some three years ago.

What I stated in terms of the difficulties of assessing whether children benefit from ECEC activities is also not the whole truth. ECEC directors lead their personnel and also the pedagogy in their centres, but can the quality of centre leadership be seen in the quality of a child's day? Does it matter what kind of director you are? How do the leaders' responses corroborate the results of the observations of the children at the centre? Can it be considered that a certain view of one's own leadership affects the way quality is perceived? Does it matter, if the directors see themselves as a good or poor pedagogical leader?

In this research I will be trying to find answers to these questions by using data collected during orientation project in 2015. This is the first time such research has been conducted on this scale. The research was funded by the Finnish Work Environment Fund (www.tsr.fi).

Orientation project

"The first cycle" of the orientation project took place in 2008-2014. "*The orientation project is a research and development project conducted in Finland, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan concerning Early Childhood Education and Care. The project includes comparative research and learning environment development based on research results.*" (http://blogs.helsinki.fi/orientate/). "The second cycle" of the orientation project was carried out in 2014-2015. The Finnish team included representatives from the following local authorities: Espoo, Helsinki, Hyvinkää, Hämeenlinna, Järvenpää, Kerava, Kouvola, Mäntsälä, Nurmijärvi, Sipoo, Turku, Tuusula and Vantaa. Currently the orientation project is analysing the feedback, and during the spring of 2018 it will be expanding and more municipalities will introduce the assessment. According to Reunamo (2018), the purpose of the project is to find out what really happens within ECEC centres. This article is based on data that was collected in 2015 during the second cycle.

In the orientation project, the data were collected in many different ways. There was observation by systematic sampling of children, child evaluation, learning environment evaluation and leadership evaluation. The learning environment evaluation and leadership evaluation are described later in this article. The observations were carried out so that each observer made observations seven times (four hours each) in a day care centre that was drawn from the list of day care centres in each city that was taking part in the project. Subsequently, the group of children where the observations took place was drawn from the groups of that day care centre. Also, the days on which the observer was to perform their observations were drawn. The personnel in that group were not made aware of the observation day beforehand. In addition, the children who were the subjects of observation were drawn from the children of that group. Before the draws took place, the parents/guardians had given their permission for the research to take place. The personnel carried out the evaluations of those children who were drawn. They also completed the learning environment evaluations. The director of the day care centre performed the leadership evaluation. Codes were used to enable the observations to be combined with the children and the day care centre. The observers in Turku made observations in ECEC centres in Turku, and so on. All the evaluation forms can be seen on the website of the project, http://blogs.helsinki.fi/orientate/. Since 2015, minor updates have been made to the questions because of the 2016 National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care.

Each observer made observations of five children, each lasting for one minute per child. As a result, observations were made every five minutes over a period of four hours. The original form of the observation and child evaluation was developed in 1997 by Jyrki Reunamo. The form featured the following variables:

A. The general activity frame of the child (what the child needs to do)
B. The main activity of the child (what the child does)
C. The child's main object of attention
D. The main social peer contact (if one can be found)
E. The physical activity level of the children
F. Child's involvement
G. Emotion (1-6, even a few seconds of the emotion is enough during observation)
H. Social orientation
I. The related or nearest adult's main activity

> *"The original learning environment assessment was developed in 2004 based on the City of Helsinki data and enhanced during several rounds of quality evaluation with the help of the municipality participants between 2010 and 2015. The leadership evaluation was developed in 2014 with the help of Mar-*

ja-Liisa Akselin and Ulla Soukainen." (http://blogs.helsinki.fi/orientate/data-collection/.)

Defining pedagogical leadership

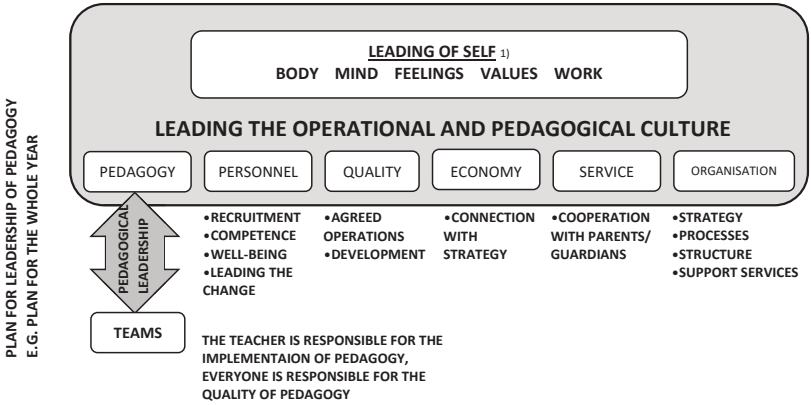
Different researchers use different concepts for leadership that have something to do with pedagogy. Some use the words 'pedagogical leadership', and in the English version, the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care says: *"Preconditions for developing the operational culture include pedagogical leadership…"* (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016, p. 30.) But in the Finnish national curriculum document it is written as '*pedagogiikan johtaminen*', which can be translated as 'leading the operational and pedagogical culture'. Pedagogical leadership is '*pedagoginen johtajuus*' in Finnish. There are many definitions of *'pedagoginen johtajuus'*. Fonsén and Parrila (2016, p. 24) describe pedagogical leadership (*pedagoginen johtajuus* in Finnish) as a "category label" or an "umbrella concept" which includes pedagogical management (*pedagoginen johtaminen*) and leading the operational and pedagogical culture (*pedagogiikan johtaminen*) of ECEC centres. For example, Ursin (2012) wrote that pedagogical management is the right term to use when we are talking about leading or managing an education organisation. Defining the concept of pedagogical leadership is rather essential before directors can form their own perceptions about this concept. Then they have to think about what kinds of aims and actions they have to achieve by implementing pedagogical leadership.

I myself think that leading the operational and pedagogical culture is much more than simply the matter of substance, pedagogy. Also, I think that pedagogical leadership is formed between the director and the personnel. It is something they create together in the name of pedagogy. For me, leading the operational and pedagogical culture is the category label for everything that a director does by managing their centre. It includes for example economics, competence and substance (see Figure 1). I think that for example planning shifts for the personnel is part of pedagogy, in addition to economics. The director plans the staff roster so that there is enough pedagogy – teachers – in each shift. After all, the director has to take responsibility for their centre and employees, although recently leadership is seen as being distributed. More and more, distributed pedagogical leadership is seen as a way of ensuring quality in ECEC. Distributed leadership can have a positive effect on teachers, leaders, and children's education (Heikka, 2014, p. 55). Though high-quality pedagogy is a matter for all, the teacher of the team is responsible for it being realised.

To clarify my thoughts about leading the operational and pedagogical culture, I present a figure below (Figure 1) that can also be seen in Curriculum of Early Childhood and Care in the municipality of Turku (2017). In this system

pedagogical leadership is created between the director and other centre personnel, and the focus of their work is on pedagogy (the arrow in Figure 1).

When directors say that they have no time for pedagogical issues, have they considered how they describe the pedagogical issues? They should see the entirety of ECEC. Pedagogical leadership is present when they discuss changes they should make for the environment or to enhance cooperation with parents/ guardians with their staff.



Footnote 1) Sydänmaanlakka (2006)

Figure 1. Leading the operational and pedagogical culture as an umbrella concept.

Figure 1 presents the idea of the multi-level concept of 'pedagogical leadership'. First, the director has to take the lead of themselves. They must have the ability to make decisions, to organise their day and to prioritise. They have to understand the contents of the work of the director and also realise how important good interactions are between themselves and centre staff (Soukainen, 2015, p. 174). Positive interaction enables good pedagogical leadership to exist.

Leadership evaluation in the orientation project

Recent research on leadership has helped us to understand the meaning of the subject. Knowledge about leading is necessary to improve the quality of pedagogy (e.g. Strehmel, 2016; Gotvassli, 2018). In Finland, many directors have become directors after having worked as teachers in centres. By analysing the results of the first cycle (2008-2014) of the orientation project, the development team noticed that not only were the observations important but also the pedagogy and the leadership being enacted within centres. How the directors lead their

centres was seen as relevant. So, during autumn 2014, Reunamo, Akselin and Soukainen created the leadership evaluation questionnaire for the directors. It was based on Akselin's and Soukainen's research into leadership in ECEC (Akselin, 2013; Soukainen, 2015).

That questionnaire included 20 background questions and 85 Likert-scale questions. In addition, there were two open-ended questions about support and one question for free comments. The Likert-scales were between 1 (I don't agree at all) and 7 (I totally agree). The instructions were as follows:

> *"This assessment is limited to the daycare centre staff and the building where the research has been carried out. The evaluation is based on the situation in January-March 2015. Because accurate calculations for the background information can take a long time, you should divide the evaluation over two days: the first day for describing the background information and the second day for evaluating the activities. There are many ways to direct and manage a school well. This evaluation is not only on a positive-negative axis. The aim is to see the relationship between the director's choices and everyday activities. Respond with care. Individual leaders' answers are not considered separately; instead, the material is considered as a whole. Managers receive feedback from the results of the investigation."*

The educators' evaluation of the learning environment

The educators' evaluation of the learning environment included nine background questions and 68 Likert-scale questions, scaled from "Does not describe the learning environment" to "Describes the learning environment very well". Then there was one question: "When evaluating using school marking (4-10), how well is a good quality Early Childhood Education actualised in the group?"

The instructions were as follows:

> *"The learning environment of the group is evaluated. The evaluation is done by the teacher(s) and staff who work with a certain child group. Many of the descriptions are neutral and can have positive or negative outcomes depending on the situation. The purpose of the evaluation is not to evaluate how good or bad the learning environments are. Often a good teacher is critical about her/his work. What is important are the aspects of the work that describe the group well. Try to use the whole scale and not just low or high evaluations. Only with a varied evaluation can the important and personal aspects of the group be evaluated. Try to be realistic in your evaluations. If you think that there are two different things described in one item, concentrate on the first description. The purpose of the evaluation is to study the pedagogical style, atmosphere and*

relations of the group, not to rank groups. The groups might be different each year and different aspects can be emphasised. To say it in another way: do not evaluate how well you yourself perform as a teacher. Evaluate the practices in the group, and how well the items describe the group's activities right now. Do not describe your personal preferences or curriculum; instead, describe the quality and activities in the group at this moment. Do it in such a way that all columns in the evaluation form are used."

Method

As I mentioned before, this article is based in 'the second cycle' of the project; in other words, the data collected during the spring of 2015. The leadership evaluation form was sent to all the directors whose centre was involved in the observation (N = 194). Some 158 directors answered, so the response rate was 81 per cent. The ages of the informants ranged between 34 and 64 years, the average being 53 years. Some 92.9 per cent of the informants were women. Only three had master's degree (only one of them had Master's degree in Education), the rest had a bachelor's degree or comparable degree.

I analysed the answers using the SPSS statistical program. I identified six dimensions using the statistical process known as factor analysis (Varimax). When constructing scale variables, I recoded four variables: no. 35: In my opinion, the placement of children in ECEC constitutes pedagogical leadership; no. 41: The working community's well-being takes a lot of time and resources; No. 46: As a director, I am perfectly aware of what happens in the groups; and No. 73: The school has recently been disturbed by confusion, frustration and chaos.

I created six scale variables:

- high quality pedagogy
- director as a developer
- weak pedagogical leadership
- structure
- assignments and division of labour
- challenging leadership.

Table 1. Scale variable: High quality pedagogy (1 = I don't agree at all… 7 = I totally agree)

Number of items 29	Cronbach's alpha .941	Correlation .375- .777	Scale variables	
			mean 5.22	std. deviation 0.75
Items • the staff are thoroughly dedicated to the development of the school curriculum; • the staff are able to describe and justify the basic tasks of the work; • the employees share a common vision; • the flow of information and communication functions excellently in our workplace; • the school curriculum is central to the execution of the shared vision; • the kindergarten's action plan is a key factor in executing the shared vision; • the values behind the work principles show in the executed activities; • the centre activities are clearly based on values; • the educational goals and plans show in the activities; new employees are introduced to house practices; • the induction of the new employees works well; • parents are kept well aware of the school curriculum; • the educational partnership with parents is supported strongly; • the pedagogic work in the school is excellent; • the division of labour of the staff is clear;		• staff recruitment has been successful; • workplace well-being is good; • the activities are evaluated in a versatile way in the school; • assessment is an essential foundation for the development of activities; • the school activities are documented in a versatile way; documentation is an essential factor in the development of the activities; • the staff develop their work with enthusiasm and in a versatile way; • the IT skills of the staff are activated and updated for the planning of the pedagogy; • the staff are strongly committed to their work; • school security is in order; • the staff are committed to the development of outdoor activities; • the staff are committed to the development of the physical learning environment; • the staff are committed to the development of new projects with the children; • the staff take account of the wide range of different learning needs and habits of the children; • the school has recently been disturbed by confusion, frustration and chaos (Recoded.)		

Though there are plenty of items included in this scale variable, the Cronbach's alpha is good. All the propositions refer to focusing on pedagogy.

Table 2. Scale variable: Director as a developer (1 = I don't agree at all… 7 = I totally agree)

Number of items 20	Cronbach's alpha .861	Correlation .337- .788	Scale variables	
			mean 5.22	std. deviation 0.68
Items • my pedagogical leadership is excellent; • management of the centre is a joint responsibility; • the personnel division of labour is based on training; • working time arrangements are based on the implementation of good quality education; • the substitutes' division of labour is defined in advance; • I instigate new development processes by introducing new challenges regularly; • I challenge and question the staff's ways of working actively; • as a director, I am first and foremost an educational developer; • as a director, I am, above all, the work community developer;		• as a director, I am first and foremost responsible for family services; • as a director, I am, above all, an example to the staff; • as a director, I concentrate on the professional development of the staff; • the development discussions with the staff are a good way to develop the activities; • the development discussions are essential channels of influence for the staff; • I take care of school safety continuously and in a versatile way; • networking with third parties has been rewarding and fruitful; • recently, my own work has been very instructive; • recently, my work has been very effective; • recently, I have experienced success in my work		

The perspective of the scale variable "Director as a developer" refers to success at work. The "vision" is about improving the quality.

Table 3. Scale variable: Weak pedagogical leadership (1 = I don't agree at all… 7 = I totally agree)

Number of items 4	Cronbach's alpha .691	Correlation .454- .747	Scale variables	
			mean 4.29	std. deviation 0.98
Items • as a director, I am perfectly aware of what happens in the groups (recoded); • as a director, I am first and foremost a listener;		• as a director, I concentrate a lot on administrative tasks; • as a director, I concentrate a lot on financial tasks		

This scale variable pictures a director whose time is spent doing administrative tasks instead of leading.

Table 4. Scale variable: Structure (1 = I don't agree at all… 7 = I totally agree)

Number of items 6	Cronbach's alpha .738	Correlation .365- .572	Scale variables	
			mean 5.05	std. deviation 0.81
Items • the director's tasks are delegated to the staff; • each employee has their own area of responsibility; • the induction of the substitutes is dedicated and valid; • as a director, I ensure that the staff have time to plan their daily work		• the most important thing in the school is a harmonious, natural and relaxed atmosphere; • the most important things are designed and goal-oriented educational activities to enhance learning		

Structures include the control of time and work, responsibility for employees and good organisational skills, in other words, the employees exhibit good organisational citizenship behaviour (Soukainen, 2015).

Table 5. Scale variable: Assignments and division of labour (1 = I don't agree at all… 7 = I totally agree)

Number of items 10	Cronbach's alpha .674	Correlation .309- .739	Scale variables	
			mean 4.07	std. deviation 0.75
Items • every staff member has been involved in planning the school curriculum; • the deputy director's job description is clear and functional; • we adhere to the principle of "everyone does everything"; • the personnel division of labour is based on their own interests; • the personnel division of labour is based on their personal expertise		• the personnel division of labour is based on their work shifts; • working time arrangements are flexible according to the needs of the staff; • the substitutes' division of labour issues are considered from the substitutes' point of view; • all employees receive the same amount of time and resources from the director; • I get enough support from my own director		

The scale variable "Assignments and division of labour" includes clear job descriptions and also operating models that have not been described, and they depend on employees.

Table 6. Scale variable: Challenging leadership (1 = I don't agree at all… 7 = I totally agree)

Number of items 8	Cronbach's alpha .748	Correlation .305- .642	Scale variables	
			mean 3.58	std. deviation 0.92
Items • to organise the substitute personnel is stressful; personnel problems and their needs take up most of my time and resources; • personnel conflicts take up a lot of time and resources; • networking takes up a lot of my working time		• recently, my work has been very difficult; • recently, my work has been very busy; • recently, my work has been in a rut; • recently, I've needed plenty of assertive leadership and have used my influence		

Challenging leadership refers to directors who have very many difficulties managing their work. The mean of this scale variable is lower than others. That means that based on this data, we can assume that the directors taking part in this evaluation did not have this problem. After developing these scale variables, I compared the results with the observations of the children and also the results of educators' evaluations of the learning environment. I focus on these results in Figure 2.

Good leadership, high quality pedagogy

In addition to developing the scale variables, I surveyed the propositions one by one. The two propositions that received the highest mean scores (scale 1-7) were: "Development discussions with the staff are a good way to develop the activities" (mean 6, std. deviation .975) and "The staff are strongly committed to their work" (mean 6, std. deviation .967). The two propositions with the lowest mean scores were the following: "Personnel conflicts take up a lot time and resources" (mean 2.54, std. deviation 1.457) and "Recently, my work has been in a rut" (mean 1.72, std. deviation 1.123).

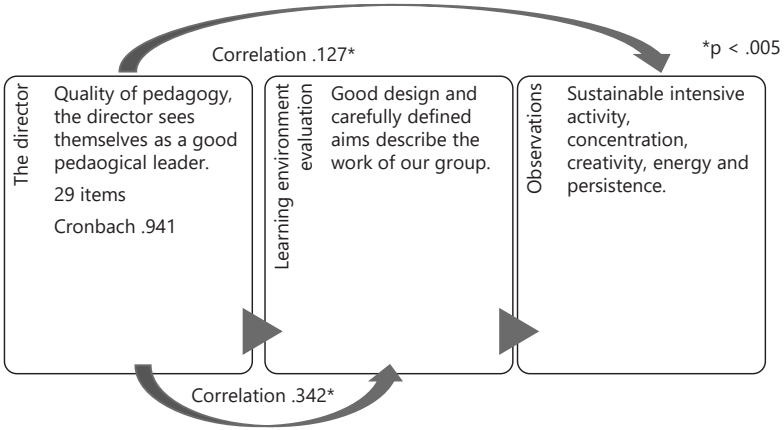


Figure 2. The main results of the study.

So, what is the answer to my question? Does it matter whether a director sees themselves as a good leader? Does the director's self-evaluation impact effect on a child's day? The answer is yes! When I compared the scale variables with the observations of the children and also the educators' evaluation of the learning environment, I found correlations. When the directors evaluated themselves as good pedagogical leaders (scale variable: high quality pedagogy), the educators

answered: "In-depth planning and defining central educational objectives are essential in the building of the group processes." The correlation was .342* (* p< .005). And when I compared the evaluations of the directors with the observations of the children, the observations were as follows: "Sustainable intensive activity, concentration, creativity, energy and persistence." The correlation was .127* (*p < .005). The comparison of these three pieces of data also led to results that were obvious. As an example, I take the directors' evaluation as "Weak pedagogical leadership". The correlation with the educators' evaluation "Pedagogical leadership should be strengthened in our ECEC/school" was .284* (* p < .005). I summarise the results in Figure 2.

Discussion

I would like to emphasise that the scale variables are based on the data collected in this study. I declare that they are not perfect, but they are directive. By examining these items, we get an idea of the contents of good pedagogical leadership, structure, weak pedagogical leadership, the director as a developer, challenging leadership, and the meaning of assignments and the division of labour. Terho (2017) used the same data in her study. The results were similar, but the names of the categories used were a little different. To clarify, she summarised her five scale variables into two: Quality leadership and Demanding leadership. Demanding leadership does not mean that the director is not good; it means that they have a lack of know-how or knowledge and skills to perform well as pedagogical leaders for their centre. Recent research has shown that good leadership requires structures (Soukainen, 2015; Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015).

Though the data collection methods in this study were varied, there is no 'voice of the children'. What do children think about what makes a good day? Fortunately, in ECEC the focus is increasingly on children and their thoughts. Recently there has also been research into children's opinions (e.g. Kragh-Müller & Isbell, 2017). It is good that in Finland, the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care 2016 emphasises child-initiated pedagogy. In order to make a child's day visible in ECEC there are some key methods that can be utilised, such as pedagogical documentation (see Rintakorpi, 2018) and child portfolios.

The "thesis of a good leadership" model to which I refer in the abstract includes the following:

- the introduction of new employees to the centre's practices is well implemented
- to be familiar with new employees, there must be a shared vision of a good

learning environment
- personnel have an awareness of the basic mission and the common vision, and they are visible in everyday life
- the personnel's commitment to the work community is 'number one'
- attention is paid to information and communication
- the director knows what kind of pedagogy there is in the centre
- the personnel's expertise is utilised
- the director is the developer of the work community
- documentation and evaluation are versatile
- administrative tasks do not take too much time – there is no rush
- disturbances, uncertainty and chaos are deliberately reduced
- the director uses different perspectives in her/his work (blogs.helsinki.fi/reunamo.)

As a result, if the director takes care of the things mentioned above, there is good pedagogical leadership in the centre.

Although this study has to be continued, I believe that the main message for ECEC directors is positive and supportive. A director can create a good day for each child by leading, constructing functional structures, understanding the contents of ECEC, and developing ECEC with their personnel and the children.

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Does leadership exist in early childhood education in Tanzania?

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Abstract

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the part of basic education that lays the foundation to the other levels of education. It is an area that requires leadership specialization based on the importance of this level and the age of children served and the current literature suggest that the nature and context of ECE makes it unique and worthy of independent examination and support mechanisms for quality improvement. This paper presents findings from a larger study conducted in Tanzania, East Africa to assess the differences between stated and implemented policies in Early Childhood Education leadership and it identifies issues such as *ECE professional background, supporting structure, budget and resource allocations and gender and leadership* that should be addressed in realization of a balanced Leadership in Early Childhood in Tanzania and other similar countries.

German Abstract

Frühe Bildung ist Teil der Grundbildung und legt das Fundament für andere Stufen der Bildung und Erziehung. Sie ist ein Bereich, der eine Spezialisierung der Leitung erfordert, die der Bedeutung dieser Stufe und dem Alter der Kinder gerecht wird. Die aktuelle Literatur empfiehlt für die frühe Bildung Unterstützungsmechanismen zur Qualitätsverbesserung und unabhängige Prüfungen, da die frühe Bildung aufgrund ihrer Natur und ihres Kontexts einzigartig ist und es wert sein sollte. Dieses Papier stellt die Ergebnisse einer größeren Studie vor, die in Tansania, Ostafrika, durchgeführt wurde, um Unterschiede zwischen vorgegebenen (stated) und implementierten Politiken in der Leitung von Kindertageseinrichtungen empirisch zu belegen. Die Studie identifiziert Themen wie den professionellen Hintergrund, Unterstützungsstrukturen, Budget und Ressourcenallokation sowie Gender und Leitung, die bei der Realisierung einer ausgewogenen Leitungskultur in der frühen Bildung in Tansania und ähnlichen Ländern aufgegriffen werden sollten.

Finnish Abstract

Varhaiskasvatus on osa perusopetusta ja luo perustan muille koulutustasoille. Varhaiskasvatus vaatii johtamisen erikoistumista tämän tason merkityksellisyyteen ja lasten ikätasoon. Uusin kirjallisuus osoittaa, että varhaiskasvatuksen luonne ja konteksti tekevät siitä ainutlaatuisen ja tutkimuksen sekä tukevien mekanismien arvoisen sen laadun parantamiseksi. Tässä luvussa esitetään tuloksia Itä-Afrikan Tansaniassa suoritetusta laajemmasta tutkimuksesta. Tuloksien avulla voidaan arvioida eroja var-

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219910

haiskasvatuksen hallinnollisten ohjeistusten ja toteutettujen toimintatapojen välillä. Luvussa nostetaan esille aiheita varhaiskasvatuksen ammatillisesta taustasta, tukea antavista rakenteista, budjetin ja resurssien kohdentamisesta sekä sukupuolesta ja johtajuudesta, jotka tulisi huomioida tasapainoisen varhaiskasvatuksen johtamisen toteuttamiseksi Tansaniassa ja muissa samankaltaisissa maissa.

Background – Education governance in Tanzania

Tanzania is a developing country in Africa, which in its efforts to improve the quality of life of its citizens a lot is being done, and yet a lot of issues are still at different levels of development. The governance of the education in Tanzania is divided between the central ministry and the local government. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is responsible for policy, curriculum and program development. It is also responsible to oversee quality control and assurance measures. The ministry is also responsible for the education budget development but the actual implementation of day-to-day education activities are decentralized.

The Local Government Authorities (which during this study were under the Prime Minister's Office but now under the President's Office) are responsible for the overall implementation, management and supervision of education at local government authorities. However, the Ministry of Education and its institutions develop policies, curriculum and syllabi, which are operationalized by the local government authorities.

Primary schools are managed and supervised by the local government. Primary education (Basic Education) includes a compulsory one-year of pre-primary (Early Childhood Education) and seven year of primary education.

In Tanzania public education system, education leadership positions at all levels are filled by promotion not training. All teachers are expected to take courses on leadership and ECE (it is mandatory during their pre-service training) together with other courses (Mtahabawa, 2010). However, these courses tend to be introductory and in most cases not well taught.

Leadership in Early Childhood

Leadership is reframed as a shared responsibility amongst all professionals, tertiary educational institutions, professional organizations and those who work and interact with young children and their families (Stamopoulos, 2012). It is a shared responsibility for all early childhood professionals who must tackle educational change (Ho, 2011). The quality of early years' service provisions is directly linked to the quality of leadership and management of early years' settings (Ang, 2011; Muijs, Aubrey, Harris, & Briggs, 2004).

Leadership in Early childhood may be well perceived in the ways early childhood professionals share a reciprocal process to pursue chances that lead to a desired future Stamopoulos (2012). According to Stamopoulos (2012), leadership is being constructed as each person interacts and influences another while contributing to a shared vision. She emphasizes that leadership is not based on position but all early childhood professionals who make decisions about educational practice in their work are perceived as leaders in their own right (Stamopoulos, 2012, p. 42).

Early Childhood Education is gaining attention at national and international levels but there is limited attention on Early Childhood leadership. Issues of capacity and perceptions of those who work in the field of ECE have not been brought to the spotlight. Literatures suggest that it seems *"almost inconceivable that the leadership practices of those working within EC are not being taken seriously" (*Muijs et al., 2004, p. 167). In Tanzania, quality ECE programs will allow children to enter primary schools better prepared to learn and succeed. However, at the time of this study there was no research that had linked teachers, head teachers/principals and policy makers' professional and pedagogical knowledge that influence leadership practice in ECE in Tanzania.

Research questions

The study was guided by questions that investigated the actual implementation of national developed policies at national, district and school levels. Three questions are presented below:

1. What professional background do teachers, head teachers and policy makers have that support their implementation of policy and programs related to ECE in Tanzania?
2. What supporting structures are in place to empower teachers, head teachers and policy makers to assume effective leadership in ECE in Tanzania?
3. What factors are viewed as barriers affecting leadership roles about ECE in Tanzania?

Literature Review

There is a growing body of literature on scientific evidence about child development and the contribution of early care and interventions in the future development of young children and their families. Study findings indicate that there is now a remarkable convergence of new knowledge about the developing brain, the human genome, molecular biology, and the interdependence of cognitive, social, and emotional development that offers scientists and policymakers an ex-

ceptional opportunity "to launch a new, science driven era in early childhood policy and practice" (Center on the Developing Child, 2007, p. 7; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000; Ramgopal, Dieterle, Aviles, McCreedy, & Davis, 2009).

The knowledge on economic returns may help parents, teachers and policy makers in making right and timely choices. Investing in early childhood has multiple benefits for children themselves, their families and the nation as whole (Heckman, 2006). For governments in developing countries like Tanzania, timely investment in Early Childhood Development programs may be a way to break the vicious circle of poverty.

Methodology

This study used Critical Qualitative Research approach with a qualitative case study research method for data collection, analysis and reporting of the findings. Merriam (2009) argues that critical education research "queries the context where learning takes place, including the larger system of society, the culture and institutions that shape educational practice, the structural and historical conditions framing practice" (p. 10).

The interview was the main source of data collection in this study, with government document analysis being supplemental (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Different government documents that show data on enrollment, staff training and budgeting were reviewed. Efforts were made to review available documents for the last five years (2008-2013) and some reports covered a longer period than five years as they were available in order to assess the trends in enrollment of children, teacher training and budget allocations.

The participants in the study were identified from a cross-sectional of policy makers at national level all the way to classroom teacher and provided the understanding of the process of implementing the policy at national level, district levels and the impacts of their decisions on teaching and learning at school level.

Findings

The data from the documents review indicate increase and decrease in enrollment across years and projecting of teacher recruitment to meet the increasing demand. However, it is clear that there is still limited funding for primary education. It is clear that ECE is under-resourced with no explicit budget allocation in the overall budget allocation and therefore it has not been receiving direct funding from the government budget. The data have also indicated the shortage of teachers to meet the increased demands.

ECE professional background

In Tanzania, Early Childhood Development professionals are very few and those few are mainly found at classroom level. The decision-making chain starts at the national level and it ends at the classroom level. Therefore it is important to have people in the decision-making loop who are knowledgeable about the importance of Early Childhood Education at all levels. The professional background of national level participants in this study varied from a graduate course on Early Childhood to only those who attended a few seminars here and there on Early Childhood:

> *If I have to talk about the experience, I think I have understood ECE to a greater extent because I have participated in so many things including research, surveys and documents productions that have helped me to understand the importance of ECE* (National Level Officer).

The situation was not different for the other participants at district and school levels:

> *When I came here in the District Education Officer also assigned me to oversee the Early Childhood Development unit and the child rights desk. So I started getting some training on Child Rights, Early Childhood Development (ECD) and through those seminars, I am where I am today (District Education Official).*
>
> *I don't recall it [leadership training in ECE] and it might have been very little to be remembered. Basically, there have been some seminar and workshops on managing ECE classes as part of our in-service capacity building* (Primary School Head Teacher).

The quotes above indicate that there had not been any training on leadership focused on Early Childhood Education. Participants at national, district and school levels had attended seminars and workshops in ECE that are helpful in professional development, but they cannot replace teacher training. The professional status has not improved and it is posing a threat to the quality of ECE in Tanzania.

Supporting structure

Findings indicate that there are no supporting structures for professional growth and policy implementation to Early Childhood Education. However, participants indicated their level of commitment to ECE despite the limited support they could not clearly identify the supporting structures in fulfilling their leadership roles apart from individual initiatives;

> *I have not received any leadership training [laugh]. I have received training I think once* (District Official).
>
> *In my leadership position as head teacher to have training specifically on how to lead the school, that's one I haven't attended any training. There is no any formal leadership training* (Primary School Head Teacher)

It was clear from interviewing teachers that because they did not see any open opportunity to them for leadership training, they could not plan or even think about attending leadership trainings. It appears that teachers are required to cover the tuition fees personally if they want to attend leadership training. They were concerned about the lack of formal structures to improve their leadership practice given that the education landscapes were changing:

> *I think training is important because things are constantly changing [and] learning is a lifelong process* (National Level Official).
>
> *Capacity building is very important because even those talented leaders need also to learn. So it is good to receive training to improve weak side while maintaining strength* (Classroom Teacher).

Barriers affecting leadership roles on ECE in Tanzania

The implementation of quality Early Childhood Services should ensure that there are no barriers to those taking on leadership and responsibilities. The barriers to all participating groups included, limited knowledge of decision makers on the importance of ECE, lack of budget and resources for ECE, limited training opportunities and over dependence on donor support for ECE programs.

Budget and resource allocations

The general impression from study participants especially at national level, it that decision makers have limited understanding on the importance of ECE. Although participants acknowledged that ECE was gaining attention at the national level, there was a general view that people who make decisions on resource allocation may lack the necessary knowledge on ECE:

> *Now when it comes to budget allocation, the people who sit there [in budget meetings], have no idea of what is ECE. So during the budget ceiling, when they look for the things to be omitted, ECE is one of the items to be deleted right away* (National Level Official).

The lack of explicit budget allocation affects almost everything including leadership training and the quality of teaching and learning in the Early Childhood Education settings. Tanzania is a good example where the policy is clear

about the importance of Early Childhood Education but the implementation does not translate the policy into programs and resource allocations.

Gender and leadership

The issue of gender and leadership was also investigated during the study. At national level out of nine people who were interviewed; only three were women and six were men. At the district level the number was equal, two men and two women. At primary school level there was only one male teacher who was the head teacher and the rest were female teachers. The situation on the ground was not different from the current literature, in that more women work in ECE classes while a few men dominate leadership positions.

Implications and Conclusion

This paper highlights key findings from the study on the differences between stated policies and implemented policies in Early Childhood Education leadership in Tanzania. Throughout the study as it was the case in the literature reviewed, it is clear that leadership does not explicitly exist in Early Childhood Education in Tanzania.

Therefore in order to improve ECE leadership and the status of ECE the government of Tanzania should increase education funding and clearly allocate budget for ECE activities. The government should provide leadership training and professional support to head teachers and classroom teachers. Efforts should be made to improve communication system in both directions. The role of higher learning institutions cannot be overlooked and therefore the government should involve higher learning institutions in policy development and implementation. The findings suggest that those working in ECE have considerable experience that could inform policy implementation. In the attempt to improve communication bottom up, it is important to acknowledge professional knowledge and experiences of those working in the field.

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Leadership diffractions, vibrations and productions – perspectives from Norway

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Abstract

The article explores and experiments with post-human and new-material approaches, inspired by the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, as well as Karen Barad's quantum physics, to examine the complexity within leadership practices. The empirical point of departure was a pilot project where the author co-walked with the director of an Early Childhood Education and Care Centre for a week, with ongoing talks about events and encounters, followed by four interviews carried out as confabulative conversations with mutual speculations. The research question explored in this pilot project was: How do powerful leadership moments affect events and encounters? The glowing moments open for wondering and fabulations. Three glowing events, illuminated by agential cuts, are the basis for discussing and speculating about powerful leadership moments.

German Abstract

Dieser Artikel erkundet und experimentiert mit posthumanistischen und neomaterialistischen Ansätzen, die durch die französischen Philosophen Gilles Deleuze und Felix Guattari sowie Karen Barrads Quantenphysik inspiriert sind, um die Komplexität des Leitungshandelns zu erfassen. Der empirische Ausgangspunkt war ein Pilotprojekt, in welchem die Autorin die Leitungskraft einer Kita über eine Woche begleitete mit fortlaufenden Gesprächen über Ereignisse und Begegnungen, gefolgt von vier Interviews, die als konfabulative Unterhaltung mit gegenseitigen Spekulationen geführt wurden. Die Forschungsfrage, die in dieser Pilotstudie untersucht wurde war: wie beeinflussen starke Leitungsmomente die Ereignisse und Begegnungen? Die glühenden Momente waren Anlass zum Staunen und für fantasievolle Erzählungen. Drei glühende Momente, die als Ausschnitte des Handelns beleuchtet wurden, sind Grundlage für die Diskussion und Spekulation über machtvolle Leitungsmomente.

Finnish Abstract

Luku selvittää uusia lähestymistapoja johtajuuden käytäntöjen monitahoisuuteen. Nämä lähestymistavat ovat saaneet vaikutteita ranskalaisilta filosofeilta Gilles Deleuzelta ja Felix Guattarilta sekä Karen Barad'in kvanttifysiikasta. Empiirisenä lähtökohtana oli pilottiprojekti, jossa tutkija kulki päiväkodin johtajan mukana ja seurasi hänen työtään viikon ajan. Tänä aikana hän keskusteli meneillään olevista tapahtumista ja kohtaamisista. Seurantajakson jälkeen järjestettiin neljä haastattelua, jotka toteutettiin tutkijan ja johtajan rupatteluhetkinä, yhteisinä seurantaviikkoa koskevina

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219911

pohdintoina. Pilottiprojektissa etsittiin vastausta seuraavaan tutkimuskysymykseen: Kuinka tehokas johtajuus vaikuttaa tapahtumiin ja kohtaamisiin? Loistavat hetket avaavat ihmettelyn ja ihastuksen. Loistavat hetket ovat perusta keskustella ja pohtia tehokasta johtajuutta.

1. Introduction

Since the millennium, there have been many reorganisations in the public sector. In a large municipality in Norway around 2007, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) institutions were merged together into larger centres with their own directors. Thus, after the recent changes in Scandinavian ECECs, they have become larger institutions (Mordal, 2014), and research on ECECs has been more focused on strategic and dynamic leadership. Strategic leadership is here suggested as a "bricolage", with the ability to sense the not-spoken and the capacity to combine various methods and tools (Gotvassli & Vannebo, 2016, p. 159). In recent years, politicians have turned a critical eye on ECEC quality, and in the municipality in question here, the aim is to promote holistic and hands-on leadership in educational and health institutions. In August 2017, new department leaders with formal economic, pedagogical and personnel leadership responsibilities were hired to the largest centres' management teams. All the leadership teams attend a leadership development programme together. Heikka and Hujula (2013) point to pedagogical leadership as crucial to quality development in ECEC.

This article presents a pilot project conducted in 2016-2017 where the aim was to find out more about what leadership produces and how it vibrates. The aim was to look into «powerful leadership moments» as discussed by Thomas and Reinertsen (2016, pp. 85, 88, 91, 99). Leadership often affects encounters and events. Affect causes intensity and energy, where the concept of "affect" is closely connected to pre-reflexivity and events, and is seen as occurring prior to perception (Andersen, 2015a, p. 317). All events involve doubt and insecurity when it comes to making choices. The ethics of events involves openness to the virtual and possibilities in all situations calling for improvisation (Leirpoll, 2015). The research question explored in this project is: How do powerful leadership moments affect events and encounters?

For a week in the fall of 2016, I shadowed or co-walked with Maria, the director of the Dandelion ECEC. "Dandelion" consists of two houses and has approximately forty-five staff members. The present article experiments with post-human and new-material approaches to explore new concepts and methodologies within leadership research, in line with the movement from hermeneutics to immanence post approaches. "Deleuze maintains that the virtual is not yet defined; it can only be perceived on a plane of immanence" (Moe,

2018). Post-qualitative research questions the categorisation and coding of data, turning to more experimental methodologies (St. Pierre, 2013; MacLure, 2013; Brinkmann, 2014). Based on the pilot project, I was invited to conduct a research project focusing on the leadership programme, new leadership teams and team roles within the municipality. I will return to the follow-up project and further research at the end of this article.

2. Theoretical excursions

Deleuze and Guattari's "immanent ontology" (2013) and Barad's "agential realism" (2007) are the basis for plugging in and thinking about how leadership diffractions, vibrations and productions affect and are affected by bodies, material, encounters and events. A key element in Deleuze's philosophy is a critique of representation within research (MacLure, 2013, p. 659). The quantum physical phenomenon of diffraction points to how waves of water, electricity or light move, overlap and spread, and when encountering obstructions, they change directions (ibid). Agential realism is described as "an epistemological-ontological-ethical framework that provides an understanding of the role of human *and* nonhuman, material *and* discursive, and natural *and* cultural factors in scientific and other social-material practices" (Barad, 2007, p. 26). Agential means experimenting, that is ongoing reconfigurations of the world (ibid, p. 141), where matter is understood as dynamic and shifting entanglements of relations.

From the French philosopher Henri Bergson (in Davies, 2016), we have the concepts of "lines of descent force" and lines of "ascent force" (ibid, p. 76). The lines of descent force point to automatic repetitions, where Bergson's argument is that creative evolution "rests on a capacity to let go of the repetitive, stratified status quo" (Davies, 2016, p. 77). Letting go by taking lines of ascent into "the not-yet-known" gives life energy and creativity. Davies states that "the ethical question of what is being made to matter in any encounter is an ongoing ethical responsibility" (ibid). Deleuze promotes the vitality of vibrations and fabulations of what *is* and what could *become* as fundamental for thinking in an experimental way, lines of flight that might open for changes and new opportunities (Sandvik, 2013). Bergson's fabulations are contrasting "major discourses" in flow (Johansson, 2015, p. 458).

2.1 Agential realism and diffractions

According to agential realism, observing, thinking and theorizing are material practices of intra-acting within and as part of the world (Barad, 2007). "Onto-epistemology" is Barad's term for the study of practices of knowing in being, stating that "becoming of the world is a deeply ethical matter" (ibid., p. 185). In agential realism, matter and meaning are "always already constituted. (…) If

matter and meaning are seen as co-constitutive to each other, then so is being/becoming (ontology) and knowing (epistemology)" (Lenz Taguchi & Palmer, 2013, p. 673).

Key concepts in Barad's agential realism are: apparatuses and phenomena. The apparatuses consist of an "entanglement of architecture, materialities, bodies, discourses and discursive practices" (ibid., p. 672). Apparatuses are open-ended practices, not located in the world as static structures. They are material and dynamic configurations and reconfigurations of the world. "Apparatuses (…) are specific material-discursive practices that become productive of phenomena by ways of specific boundary-making-cuts" (Lenz Taguchi & Palmer, 2013, p. 674).

Concepts are crucial to naming the new and not-yet-known (MacLure, 2013), suggesting a more non-hierarchical organisation; i.e. assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013), apparatuses (Barad, 2007) or actor networks (Latour, 2007), all concerned with entanglements. Diffraction is an entangled phenomenon, and we can read different events and texts diffractively through each other. Here I shall look into how leadership interferes, produces, diffracts and vibrates; the outcome could always be different. According to Lenz Taguchi and Palmer (2013, p. 671): "A diffractive analysis aims not only to analyze how this apparatus is made and what it produces, but also how it can be productive of new possible realities".

Diffractions offer tools for new ways of thinking and being as researchers, highlighting the importance of the "not-yet-known" within research, an invitation to lose oneself, to move, to challenge (Davies, 2016). "Simply stated, diffraction has to do with the way waves combine when they overlap and the apparent being and spreading of waves that occurs when waves encounter obstruction" (Barad, 2007, p. 74). Diffraction focuses on the ongoing productions of thoughts in the process whereby difference is made as entangled movements. In diffractive analysis, the endeavour is to try to locate lines of force at play. Diffractions open the self, practice and thought, this is about becoming different. Referring to the nature of embodiment, subjectivity and agency, Barad (2007) states: "What is at stake here is nothing less than the possibilities for change" (p. 46). Diffractive research addresses the not-yet-known, it "does not reproduce an image of what is imagined to be already there, but is focused on its ongoing production" (Davies, 2016, p. 75).

2.2 The not-yet-known

Davies (2016, p. 73) proposes emergent listening as a counteraction to "listening-as-usual", like already knowing what another person might say or know. Emergent listening follows the lines of ascent forces. Through emergent listening, the not-yet-known might be opened up and yield new insights. Davies points to the move from reflexivity to diffraction as a conceptual key to emergent listening (2016, p. 74). It is characterised as slow and ethical listening, focusing and

dwelling, open to difference in the moment of encounter. "It is an entanglement of emergent moments that cannot be made to make sense through strategies of listening as usual" (ibid, p. 81). Ethics vibrate in emergent listening and how we deal with doubt and insecurity. One aspect of new organisations is obviously the not-yet-known. Through emergent and careful listening, habitual thinking and the descent lines of force can be suspended. The haptic space with emergent listening and a close gaze gives room for ethical practices. The vision of haptic and optic space relates to a closer or more distant vision (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013). "The haptic space of close vision gives the chance to be aware of small happenings and events […]. The haptic space is connected to tactile events, and a close gaze can open for awareness of relations to another" (Moe, 2018, p. 4). How does this translate into theories of leadership?

2.3 Ethical leadership

Hard, Press and Gibson (2013, p. 324) have studied leadership for social justice and argue that critically informed, intentional, strategic leadership makes a difference and can open up for insecurity and doubt. Leadership seems to be a key success factor, which is also shown in research where it is not the primary focus (Hard et al., p. 329). However, no one theory can cover the complexity and entanglements within leadership practices, and this present approach is rather pragmatic and experimental, exploring some post-qualitative ideas while still being influenced by traditional qualitative research. The complexity of leadership calls for diverse perspectives and different approaches.

Powerful leadership moments are glowing, affecting events and encounters (MacLure, 2013, p. 661; Andersen, 2015b, p. 315-321). "We are made up of relations," Deleuze claims (in Semetsky, 2013, p. 216). Thinking is mostly produced by experience, and "events will make sense, (…) when we experience in practice the very difference that makes each singular event singular" (Semetsky, 2013, p. 216). Experimenting may open up for the not-yet-known and another understanding of leadership. My ambition is to create methodologically smooth spaces with explorative and co-producing lines of thought about leadership vibrations, diffractions and productions in new organisations. As a researcher, one must address the unknown and one needs to become, again and again.

3. Methodological explorations

Post-qualitative research has been introduced as a critique of qualitative research for centring on the human subject (as, for example, in hermeneutic and phenomenological research) and of qualitative methods for often declining the acceptance and legitimation of quantitative mindsets (MacLure, 2013, p. 451). Methodological explorations of diffraction analyses (Barad, 2007), emergent listening

(Davies, 2016) and confabulative conversations (Johansson, 2015) are explored here. The methodology of agential realism experiments with controversy and the fact that everything could be otherwise (Lenz Taguchi & Palmer, 2013, p. 672). Everybody and everything are entangled and produce something all the time. As researching agents, we also need to pay attention to our own production (Lenz Taguchi & Palmer, 2013, p. 674). For example, how do the apparatuses or assemblages of the notebook and the recorder work?

3.1 Co-walking and confabulative conversations

In the pilot project, I started with "shadowing", an abductive method with the possibilities of getting close to events and encounters, as well as to the leader's comments and wonderings (Mintzberg, 1973; Czarniawska, 2007; Bøe, Hognestad & Waniganayake, 2017). Bøe et al. (2017) highlight shadowing as a fruitful and powerful method in studying leadership, and this was an inspiration for my pilot project. However, shadowing and post approaches are a difficult match, as the concept may indicate that the researcher is a passive, non-productive shadow. Post qualitative research aims to create room for entanglements, trying to escape schooled intuition to search for meaning, structure and logic. Here I will use co-walking as an alternative concept, referring to the researcher as an active agent. The co-walking in the fall 2016 to get close to the director's, Maria's, encounters and events was documented with field notes, and we had ongoing talks during the days, followed up by four interviews conducted more or less as "confabulative conversations" (Johansson, 2015). The glowing events can help us understand the affective encounters. Events are always in the middle between what has been and what is to become. Thinking diffractively with and on data opens us up to thinking differently about what data *is* and what data can *become*.

Johansson (2015) suggests that confabulative conversations can be approached as events for producing data (p. 446). The two con-prefixes in confabulative conversation point to slightly different things. The "con" in confabulative refers to a conversation with mutual speculations, fabulations, fantasies and dreams (Johansson, 2015, p. 459), while the "con" in conversation points to dialogue, something in between, and thus connecting to the ever-existing phenomenon of entanglements. Waniganyake states (in Bøe et al., 2017) that "it is through conversations with others that one can experiment and refine the articulation of one's leadership philosophy" (p. 13).

Confabulative conversations may open us up to the-not-yet-known and to moments of powerful leadership, as well as to the researcher's participation in creating data – or to *"creata"*, as Brinkmann (2014) suggests. Speculations on and fabulations of glowing events permit the researcher to open up for lines of flight in confabulating with the leader about leadership productions.

3.2 Diffractive analysis – highlighting encounters and events

Experimenting with new concepts and exploring encounters is an entrance to find new perspectives on leadership in ECECs. Here I will present three glowing events and discuss how leadership affects and is affected by discourses, materiality, events and encounters. In turn, these perspectives can produce new knowledge about leadership in a post-human context.

Haecceity points to "the moment when difference between this and that, body and horizon shifts" (Davies, 2016, p. 74). MacLure (2013, p. 661) posits the concept of "glowing data" to describe data that gradually begin to grow and glimmer, calling for attention. The glow is described as "affect". The significance of affect and the emergence of sense work in thought-provoking and glowing events sometimes create turning points and diffractions. The glow appears in singular points, according to MacLure (2013, p. 662). "In affect we are never alone. That's because affect in Spinoza's definition is basically ways of connecting, to others and other situations", Brian Massumi maintains (in Leirpoll, 2005, p. 108). What is important for materialist methodology is what Deleuze (2004) calls sense, pre-reflecting and catching up with the non-representing and wild elements in dialogic relations.

MacLure (2013, p. 662) proposes to "…stop looking for depth and hoping for height. It might work instead with, and within, the flat topology of *events* which, according to Deleuze […] 'are like crystals, they become and grow only out of the edge, or on the edge'". Sense is virtual, and "sense is about resistance and perplexity" (MacLure, 2013). In this article I will explore how mutual thinking and speculating with glowing data may produce new perspectives on good leadership, affecting events and encounters in ECECs.

Mapping cartographies of glowing events might help to illuminate the phenomenon of powerful leadership moments. "A diffractive analysis can be understood as a wave-like motion that takes into account that thinking, seeing and knowing are never done in isolation, but are always affected by different forces coming together" (Lenz Taguchi & Palmer 2013, p. 676). In the next section I will explore powerful leadership moments of glowing data highlighted by "agential cuts" to focus on dynamic leadership production and answer the research question: How do powerful leadership moments affect events and encounters? Finally, I will read the glowing data and agential cuts together in the concluding discussion. Lenz Taguchi and Palmer (2013) suggest that the diffractive analysis constitutes events where minds and bodies, thinking and feeling are entangled (p. 676). However, Barad's (2007) warning is important: "Different agential cuts can produce different phenomena" (p. 175).

4. Glowing data

During our co-walking, the director could air any immediate thoughts about what was going on, and we could share our speculations, wonderings and questions about events and decisions. MacLure (2013), as mentioned above, introduces the concept of glowing data, how "some things gradually grow, or glow, into greater significance more than others" (p. 175). Barad and Deleuze define ethical practice as something that "requires thinking beyond the already known, being open in the moment of the encounter, pausing at the threshold and crossing over" (2016, p. 83).

4.1 I didn't want to put the staff in such a situation

A discussion had been going on for some days in the Blue department after one parent announced that a pair of shoes was missing, accusing other parents of taking the wrong shoes or perhaps taking two pairs. Two of the children had quite similar shoes, and the staff had asked the other parents twice if they had taken the wrong shoes, which they denied. The leadership team had discussed the situation, and in the morning meeting Maria, the director, stated that the parents who had lost their shoes would receive a requisition from the ECEC to buy a new pair (field notes 2016.10.20). Finally, this was chosen as a glowing event in the last confabulative conversation ten months later:[1]

Maria *I think it's very important to have good relationships with all the parents, and if we had gone into this episode, and pursued the mother's story in a way, it would have been too difficult, also for the mother herself... I think she could have landed in a very unfortunate situation with the other parents. Not all parents are able to foresee what they put into action.*

Merete *No, you can't expect parents to be professional. They're first of all parents. The responsibility of the professionals is much different.*

Maria *I didn't want to put the staff in such a situation where they were going to look for trouble…*

Merete *…so you found it best to put a lid on it and case closed? No losers?*

Maria *No losers.*

The director was present; she sensed the staff's worries about what would happen if the parents were to pursue the truth. Emergent listening made her sensitive to a difficult situation that might have arisen for the parents and, in turn,

1 All extracts are from the fourth confabulative conversation with the director, Maria, 02/08/2017. All names have been changed.

for her co-workers. Emergent listening impacts relations, events and encounters (Davies, 2016), and the next episode about staff relations reflects this.

4.2 You need to help them with the gaze

During my co-walking I attended a meeting with Lisbeth and Hanna, educators from the Yellow department, and Elisabeth, the department head, together with Maria, the centre's director. The point of departure was that in a meeting with the educators and Elisabeth, one parent addressed the ongoing concerns voiced by one assistant who was complaining a great deal about the pedagogical leaders being away at meetings, having planning sessions and so on, noting that their absence was hard on the rest of the staff. The meeting with the educators concluded that the director should talk to the assistant according to what Elisabeth, the department head, had heard from one parent in a meeting (field notes 2016.10.20). There are some challenges in the relationship between the educators and the assistants in general, and my questions to the director in the confabulative conversation later were: How will it go if you take this up on behalf of the educators? Can it alleviate or exacerbate the problem?

Maria *I think there's a lot (of stress) on the educators; they have to deal with many situations and sometimes it's better that it comes from us (the ECEC leader team], to support the job they do. At Yellow, I work closely with the leaders to follow up on some assistants, so they are able to face it, because they are so intimate. They are working together all the time. For them, it's the closest colleague who they will deal with for every second of the day. So sometimes we try to lift the stress off of them (the educators). And in order for them to feel that things hang together, the attitude is that we're there, and we share the same attitudes, which is what the assistants should experience. Therefore, I think it's wise that we follow up this matter to show that this is not acceptable, and that it comes from us in the leadership team at Dandelion ECEC. Then the educators don't have to stand alone.*

Merete *Yes, I think this is important and interesting, because the problems you point out are rather classical; the relationship between assistants and the educators – and there's a lot of tension there, I think […]*

Maria *Yes, and it's good to feel that we're very close to the educators here, which I think is important: that we as the ECEC leaders together own the attitudes and values and know what we stand for. So, therefore, we have the performance reviews, and in those conversations, we plan their co-worker performance reviews with the assistants – and my performance reviews with them. And it's about knowing what's going on, because if you're going to support and understand their choices and positions, you need to be close to them. (Pause)*

> *And that doesn't mean that we should always own the same attitudes, because we have to be able to change and see different perspectives as well.*
> *I think there are some challenges that we have to be aware of. Thea (the manager responsible for assistants in the new organisation) and I have to work together very closely, because it could be a bit difficult for us if a lot of the assistants' attitudes are directed at her, and I own the educators' opinions. So, we need to be very aware. The relationship between the professions, that's what it's all about […]*
> *You can't follow up on everything, because it's easy to make a mistake and everybody has to be allowed to act in an unfortunate way sometimes. But the professionality when we interact with parents is important – and another important thing, which we have particularly guarded here, is lines of communication. […] The aim is to build a good and close relationship between the assistants and educators.*

Nearly a year had passed since the incident happened, and when I asked the director how this situation developed, she answered:

Yes, I have had several talks with the assistant, because I see some challenges there. But it's very important that the educators don't become prejudiced in the way they see this assistant, because I think that will taint their judgment and may determine what they're looking for. So, you need to help them with the gaze, to help focus on qualities, to help them see the good sides of the assistant. If we don't, things might go a bit the wrong way, then it'll be the co-worker who doesn't function in a way, and that's not the aim.

The discussion evoked several experiences from my own time as a director, and the last paragraph seemed to be a very important reflection affecting the leadership production. Maria pointed to the risk of prejudices, the risk that some negative experiences could shadow one's view of other capabilities. She was aware of her role as the leader of the whole staff and the possibility of helping every one of them grow. The agential cut about helping the educators with their gaze shows the director's emergent listening, sensibility and awareness of different perspectives. Leadership is constituted by a larger apparatus of multiple practices, with both the mattering of earlier experiences and all intra-acting agents involved. The last glowing event is highlighted with an agential cut, working diffractively for all three events.

4.3 What can you risk facing?

The point of departure was:

A group of 10-12 staff members, including the director and me the researcher, have been away for 1.5 hours (on a mini-bus) on an excursion to the Remida Centre.[2] *Returning, we are met by Lena, the educator, who is three months pregnant. She has been kicked in her stomach by a child (with autism). Lena is upset and afraid. (field notes 2016.10.19)*

The event affected our bodies. Maria sensed Lena's anxiety and horror. She cancelled the planned meeting. Lena was sent to the doctor, and the director ensured her that she would not be alone with that child any more. In the confabulative conversation ten months later, I asked Maria if she remembered the incident, and she did; she told me that Lena returned to work afterwards, and now she had a four-month-old baby.

Maria: *However, we have had several episodes with this child, with staff on sick leave because of being pulled by the hair, so we have had some really hard physical rides. And I think this is a very hard situation for the staff to be in… What can you risk facing?*

The last phrase serves as an agential cut pointing to the importance of feeling safe in the job. Lena was in a vulnerable situation. In Norway, pregnancy is not viewed as an illness, and most women work until there are only a few weeks left before the child's due date. However, the rhetorical question from the director is a reminder that everyone has the right to feel safe at work. The agential cut that emerges is: What can you risk facing? And how does the event affect the staff?

Maria: *It happens very seldom, but this was extremely hard then, both physically and mentally to stay in the situation. And if I was not able to ensure her safety in this situation, next I would be processing sick leave…*
Merete: *Yes, I think this is important…*
Maria: *…and to have that kick, was a very frightening episode; when you carry a child, and it's your greatest wish to have the baby... and to feel that that is threatened. So, I think this was a very frightening experience for her…*
Merete *You sent her to the doctor?*
Maria *Yes, and I said that she would not be with this child, and she was not left alone with that boy any more.*
Merete *So, her concerns were taken seriously?*

2 REMIDA, inspired by Reggio Emilia (established in 1996), is a cultural project focusing on sustainability, creativity and research on waste materials.

Maria Yes, and that's very important, I think, also for the child, because he's very sensitive, and he can sense when adults are afraid.
Merete …and she would have been afraid…?

Our comments are entangled here, and our own bodily experiences connect diffractively with our histories. Our voices were intertwined and connected to each other; and besides, Maria's reflections on the situation below can be seen as commenting on the vibrations, productions and diffractions of powerful leadership:

Yes, she would have been anxious, if she was to stay in that relationship – and that would have had consequences for her relations to the child who needs safety and firm frames. So, it would have been quite different then (diffractions). And I think to build close relationships with the staff, so if they will find themselves in such situations, come and tell me – that's very important. So, it's about presence… (…) And when you handle things, that makes the organisation safer, because it affects the next person who thinks things are difficult (productions and diffractions). I think we need to hear about them (the episodes) to get the best service and best cooperation – we need to act. It's important to have confidence and safety, and I think that is rather basic. So, to have walking rounds, talk to all people and hear how they are, hear about their weekends… to lower the threshold (vibrations) of the conversation, in a way – that's important.

The director was affected by the situation, perhaps also recalling her own pregnancies. The co-walking permitted me as researcher to enter the haptic space and participate in confabulative conversations, and thus provide me with the opportunity to participate in "creata". Based on our own bodily feelings, ascent lines of thought were developed

When reading all the events diffractively through the last agential cut, the most obvious phenomena of the director's diffractions, vibrations and productions are enhanced by emergent listening. Everything is vibratory, and Maria was concerned about the effect of her relationships with her co-workers and the importance of lowering the threshold of the conversations. The agential cut points to close leadership, presence and the ability to open up for ascent lines. The haptic space is connected to tactile and pre-reflexive sensing. In our confabulations, we utilised the data of powerful leadership moments. Can these powerful glowing moments be viewed as strategic, democratic, ethical leadership? Sensing and emergent listening enhance social justice and democratic leadership. Democratic leadership may be seen as a way of living, Thomas and Reinertsen maintain (2016, p. 99). The director's productions in the three glowing events can be read as a wish to help her co-workers and alleviate some stress for them in what could have been difficult situations.

5. Concluding discussion

Everything vibrates, according to Deleuze's philosophy, and we can speculate and fabulate on events and encounters which could have taken many other directions without the director's productions. Maria was concerned about feeling her way using emergent listening and close gaze in the haptic space. The director's productions and diffractions affect events and encounters in the future as well. These powerful moments form the basis for ethical and democratic leadership, also affecting events and encounters in the future. Ethical perspectives concerning her relationship seem to be constantly on her mind. Maria was aware of the importance of the walking rounds and meeting everyone on their own ground as a way to lower the threshold and open up for conversation with her co-workers. In a close vision, the director's endeavour was present and emergent listening was open for ascent lines.

5.1 Powerful leadership moments

The three glowing events have highlighted powerful and ethical leadership. The director was aware about not rejecting staff, and she facilitated good encounters by helping with emergent listening and open questions. She pointed out that her encounters with her co-workers created diffractions that affected the ensuing events and meetings. In the three glowing events, the director intervened by acting and producing turning moments. The agential cuts expressed a deep sense of her powerful productions and the importance of building confidence and safety in the organisation:

- *I didn't want to put the staff in such a situation*
- *You need to help them with the gaze*
- *What can you risk facing?*

The three glowing events and agential cuts show how utopian thinking and confabulative conversations may open for identification of moments of ethical leadership. Emergent listening is helpful in encountering the virtual, which always contains aspects of the not-yet-known. (Johansson, 2015, p. 447; Davies, 2016, p. 73). Hard et al. (2013) show the importance of the culture of leaders seeking to broaden their own and others' perspectives. The confabulations open for mutual speculation, emergent listening and the not-yet-known.

Agential realism focuses on apparatuses and entanglements of bodies, events, emotions and talks having transformative effects on the production of histories. The director's intervention can be perceived as smoothing the room and opening for ascent lines of force affecting events and encounters now and in the future.

5.2 Further research

The research project is continuing and I have been invited to study the reorganisation of Early Childhood centres in the same municipality under the research project entitled: "Early Childhood Leadership in Motion". A small group of researchers is co-walking with leaders and leadership teams in four ECEC centres located in ten buildings. The research question is: *How do the movements in leadership teams connect with the leadership development programme and new roles?* Further research will be based on this pilot project and we will map a variety of glowing moments as cartography whilst being open for entanglements and connections in several dimensions.

In this article I have attempted to show how ideas from post-qualitative research can help us to conceptualize good and ethical leadership in new ways. The idea is to explore tracing and mapping of glowing data as cartography, which is often used to explain entanglements between seemingly different "in-connectible" parts of data (Andersen, 2015a, p. 153). Cartography is oriented towards experimenting, discovering and speculating with the complexity of dynamic and powerful leadership productions, diffractions and vibrations.

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Developing a learning organization – creating a common culture of knowledge sharing – an action research project in an early childhood centre in Norway

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Abstract

This chapter examines how an action research project can be used as a tool in developing a learning organization for an Early Childhood Centre (ECC) in Norway. The aim was to change the present organizational culture and create a common culture for sharing experience and knowledge. The main findings were that, in the end, the action processes had contributed to an experience of learning to learn together and that an interaction between individual learning and collective learning took place. A culture of sharing was explicitly experienced. Another finding was that the action process depended on close monitoring and active management from the director to establish good learning systems in the organization and good learning conditions based on mutual confidence among the staff.

German Abstract

Das Kapitel untersucht, wie ein Handlungsforschungsprojekt als Handwerkszeug für die Entwicklung einer lernenden Organisation für eine Kita genutzt werden kann. Ziel war es, die gegenwärtige Organisationskultur zu verändern und eine gemeinsame Kultur des Austausches von Erfahrungen und Wissen zu schaffen. Hauptergebnisse waren, dass – am Ende – der Handlungsprozess zu Erfahrungen des gemeinsamen Lernens des Lernens beitrug und dass Interaktion zwischen individuellem und kollektivem Lernen stattfand. Eine Kultur des Teilens wurde explizit erfahren. Ein anderes Ergebnis war, dass der Handlungsprozess von einer dichten Begleitung (Überwachung,Monitoring) und einem aktiven Management durch die Leitung abhängig war, um gute Lernsysteme in der Organisation einzuführen und gute Lernbedingungen, auf der Grundlage gegenseitigen Vertrauens, zu etablieren.

Finnish Abstract

Tässä luvussa tarkastellaan, kuinka toimintatutkimuksen avulla voidaan kehittää päiväkotia oppimisympäristönä Norjassa. Tavoitteena oli muuttaa nykyistä organisaatiokulttuuria sekä luoda kokemuksia ja tietoa jakava yhteinen kulttuuri. Tulokset osoittivat, että toimintatutkimuksen lopussa osallistujat kokivat oppineensa oppimaan yhdessä. Prosessin aikana yksilöllinen oppiminen ja yhdessä oppiminen olivat vuorovaikutuksessa. Osallistujat kokivat jakamisen kulttuurin. Toinen tutkimustulos

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219912

oli, että toimintaprosessi riippui johtajan läheisestä seuraamisesta ja aktiivisesta johtamisesta. Tällä pyrittiin luomaan hyvä oppimisympäristö, jota leimaa henkilöstön keskinäinen luottamus.

1. Introduction

The research presented in this chapter is part of the research project *Management for learning: Challenges facing ECECs in Norway.* The project period was 2012-2017, and the project was funded by The Norwegian Research Council through its *Programme for Practice-based Educational Research,* which was part of the Council's Programme for Research and Innovation in the Educational Sector. The project involved collaboration between the Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, North University, and the University of Bergen. At the end of the study period, four researchers conducted action research projects in four early childhood centres (ECCs) in two different municipalities in Norway. This chapter presents results of the project from one of these ECCs.

The director led the research process within the ECC in cooperation with an external action researcher. The director's aim was to change the present organizational culture in the ECC and to develop a common culture of knowledge sharing. The research question in this chapter is, *How can a common culture of knowledge sharing be created using action research as a tool?*

As an instrument for reaching this goal, the director had decided to participate in an action research project to reinforce an ongoing competence development programme. The main purpose of action research is not only to change and improve practice but also to create new knowledge and disseminate this knowledge throughout the organisation (Bøe & Thoresen, 2017, p. 59). Such organisational development requires learning at both the organisational and individual levels, as well as interaction between these levels.

2. Background and establishment of the project

2.1 The early childhood centre

The ECC in this presentation was located in a small rural municipality. At the start of the action research project in August 2015, the ECC had 60 children, one director (an EC teacher), five pedagogical leaders (EC teachers), five skilled assistants (with two years of education at the high school level), and three unskilled assistants. The ECC consisted of two departments in the same building. One department focused on children one to two years old (20 children) and consisted of two teams, each led by a pedagogical leader, while the other department was for children of three to five years in age (40 children) and consisted of three teams, each led by a pedagogical leader. At the start of the action research

project in August 2015, the ECC had been located in a new building specifically designed for an ECC for approximately 9 months. Prior to the relocation, there had been a reorganization process in the municipality. Due to a decrease in the total number of children in the municipality, the number of ECCs, along with the number of employees, was reduced, and others had to relocate their places of employment, not all at their own choice. As a consequence, the ECC in question lost a staff member who had been there for several years, and it also hired three new employees from another ECC that closed down.

The reorganization process was ongoing prior to the action project period, and the resistance against the changes, as well as cultural differences between the new and old members of the staff, had become visible in the field of practice. There was some disagreement about what constitutes good pedagogical practices.

The director's attempt to develop the organization involved building a common culture focused on the sharing of experience and knowledge to serve as the basis for the development of common understanding and practice. When the ECC relocated into a new building in December 2014, a year prior to the start of the action project, this was framed as a starting point for the development of a common practice, and the relocation became a positive driving force.

The director and the staff chose to work on the theme of *the sensitive adult*, and the ECC was in the beginning of a project on children's language development. The staff worked on the following question: *How can everyday conversation promote learning among children and adults in the ECC?* The challenge was that the processes consumed considerable energy, and it took time to develop new practices in a new building.

2.2 Developing of project and focus area

As a preparation prior to the start of the actual action period, there was a meeting in the ECC where the purpose and goals of the research were discussed with the pedagogical leaders and the director, and the action research was explained in the existing context.

In the initial phase, there was some scepticism among the pedagogical leaders towards the action research project because they perceived it as "another project" in addition to the competence development project in which they were already involved. In the dialogue at the first meeting, an understanding that the action research project could be "a project within the original project", rather than an additional one, was developed. At the first action research meeting between the director, the staff and the external action researcher, it was decided that this issue of the children's language development project could also work as a basis for the action research project. The premise was that the action research

should focus on the development of the learning organization and the leadership in this process.

This phase is called *context and purpose* and is the initiation phase of the action research model described in Figure 2. The purpose of this phase is for the action researcher and the participants to determine through dialogue the challenges that will provide the basis for the action research approach.

2.3. Planning and organization

At the overall project level, all four researchers in the action research project had chosen the same design for the subprojects in all four ECCs and defined some guidelines. The action research period lasted from August 2015 to June 2016, and the process started and terminated with interviews of all the participants. During this period, actions and documentation of these actions were conducted. The kind of documentation collected varied depending on the chosen actions in each ECC, and how the project was to be carried out within this framework was up to the individual ECC to decide.

In the ECC discussed here in detail, a project plan was developed. This document defined the research questions and the allocation of responsibility within the organization, provided a description of the actions and the progress plan contained a meeting plan where the external researcher's participation was decided. The planning document was used as a dynamic working document throughout the process, where preliminary decisions were updated as the project progressed as actions revealed the need for adjustment of the plan.

The project made Nkr. 40.000 (€ 4.200) available for each ECC. In the planning document for this particular ECC, the decision was to use these resources to hire additional temporary workers and thereby allow the staff more time to carry out the project work. The estimate in the plan was based on the purchase of temporary staff to work two days per week for nine weeks.

2.3.1 Actions

As a main form of action, the ECC chose to use practice stories as the basis for discussions at the scheduled meetings in reflection groups, which mainly consisted of the staff from each department. A practice story is a short written scenario from a practical situation or episode in the daily life of the EEC. This story was shared in written format with the colleges as a theme for reflection and discussion. In addition to this, it was decided that the project would be given a time and place on four scheduled planning days during the ECC's annual plan. The last meeting was in June 2016, and the intention was to present a summary of the findings after the project period.

Communication between the external action researcher and ECC was carried out through the director. The organizational structure is visualized in Figure 1.

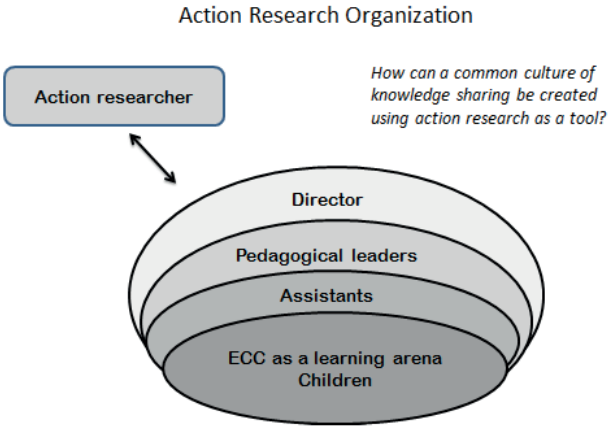

Figure 1. Action Research Organization.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 Action research

Action research as a scientific method has its roots in studies by Kurt Lewin from the 1940s. He defined democratic processes and action research as synonymous concepts, and he combined traditional research and planned changes in working life with processes involving the research participants, including in the processes of diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation (Lewin, 1946).

One tradition within action research is linked to educational research. The focus is on the improvement of educational practice (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Elliot, 1991). This tradition has also been applied in Norway, especially as it relates to local school development (Tiller, 2006; Brekke & Tiller, 2013). There are also recently published works about action research in Norway, with the studies taking place mainly in schools, which may also be relevant for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) (Hiim, Husebø, Jensen, Steen-Olsen, & Stjernstrøm, 2017).

In the ECEC literature, relatively few studies have dealt with action research as way to promote development in ECCs in Norway. However, both Dons and Mørreaunet (2013) and Bøe and Thoresen (2017) showed how action research can be applied in ECCs. The work in this chapter is part of a larger project where

parallel action research projects on the same research topics about leadership for learning have been conducted simultaneously in four ECCs. This contribution is new in the Norwegian context.

3.2 Action research and action learning

There is a distinction between *action research* and *action learning*. In the ECEC context, action learning describes the way the staff works systematically to improve their own practices, while action research refers to the case when external researchers carry out development work with the staff in the ECCs (Tiller, 1999). Action learning does not require the involvement of external researchers; instead, it consists of internal development processes in which the staff themselves act as both initiators and executives in the development work. However, the way the action learning is performed is, in principle, equivalent to the basic prerequisites of action research. Dons and Mørreaunet (2014, p. 209) link action learning to the systematic work that the development staff in ECCs undertake, while action research is when researchers, together with the staff, conduct educational development work. Although a distinction is made between the terms, there are clear overlaps between them as well. In ECCs, the EC teachers can conduct the action learning process without having formal research skills, but they might have a research-oriented perspective of their own practice.

This is a tradition that Coghlan and Brannick (2014) describe in their book *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*. In our case, this means that the director – together with the staff – must analyse practices, plan new actions, and evaluate and possibly make new changes in the daily work. The director simultaneously participates in researching and leading the ECC and documents everything in a report.

For this reason, such processes will include both action research and action learning. These processes may be useful for improving various aspects of the pedagogical work in the ECC. It is this perspective that underlies the action research project described in this chapter, and the method will be described more thoroughly below.

3.3 Becoming a learning organization, creating a learning culture

The most recent edition of the Norwegian Framework Plan for Kindergartens (2017) has a very clear statement: "Kindergartens are learning organizations in which all staff must reflect on professional and ethical issues, keep up to date and be clear role models." (Framework Plan for Kindergartens, 2017, p. 15). The term "learning organization" has been an issue in ECEC for about ten years in Norway, and the director of the ECC in question was very aware of this. Her attempt to develop a common culture for knowledge sharing was a part of what she, as a director, was required to carry out in her ECC.

What is perhaps the most well-known definition of a learning organization comes from Senge (2006, p. 14): "This, then, is the basic meaning of a 'learning organization' – an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. For such an organization it is not enough merely to survive."

To make this happen, the central focus for a leader will be on developing cultures for knowledge sharing and transforming the visibility of individual tacit knowledge to explicit collective knowledge, i.e., the promotion of learning to learn together. One prerequisite for creating learning ECCs is the development of good learning cultures, where the learning processes are continued and new knowledge and experiences are shared. The leader's main responsibility is to make arrangements for these processes to take place (Senge, 2006, p. 15).

Two leadership tasks are important in this matter: the establishment of both *learning systems* and *learning conditions* (Wadel 1997, 2004). Learning systems mean that the ECC must establish and maintain systems to ensure that the staff can acquire the information and knowledge needed to achieve the goals of the organization. Learning conditions are understood as part of a social relationship in which learning takes place both ways. This requires pedagogical leadership with a relational perspective, with dialogue in a mutual process where both the teacher and the learner learn from each other. Pedagogical leadership must, to a large extent, be based on a relationship of trust between the involved persons. Wadel (1997) divides pedagogical leadership into two types based on the values of learning: *reproductive* and *productive* leadership. Reproductive pedagogical leadership assumes that those who are led have the skills to learn, remember and reproduce the knowledge that is shared. Productive pedagogical leadership, on the other hand, is a process takes place both ways and requires that those led are also able and given opportunities to teach, initiate and participate in the communication and make suggestions.

This approach is relevant in this case because the concept of productive leadership describes the director's efforts to develop a culture where mutual processes and the exchange of knowledge are the basic elements. This can also be described as a good learning culture where individual experiences are shared and become collective learning, where the staff is not afraid of or reluctant to share experiences from everyday practice with each other, and where there is open reflection about what is "right" and "wrong" in different situations. It is important to be aware that the pedagogical leadership as described here does not entail a *specific leadership role* but can be regarded as a dimension that can be found in different leadership roles.

4. Method and data collection

The action research was conducted in the period from August 2015 to June 2016. Our collaborating municipalities in the main action research project chose the ECCs for us. Two ECCs were recruited from each of the municipalities. More precisely, a group of the ECCs received requests from their owner to participate and responded that they were willing to participate. The group of researchers had no insight into why these ECCs were chosen, but it was important for us that they had signalled an interest in contributing. To us, they appeared to be average ECCs in terms of size and engagement in the areas they mastered well and in the areas they experienced as challenging throughout their daily operations.

The director's role was to lead and manage the actions in the ECC and to participate as an informant. They did not participate as researchers.

The process was initiated and concluded with focus group interviews, one with the group of assistants and one with the pedagogical leaders. The director was interviewed individually. During the data collection period, the action researcher participated in regular meetings with the staff, and after each meeting, the researcher took notes. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using NVivo 11 as a processing tool.

The interviews with the staff were focused on the following question: *How can everyday conversation promote learning among children and adults in the ECC?* Themes such as expectations, experiences, children's learning and leadership were discussed in the focus groups. The pedagogical leaders were additionally asked about their leadership roles and the challenges they faced in the action processes. In the closing interviews, one of the themes was how the action research project was experienced, and if this made any difference.

The interview with the director discussed the challenges in the management of action research projects in the ECC and the leadership of staff in the process of developing a common learning culture in the ECC.

4.1 General empirical method

The cycles (*constructing, planning, acting and evaluating*) are repeated in the same fixed pattern as long as the research period is in progress. To ensure progress, evaluation and reflection are central. Reflections on the experience gained in the earlier phases of the process are taken into account in the next interaction. Here, reflections on the actions taken are made as requests in the construction phase for the next interaction.

The purpose is to handle and make adjustments in the research plan. Between each action, there is a new evaluation and reflection phase which sends new requests into the next interaction or cycle. These interactions will last until the desired status is reached or until the research period ends. Reflection is a pro-

cess which makes it possible to consider concrete experiences at a distance, thus creating an understanding of what these experiences truly meant and the consequences they resulted in. This is then taken into account in the planning to make it possible to improve upon the actions in the next cycle. The main elements of an action research project resemble the illustration in Figure 2. This cycle formed the basis for the processes carried out in the ECC.

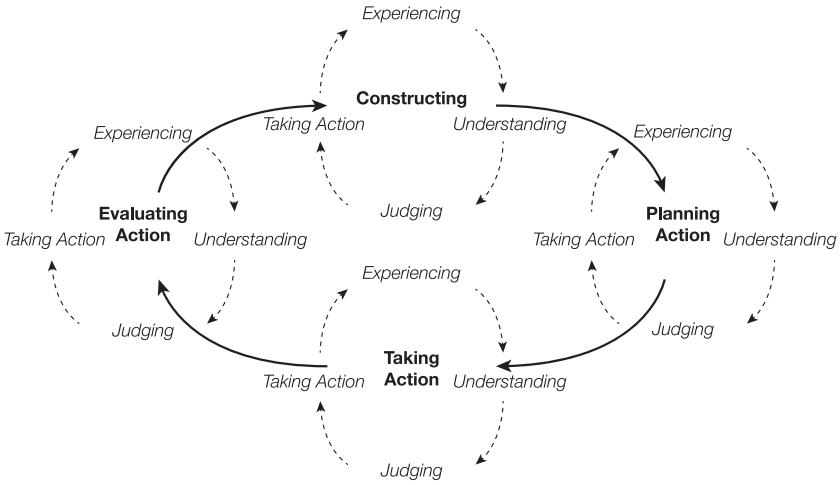

Figure 2. Action Research Process (Coghlan & Brannick 2014, p. 30)

Context and purpose

The context and purpose phase is not part of the described cycle but serves as a preparation stage for the research to be put into practice (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 30). This is a phase where the research project is put into a context, and the purpose of the research is clarified. Elements of this phase may include the establishment of groups and contacts and the assessment of which tools may be relevant, such as observation, various forms of pedagogical documentation and guidance.

This phase describes the content of the first meeting between the action researcher, the director and the pedagogical leaders described earlier in this chapter.

Constructing

The first step of the action research cycle is a dialogic activity in which the stakeholders and participants of the project engage in constructing the relevant issues

and defining the challenges to be met. This collaboration can contribute to a sense of increased ownership of the project among the participants. It is important that the construction step is a collaborative venture in which the action researcher engages the participants in the process of construction, rather than one in which the expert makes the decisions.

This phase was concretized in an action plan where the ECC defined their research questions, defined responsibility allocation within the organization and made a timetable for actions, meetings and action research participation.

Planning action

The next step, planning action, follows from exploration of the context and purpose of the project and construction of the issue, as well as agreement on the challenges to be approached. It is important to spend enough time discussing to reach an agreement on the priority area.

It is also important that this area becomes relatively concrete and delimited. What one wishes to achieve should also be described and operationalized so it is possible to assess how far one has come in relation to the target.

The action plan worked as a tool for this step and the next step. The purpose and wishes were formulated as issues and aims in the plan, and there were also timetables and deadlines.

Taking action

At this stage, the plans are implemented and interventions are made collaboratively. It is crucial that the action researcher continuously reflects on what is happening by asking questions for the purpose of better planning for further action. In the ECCs, reflection in relation to different types of pedagogical documentation will be important.

In this ECC, they had chosen practice stories as a documentation tool. The intention was to collect and use these stories as cases for reflection in the reflection groups and to form the basis for planning the next action.

Evaluating action

At this stage, the outcomes of the action are evaluated. It is important to include both intended and unintended outcomes in the evaluation. This can be done by examining:

- whether the original construction fit
- whether the actions taken matched the construction
- whether the action was taken in an appropriate manner
- what feeds into the next cycle of constructing, planning and action

This step is central to the next phase of the action research cycle, since it completes a round and prepares for a new one with construction, planning and implementation (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014).

This is a crucial phase in the process, and it was also important for progress in the action project in this ECC. The actions were performed approximately once a month, and after a couple of months, very little progress was made on the project. The director and the action researcher had to make some changes in the plan in two areas: the director had to reinforce her leadership in the actions, and the action researcher had to be more visible in the project.

5. Findings

5.1 Leading the actions

The research question in this article is, "how can a common culture of knowledge sharing using action research as a tool be created?" To answer this question, focusing on leadership is an important issue. The director had an intention to change the culture in her ECC and to develop a learning organization, and she chose to participate in an action research project to reinforce this process. Through the action, the importance of active follow-ups by the leadership of project gradually became clearer to the director. As a result, she took action to put pressure on the project. She became more "hands-on" in the process. In the closing interview, the director highlighted several factors that interacted negatively in the first three months of the project. The repercussions of reorganization on personal situations was one of them. This delayed the process. The director said:

> *I think that the anchoring process has been long and, and a bit like that – like on and off. But it's a matter of fact that key staff in running projects have been absent in some departments. And when there is no leadership as a driving force, nothing happens.*

However, the director was also self-critical of her own role as the leader. She believed she could have been more present in the daily operation rather than feeling confident that delegated work probably was carried out as she perceived and that agreement was reached.

> *I think that what makes leadership is to define and promote the goals regularly. Be the one who takes a stand and, in a way, keep up the pressure a little bit. The learning pressure. That is important. I can see that. And then I think that I have learned a lot about myself in the process. The activity increases when you have capacity yourself and the more you demand and in a way keep the demand up against the goal, the more – so it's easier to make things happen.*

> *Still, if you only delegate and then you think: "It will certainly be done". It's not always that this will be done, so you have to follow it up in a way. You have to be hands-on all the time.*

When she looked back on the process and on what she had learned about her own leadership, she realized she had improved in the relational aspect. Follow-ups by the educational leaders provide confidence and guidance for the development of a common understanding of the leadership's priorities for the project and for supervising the quality of the research conducted. The director said in the interview: "But I look at the structure in ECC, I find that the structures for running the project in a way have been present, but the roles have not been in place."

5.2 How does learning at the organizational level take place?

To be able to develop an organizational culture, there is a need for interaction between the individual and the collective levels. Each individual is a part of the collective, but collective consciousness depends on input from different sources of individual knowledge and experience. This is different from "right or wrong" discussions on the same issue. The director's recounted experiences of this after the project had ended were slightly different from the perspectives expressed by the staff.

5.2.1 The director's perspective

The director`s goal was to develop a common organizational culture after the reorganization. The staff had working experience with different ECCs and expressed divided opinions on what constitutes good pedagogical practice and on what was important in the ECC daily operations. Based on different routines and ways of solving tasks, much energy was spent discussing everyday practical tasks and themes that were less important in the children's everyday lives in the director's opinion.

One step towards developing a common professional focus was to initiate the ECC-based competence development project on language and language environment in the ECC. When the owner's request for participation in the action research project came, the director considered it a good opportunity to reinforce the process she had started. The director justified this as follows:

> *Then I thought in relation to learning organization, this is a very important piece to work with in the ECC. So I thought that's a great and suitable project; the project "Leadership and learning" was absolutely superb as we were in the start of the language project and this could give us extra help to get started.*

The project was initially intended as an instrument the director chose to help establish a common culture and common competence enhancement in the staff.

There was little progress in the first part of the project period and the quality of the action executed was not as expected. The director decided to make changes in the process. The meeting plan for the action research project was implemented within the ECC's regular weekly meeting plan. The intention was initially to include the external action researcher in these meetings "when needed", but this was rarely carried out. About halfway through the project period, the regular meeting points were rescheduled to occur approximately every four weeks. The director needed to increase her effort to obtain the desired results from the actions executed, and she therefore made changes to include the external researcher to a greater extent than she had originally planned. After the director had taken what she thought were the necessary leadership steps, the process improved, and she concluded that the goal of developing a learning ECC was within reach. At the end of the project period, the director concluded that after a hesitant and fumbling start, the goals were about to be reached at the end of the action research period:

> *And when in a way we have – as we found the way to do it, I see in a way that the most important result we actually got is that we have learned to learn together.*

5.2.2 The staff's perspective

The pedagogical leaders expressed their experience of the organizational learning in a different way. At a community seminar for the ECCs that participated in the language project, each ECC gave a presentation of their process. At this point, the pedagogical leaders from the ECC in question discovered that they had actually come further in their processes and achieved more than most of the other ECCs. They had achieved more from the process and made progress with the project:

I: But what were you able to report, from the presentation?

A: All we have done, compared to the practice stories, not least. We had concrete things to come up with… …that we have actually changed a culture and that's important.

The informants could tell that they had experienced a transition from a phase where sharing experiences was "scary" and something they hesitated about to a phase where sharing had become common, and they realized that there was a lot to be learned from both their own and others' shared experiences. To the extent that this actually had happened, the informants were first conscious of compar-

ing themselves to others who worked on the same processes in different ECCs. They brought this consciousness and self-confidence back to their own ECC.

The assistants also got some help from "outsiders" in gaining awareness of their own professional development. They were quite aware that they had been struggling to get started with the work of the practice stories and that this had caused delays. This feeling of not coping had probably been stronger than the feeling of having gained something, but two of the staff, who had participated in the start but had been absent a while because of sick leave periods, shared some key observations in the closing interview. They noticed substantial changes when they returned after their sick leave period:

E: I have been away from work during that period. From Christmas, a little before Christmas. And I notice that you are much more "online" now. When it comes to talking about this, I notice that everyone is much more involved. Or that you have a better understanding that everyone should be involved. There was a little difficulty with starting at first. But now I think everyone is a little more into what this really is about.

B: Mm. [Confirming]

F: I notice a big difference since you [action researcher] last were here – and now. That you [the assistants] have reached a lot farther. You may not notice it yourself, but I do notice very well. That you are more into it when you talk about it and when we have discussed it at the meetings. What you have done and what you have found out. Then I think, "Wow, you've come a long way!" I have not participated in this, but I can hear it and see it. That you have worked a lot with it.

6. Discussion

In the first phase of the action research, the agreement about the project plan was that the action researcher only needed to participate in the reflection meetings in the ECC when required, but this rarely happened. After three months, very little progress was made with the project, and the director decided to make changes. Analysis based on the model in Figure 2 revealed that the director's evaluation of the actions taken showed that they did not have the desired effect or quality. The director's assessment was that the leadership was too weak, including both her own leadership and that of the pedagogical leader. She chose to put more pressure on the processes, both by actively engaging herself and by involving the action researcher more actively into the reflection processes of the pedagogical leaders. This way of reasoning and acting can be considered an *understanding-judgment-taking action cycle* (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 30). The meeting structure for the action researcher was changed to permanent participation approximately once a month during the last four months of the project.

In dialogue with the director, the action researcher took a greater guiding role by asking questions about the topics discussed in the reflection meetings. The research notes after these meetings showed that the action processes began to improve, and in the final interviews, the participants' experience of this improvement was confirmed.

The director's main intention in recruiting the ECC for the action research project was to reinforce the competence development project which was already underway. According to Wadel (2004), two of the director's most important tasks in this phase were to establish both learning systems and learning conditions. The director's own assessment of this was that the ECC's learning systems had been in place, but the leadership roles had not been clear and visible enough, and thus the learning conditions had not been sufficient. By addressing this, the processes were improved, and both the educational leaders and assistants felt that they had helped the culture to become more open and inclusive and that knowledge sharing had become part of daily practice. The director concluded that the biggest benefit of the action research project was that the entire staff had achieved learning together, and she therefore experienced success along the way to developing a learning organization.

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Diversity of the assessments of a joint leadership model in early childhood education

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Abstract

This article provides the assessments of a joint leadership model based on research in early childhood education (ECE) leadership in the city of Hämeenlinna, Finland. In this new leadership model, each ECE unit was led by a pair of directors, with one responsible for the financial and human resources aspects and the other responsible for the pedagogy and client processes. The aim of the new leadership model was to strengthen the leadership and pedagogy as the core of leadership. The study explored how the staff members evaluated the quality of leadership within several ECE units. Furthermore, this study examined if there were differences in the assessments of the quality of leadership of the pair of two directors. The quantitative data for the study were collected by an electronic questionnaire completed by ECE directors and staff. Statistically significant differences were found in the assessments of the units led by the same director pair. The parallel line in high and low assessments indicated that satisfaction or dissatisfaction with leadership was a holistic way to see the impact of leadership on the organisational culture of the units. The findings drew attention to the question of how the conditions that were necessary for distributed leadership should be supported.

German Abstract

Dieser Artikel stellt die Untersuchung eines Modells geteilter Führung in der Stadt Hämeenlinna in Finnland vor. In diesem neuen Modell wurden die Kindertageseinrichtungen von zwei Führungskräften geleitet, die eine verantwortlich für die finanziellen und personellen Ressourcen und die andere für die Prozesse in der pädagogischen Arbeit und in der Zusammenarbeit mit den Eltern. Die Ziele dieses neuen Leitungsmodells war es, die Führung zu stärken und die Pädagogik in Richtung einer Kernaufgabe von Leitung zu bewegen. Die Studie erkundete, wie das Personal die Qualität der Leitung in mehreren Einrichtungen bewertete. Außerdem prüfte die Studie, ob es Unterschiede in der Einschätzung der Leitungsqualität zwischen den beiden Leitungskräften gab. Die quantitativen Daten der Studie wurden mit einem elektronischen Fragebogen erhoben, der von Fach- und Leitungskräften ausgefüllt wurde. Statistisch signifikante Unterschiede wurden in den Beurteilungen, der Einrichtungen gefunden, die von den gleichen Leitungstandems geführt wurden. Die parallelen Linien der hohen und niedrigen Bewertungen, deuten darauf hin, dass die

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219913

Zufriedenheit oder Unzufriedenheit mit der Leitung ein ganzheitlicher Weg ist, um die Wirkung der Leitung auf die Organisationskultur der Einrichtungen zu erkennen.

Die Ergebnisse ziehen die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Frage, wie die Bedingungen, die für verteilte Führung notwendig sind, unterstützt werden können.

Finnish Abstract

Tässä artikkelissa tarkastellaan varhaiskasvatuksen uuden yhteisen johtajuusmallin arviointia Hämeenlinnassa, Suomessa. Yhteisen johtajuuden mallissa varhaiskasvatusyksiköitä johtaa johtajapari, joista toinen on vastuussa taloudesta ja henkilöstöstä ja toinen johtaja vastaa pedagogiikasta ja asiakasprosesseista. Johtajuusmallin tavoitteena on vahvistaa johtajuutta ja pedagogiikkaa johtamisen keskiössä. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan henkilöstön antamia arviointeja johtajuudesta varhaiskasvatusyksiköissä. Tarkastelun kohteena on erityisesti johtajaparien eri yksiköiden arviointien erot. Kvantitatiivinen aineisto kerättiin sähköisenä-kyselynä johtajilta ja henkilöstöltä. Joidenkin johtajaparien eri yksiköiden henkilöstöjen antamien johtajuusarviointien erot osoittautuivat tilastollisesti merkitseviksi. Sekä korkeat että matalat arvioinnit näyttivät noudattavat samankaltaista yhtenevää linjaa ja näyttäisi siten olevan kokonaisvaltainen organisaation kulttuurinen tapa tarkastella johtajuutta kyseisissä yksiköissä. Tulosten perusteella on tärkeää kiinnittää huomiota siihen, miten voitaisiin tukea johtajuuden kehittämisen taustalla olevia organisaation olosuhteita.

1. Introduction

Due to the continual changes in early childhood education (ECE) in Finland, the existing state of affairs can be defined as follows. The administration of ECE in Finland is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the services are regulated by the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (2015). The National Core Curriculum on Early Childhood Education (2016) guides all Finnish ECE provision, stating that municipalities are responsible for ECE services. In particular, 84 % of children in ECE are in services provided by municipalities while 16 % are in private services (Repo & Vlasov, 2017). Finnish educational professionals are widely respected and enjoy relatively autonomous working conditions based on the implementing the national core curriculum. This can be seen as a strength of the pedagogical quality of the services. Previous research has shown a need for a focus to develop the quality of ECE services, pedagogy and the pedagogical leadership of ECE (Eskelinen, Halttunen, Heikka & Fonsén, 2015, p. 82; Fonsén & Vlasov, 2017).

The Act on Qualifications Requirements for Social Welfare Professionals (272/2005) states that a director of an ECE unit must be a qualified ECE teacher and have adequate management and leadership skills. The directors usually work as administrative directors and are responsible for a number of units and

employees. In Finland, an ECE centre may consist of many ECE units of different sizes (from one to several groups) but also it may include different forms of ECE services, not only all-day care in groups but also part time and pre-school services. The number of employees needed follows the ratio set in the ECE act. However, it seems that the directors' responsibilities are not clearly defined (Eskelinen et al., 2015). In such a situation, administrative tasks concerning human resources and economic matters are shifting the focus of directors away from pedagogy and towards these other issues. High-quality pedagogy would need directors to reflect on and develop pedagogical practices with the ECE practitioners who work with children (Fonsén, 2013, 2014; Parrila & Fonsén, 2016).

Early childhood education in Finland has faced many reforms in recent years. The administrative shift from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the Ministry of Education and Culture, new legislation and the new National Core Curriculum took place between 2013 and 2017. Due to these numerous changes, it has also been necessary to redefine the leadership of ECE. This study examines the implementation of the new joint ECE leadership model in one Finnish municipality (for more, see Fonsén, Akselin, & Aronen, 2015; Keski-Rauska, Fonsén, Aronen & Riekkola, 2016). In this model, management and leadership functions were distributed between two directors: the finance and human resources director and the pedagogy and client processes director.

2. Joint leadership in the new model of the ECE leadership

The change of the leadership model of ECE in the City of Hämeenlinna occurred from the beginning of 2014. The aim of developing the new joint ECE leadership model was to bring the core task of ECE, pedagogy, to the centre of the leadership focus. The pedagogical development of ECE was considered in order to require strong pedagogical leadership. The previously implemented concept of multi-dimensional leadership was considered to be challenging. The tasks of financial and personnel management were emphasised for several years. It was noticed that directors' opportunities to emphasize pedagogy were limited. The development of pedagogy and pedagogical leadership was restricted due to the expanded focus on administrative tasks.

As a result of the changes, the pairs of directors were given the responsibility for leading each ECE unit. Under this joint leadership model, one of the directors is responsible for the financial and human resources and the second director is responsible for the pedagogy and client process. The director who is responsible for the financial and the human resources is officially the manager responsible for the staff, while the director responsible for pedagogy and client processes leads the process of pedagogical work. In addition, the directors share the responsibility for pedagogical development. In the Hämeenlinna ECE joint

leadership model, each work pair has two to five physically-separated ECE units. (Aronen, Fonsén & Akselin, 2014a, 2014b.)

The aim of the joint leadership model has been to strengthen the ECE directors' leadership through their own leadership positions. However, the central element of the change in the leadership model has become distributed leadership with a pair of directors. Essential for the director pair's development of joint leadership and the creation of practical structures were mutual time resources, common discussion, evaluation and critical consideration of issues. At the same time, the individual directors have developed their work in their own leadership position. (Aronen et al., 2014a, 2014b.)

Having a director pair replaces the role of having an individual director in the organisation (Gronn, 1999). In order to succeed, the leadership by two directors must be able to create a common vision and to communicate it credibly to their community. Directors must have a common understanding of the direction in which they lead their units. (Houni, Ansio & Järvinen, 2013; see also Akselin, 2013.) Miles and Watkins (2007) use the term "complementary leadership", where leadership is shaped by interacting with team members who complement each other. The success of complementary leadership is promoted by a shared vision, reciprocal encouragement, good interaction and trust. However, changing structures to joint leadership is not enough. At the same time, it is important to look at people's agency in the organisation and to clarify both professionalism and the professional relationships (Halttunen, 2009).

As a result of the development work of directors' own leadership functionality, a second element was the vertical perspective of joint leadership referring to joint leadership interaction between the staff and the directors. Joint leadership challenged the staff to focus on a new kind of leadership. This required time and space for both the two directors and the staff to learn about the joint leadership model. Joint leadership was seen largely as being based on interaction, which was supposed to become deeper over time between people in a familiar and secure framework (Keski-Rauska et al., 2016).

McDowall, Clark and Murray (2012) emphasize the re-definition of leadership, which involves seeing shared leadership as a collective commitment and a common process for all participants. In the joint leadership model, leadership is divided horizontally with the working pairs of directors. In addition, the perspective of the vertically distributed leadership is present by sharing the common vision and mission with all members of the organisation. The process of making a joint effort emphasizes dialogue and the building of a new common reality, taking into account the multitude forms of leadership. (Ropo et al., 2006; Viitala, 2005, p. 188).

An earlier study of the joint leadership model in Hämeenlinna (Keski-Rauska et al., 2016) showed that the assessments of the quality of leadership by the

staff were different from the assessments made by the directors. The directors were more satisfied, while the staff did not consider the joint leadership model to be as successful. The prerequisite for developing a model was to find a time to examine, discuss and clarify the structures and practices. Particularly important in the development of the new leadership model was the sharing of leadership as both a horizontal pair of workers and as a vertical divide between the directors and staff. In the working communities, common joint leadership builds trust and promotes the commitment of all parties to a common goal. (Kocolowski, 2010; Keski-Rauska et al., 2016.)

3. Research questions

The purpose of the study was to investigate leadership assessments in several ECE units that were the responsibility of a pair of directors. The quality of the joint leadership model has been examined using the leadership assessment tool (Hujala & Fonsén, 2009, 2010a, 2012; Hujala, Roos, Nivala & Elo, 2014).

The research questions are:
1) How do the staff evaluate the quality of joint leadership in several ECE units?
2) Are there any differences in the quality assessments of joint leadership between the ECE units under the responsibility of the director pair?

4. Conducting the research

The assessment of leadership in Hämeenlinna's ECE was implemented in August 2015 by distributing an electronic survey questionnaire to the ECE-centre directors and staff. The assessment tool (Appendix 1) has been developed as one of the ECE quality and leadership development projects at the University of Tampere to evaluate the quality of leadership and work well-being. The questionnaire comprises 41 items in six themes concerning leadership dimensions. (Hujala & Fonsén, 2009; 2010a; 2012; Hujala et al., 2014.)

The assessment tool was based on an earlier national ECE curriculum, the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care (2005). The theoretical basis of assessment is in pedagogical leadership theory (Fonsén, 2009) and contextual ECE leadership research (Nivala, 1998, 1999; Hujala & Puroila, 1998; Puroila, 2004; Nivala & Hujala, 2002), a day care quality assessment model (Hujala-Huttunen, 1995; Hujala, Parrila, Lindberg, Nivala, Tauriainen & Vartiainen, 1999; Hujala & Fonsén, 2010b) and work on well-being studies (Mäkipeska & Niemelä, 2005; Juuti, 2006).

The assessment of leadership questionnaire contains six themes:

- pedagogical leadership
- support for well-being at work
- information and communication
- working atmosphere and community
- distributed leadership
- quality factors

The pedagogical leadership theme is related to the implementation of the ECE curriculum. The items evaluate how the work community has created common practices for pedagogical discussion and how these are realized. *The support for work well-being at work theme* is related to human resource management, such as the implementation of development discussions with staff and the director's support in problematic situations. *The information and communication theme* covers both internal information issues and communication within the organisations. *The working atmosphere and community theme* assesses the interaction between staff, and the staff's experience of their successes in the work and their sense of work relevance. Issues related to the *distributed leadership theme* evaluate the personnel's own responsibility to promote the work community's performance in the skills of leadership and responsibility for the quality of work shared with director and staff. *The quality factors theme* assess the items that measure the structural aspects of the early childhood education organisation. These include the size and structure of child groups, the support of leadership and organisational structure for pedagogical activities, as well as the practices of co-operation with partners. (Hujala & Fonsén, 2009; 2010a; 2012; Hujala et al., 2014).

The questionnaire was sent to 486 ECE staff members (including directors) in Hämeenlinna, and 233 of these responded, giving a response rate of 48%. The responders were teachers (n=214) and directors (n=19). The participants' consent to participate in the research was obtained and they were informed about the aims of the research.

The responses were provided according to a five-point Likert scale, with assessment 1 standing for the lowest quality level and assessment 5 standing for the highest. The sum score of means was calculated for all six themes. The total sum of leadership was modelled from all 41 items. Statistical tests were performed by using SPSS software. The internal consistency of the dimensions was computed using Cronbach's alphas. The reliability of the tested dimensions was good (Cronbach's Alpha: .738 - .845), when a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered acceptable (Heikkilä, 2008).

5. Results

In this study, the assessment of the leadership of early childhood education units (N = 22) was examined separately for each director pair (N = 9). Among the total ECE units (n = 27), five units were removed from the data, because only one response had been received. Differences in quality assessments were examined using non-parametric tests due to the small size of the data sample. The Mann-Whitney U test measured the statistical significance of the difference between the two units and the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to test the statistical significance of differences between more than two units (Table 1). Significant differences were found between the assessments of the different units under the response of the same director pair.

Table 1. Leadership quality assessments in ECE units under the responsibility of director pairs

Director pair	The total sum of leadership assessment in the units (mean)	Significance between the tested groups	
A	Unit 1 (3.36) Unit 2 (3.75)	Mann Whitney U	p. = .003 **
B	Unit 3 (3.70) Unit 4 (3.32)	Mann Whitney U	p .=.087
C	Unit 5 (3.63) Unit 6 (3.73) Unit 7 (4.18)	Kruskal-Wallis	p. = .005 **
D	Unit 8 (3.50) Unit 9 (3.58)	Mann Whitney U	p .= 392
E	Unit 10 (3.88) Unit 11 (3.80) Unit 12 (4.19)	Kruskal-Wallis	p. = .150
F	Unit 13 (4.19) Unit 15 (3.63) Unit 16 (3.30)	Kruskal-Wallis	p. = .000 ***
G	Unit 17 (3.58) Unit 18 (3.80)	Mann Whitney U	p.= 149
H	Unit 21 (3.78) Unit 22 (3.46)	Mann Whitney U	p. = 142
I	Unit 24 (4.09) Unit 25 (3.99) Unit 26 (3.31)	Kruskal-Wallis	p. = .000 ***

The differences in the quality assessments between the units were not statistically significant in the units of five pairs of directors, (56% of the director pairs), but the differences between the quality assessments of the units that were the responsibility of four director pairs were statistically significant (44% of the director

pairs). The difference between 11 units (50%) had no statistically significant difference in quality results and the difference between 11 units (50%) that were the responsibility of the same leader pair was statistically significant.

In two cases, the director pair had three units that they were responsible for, and the differences between the assessments of the units were statistically very significant (***=p<.001). Closer inspection was made of the units that were the responsibility of two director pairs, (director pair F and director pair I). In Figure 1, the parallel line indicates how the means of all six leadership themes vary in units led by director pair F. Only issues related to the atmosphere and work well-being revealed a small deviation in the assessments of unit 15, which was slightly lower than the ratio of the corresponding variable of the other units to the other sum variables.

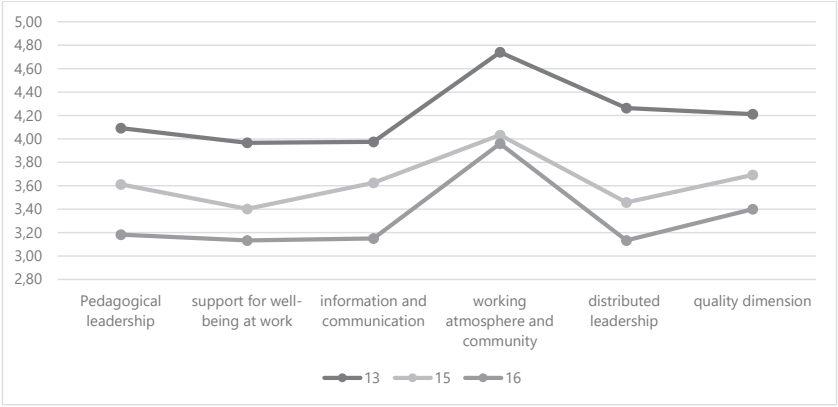

Figure 1. The sum score of means in different themes in the Units (13, 15 and 16) under the response of director pair F

A parallel tendency can also be observed in Figure 2. The sum score of means of all six leadership themes varies as an almost parallel line in the units for which director pair I are responsible. However, in this case, the assessment of distributed leadership in unit 25 is somewhat higher than the assessments of the other units. In two other units (24 and 26), distributed leadership was lower than the assessments of the other themes.

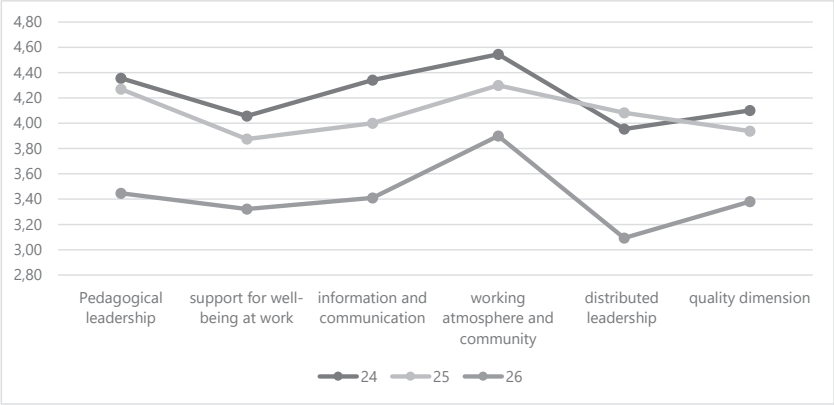

Figure 2. The sum score of means in different themes in the Units (24, 25 and 26) under the response of director pair I

It is interesting that in both cases the highest and the lowest assessments are almost in line with each other. The highest assessments are in the working atmosphere and community theme in both director pair units. The lowest assessments are clearer in the distributed leadership theme in the units of director pair I, while the assessments in the units of director pair F are as low as or slightly lower in the support of the work well-being theme and the information and communication theme than for the distributed leadership theme.

6. Discussion

The parallel lines of high and low assessments indicate that satisfaction or dissatisfaction with leadership is related to seeing leadership as part of an organisational culture in a holistic way. The same phenomena were found in discursive research in the same context in 2017 (Fonsén & Keski-Rauska, 2018). In the e-mail interview with the child group staff in the units that director pair I and F were responsible for, the staff were asked to discuss the results of the leadership assessment in 2015 and write a summary of the discussion. The analysis of the staff members' discussions indicated that the units which received the highest assessments had the strongest discourse on joint leadership and trust and that had empowered the staff. In the units which received the lowest assessments, more critical discourse was found in the speech which reflected instability and uncertainty.

Distribution of leadership is not yet obvious in the joint leadership model. In addition, the results of an earlier study by Keski-Rauska et al. (2016) indicated that the teachers did not yet consider the joint leadership model to be

entirely successful, but the directors were more satisfied. The current study indicates that vertical distribution requires more clarification and common understanding. Interestingly, the highest (4.19) and the lowest (3.30) ratings received by the units were in the results of the same director pair (F). The organisational culture in units and the circumstances of the units may vary. Many simultaneous changes, such as the changes of the personnel and in the leadership system, require stronger support in the organisation.

In addition, the early stage of the new leadership model and the new arrangement of the leadership in the municipality may produce the limitations in the reliability of the research. The different number of changes in the personnel and the directors in the units may have had an impact on the assessments of leadership. In some cases, the director pair may be new, while in the other cases, a familiar director was continuing.

The challenges of joint leadership found in the earlier study were the following dimensions of joint leadership: time, interaction, situation, and diversity (Keski-Rauska et al., 2016). Time for reflection and discussion is needed while developing joint leadership towards a common shared understanding at both horizontal and vertical levels of the distributed leadership. Furthermore, the clarification of practices and structures is required, as well as permanency in interactions, communication, and relationships. Transparency, confidence and empowerment are needed for the implementation of the new leadership model equally in every ECE unit. (Figure 3.) As was mentioned earlier (Aronen et al., 2014a, 2014b), and as the results of the current study also shows, the essential for the development of joint leadership is the creation of practical structures for leadership as well as mutual time resources, common discussion, evaluation and critical consideration of issues.

As Kocolowski (2010) argues, shared leadership is quite a complicated thing to implement, but the benefits of it are evident. Harris and Spillane (2008) claim that to succeed, distributed leadership requires a lot of planning and functional structures in the organisation as well as continuous development. The organisational structure needs to be clarified, so it can support the pedagogical structure. Furthermore, Halttunen (2009) has pointed out, that is necessary to redefine all participants' roles and responsibilities during periods of organisational change. Currently, it seems that Hämeenlinna's ECE directors have clarified their own roles and the distribution of leadership between their positions. Furthermore, crucial in the process of implementing the new leadership model is to build the confidence of all participants. As McDowall Clark and Murray (2012) argue, shared leadership as a collective commitment and a mutual process for all participants needs a re-definition of leadership. Vertical distribution is a prerequisite to success in the implementation of the joint leadership model. It supports well-be-

ing at work and while the work atmosphere is good, it leads to opportunities to enhance professionalism and the quality of pedagogy.

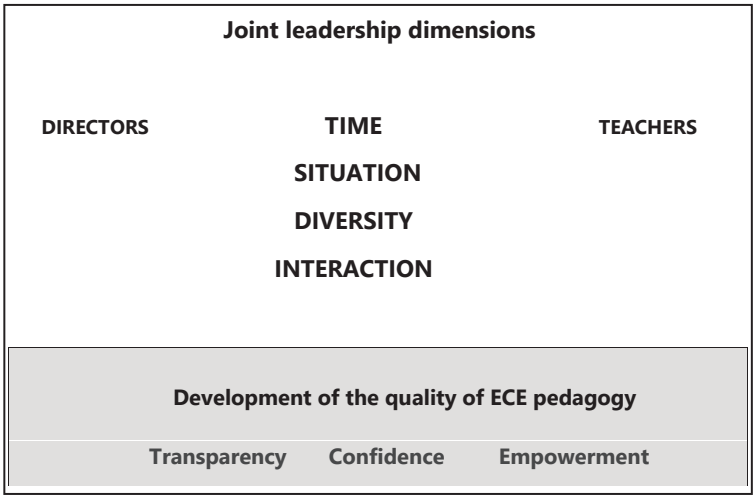

Figure 3. Outlines of quality of joint leadership (Fonsén & Keski-Rauska, 2018)

7. Conclusions

The results emphasise that the situation in the ECE units differs, and this leads to demands for different kinds of leadership. The process of change from ordinary leadership to the joint leadership model seems to progress gradually. In the units, the process of change has reached various stages, and the staff can experience it differently. The diversity of leadership assessments may be related to several changes happening in the organisation at the same time. The diversity may also be constructed through different discourses in the organisations (see also Soukainen & Fonsén, 2018). Change can be seen as an opportunity or as a threat; it may be experienced as exhausting or it may offer the opportunity for empowerment. The directors should have enough time to get to know the discourses in every unit, to be aware of the specific needs that manifest themselves. This means that transparency is needed in communication. In addition, the teacher's professional knowledge, experience and training and the pedagogical skills may be varied, and the staff's need for pedagogical leadership differs. This requires time and discussion between the staff and the director pair. Thus, attention should also be paid to the professional and reflection skills of the director pairs. Puroila and Kinnunen (2017) showed how the renewed Early Childhood and Care Act

challenges directors to improve pedagogical leadership and this is recognised by Finnish professionals nationally. The most critical question regarding successful joint leadership with the aim of improving the quality of ECE can be seen as the demand for directors' professionalism and the requirement for ECE directors' training and further training.

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Appendix 1

The assessment of the quality of leadership

Pedagogical leadership

1. The work community has achieved mutual agreement for pedagogical conversation practices.
2. The teams have created mutual agreement for pedagogical planning practices.
3. The pedagogical practices of ECE are discussed in the work community's mutual conversations.
4. The work community's pedagogical conversation practices are actualized as agreed.
5. The teams' pedagogical planning practices are actualized as agreed.
6. The core tasks of ECE are defined in the work community's mutual conversations.
7. The director implements pedagogical leadership in everyday work.
8. The director is aware of and interested in the educational activities of our group.
9. The early childhood education plan is implemented as practical pedagogy.
10. The children's individual early childhood education plans are implemented as practical pedagogy.
11. The work community evaluates early ECE practices and develops them according to the assessment.
12. Joint discussions on mission and values are reflected in pedagogical activity.

Support for well-being at work

13. Employees have the opportunity to receive professional guidance.
14. Development discussions for employees are implemented.
15. Employees have the opportunity to participate in service training and additional education.
16. The working conditions, such as ergonomic dimensions, safety, tools, etc. are appropriate.
17. The director supports employees in problematic situations.
18. The director evaluates the work community's action and develops it according to the assessment.

Information and communication

19. The flow of information within the work community is functional, transparent, and fair.
20. Information about current issues of ECE in the entire municipal organisation is available to all.

21. There are functional communication practices between the work community and the ECE administration.
22. All members of the work community are aware of the main tasks and job descriptions.

The working atmosphere and community

23. The work community's atmosphere is open and accepting.
24. The work community's mutual communication is proper and takes its members into account.
25. I feel successful in my work.
26. I consider my work meaningful.
27. I can influence issues concerning my own work.

Distributed leadership

28. Employees have the power of decision in matters relating to the work community.
29. Leadership is distributed, and leadership responsibilities are shared with director and employees.
30. The responsibility for pedagogical development is shared in the work community.
31. Employees contribute to the community's common work goals through their own actions.
32. Employees contribute to the functionality of the relationship between the director and personnel through their own actions.
33. Employees evaluate the work community's action and develop it based on their assessment.

The quality dimension

34. The child group size and consistency are premeditated and functional.
35. The physical environment of child care is appropriate.
36. Attention has been paid to the stability of the human relationships.
37. Leadership supports pedagogically high-quality everyday practices.
38. The structures of child care organisation support pedagogically high-quality everyday practices (e.g. the extent of the kindergarten director's area of responsibility is manageable).
39. Cooperation practices between the parents and the personnel are functional.
40. Cooperation practices between the personnel and partners (therapists, school, etc.) are functional.
41. Personnel are interested in professional development.

SECTION III:
LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Complexity leadership theory: a framework for leading in Australian early childhood education settings[1]

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Abstract

This chapter discusses the context for leading in Australian early childhood education (ECE) settings. It highlights the challenges that exist in assuming and performing the leadership role in the complex milieu of people, policy and practice. It discusses challenges to leadership in ECE. Those challenges include lack of supply and rates of attrition of educators and leaders and lack of preparedness for leadership roles in ECE.

This is a conceptual chapter that proposes a theoretical framework – complexity leadership theory within complex adaptive systems. The theory is applied as a foundation for considering leadership in contemporary ECE environments and for supporting the emergence, preparation and development of leaders.

German Abstract

Dieses Papier diskutiert die den Leitungskontext in im australischen System der frühen Bildung. Es hebt die Herausforderungen hervor, die in Annahmen sowie Handlungsweisen in der Leitungsrolle im komplexen Milieu von Personen, Politik und Praxis stecken. Es diskutiert die Herausforderungen der Leitung in der frühen Bildung. Solche Herausforderungen umfassen das Fehlen der Verfügbarkeit und den Schwund an pädagogischem Personal und Leitungskräften sowie die fehlende Vorbereitung auf Leitungsrollen in der frühen Bildung. Es handelt sich um einen Konzept-Kapitel, das einen theoretischen Bezugsrahmen vorschlägt – die Komplexitäts-Leitungstheorie innerhalb komplexer, sich anpassender Systeme. Die Theorie wird als Grundlage für das Nachdenken über Leitung in zeitgenössischen Umgebungen für die frühe Bildung und zur Unterstützung der Gewinnung, Vorbereitung und Entwicklung von Leitungskräften angewandt.

Finnish Abstract

Tässä luvussa pohditaan johtamisen konteksteja australialaisessa varhaiskasvatuksessa. Luvussa tähdennetään haasteita, joita johtajuusroolin toteuttamiselle nousee

1 This article has been object of double blind peer reviews.

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219914

ihmisten, poliittisten linjausten ja käytäntöjen paineissa. Tämän pohjalta keskustellaan varhaiskasvatuksen johtamisen kehittämishaasteista. Näihin haasteisiin sisältyy opettajien ja johtajien saatavuus ongelmat sekä heidän puutteelliset valmiutensa varhaiskasvatuksen johtajuusrooleihin. Luku on käsitteellinen avaus. Se esittelee teoreettisen viitekehyksen – monitahoinen johtajuusteoria mukautuvissa moninaisissa systeemeissä. Teoriaa on sovellettu tarkasteltaessa johtajuutta nykyisissä varhaiskasvatuksen konteksteissa. Sitä on hyödynnetty myös johtajien kouluttamisen ja kehittämisen tukena.

Introduction

This conceptual and theoretical chapter focuses upon the challenges and opportunities of leading in Australian early childhood education (ECE). Leading and leadership in ECE is enacted within a complex landscape comprising complicated legislation, a volatile workforce, comprehensive standards of practice and a diversity of children and families. In that context, the chapter highlights the perceptions that reinforce the challenges of leading in ECE and goes on to discuss an alternative theoretical framework; -complexity leadership theory and complex adaptive systems theory. This framework is proposed as a way of thinking about the emergence of leadership in an environment where educators can practice leading, and the conditions are created in which leadership can be cultivated and developed.

Leading and leadership

Leadership has an important influence on quality in early childhood education (ECE) settings. Effective leadership, characterised by collective vision building, shared understandings and goals, good communication, and the building of a professional learning culture, is fundamental to improved outcomes for children participating in ECE (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007). Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley, and Shepherd (2016) assert leadership is framed by three elements; the person (traits, values, personality), the place (ECE settings) and the position (ascribed leadership role). Another conceptualisation of leadership recognises *leading* as an act that can be in the hands of all educators within the early childhood education setting. *Leading* represents an emergence of leadership, where leadership can be practiced both for the direct impact of the activity and for the preparation for a formal leadership role. In this context leading is a socially just practice occurring as a relational activity within a collective. It is a dynamic activity that can be undertaken by anyone and is not limited to those in formal leadership roles (Wilkinson, Olin, Lund, Ahlberg, & Nyvaller, 2010).

The context for leading and leadership in Australian ECE

Leadership is performed in Australian ECE settings in a complex milieu of policy, people and practices. Policy and funding arrangements are shared across three levels of government (Commonwealth, State and Local government) and all ECE settings are subject to Commonwealth legislation that is administered through each State and Territory. The legislation aims to raise the quality of education and care in ECE from both an operational and educational standpoint through the National Regulations and the National Quality Standard embedded in the regulations. The legislation is designed to increase women's workforce participation, provide for universal access for all children to high quality education in the year before school, develop the ECE workforce and reduce the cost of child care for families. ECE is delivered though a mixed market comprised of private for-profit and public services. There are no restrictions on profit making (as there are in the Australian school system) and no regulation on fees, although fee subsidies are capped (Productivity Commission, 2014).

The Australian ECE workforce consists of predominantly women (91%), with a range of qualifications. Eighty five percent of the workforce has an ECE related qualification of a degree (24%) a diploma (39%) and/ or a certificate (39%). Forty one percent has just one to three years tenure in their current setting (The Social Research Centre, 2016). Educators are considered to be underpaid in comparison to other sectors.

Practices in early childhood education settings are bound by the National Quality Standard (NQS). These assessable standards comprise educational program and practice, health and safety, the physical environment, staffing arrangements, relationships with children and families and leadership and management, and are made up of descriptors and elements for practice in the ECE setting. The quality measures for Leadership and Management (Quality Area 7) within the NQS (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017) were created from understandings of effective leadership in ECE. Overarching concepts of leadership found in the standards (culture, professional learning and continuous improvement) are entrenched in the principles, with the elements of governance, induction and work performance closely linked with 'management' (Drucker & Wartzman, 2010; Waniganayake et al., 2016). The NQS does not define leadership, but leadership is intrinsically linked with a formal role in a setting where responsibility for meeting standards is embedded in national law and rests with a formal role identified as the Nominated Supervisor.

The pressure on the enactment of leadership in this environment is exacerbated by frequent changes to legislation and the increasing demand for leaders who are prepared for this leadership role. There is a predicted growth of fourteen percent in the number of ECE centres over the five years from 2016-2021 (BankWest, 2015). This projected increase means that more leaders will be need-

ed in the future. These leaders must have leadership preparation, professional expertise, and capability to manage the complex demands of compliance, funding, pedagogy and the community of the early childhood setting (Productivity Commission, 2011; The Social Research Centre, 2016). However, it appears that educators who move into formal leadership roles, such as centre director, room leader or educational leader often feel unprepared and lack important professional skills and experience. They move into leadership roles more by 'accident' than intention and lack the necessary practice and preparation for the role (Sims, Forrest, Semann, & Slattery, 2014; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007).

The sustainability of leadership in the ECE sector is also impacted by the leadership 'pipeline'. A recent Australian study of 1200 qualified ECE educators, found that one in five participants planned to leave their job within a year because of low pay, feeling undervalued and the burden of increasing time spent on paperwork (Irvine, Sumsion, Lunn, & Thorpe, 2016). Furthermore, recent research by the Mitchell Institute highlights the continuing lack of systemic support for the development of leadership in ECE, and argues that this is a lost opportunity for the enhancement of quality and leadership sustainability in ECE (Torii, Fox, & Cloney, 2017).

The quality of ECE settings is linked with leadership enactment yet it may be that leading, and leadership is not fully understood nor developed within the profession. The ECE leadership role, in its current form, requires leaders to be powerful, knowledgeable and certain, as well as responsible for the development of others. Yet educators appear to have had inadequate preparation for, and practice in, 'leading' (Hard & Jónsdóttir, 2013; Sims et al., 2014). Whilst there is some research on professional development for leaders within ECE settings, there is no conclusive evidence that the current preparation programs produce effective leadership in formal or informal roles, or result in improved service quality (Layen, 2015; Nicholson & Kroll, 2015; Stamopoulos, 2015; Talan, Bloom, & Kelton, 2014; Thornton, 2010). Inexperienced and aspiring leaders continue to report a perceived lack of preparedness to take on leadership responsibilities (Sims et al., 2014). Sinclair (2007). As Waniganayake et al. (2016) argue, this lack of preparedness and confidence is an unsustainable model for leadership for both organisations and individuals.

The challenge of 'equilibrium'

A further challenge to the practice of leadership exists in the theoretical domain. One such problematic theoretical concept is the notion of 'equilibrium'. 'Equilibrium' is considered to be a favourable state. Within ECE settings and is driven by the expectations of those who work in and manage ECE settings. That is, there is a persistent view that leadership success within early childhood settings can be

measured by a leader's capacity to bring an organisation into a state of equilibrium. This state of equilibrium is characterised by stability and harmony within the setting (Bloom, 1991; Jillian Rodd, 2012). In theoretical terms, equilibrium is achieved when there is a balance between individual and organisational satisfaction. Satisfaction is comprised of shared and fulfilled economic and cultural values and compliance expectations (Bennis, Spreitzer, & Cummings, 2001). In this model, the formal leader within the setting orchestrates, maneuvers, directs and facilitates outcomes and brings about the state of equilibrium.

However, equilibrium may be an inadequate benchmark of leadership effectiveness. The central control, predictability of outcomes, and stability of organisational performance associated with equilibrium may constrain the emergence and development of leading and leadership. For instance, the need to ensure harmony and balance could lead to constraints on innovation, radical solutions and independent action where educators practice leading and take individual responsibility within the collective. Further, educators may be reticent to 'try out' or practice leading in a culture where compliance takes precedence, and could be a constraining factor (Woodrow, 2007).

An alternative theoretical approach to leadership, that anticipates the complexity of organisations and the need for the development of leading and leadership, could be complexity leadership theory. This dynamic theory addresses the challenges of complicated environments and provides a setting for the democratic emergence and enactment of leadership (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007). The enactment of complexity leadership theory is not dependent upon the state of equilibrium. We outline complexity leadership theory below.

Complexity leadership theory

Complexity leadership theory, located in complex adaptive systems theory, may provide a useful contemporary framework for leading and leadership in ECE. Complexity leadership theory is concerned with emergence of leadership, self-organisation in complex environments, devolution of formal leadership roles and interdependence (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017; Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2014). Thus, it responds to the challenges of leading in the ECE context; including the lack of preparedness for leadership roles experienced by ECE professionals. It presents an opportunity to reconceptualise leadership and to subsequently address the constrainers and enablers for leading and leadership in ECE.

According to Hunt and Dodge (2000) complexity leadership theory arose from the development and maturing of theories such as transformational, contingent and distributed leadership. Complexity leadership theorists believed that established theories were not well positioned to meet the challenges faced by leaders in increasingly complex organisations characterised by complicated regu-

lation, diverse workforces and unanticipated world events (Plowman et al., 2007; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007). Complexity leadership theory therefore came as a response to increasing organisational complexity. It was an explicit recognition that a different type of leadership was needed for a different type of organisation (Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011). Complexity leadership was posited by leadership theorists as a suitable proposition for current times – one that accommodates the challenges and unexpected events of contemporary organisational environments.

In a customary bureaucratic model of leadership, an ascribed leader guides an organisation to a known vision and outcomes, and individuals are inspired and motivated to achieve goals (Rodd, 2013; Waniganayake et al., 2016). Conversely, with its roots in complexity theory, complexity leadership theory has several 'schools of thought', all of which reject a model of leadership that relies on individual power and control. The model of complexity leadership theory proposed by Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey (2007) represents the evolution of complexity leadership theory concepts, embedded in complex adaptive systems. This model of complexity leadership theory is built around three functions. These functions are administrative leadership, adaptive leadership and enabling leadership. A distillation of these functions forms a theoretical framework from the educational leadership perspective and is offered by Marion and Gonzales (2013).

- **Administrative leadership** is built around standard functions of management and bureaucracy. It seeks to standardise and make systems compliant to exploit resources that are available to the organisation.
- **Adaptive leadership** describes the change and influence that is facilitated through collective dynamics within the team or working group. This is leadership in, rather than of, the group.
- **Enabling leadership** has two functions. One is to create the structural, organisational and relational conditions for disequilibrium and subsequent creativity and innovation. The other is to manage the balance between administrative and adaptive functions.
  (Marion & Gonzales, 2013)

In this theoretical framework, organisations are depicted as complex adaptive systems.

Complexity leadership theory within complex adaptive systems

Leadership theory and research on leadership has been historically founded on the view that organisations conform to a model of general systems theory (Schneider & Somers, 2006). The general systems theory portrays 'good' organisations as having stable patterns of relationships within structured boundaries where feedback corrects disequilibrium and there is a consistent preservation of the structure and the system. Energy and influence within the organisation come from the external environment and outcomes are predictable (Brown, 2011; Schneider & Somers, 2006). Complex adaptive systems theory disrupts this general systems theory model.

Complex adaptive systems theory views organisations as having less predictable outcomes and being situated at the edge of chaos. Chaos is not depicted negatively. Complex adaptive systems are characterised by chaotic, unpredictable interactions between people and materials that are needs based, emergent, catalytic and constructed on initial feedback. Emergence of action results from the interaction with the environment rather than as a direct influence of the environment. This emergence involves a subtle redistribution of power where basic principles relate to preservation and adaptation of the system. Most importantly, outcomes are unpredictable and full of possibilities (Schneider & Somers, 2006). Complex adaptive systems theory moves beyond the narrow meaning and reductionism of general systems theory where structured systems and actions result in predictable outcomes. Cilliers and Spurrett (1999) assert that complex systems have characteristics where many elements interact richly in an unpredictable way. The system has feedback loops and exists in a state of disequilibrium, self-organisation and emergence (Cilliers & Spurrett, 1999; Marion, 2008). The outcomes in complex adaptive systems are unpredictable and the disequilibrium can result in innovative solutions.

Customary ECE organisational theory shares common ground with the principles of both general systems theory and complex adaptive systems theory (Härkönen, 2002; Waniganayake et al., 2016) but there are also points of divergence. For example, Bloom (1991), an influential ECE leadership researcher, classified 'child care centres' as complex social systems in an effort to understand the dynamics of organisational life. Bloom's seminal systems theory comprised the internal environment (people, structure and processes) influenced by the external environment (funding, regulations and professional community), (Bloom, 1991; Bloom, 2005). In this portrayal, ECE settings are characterised as products of 'benevolent external administration'. However, this situation is inconsistent with complexity theory and complex adaptive systems. Complexity theory conversely invests power and influence in internal environments. It sees organisations as a creation of the influence and power of internal, rather than external,

forces (Hazy & Uhl Bien, 2015; Marion, 2008). For example, in an ECE setting, complexity theory would see internal forces driving decisions on how to best use funding supplied by government rather than relying only on external guidelines. External guidelines, in this example, form a critical foundation for decision making and the standard for execution of funds. Professional knowledge and practice, as an internal driver, expertly informs decision making and potentially enhances the programs that are delivered through that funding (Waniganayake et al., 2016).

In Bloom's approach the formal leader is endowed with the power to direct and guide decision-making to plan, to set goals, solve problems, manage conflict and so on. This depiction of ECE settings is distinguished by dynamic, productive interrelationships conforming with complex adaptive systems theory but divergence occurs where leadership is concerned. Bloom (1991) sees formal leaders as principally responsible for predictable outcomes whereas complex adaptive systems theory favours emergence and unpredictable outcomes (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). The ECE system described by Bloom is preoccupied with measurable results and establishes equilibrium as a gauge of effectiveness. She cites the barometer of organisational effectiveness as the outcomes, but notes these as 'multidimensional' (Bloom, 1991).

ECE settings are conversely depicted by Urban (2008) as dynamic environments, always in a state of flux and instability, and needing to be flexible and adaptive. This view conflicts with the perspective that settings must be in balance to be effective (Bloom, 1991). In Bloom's systems approach (1988; 1991), problems are identified, analysed and remedied and structures put in place to ensure success. The formal leader is most often in charge of this process and is ultimately responsible for the achievement and effectiveness of the organisation. Such a system favours attributes of power and control and tends to rely on a traditional bureaucratic form of leadership (Drucker, 2008; Urban, 2008). These conflicting, yet interrelated, perspectives on leadership provide a platform for considering the relevance of complexity leadership theory for ECE settings.

The following table conceptually maps complexity leadership theory in complex adaptive systems against leading in ECE settings to elucidate the case for the application of complexity leadership theory.

Table 1. Complexity leadership theory, complex adaptive systems and ECE settings

Leading in ECE settings	Complexity Leadership in complex adaptive systems
Leading is conducted in ECE settings in complex organisations.	Complexity Leadership Theory is located in settings that are complex.
Leading in ECE settings must deliver on compliance to be effective and accountable.	Administrative leadership within complexity leadership theory engages in planning, resourcing, goals, and structured tasks.
Leading in ECE must generate solutions and creative responses as change is constant.	Adaptive leadership within complexity leadership theory produces innovative solutions.
Leaders are often "accidental" and unprepared to take on leadership.	Enabling leadership in complexity leadership theory encourages emergence of leadership. It enables leadership through the integration of administrative and adaptive functions.

Limitations of complexity leadership theory

It is important, at this point, to consider the limitations of complexity leadership theory. This ensures our focus does not become enchanted by the "siren song" of theory and subsequently is "deracinated from practice" (Rasmussen, 2017, p. 66). Some leadership theorists proposed complexity leadership theory as a remedy to the reductionist outcomes of traditional leadership theory (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011). The proposition is that complexity leadership theory redresses the lack of creativity, innovation and emergence—suppressed when leadership is enacted through control and implementation of externally organising systems. Complexity leadership theory promotes the emergence of patterns and behaviours that lead to self-organisation and unpredictable outcomes that are purportedly greater than can be foreseen. Complexity leadership theory encourages the emergence of leading by decentralising power (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007).

The positive conceptualisation of complexity leadership theory as a panacea does, however, have limitations. Solow and Szmerekovsky (2006) explored the limitations of complexity leadership theory through computer modelling of scenarios that tested central control versus self-organisation. Solow and Szmerekovsky were aware that, following a period of complexity leadership and self-organisation, some organisations had reintroduced formal leaders in order to achieve outcomes. They proposed that a level of central organisation was required to realise the benefits of self-organisation and emergence. Their modelling showed a need for the exertion of levels of centralised control, but the levels

remained indeterminate. The question of the need for, and amount of, control for organisational success remained (Solow & Szmerekovsky, 2006).

Levy (2000) also found that the lack of central control, characteristic of complexity leadership theory, meant that some creative and innovative solutions could not be implemented successfully. The lack of an externally managed systematic framework inhibited implementation. Although Levy saw that adaptability could be built into work practices, he believed that a lack of generalisable conclusions made strategic planning and predicting an organisation's future very challenging (Levy, 2000). In the context of ECE settings, this limitation could be experienced when creative solutions are conceived but fail to be realised. The failure occurs because strategic systems for the implementation of solutions have not been developed.

Additional limitations were identified by Marion and Uhl-Bien (2002) and Brown (2011) in the application of complexity leadership theory to the 'real world'. Marion and Uhl-Bien (2002) highlighted that complexity leadership could not be practiced on its own and that other forms of leadership theory are required to achieve any objectives. They maintained complexity leadership could be used to strengthen the impact of other forms of leadership (for example, transformational leadership). They suggest that complexity leadership should be supplemented by other forms of leadership that expand the view and mission of the leader, and the theory cannot be used in isolation.

Brown (2011) expands on this limitation by maintaining that the complexity leadership approach can only be conducted by leaders with a mature self-identity and a willingness to make meaning through critical reflection. This meaning making or sense making requires a leader who is prepared to lead without all of the answers into an unpredictable outcome (Sinclair, 2007; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2011) with a theory that has not been fully legitimised (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011). Uhl-Bien and Marion (2011) say that this lack of legitimisation 'makes it hard for leadership scholars to "get their head around" complexity theory as the traditional thinking tends towards leader's individual characteristics and achievement of outcomes' (p. 472).

These limitations pose challenges and opportunities for the theoretical application to the early childhood education sector. Our search has not found any existing applications of complexity theory to the early childhood education field and yet the application of complexity theory to ECE may be instructive. Complexity theory attends to the concern that ECE leadership has not been adequately conceptualised in a way that recognises the complexity of ECE settings and the importance of emerging leadership (Shin, Recchia, Lee, Lee, & Mullarkey, 2004; Urban, 2008). It also responds to the lack of theorisation of a unique model of leadership for ECE (Davis, Krieg, & Smith, 2015; Waniganayake et al., 2016) and the propensity for 'accidental' leadership that can leave educators unprepared for

leadership and formal roles of leadership in ECE settings (Hard, 2008; Hard & Jónsdóttir, 2013). Complexity leadership theory with its primary focus on emergence and self- organisation could offer educators the opportunity to practice 'leading' behaviours and to assert leadership without the central control and approval of those in formal leadership roles.

The need for leaders to exercise critical reflection to theorise complexity leadership cited as a limitation by Brown (2011) and Marion and Uhl-Bien (2002) may not be as challenging in ECE settings as in other organisations. This type of reflective practice is an 'everyday' component of educational program and practice in ECE settings (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017).

Conclusion

Leading and leadership in Australian early childhood education is practiced in a complex milieu of people, policy and practices often without adequate preparation, systemic support or professional development. The challenges regarding ongoing emergence and development of leadership cause concern over possible shortages of those willing and ready to take on leadership roles in the ECE sector.

This chapter has discussed those concerns and proposes an alternative theoretical lens- through which to view leading in the ECE sector – complexity leadership theory. Complexity leadership theory with its capacity to cultivate leadership in dynamic and multifaceted environments and to encourage innovation creates an opportunity for the complex ECE setting. Our exploration of the theory suggests this alternative may offer a foundation for thinking and opportunities for the emergence and development of leadership within Australian ECE settings.

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Implementing the Norwegian framework plan – organizational and leadership translation strategies[1]

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Abstract

This article analyses implementation of the Norwegian early childhood education and care framework plan from a neo-institutional translation perspective. Implementation is understood as ongoing interpretation processes in organizations, related to the organization and leadership practices. Four organizational and leadership translation strategies are described and discussed: specialization, standardization, delegation and involvement. The article suggests four ideal types of framework plan implementation: rigid implementation, collective meaning making, decoupled implementation and implementation as pre- or post-activity rationalization. A qualitative dataset consisting of interviews with directors and staff are analysed to shed light on the research question.

German Abstract

Der Artikel analysiert die Implementation des norwegischen Curriculums für die frühe Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung aus der Perspektive einer neo-institutionellen Übersetzung. Implementation wird als fortwährender Interpretationsprozess in Organisationen verstanden, der die Organisation und die Leitungspraxis formt. Vier Strategien der Übersetzung in Organisationen und im Leitungshandeln werden beschrieben und diskutiert: Spezialisierung, Standardisierung, Delegation und Einbindung. Der Artikel schlägt vier Idealtypen zur Implementation des Rahmenplans vor: rigide Implementation, kollektive Deutung, entkoppelte Implementation und Implementation als Rationalisierung vor und nach der Tätigkeit. Eine qualitative Datensammlung bestehend aus Interviews mit Leitungskräften und pädagogischem Personal, Beobachtungsdaten und Dokumentationen wurden analysiert, um die Forschungsfrage zu beleuchten.

1 The article has been object of double blind review.

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219915

Finnish Abstract

Luku analysoi norjalaisen varhaiskasvatuksen ohjausasiakirjojen toteuttamista uudenlaisen institutionaalisuuden näkökulmasta. Tämä on ymmärretty organisaatioiden jatkuvina tulkintaprosesseina sekä organisaation ja johtamiskäytäntöjen kehittämisenä. Artikkelissa pohditaan ja kuvataan neljää organisaation ja johtajuuden muutosstrategiaa: erikoistuminen, standardointi, jakaminen ja osallistuminen. Kirjoittajat esittävät neljä ihanteellista ohjausasiakirjojen toteutusta: tarkka toteutus, kollektiivinen merkityksen antaminen, erillinen toteutus ja toteutus esi- tai jälkirationalisointina. Laadullinen aineisto muodostuu johtajien ja henkilöstön haastatteluista, joiden analyysien avulla vastattiin tutkimuskysymyksiin.

Introduction

Curriculum plans are central for early childhood education and care (ECEC) quality (Engel, Barnett, Anders, & Taguma, 2015). The Norwegian ECEC field faced the first national framework plan for content in 1995. New versions of the plan were introduced in 2006 and 2017 and a minor revision of the 2006 version in 2011. Implementation of the 2006/2011 plan (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2012) is analyzed here. Research on Norwegian framework plan implementation is scarce (Ljunggren et al., 2017). Ljunggren et al. (2017) find lacking economic incentives, shortages in legal sanction tools and unprecise text that open for local interpretation of the plan. This chapter explores organizational and leadership strategies to implement the plan in a sample of Norwegian early childhood centers (ECCs). Strategies are deliberate or realized as intended and patterns of actions *"realized despite, or in the absence of, intentions"* (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 257).

The local interpretations of the plan actualize a neo-institutional perspective of curriculum plan implementation. This perspective explains how ECEC policies and curriculums are subject to local interpretation and negotiation, termed translations (Cf Tayler, 2011; Alasuutari & Alasuutari, 2012). Tayler (2011) claims that translation of national visions reflected in the ECEC policy assumes goodwill and increased resources locally, whereas others note that early childhood centers (ECC) leaders face a growing demand for curriculum and policy implementation with an interpretative, professional and critical lens (Hard & O'Gorman, 2007; Pence & Pacini-Ketchabawf, 2010; Stamopoulos, 2012). This includes leadership abilities, such as informed expertise, mentoring and encouragement, listening and dialogue (O'Gorman & Hard, 2013). Leadership is relations and actions aimed at influencing (Stamopoulos, 2012). However, there are many perspectives of leadership related to different organizational theoretical frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013). We are not aware of previous research on organi-

zational, meso-level strategies for translating ECEC curriculum plans or leadership strategies applied in the Norwegian setting and ask:

Which organizational and leadership strategies for translating the framework plan can be identified in Norwegian ECCs, and how can these strategies be understood in terms of implementation?

We analyse qualitative data comprised of long, semi-structured interviews with directors and staff at six different ECCs collected during the jurisdiction of the 2006/2011 plan. Due to the Norwegian context, as presented in more detail below, our main focus is on the ECC directors in the analysis.

Contextualization

The Norwegian framework plans is a regulation to the Kindergarten[2] Act (Kindergarten Act ,2005, §§ 1-26). The 2006/2011 plan (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2012) divides into three parts. Part 1 defines the social mandate of ECCs and introduces fundamental values and central notions (e.g., children's participation). Part 2 defines required pedagogical content with six operational themes in all activities. This part presents seven learning areas (e.g., "Numbers, spaces and shapes") with associated process aims. Part 3 conveys organizational requirements. The document presents subjects, themes and goals with varying degrees of clarity. The plan delegates particular responsibilities to directors and pedagogical leaders relevant to framework plan implementation. The directors shall ensure that pedagogical work in the centre complies with the plan. They are responsible for developing common understandings among staff and utilizing their competence. The pedagogical leaders shall lead the planning, implementation, documentation, evaluation and development of the work with their groups of children or other areas and guide the staff.

Implementation and translation

Implementation is explained in terms of Scandinavian neo-institutional ideas of translation regarding ideas or actions as "interpreted and reformulated during the process of adaptation" (Greenwod, Oliver, Sahlin, & Suddaby, 2013, p. 17). Implementation goes on in the intersection of organizational practices and contexts (May, Johnson & Finch, 2016). It is not a mechanical, top-down process transferring policy from donors to recipients (Alasuutari & Alasuutari, 2012, p. 132). Accordingly, implementation of the framework plan is an outcome of organizational contexts and leadership practices meeting ideas. Organizations are institutions marked by socially constructed ideas of what an "organization"

2 Kindergarten refers to ECCs for children 1-5 years old.

is supposed to be (structure, hierarchy, architecture) (Røvik, 2014). Such ideas vary and change over time, and must be translated in the organization adapting it. They are the available "repertoire" of possible ways to organize. One example is McDonalds' way of organizing the production of fast food that has spread to other organizations through the mcdonaldization process, making organizations translate certain ideas of predictability, standardization and efficiency (Ritzer, 1996). Finally, actors play a vital role in the translation process. The qualities of the individual translator are described as crucial for successful translations, and such qualities are knowledge, competence and the ability to make the plan meaningful for colleagues (O`Gorman & Hard, 2013; Røvik, 2014), the role of leaders in Norwegian ECCs.

Methodology

Case studies in six ECCs with different characteristics (cf. Yin, 2014) were conducted to enable an in-depth analysis of translations and comparisons between different organizations. The research project was approved by the Data Protection Official for Research and was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines for research complied by the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees.

A strategic sample of six ECCs from three counties and six municipalities of different sizes was selected to reflect sector diversity. Centres with special profiles were selected based on the distribution of such profiles in the field in Norway and because they specialize within a content area. Table 1 provides an overview of some characteristics of the six cases (ECCs) in the study.

Table 1. Overview of ECCs by number, number of children, profile, ownership and number of interviews and informants.

ECC (case)	Number of children	With or without profile	Ownership	Number of interviews/ informants
1	80	Profile	Private chain	3/6
2	60	Profile	Municipal	3/6
3	25	Profile	Private independent	2/4
4	70	Without profile	Municipal	3/5
5	70	Without profile	Municipal	3/6
6	120	Without profile	Private chain	3/7

The directors were asked to participate and suggest 2-3 pedagogical leaders and 2-3 skilled or unskilled assistants to the study. A guided tour was conducted in each ECC (Everett & Barett, 2012), including photographic documentation of the ECC. Documents were collected (annual plans). These data are secondary to the interview data.

In five of six centres, one group interview with 2-3 assistants, another group interview with 2-3 pedagogical leaders and one in-depth interview with the director were conducted. Group interviews were chosen to reach more informants, enable common reflections and produce richer data (Gaskell, 2000).

The interview guides were designed to produce data on different aspects of framework plan implementation within an organizational setting and interviews were conducted by two researchers, strengthening data reliability. Reliability was ensured by recording interviews. Director interviews, as key informants, were transcribed verbatim. Interviews with other staff were summed up in written reports referring in minutes and seconds to the audio file. Particularly relevant sections of the group interviews regarding translation were transcribed verbatim.

The material was analyzed using within-case and cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Parts of the interviews/texts interpreted as translations were identified. Then, the researchers searched for different organizational and leadership strategies related to translations by developing and using a coding scheme. NVivo software was used for analysis of the coded qualitative data. This resulted in four main themes of translation strategies at organizational and leadership levels to be presented. The size of the sample reduces the possibilities of drawing general conclusions about organizational and leadership strategies for translations. The external validity is low, but the analytical validity is strengthened by co- authorship and blind review.

Specialization as organizational translation strategy

One organizational translation strategy is the selection of one or several parts of the framework plan and specialization in specific subjects. Certain ideas corresponding with the plan are given precedence in organizational action. The material shows that this is carried out differently.

One way is to organize the organization in such a way that it fits well to a specific subject or theme of the framework plan to present a centre with a profile. This was particularly clear in case 1, which was specialized in sports and nutrition from the beginning, making them tightly connected and familiar with the learning area "body, movement and health" in the framework plan (2006/2011). The director, owner and funder explained:

> *It is not like you can vote something out from the framework plan, but I think it is important to say that we can choose some areas we can be particularly good at. I think many other ECCs fail on that. We as a concept ECC are explicit about being good at body, movement and health (Director case 1).*

This specialization strategy manifested itself in the architecture of the centre. It was built to meet the sports and nutrition profile with a gymnasium and a large kitchen. According to the director/owner, specialization was a deliberate strategy chosen to stand out in the market and it served an personal interest in sports pedagogy. She underscored the importance of recruiting staff with an engagement in their specialty. The staff was expected to attend a competence building course on sports pedagogy offered by the organization. This centre's staff, and particularly the assistants, claimed they were most familiar with the "body, movement and health" learning area in the framework plan because this was their main focus:

> *We focus our activities on learning area 2, "body, movement, food and health[3]", that is what we have crammed on and have gotten most information about. We have just gone fast through the other learning areas so that we know about them (Assistant case 1).*

Specialization implies prioritizing some subjects and areas and giving lower priority to or to deselect others. The prioritization of areas appeared in case 2, which had specialized in Reggio Emilia ideas. The new director was critical to their strong influence of Reggio Emilia ideas. She thought the strong focus on projects, the work process and learning took attention away from the relationships between staff and children and children's learning in everyday situations. Specialization can result in a potentially blind eye for other areas and subjects in the plan, but often we find that the topic is supplemented by other areas of the plan. Case 3 had a "nature and outdoor life" profile. They supplemented the subject in focus with other areas of the plan, a type of concept-driven practice. Sometimes the staff started with a topic such as "animals in the woods". The pedagogical leader in case 3 explains: *Before each topic we have had, we have tried to look: Where do we find this in the framework plan? Where can we anchor it?* She explained that they could anchor already implemented practice in the framework plan when working on documentation and evaluation afterwards. This becomes a form of "post-rationalization", the process of translation from practice to plan.

Another type of specialization is to select target areas collected from the framework plan for specific periods, as a form of "serial specialization". This spe-

3 They used the new term of this learning area in the framework plan from 2017, it includes food.

cialization could be concept-driven from plan to practice, for example selecting specific subjects or themes from the plan to work in depth with for a period of time. The choice of themes were decided by owners or triggered by regionally organized competence building. One director stated:

> *We have three priority areas; it is language, it is movement and it is science. Usually, it takes 5-6 years to work well with them. […] it's good to have priority areas, because then you know what to deal with (Director, case 6).*

In terms of the translation of organizational ideas, there is a need for organizations to find a niche, stand out, and be able to survive in their environments within population-ecology models for organizations (Daft, Murpy, & Willmott, 2014); we find traces of such ways of thinking about framework plan implementation in our material connected to specialization as translation strategy. Inherent in specialization is a possibility of increasing the effectiveness of the organization. Specialization narrows the organizational focus of attention, which can be rational for organizations marked by a shortage of resources. Given the different grades of ambiguity of different parts of the plan, deciding to specialize in the more unambiguous parts of the plan can be a translation strategy that fits an organization with a shortage of professional translation competence. It is reasonable to question this strategy in relation to the policy expectation to implement the plan as a whole. Hence, specialization might challenge framework plan implementation.

Standardization as organizational strategy

The second organizational strategy is standardization. Standardization is processes through which organizations establish standards that contribute to unification of practice and understanding. It contributes to predictability in the way service is offered by the ECC. The framework plan can be interpreted as a tool for standardizing the Norwegian ECEC field by setting a standard for minimum quality. According to the director in case 2 it hindered so called "private practice", referring to non-professional practice due to shortage of competence.

Standardization expressed through making plans is evident in all cases. These are generally made in top-down processes by staff from all staff groups or by the pedagogically educated staff, presenting a predefined content to the assistants. The plans are made to coordinate practice in the ECCs according to the framework plan. They enter directly into translation processes though common meaning making because they are used to foster discussions on questions such as 'how are we doing this (e.g., meals and outdoor play) in this ECC' or 'how do we understand this concept (e.g., formation and play) in our ECC?'

Standardization as an organizational strategy is outspoken in case 6. This ECC is part of a national chain and the standardized solutions are, according to the director, established in all ECCs of the chain. The chain has developed internal pedagogical material that consists, inter alia, of an abridged version of the framework plan, simplified versions of the learning areas with new names and logos, and various "professional cards" that staff members can use to get ideas for working with children. These cards define the parts of the framework plan they refer to, relevant activities, and arguments for why the activity should be done. The directors explained:

> *We call our learning areas for the "language class" and the "wondering child", so that unskilled staff will understand what it means. There is written about an activity on the backside, as well as where in the plan in connects to. We could even be better at using the cards. They are used as a tool in our documentation because we have something called the gate and it's a digital tool where all documentation is submitted (Director, case 6).*

In this ECC, the assistants had problems naming the areas of the framework plan because they were so used to the predefined and abridged notions. The director indicated that they were *particularly* fit for staff lacking competence such as substitutes since they presented activities with children and related them to the framework plan, and thereby enabled a minimum standard and quality. These cards enabled the staff to reflect upon a completed practice situation and relate it to the framework plan, which is post-rationalisation of the activity. The digitalization of the documentation process related to the cards is part of standardization. The pedagogy is incorporated in the standardizing technology. It is therefore not strictly necessary to be familiar with the framework plan in the documentation process if the pedagogical cards are used because the machine provides professional arguments for the activity. Pedagogical educated staff noted they did not use the cards very often. Hence, competence plays a vital role in the use of standardized pedagogical tools.

The standardized solutions affect leadership. The chain made and distributed a template for the content of the annual plan, making the director`s job regarding the annual plan more rational. The director (case 6) stated that standardization made her job interpreting the framework plan easier: *Without the system I think that I would have felt perplexed, like "how to ensure that we follow everything in the framework plan", so I find it much easier to work like this.* Standardization gives the leader control over the translation process without being present among the staff groups.

In sum, standardization leads to a predictable translation of the framework plan across different levels of the organization. It aids the translation of the framework plan by low- or non-educated staff and ensures a minimum standard

of quality to the service. It enables control by using digital tools. As such, we argue that this shows traces of a "mcdonaldization" (Ritzer, 1996. p. 1) of the service.

Delegation as a leadership strategy

Delegation is the third strategy to implement the framework plan. This is a leadership strategy, yet related to organizational structures as hierarchy and organizational size. Delegation refers to the process in which the responsibility for translating the framework plan is delegated to other staff groups in the ECC, down the organizational hierarchy, for example, from the director to the pedagogical leaders.

In one of the large ECCs, this was a deliberate strategy applied by the director (and owner). She argued that a flat organizational structure was counterproductive in a large organization. She promoted more hierarchy and consequently delegated the responsibility for translating the framework plan to the pedagogical leaders:

> *I have put together a rather hierarchical system. We have a leader team with me at the top. Pedagogical leaders under me. We decide and lead the ECC together. When you are hired as a pedagogical leader, and take part of the team, and lead a unit, then you lead it. You govern your own worktime and you run the pedagogy. You are given freedom. […] they have the responsibility for making sure that the assistants know what the plan says. (Director, case 1)*

Realizing pedagogical plans is a way of implementing the framework plan. The pedagogical leaders made pedagogical plans tightly rooted in the framework plan together in a pedagogical leader meetings. These plans were presented to the assistants. Still, a gap was detected between the ways staff groups used plans, which is a way of implementing the framework plan in ECCs. The plans were not always read closely by the assistants. There were signs of a "decoupling" between the different levels of translation in the organization. In case 6, the assistants felt they had been delegated too much responsibility for the pedagogical content. They had been told they were supposed to start using the framework plan and write a pedagogical report. The assistants were critical of being responsible for working pedagogically. They did not consider themselves competent for the task and stated: *It is much better when the pedagogue has made a plan … Then, we know what to do.* Still, the assistants enjoyed the responsibility because it made work more interesting. They had to practice more professionally and learn, making work more exciting: *It makes us more conscious about practice*. They stated

that reading the pedagogical plans and being delegated responsibility for activities they learned about the plan. The plan became translated into their practice.

Delegation as a leadership strategy relates to a structural frame of organizational understanding, positioning the leader as an organizational architect using the organization and delegation to reach set goals (Bolman & Deal, 2013). It highlights the relationship between delegation and competence since it implies a competent staff. Lacking competence and involvement can foster decoupling between plan and practice.

Involvement as a leadership strategy

Involvement is used by formal leaders and implies wide participation in translation processes related to the framework plan. The leaders can involve themselves in pedagogical work and translation processes by inviting themselves to groups during their daily work and at group meetings. Second, they can ensure broad participation by inviting staff to participate in development of the ECC annual plan or other pedagogical organizational processes.

The framework plan contains ambiguous philosophical-professional concepts such as "children's participation". Director in case 3 noted that "children's participation" was translated at staff meetings and planning days in her centre. The staff spent much time discussing the term and its meaning. They asked each other *what does this mean for our centre? What do you mean by yourself? What do you think of when you hear the term?* They organized collective processes to give local and shared meaning to the concept. The process was, according to the director, necessary due to the level of competence among assistants in the centre. This is a concept-driven process where term in the framework plan is the starting point of a local collective meaning making and translation.

In case 6, the assistants were indirectly involved in developing the annual plan through the pedagogical leaders taking their opinions into account. They reflected on their own practice and competence and concluded that the activities of the pedagogical educated staff, to a greater extent than their own, are based on professional standards: *We give input on activities, and the pedagogues tell us that this can be framed like this, according to the framework plan. The activity is the same, but they enter the plan.*

The pedagogical leader and the director in case 3, which is a small centre, related their closeness to staff to the practicing of the framework plan. This pedagogical leader explained that they spent time with the staff, observed them and guided them according to the plan. She stated that when practising learning areas from the framework plan, they often articulated them, going from practice to plan: *We are trying to find the learning areas in what we are doing.*

An involving leadership strategy includes articulating the plan in the everyday meetings with staff at the unit thus ensuring that the framework plan is more than words at meetings but permeating everyday life. The director in case 5 explained: *First and foremost, I'm talking to people, observing and walking around, I'm in the environments.* She gave feedback on observed good practice that was in accordance with the framework plan while walking among the groups in the ECC. She participated at most pedagogical meetings in the centres and invited herself to group meetings that were led by pedagogical leaders. She involved all the staff in composing the annual plan. In meetings, they were encouraged to suggest and discuss themes and concepts.

In sum, involvement as a leadership translation strategy highlights the ongoing meaning making in the staff group as the plan is translated, as well as the role of professional competence to imbue notions and actions with knowledge. It has traces of a symbolic perspective of organizations in which leaders are central in meaning making processes (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Discussion and conclusions

The chapter presents organizational and leadership strategies for translating the framework plan in Norwegian ECCs. The strategies reflect current widespread organizational and leadership ideas, such as niches and mcdonaldization apparent on the "menu" of organizational formation. Likewise, the plan itself defines the ECC as an organization, particularly the profile ECCs. Translation processes interplay between organizational ideas and the framework plan. Standardization includes *predefined organizational content of the plan. Concept-driven* practice and *post-rationalization* of the plan is detected in specialization. Concept-driven translations imply that the translation starts with the concepts from the framework plan used to give meaning to activities in practice; the order is from plan to practice. These organizational translation strategies might foster effective framework plan implementation and risks of neglecting important parts of the framework plan and of simplifying the framework content. They can challenge the general pedagogy in the ECC.

The involvement leadership strategy supports previous research stressing the leaders' ability to practice informed expertise, mentoring, encouragement, listening and dialogue in curriculum plan implementation (O'Gorman & Hard, 2013). This fosters a *coproduction of content* that is concept- and practice-driven. *Practice-driven translation* occurs when the translation process departs from practice and seeks to imbue practice with meaning from the framework plan. Another leadership translation strategy is delegation which is related to the risk of decoupling in combination with lacking translation competence and a high degree of practical experience. Knowledge is set into motion in a transla-

tion process. Leaders are bearers of professional knowledge and have potentially extensive definition power in coproduction processes. An involvement strategy appears more suitable to mobilize such power of definition than a delegation strategy.

Based on the analysis we suggest the following ideal types of framework plan implementation in staff group, in table 2:

Table 2. Ideal types of framework plan implementation

	Concept-driven	Practice-driven
Predefined organizational content	Rigid implementation	Decoupled implementation
Coproduced content	Collective meaning making as implementation	Implementation as pre- or post-activity rationalization

Rigid implementation appears in a situation where a concept-driven direction is combined with a predefined organizational content, found in standardization. This gives the organization more control over the implementation process and might be advantageous in meetings with unskilled staff. However, it might challenge professional assessment.

Second, decoupled implementation occurs when the direction is practice-driven in combination of a predefined organizational content. There is no connection between the planning and staff (e.g., assistants) practice. There is a collision between top-down versus bottom-up – processes. Decoupling highlights the significance of translation competence and underscores the "soft underbelly" of framework plan implementation. The ECC organization can make professional plans but if the staff is not sufficiently competent to translate them, the implementation of the framework plan falters and allows for "private practice".

Third, the situation may be a concept-driven and involve coproduced implementation, i.e., *collective meaning making* as implementation. The organization or leaders allow for negotiating the content of the framework plan in the staff group and start the discussion and negotiation of the concepts. This implementation allows for local adjustments. As it is concept-driven, a solid professional competence would give pedagogical staff definition power.

Last is implementation in the form of *pre- and post-activity rationalization that* results from the combination of coproduced content with a practice-driven direction of translation in which staff. Pre- and post-activity rationalizations rely upon staff skills and competence. Accomplished by low- or non-skilled staff, it might represent a "framework planification" of actions that does not incorporate a high level of reflection. As some parts of the plan might be easier to translate than others, this might affect the role of general pedagogy in the ECC.

Our hope is that the strategies and ideal types presented here can improve the understanding of curriculum plan implementation. Further research could explore possible outcomes of the different implementation types constructed from the data in the intersection of different organizational contexts.

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Current Japanese leadership roles in meeting social changes in early childhood education

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Abstract

To meet the requirement for quality ECEC settings due to increased government pressure for improvement and cost-effective reform, Japanese ECEC established new centers for ECEC. Additionally, the government has conducted middle leader training programs. This paper will examine the recent emergence of a complex Japanese ECEC system, the current challenges, and, through interviews, present the voices of a nursery center director and an owner regarding their efforts to meet social changes. It clarifies the details of how to raise staff professionalism from the leader's perspective. Leaders are willing to make a "place and time" which enable teachers to notice their problems that need to be solved and to improve self-professional skills on their own, instead of through the leader's instruction or teaching directly. Further interpretation of indirect support is required in the Japanese context.

German Abstract

Um den Anforderungen an Qualität in der frühen Bildung gerecht zu werden, die durch den Druck der Regierung mit Reformen in Richtung einer Verbesserung und Steigerung der Kosteneffizienz entstanden, hat die japanische Kindertagesbetreuung ein neues Zentrum für frühe Bildung etabliert. Zusätzlich hat die Regierung ein Trainingsprogramm für die mittlere Leitungsebene eingeführt. Dieses Papier untersucht die aktuelle Entstehung eines komplexen Systems der frühen Bildung, aktuelle Herausforderungen und Stimmen von Leitungskräften und Trägern zum sozialen Wandel via Interviews. Es klärt im einzelnen, wie Professionalisierung des Personals aus der Perspektive von Leitungskräften eingeschätzt wird. Leitungskräfte sind gewillt, dem pädagogischen Personal Zeit und Raum einzuräumen, die die pädagogischen Fachkräfte befähigen, zu lösende Probleme zu erkennen und ihre Selbstentwicklungskompetenz selbstständig zu verbessern anstatt Anweisungen der Leitungskräfte entgegenzunehmen oder belehrt zu werden. Weitere Überlegungen zur indirekten Unterstützung sind im japanischen Kontext notwendig.

Finnish Abstract

Japanissa on viime aikoina uudistettu varhaiskasvatusjärjestelmää ja tehty uudenlainen päiväkotien organisaatio. Tämän taustalla on hallituksen huoli varhaiskasvatuksen laadusta. Se on johtanut paineisiin kehittää varhaiskasvatusta ja rakentaa entistä taloudellisempia varhaiskasvatusratkaisuja. Hallitus on rakentanut myös johtajien

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koulutusohjelman. Tässä luvussa tarkastellaan viimeaikaista japanilaisen varhaiskasvatuksen uudistumista ja sen nykyisiä haasteita. Haastatteluihin perustuen avataan päiväkodin johtajien ja omistajien näkemyksiä siitä, miten varhaiskasvatuksen avulla voidaan vastata yhteiskunnassa tapahtuneisiin muutoksiin. Johtajien näkemysten avulla pohditaan henkilöstön professionaalisuutta ja sen kehittämisen haasteita. Johtajat ovat halukkaita organisoimaan "ajan ja paikan", mikä auttaa opettajia havaitsemaan ongelmiaan, joihin he etsivät ratkaisuja. Näin opettajat itse parantavat omia ammatillisia taitojaan eivätkä tarvitse johtajien ohjausta tai neuvomista ongelmatilanteissa. Japanilaisessa kontekstissa kuitenkin edelleen tarvitaan lisää ymmärrystä johtajien epäsuorasta tuesta opettajille.

Introduction

In Japan there has been a long discussion regarding early childhood education and care (ECEC) among various government ministries. Because differences in their roles have been emphasized both at an administrative level and a field level, a unified system of kindergarten and nursery center education has not been achieved (Amino, 2016). Since 2000, despite the movement toward unifying kindergartens and nursery centers, legislative bills for comprehensive child centers have been repealed. Both systems remain and now centers for ECEC have been added to the mix. As of 2018, Japanese ECEC consists of three systems: kindergartens, nursery centers and centers for ECEC, which is extraordinary on a global scale (Amino, 2016). This paper will examine the emergence of the complex Japanese ECEC system and, through interviews with nursery center director and owner, address the demands being made in an ECEC field toward good practices.

1. The history of Japanese ECEC

In Japan, there are mainly two kinds of institutions involved in preschool education and care: kindergartens (normally open from 9 am for 4 hours) and day nurseries (normally open from 7:30 am for 8 hours). Historically, kindergartens and day nurseries have existed under separate systems, that is, the education sector and the child welfare sector.

Japan's ECE system was established in 1876 with the opening of the Tokyo Women's Normal School affiliate kindergarten. On the other hand, day nurseries were started in the 1890's to care for children of the poor.

After World War II, kindergartens were defined as an educational institution (Ministry of Education, 1947 (The School Education Act)). In the same year, nursery centers were defined as a child welfare institution (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 1947 (Child Welfare Act)). Kindergartens developed as an educational institution for middle-class children (from 3-5-years old), whereas nursery centers were a welfare institution intended to care only for children "lacking

childcare" (from birth to 5 years old) based on entrustment from their parents on a daily basis.

In the 1920's, Japan's ECE educational philosophy was influenced by the US and European countries. Sozo Kurahashi was one of the remarkable leaders who established Japanese ECE and investigated child-initiated education in kindergarten.

The first educational guideline describing this policy was published in 1948. This applied not only to kindergartens, but also to nursery centers and home education. In 1956, a revised guideline called the "Course of Study for Kindergarten" was published by the Ministry of Education. The first revised edition was promulgated in 1964. The second revision was adopted in 1989, emphasizing the concept of "education through the environment," which characterizes the uniqueness of ECE education as distinct from school education. It outlines 5 perspectives in understanding children's growth. The following content integrates aspects of each child's development: health (physical and mental health), human relationships (the relationship between the child and other people), environment (children's surroundings and their relationship to them), language (the process of language acquisition) and expression (feelings and expression). (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 1989). Subsequently, the educational guideline was revised every 10 years in line with changes in society. Tamiaki et al. (2017) point out that kindergartens are expected to respond to societal demands by enriching their organization.

One year after the first "Course of Study for Kindergarten" was published, the "Guideline for Nursery Care at Day Nurseries" was enacted in 1965. The "Guideline for Nursery Care at Day Nurseries" was revised in 1990 and again in 1999, following the revisions of the "Course of Study for Kindergarten." After the educational content was determined, the Guideline for nursery centers were made to conform to it (Tamiaki et al., 2017).

In 2006, to respond to social demands, a new type of facility, called Center for ECEC, which provides both functions of kindergarten and nursery center, was established through the "ECEC Center Act." The ECE Center Act was revised in 2012 and a new system launched in 2015 through the "Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing" under the jurisdiction of the Cabinet office. A new "Course of study for Centers for ECEC" was published jointly in 2014 and promulgated in 2015 by the Cabinet Office, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. This guideline established consistency between the guidelines for kindergarten and nursery centers. The three guidelines were revised in unison in 2017 and implemented in 2018.

2. ECEC staff certification and qualification

ECEC staff are required to have teaching certification for kindergarten and childcare qualification for nursery center. Kindergarten teachers have three levels of certification: specialized (graduate school level degree), first-class (university level degree) and second-class (junior college or polytechnic level degree). Nursery center teachers do not need certification, but need a graduate school, university, or junior college course in ECEC or must pass a qualifying examination. Centers for ECEC require both teacher certification and childcare qualification.

The qualification for nursery center teachers was enshrined into law in 2001. "The term 'nursery center teacher' as used in this Act shall mean a person who is registered as prescribed in Article 18-18 paragraph (1) is called a nursery center teacher, providing daycare for children and guidance concerning childcare to their guardians, using his/her specialized knowledge and skills" (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2001(Child Welfare Act, Article 18-4)) and "A person who is not qualified to be a nursery center teacher shall not use the name "nursery center teacher" or any other confusing name" (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2001 (Child Welfare Act, Article 18-23)). It means that they have established a professional position. (Tamiaki et al., 2017).

3. Current issues in Japanese ECEC

3.1 Background of the systemization of centers for ECEC

Institutional reforms are strongly related to social changes, such as increased urbanization, a shift toward nuclear families, tendency toward low birth rate and women's participation in labor force. In spite of the low birth rate, day nurseries are increasing at a remarkable rate in response to a demand for childcare due to the growth in female labor participation. As it is hard to grasp potential needs, the government faces a shortage of day nursery facilities and difficulties in eliminating the waiting list for children. In order to deal with these difficulties, many kindergartens offer after-school care beyond four hours of education, and nursery centers have increased the prescribed number of children. This is especially true in Tokyo where the government has relaxed standards for nursery centers in order accommodate many waitlisted children. Furthermore, it has become impossible to overlook the number of parents who feel isolated or anxious in child-rearing and who feel that they lack support or advice from others. The number of consultations about child abuse has climbed (MHLW, 2017a).

As a result of social changes, a new unified system of centers for ECE has been authorized. There has been long discussion since soon after the first kindergarten has established to unify the system of the education sector and the social welfare sector. From the late 1990s, the central government has recommended

collaboration and commoditizing of facilities among kindergartens and nursery centers, leaving their implementation up to local authorities under the policy of decentralization and deregulation (Murayama, 2016). The new system was led by a joint reform of social security and taxation and financed by an increase in the consumption tax. Hence new centers for ECEC, which legally function as both school and child welfare institutions in a single facility, were created.

Under the new system, centers for ECEC will be further promoted by making it easier to establish new facilities or to change existing kindergartens or nursery centers into ECEC facilities by simplifying the certification procedure. Additionally, the new system is available to provide municipal-level childcare licensed services such as family-style daycare services, small-scale childcare services, childcare within institution services and in-home childcare services. The goal is increasing the number of childcare facilities to shorten the long waiting list and to respond to local circumstances (Cabinet Office, 2016a).

The number centers for ECEC and nursery centers are rapidly increasing (Cabinet Office, 2016b; MHLW, 2011, 2017b). During the same period, the number of kindergartens declined (MEXT, 2016, 2017a). The reason for the decline in number of kindergartens is inferred to be because of their transition to centers for ECEC, which reduces the need. The start of small-scale childcare services raised the number of nursery facilities.

3.2 ECEC reconsideration as ECE

The revised Course of Study for Kindergarten and Guideline for Nursery Care at Day Nurseries in 2017 which implement in 2018 reveals a consistent policy for ECE.

The "Curriculum Guideline for Kindergarten, Nursery center, and Centers for ECEC" was revised and improved toward consistency of policy. It guarantees that all children aged 3 to 5 shall participate in the same quality of ECE. It also assures that children's learning is integrated and progresses consistently at all curriculum levels. Despite historical conflict among the three ECEC settings in Japan, they are now at the same starting point in implementing children's growth (Tamiaki et al., 2017).

The main revisions to the Course of Study for Kindergarten were carried out according to three basic policies (Figure1) (MEXT, 2017b).

1) Clarifying enhanced competences and qualities in the early years.
2) Ensuring consistency in school education
3) Reconsidering the content of education in current subjects

To give children a good foundation for lifelong learning, it illustrates a perspective of the teacher who can grasp children's learning and growth.

The competences and qualities to be developed in preschool education include: "What children know and are able to do (basic knowledge and skills)"; "How to apply knowledge and skills (the foundation for thinking, determination and expression)"; "How to participate in society and live a meaningful life (learning and humanity)." Structural reconsideration has been carried out, whereas perspectives toward understanding children's growth remain on the agenda. These ideals are shared throughout the preschool to high school curriculum. (MEXT, 2017b).

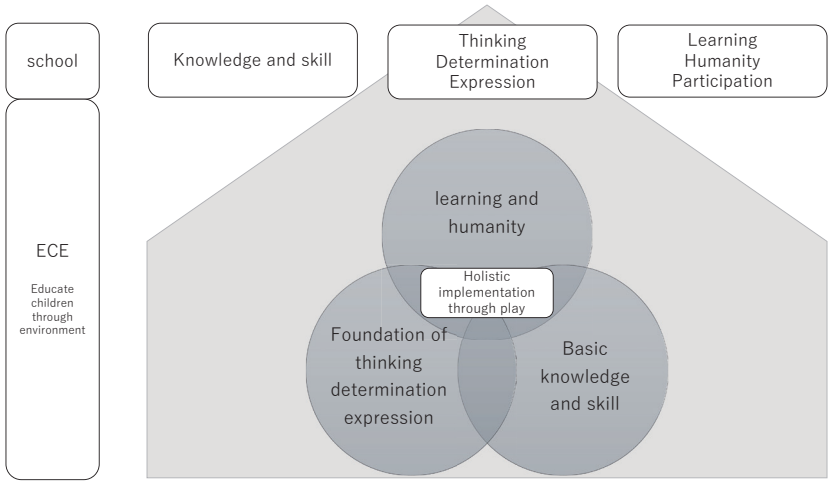

Figure 1. Figure of an enhanced competences and qualities in the early years-Three main pillar (Source: translated and modified by authors; http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/057/siryo/attach/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2016/06/29/1373429_01.pdf)

The Revision of the Guideline for Nursery Care at Day Nurseries has 5 main points (Figure 2) (MHLW, 2017b).

1) Enhancing the education and care of infants and children, ages 1-3.
2) Actively positioning ECE in nursery childcare.
3) Reconsideration of health and safety in a changing environment
4) Necessity of childcare support for parents and local communities
5) Developing the capability of professional staff

The unification of ECE can be seen qualitatively in points 1) above. It places infancy as the starting point of learning and the beginning of lifelong learning. The

content of ECEC for infants and children 1-3 years old is clarified, connected to the 5 content areas of ECE for children 3-5 years old. The basic idea is that ECE develops a foundation for children physically, mentally and socially, as infants actively "communicating feelings with others they are close to," "develop their senses by relating to things around them" and "grow up healthy." "Communicating feelings with others they are close to" are connected with "language" and "human relationships" from among the 5 perspectives. "Developing their senses by relating to things around them" is connected to "expression" and "environment."

The revised guideline actively stipulated that nursery centers are a facility which provide the same ECE as kindergartens and centers for ECEC in points 2) (MHLW, 2017b).

Recent changes in Japanese society influence both system and content of ECE reform. The revision of the curriculum in 2018 confirms that the early years are an essential period of life and that each type of facility must provide the same ECE content wherever children live. We can say that we are finally at the starting point to move beyond the discussion on education and care.

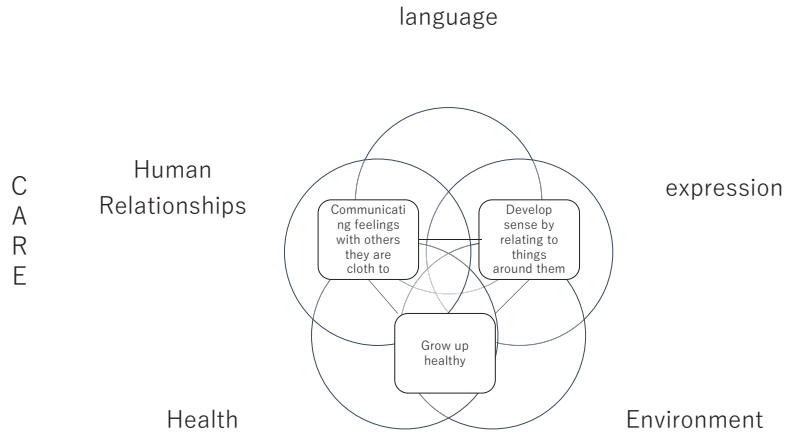

Figure 2: Relation among care and ECE
**five content areas of ECE is based on care*
(Source: translated and modified by authors; http://www.mhlw.go.jp/file/05-Shingikai-12601000-Seisakutoukatsukan-Sanjikanshitsu_Shakaihoshoutantou/04_1.pdf)

3.3 Demand for professionalism in ECEC staff-focusing on middle leader

The ECEC system has been regulated gradually, but it also underscores issues related to the lack of ECEC staff members. There seem to be three reasons for this: the increase in the number of facilities, the relative lack of staff for the transition from kindergartens to centers for ECEC and the high rate of resignations by young employees. The phenomenon of high turnover has been seen before, but it is becoming more apparent because of recent staff shortages. To deal with this situation, local governments are subsidizing the salaries of nursery center employees whose wages are relatively low, providing scholarships for students who work as ECEC staff for 5 years or more in a municipality.

An Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development survey indicates caution: the relatively young age of ECEC staff in Japan may be related to the staff turnover rate, where over 10% of staff leave a job and sector (OECD, 2012). The average age of preschool/kindergarten teachers (pre-primary education) is 35 in OECD countries. According to the age distribution in the pre-primary education survey, the OECD survey indicated that 20% are under age 30, 28% are age 30-39, 27% are age 40-49, and 25% are over the age of 50. Meanwhile, the Japanese distribution showed that 55% are under age 30, 22% are age 30-39, 14% are age 40-49, and 9% are over 50. The ratio of young staff to old in Japan is remarkably higher than in other countries (OECD, 2017).

The matter of concern is the difficulty of keeping professional ECEC staff regarding of young staff's high turnover rate. Here we can look back at the revision point 5) Developing the capability of professional staff. The newly revised curriculum specifies that each facility should provide enriched opportunities for on-the-job training leading to a clear career path for staff. In addition, the Guideline indicate that leaders such as directors need to provide systematic, pre-planned job training and concrete content and methods to implement role sharing and construction of a working structure (MHLW, 2017b). Since 2017, MHLW has established guidelines for a career path and job training system that enhances improvement in nursery center teacher professionalism and quality of practices. The head teacher and middle level teachers need training in "management and leadership."

The job training system includes 8 fields of study, namely, 1) infant care, 2) ECE, 3) care for disabled children, 4) nutrition education and allergies, 5) hygiene and safety measures, 6) parental and childcare support, 7) implementation of ECEC, and 8) management.

Excepting the director (average employment 24 years) and head teacher (average employment 21 years), any nursery center teacher who has worked more than 7 years (average employment 8 years), has a possibility of becoming a vice head teacher or a professional leader. Teachers with 3 or more years' experience

can become a leader in their professional field of study. The requirements for each position are described below:

- Vice head teacher: a) career of 7 years or more, b) experience as a leader in their professional field, c) management experience and completion of 3 or more fields of study
- Professional leader: a) career of 7 years or more, b) experience as a leader in their professional field, and c) 4 or more fields of study
- Leader of professional field of study: a) career of 3 years or more, and b) completed study of fields 1) to 6) above.

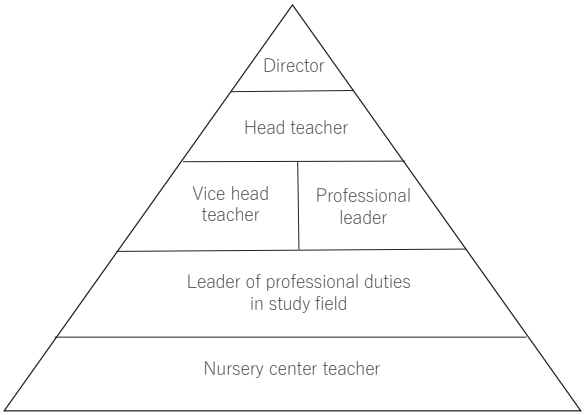

Figure 3: Image of career position of nursery teacher (Source: translated and modified by authors, https://www.mhlw.go.jp/file/06-Seisakujouhou-11900000-Koyoukintoujidoukateikyoku/0000146788.pdf)

Furthermore, middle level kindergarten teachers are also required to increase their professionalism. In the partial revision of the "Special provision act on civil servants in the field of education" of November 2016, "Job training for middle level teachers" was established, which replaced 10-year career job training.

The Hoikukyoyu yoseikatei kenkyukai (2017) [ECEC teacher education course study group] conducted a questionnaire survey of 762 middle level leaders from kindergartens and centers for ECEC with 5-10 years' experience. It revealed a high turnover rate among young staffs. Only 25% of teachers with 5-8 years' experience desired to work until retirement age.

Six factors were identified among middle level leaders' competences and qualities, such as "arrangement," "cooperation," "reflection," "understanding and support of children," "management," and "giving guidance to subordinates." These factors are even more crucial the longer they stay in their careers. Teachers

with 9 years or more experience showed growth in self-efficacy, revealing the need for more follow-up to enable teachers with 5-8 years' experience to continue their career development.

From a viewpoint of response to teachers who leave their job at an early stage and to promote quality ECEC in Japan, measures to raise the social status of ECEC staff and to consider relationship between professional development, career advancement, and salary have just begun.

4. View to research on leadership in Japan

4.1 The tasks for leaders

In early childhood research in Japan to date, there has been little focus on career development of ECEC staff. The main focus has been on more practical contents of ECEC, such as how to understand and relate to children face-to-face and how to respond to parents' demands. The term "leadership" has not been commonly used in Japanese ECEC culture. For instance, the Guideline for Nursery Care at Day Nurseries mentioned collaboration among ECEC staff according to improve quality of ECEC for means of work in cooperation in diversity without using the term "leadership" (MHLW, 2000, 2008). The Revised Course of Study for Kindergarten describes the term "director" to implement curriculums and share on visions and strategies among center staffs (MEXT, 2017b). Very little research has been carried out on leadership in Japanese ECEC. Recently the importance of leadership in the ECEC field has drawn renewed attention. To date, leadership research has mainly focused on relationship between improvement of ECEC quality and leadership, revealing the importance of collaboration in Japan. This follows the Rodd (2006) which indicate that leadership in early childhood education is fundamental to a creation of high-quality services. Additionally, the cultural perspective is essential as Hujala (2004) mentioned that context of leadership defines the leadership culture and creates leadership discourse.

Ueda (2015) conducted a questionnaire survey of 53 directors of public nursery centers, public kindergartens and kindergartens affiliated with universities, based on the items which Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) clarified as leadership roles. She found that leadership roles included, a) clarifying and sharing policy, b) support to improve parenting, c) constructive communication and collaborative relationships among staff, d) facility management and relationships with others. Items a), b) and c) were shown to be most important for Japanese leaders. The results support the leadership roles clarified by Rodd (2006) in the Western social context and Hayakawa (2009) in the Japanese context.

Ueda (2014) carried out direct interviews to clarify the type of leadership kindergarten directors need for on-job-training of teachers. She selected one nursery center, including the director and 14 nursery teachers who participated

in on-the-job training conducted by the municipality. The most effective factor was to "create a learning group and collaborative culture in the center." Accordingly, we can see that leadership promoting a cooperative culture as well as dialogue are key issues in improving the effectiveness of on-the-job-training.

Hujala et al. (2016) conducted a cross-cultural study among leaders in Finland, Japan and Singapore. The research examines the leaders' discourse about their tasks by comparing what leader state are important tasks, with the actual tasks they carry out. The contents of tasks are 1) Pedagogical leadership, 2) Service management, 3) Human resource management, 4) Financial management, 5) Change management, 6) Network management and 7) Daily management. The findings showed that Japanese leaders spent most of their time on service management, human resource management, and daily managerial tasks, whereas pedagogical leadership remained in the background. Finnish leaders spent their time on human resource management and pedagogical leadership and Singaporean leaders spent time on pedagogical leadership—hence, two countries conducted mainly pedagogical work (Hujala et al., 2016). For all three countries, the two most important leadership tasks were pedagogical leadership and human resource management.

4.2 Case study on leaders' tasks today

To develop a deeper understanding of these results, we conducted a pilot study by interviewing two leaders to clarify their thoughts in detail by researcher one on one. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in July and August 2017. The question items contained five open-ended questions based on research concerning leadership tasks (Hujala et al, 2016; Hujala & Eskelinen, 2013).

- What are the most important tasks in your leadership work?
- Which leadership tasks do you not have enough time to complete?
- What in your leadership work is difficult or problematic and wears you down most?
- What skills and attributes have helped you to succeed as a leader?
- What things support you as a leader?

The data was analyzed qualitatively by reading transcribed data and selecting key idea from connections with questions. Each leader manages their own private nursery center. Director A has a 30-year career as a practitioner and owner B has 20 years of experience. A is the director of nursery center with 90 children and 20 staff members. B is the owner of 4 nursery centers with 200 children and 70 staff members in four centers. Both has no specially trained for leadership. They hold discourse with experience they work as leader role.

Leaders responded that the most important task is the ability to lead staff. Competence in noticing the difficulties faced by staff, reliable judgment and accountability were also noted. They found it difficult to talk to and to listen to each person according to the staff person's years of experience. Furthermore, they wanted staff to overcome difficulties cheerfully and in a positive manner, in other words, optimistically. They pointed out the following contributing factors: They had some misgivings that they couldn't give adequate advice to staff during their own busy days and found it difficult to convey ideas to younger staff who interpret the meaning in various ways.

The leadership tasks they wanted to complete if they had enough time were: on-the-job training and parent participation. They wanted to create opportunities for each staff to observe their colleagues and discuss and assess each other's skills in order to improve their professional skills. The purpose of parent participation is to enable staff to observe an actual relationship between children and parents and respond to needs of each child so that the quality of ECEC could improve. Specifically, parents participate and spend time with their child at the center so that the teachers can talk to the parent about childcare policies, the content and methods of ECEC, the developmental characteristics of their child, and principles of parenting, to raise parents' awareness.

The leaders' discourse shows that human resource management such as to promote teacher's competence exists to reinforce pedagogical leadership. It is known from the previous studies that childcare leaders centered on dialogue to raise staff professionalism by enhancing their practices (Ueda, 2014, 2015). This leaders‘ association is much closer to the idea which is said leadership is influence process (Robinson, 2008). This study clarifies the details of how to raise staff professionalism from leaders' perspective. Leaders expect to create opportunities that teachers to learn from each other by observing interactions among staff and parents to learn how to understand and interact with their child. New findings from this study reveal that good leaders are willing to create the "time and place" which enable teachers to notice problems that need to be solved and improve their professional skills on their own, instead of telling or teaching them directly.

Conclusion

Influenced by global trends and a growing concern with ECEC, Japan is in the process of reforming the ECEC system. More than 140 years have passed since the first kindergarten was established in Japan. Today we recognize that the early years are an essential period in human life and that we share the same perspective in ECE. At the same time importance of leadership in the ECE field is drawing renewed attention. The study shows that leaders need time to reflect on their

own methods so that they can continue changing and improving the quality of ECEC practices.

Although the term "leader" easily reminds the meaning of "stand above others" in Japanese, the essence of a leader is demanded to establish a structure with a fascinating vision based on each policy and values. Moreover, it is needed to solve the difficulties by promoting practitioner's motivation and professional development. Each practitioner has their own policy about children's development and practices. Hence, leadership is essential to solve the difficulties with collaborating with others based on one's belief.

Enhancing leadership is important for promoting quality of ECEC. Rodd (2006) mentioned about that more effective ECE leader increase, more professional competency, confidence and status could develop in the local community.

In Japan, training system and guideline to promote their salaries and profession for nursery teacher have formulated by MHLW from April 2017. Those who take a training course for career development could promote to a subhead nursery teacher, professional leader. At the same time middle level kindergarten teachers are also required to increase their professionalism and "Job training for middle level teachers" was established, which replaced 10-year career job training by MEXT. These are new middle leader positions. Namely we could see the increasing interest in developing leadership in ECEC. To deal with this complicated role, professional development is needed (Muijs, Aubrey, Harris, & Briggs, 2005).

Although ECEC system is changing in this society, we could see that some fields and facilities remain unchanged. To ensure that early childhood practitioners themselves change toward the better, more research is needed to reflect the voices of the actual situation.

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Investing in Hamburg's future – early childhood education and children's day care in Hamburg

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Dirk Bange, Hamburg Ministry of Labor, Social, Family Affairs and Integration, Germany

Abstract

The Free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg (FHH) has a population of 1.8 million people, comprising of 118.000 children under the age of 6.5. In 2003 Hamburg introduced the newly developed "Kita-Voucher-System" with the purpose of improving the quality of children's day care facilities. The voucher enables all families to place their children in a children's day care facility and lets different providers independently develop a concept and infrastructure appropriate to the needs for each day care center.

Due to the change in law giving families the legal right for their children to attend day care has resulted in the FHH having the highest attendance of children in day care centers across all western states in the Federal Republic of Germany. As a result Hamburg has more than doubled the amount of money spent on early childhood education since 2010. This underlines its importance and acknowledgment by Hamburg's Government. Equally important in relation to this is the integration of specialized assistance to children with disabilities and children of immigrant families (refugees).

German Abstract

Hamburg ist eine Stadt mit 1,8 Millionen Einwohnern, davon 118.000 unter 6,5 Jahren. 2003 wurde das Kita-Gutscheinsystem eingeführt. Dieser Gutschein berechtigt Familien zu einem Platz in einer Kindertageseinrichtung. Das neue System ermöglichte es der Stadt, komplizierte Planungssysteme abzuschaffen, sodass Träger unabhängig ihrer eigenen Infrastrukturen entwickeln konnten. Durch neue Rechtsansprüche wuchs die Zahl der betreuten Kinder massiv. Das Kita-Gutscheinsystem hat in hohem Maße dazu beigetragen, dass Hamburg den höchsten Anteil betreuter Kinder in Kindertageseinrichtungen in den westlichen Bundesländern der Bundesrepublik Deutschland aufweist. Seit 2010 hat Hamburg seine Ausgaben für die frühe Bildung mehr als verdoppelt. Dies zeigt die Bedeutung der Kindertagesbetreuung

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219917

für die Hamburger Regierung. Andere wichtige Themen sind die Integration von Kindern mit Behinderungen und von Flüchtlingskindern.

Finnish Abstract

Hampurissa on 1,8 miljoonaa asukasta, joista 118.000 alle 6.5 vuotiaita. Vuonna 2003 Hampurissa käynnistettiin päiväkotisetelijärjestelmä. Seteli antoi perheille laillisen oikeuden päiväkotipaikkaan. Uusi järjestelmä teki kaupungille mahdolliseksi lopettaa vaikean osavaltioiden tasolla tapahtuvan suunnittelun. Uudessa järjestelmässä palvelun tuottajat itsenäisesti kehittävät omaa infrastruktuuriaan omilla päätöksillään. Uusien lakisääteisten vaatimusten myötä päiväkodeissa hoidettavien lasten määrä lisääntyi merkittävästi. Päiväkotisetelijärjestelmä aiheutti sen, että Hampurissa on enemmän lapsia päiväkodeissa kuin Saksan missään läntisissä osavaltioissa. Vuodesta 2010 alkaen Hampuri on enemmän kuin kaksinkertaistanut varhaiskasvatukseen kohdennetun rahamäärän. Tämä todistaa, että hampurilainen hallinto pitää lasten päivähoitoa tärkeänä. Muita tärkeitä asioita hallinnolle ovat vammaisten lasten integraatio ja pakolaislapset.

1. Administrative framework and structure of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg

The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg has the second largest population in Germany and is also a city state. The Federal Republic of Germany consists of 16 states including Hamburg. As one of the three city-states – beside Berlin and Bremen – Hamburg has the opportunity to influence directly the living conditions on a local community level, to set the legal framework as a state and to take part in national legislation through its membership in the Bundesrat, the second legislative chamber in Germany. This unique administrative structure makes it easier for the city to follow coherent political strategies such as the development of early childhood education and children's day care.

Hamburg has about 1.8 million inhabitants, of which 118.000 are under the age of 6.5. According to the Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig Holstein in 2016 a third of Hamburg's population had a migration background. These numbers increase to more than half of the population when evaluating minors specifically. The immigrant population is made up of first to third generation families, regardless of their nationality and refugees that have spent more than six months in Germany (Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig Holstein 2017). Children are considered to have a migration background if they themselves immigrated to Germany or were born in Germany by parents who immigrated. In addition, since 2000, (German) children of foreign parents who fulfill the conditions for the so-called "option model" also belong to this group.

Hamburg's administrative structure contains seven districts and 104 city quarters – which are all part of Hamburg as one local community. In 2017 al-

most 27.000 children between the age of 0-2 attend crèches (day nurseries) (see Figure 1), a quota of 44.2 %, 60.000 children between ages 3-6.5 attend preschool (Kindergarten), a share of 96,9% (see Figure 2). Therefore, Hamburg has the highest attendance rates of all western states in the Federal Republic of Germany (German Statistical Offices National and States, 2017). It has been the most successful state in expanding its number of day care centers and increasing their attendance. Due to the historic difference between former eastern German states with a traditionally high degree of institutionalized early childhood care and the western states statistics still differentiate between eastern and western states.

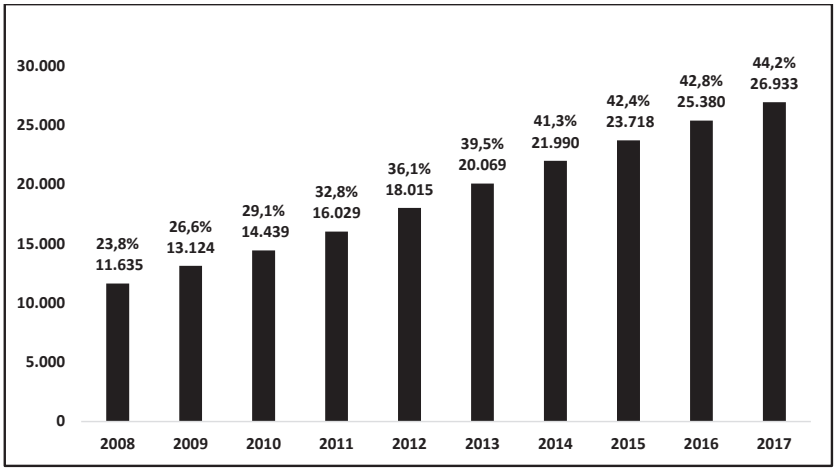

Figure 1. Children attending day care less under the age of 3 years in Hamburg 2008-2017 (Data Source: Ministry of Labor, Social, Family Affairs and Integration 2018)

The general legal framework for children's day care is set up by the children and youth welfare law (Social Civil Code VIII, 1991) on the national level. Since August 2013 all children from age 1 without special needs have the right to attend a day care center daily according to the child and family's individual needs (§ 24 (2) SGB VIII). The German states organize the implementation of this law by themselves. The communities are locally responsible for administrative guidelines and financing – which includes the guidelines and amounts paid by parental contributions and the planning of infrastructure such as the "Kita-Voucher-System" implemented in Hamburg.

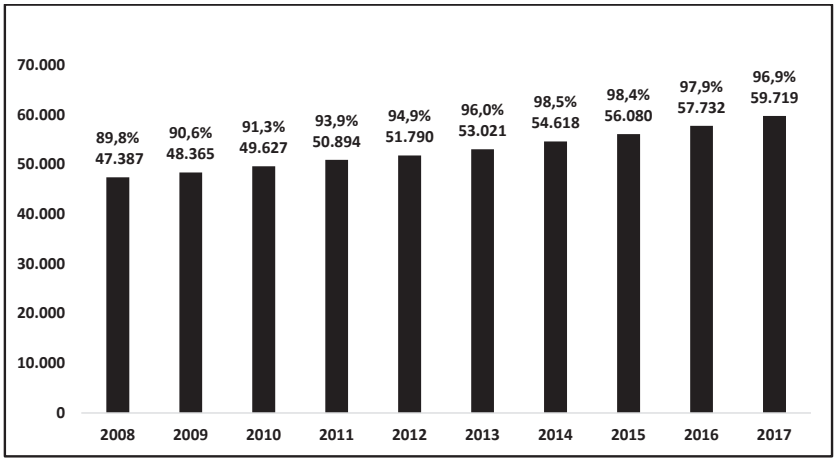

Figure 2. Children in day care between the age of 3 to 6.5 years in Hamburg 2008-2017 (Data Source: Ministry of Labor, Social, Family Affairs and Integration 2018)

2. The Kita-Voucher-System

The Kita-Voucher-System was developed because in the early 2000s Hamburg amongst other states could not meet the peoples increasing demand for day care facilities. The traditional household had changed and with the increasing number of women returning back to work, parents and employers were campaigning for more day care facilities. To prevent unfair practices and to avoid bribery and long waiting lists the government of Hamburg – called "Senat" introduced the Kita-Voucher-System in August 2003. Families receive a voucher valid for one year per child according to the child and family's individual needs. Parents may then choose a day care center for their child and hand in their voucher. Providers on the other hand receive the same payment (remuneration) for their services, refinanced according to how many vouchers they receive from parents.

This change from object to subject financing led to a large increase in services and a huge growth in the number of organizations (state owned, church related, non- governmental or private) running day care facilities (2007: 880 child day care centers 2017: 1080 child day care centers). Parents apply at the youth welfare offices in their city districts for a voucher, hand them over to the day care center of their choice and pay their parent contribution to the day care-provider. The day care then passes on each voucher given to them to the youth welfare office and receive a reimbursement of costs reduced by the parent's contribution.

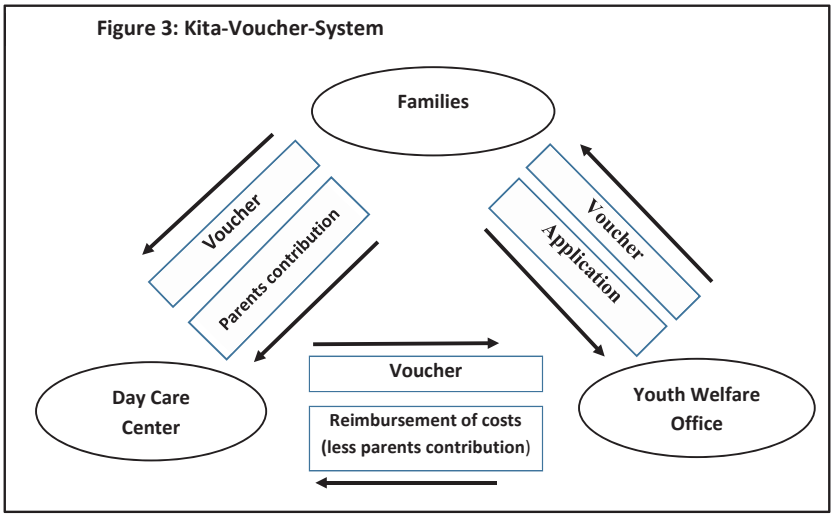

Figure 3. Kita-Voucher-System (Data Source: Ministry of Labor, Social, Family Affairs and Integration 2018)

This new system has exempted the city from difficult state planning systems as the providers independently develop their own day care-infrastructure with regard to the demand of the families on their own initiative. The supply adapted step by step to the demand, but much faster than in the state-run planning system. The competition between the different providers led to quality improvements. The city itself could reduce its administrative costs as the new system was much easier to handle. Although there is a free market access to become a day care provider, implemented regulations and requirements must be fulfilled. Every day care centre which fulfills the demanded requirements can join the Kita-Voucher-System and can sign the Hamburg framework contract. The requirements comprise early childhood education on the basis of an obligatory plan, personnel requirements (number of skilled personnel etc.), quality-, hygiene and technical requirements (buildings). The cost of the infrastructure (including investments) is part of the reimbursement of the voucher.

Of course, this change of systems also led to changes in the structure of those organizations running day care centers. Especially the state- and church-run organizations had to adapt their cost structures to the new market competition. On the other hand the financial framework was set up in a way to ensure that the collective wage agreements could be fulfilled and the new system would not lead to wage dumping. Regulations for including basic administrative funding into the voucher system made it possible to keep smaller, usually independent and

in many cases small day care centres run by parents in place. For the age groups from 0-2/3 year olds the remuneration for a voucher of 8-hour day care, five days a week, amounts to 1.287 € and for the age group of 3-6,5 year olds to 801 € in 2017. The educator-to-child-ratio –in the crèches/nurseries was 1 : 5,6 and in the preschool (kindergarten) 1 : 10,7. Hamburg is at the top of the day care-equipment ranking in Germany. Hamburg spends more on day care-equipment then any other state in Germany. In addition each child day care facility will receive extra hours for management and administration that are financed by the voucher (Bertelsmann-Stiftung 2017, 106f.).

Only 7% of the total financing comes from parental contributions, 93 % are covered by tax money. In 2017 823 Mio. € were financed via tax money. Since 2008 this is an increase of 150 %. This shows the high priority given to child day care by the Hamburg "Senat".

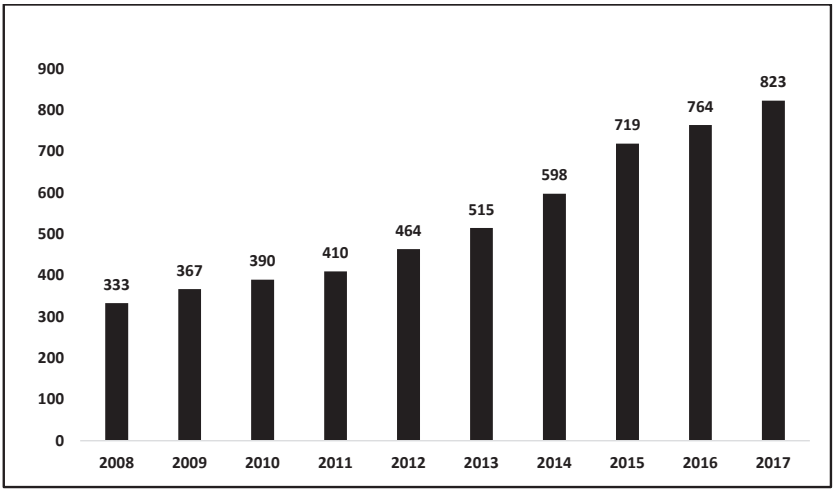

Figure 4. Development Expentitures for day care in Mio. Euro (Data Source: Ministry of Labor, Social, Family Affairs and Integration 2018)

Up to now the new system has managed to fulfill the growing demand of facilities throughout the whole city. As Hamburg is a growing city the youth welfare office as well as the department of city development make sure that in new building areas space for new day care centres is considered within town planning in the same way as e.g. schools and other public infrastructure. In these cases the city calls for tender to give away these new slots to provide a day care center. In some areas of Hamburg, especially those densely populated or with lower socials standards the city has to foster the development of new day care centres. In these

cases the city encourages providers to open new Kitas, supports in administrative questions or steps in with its own state owned provider, the "Elbkinder" which is still the largest provider of day care centers in Hamburg.

Along with increasing the scale of places in day care centers Hamburg has made strong efforts to increase legal claims to children's day care. Every child from the age of 1 until the enrolement in elementary school has a claim for 5 hours daily care on five days a week including a warm meal without any additional financial parent contribution ("for free"). All children in the age of 0 until less of 14 years depending on work, vocational education and training of the parents or on special social or educational needs of the child have a claim to day care adapted to the individual needs of the child or the family. Additional hours exceeding the 5 hour basic offer require a parental financial contribution based on social factors such as income and number of families' children/and the number of family members in day care.

3. Children with disabilities in Hamburg's Kitas

Children with disabilities from the age of 3 years until the enrolment in elementary school have a claim for integrative day care including necessary therapies, curative education and support in everyday matters based on an expert's report of the child's individual needs. The Kitas have to meet special requirements such as staff qualified in curative education, therapies and medical care. They need to provide appropriate premises such as rooms for individual therapy and have to cooperate intensely with the parents. The aim is to provide inclusive childhood education from an early age on and mitigate the consequences linked to the disabilities. It is also the goal to provide support and services from only one source with only one application by the parents to the youth welfare office for one voucher including payment for the special integration and inclusion program without any additional parental contribution. These vouchers remunerate the Kitas oriented on the individual need of the child between 1.700 and up to 5.100 € per month (8 hours daily).

The number of Kitas offering these services has increased from 125 in 2004 up to 284 in 2016, the number of children with disabilities in day care has risen from 1.315 in 2007 to 2.170 in 2016 (Department of Labor, Social Affairs, Family and Integration, 2017).

4. Early Childhood curriculum and special programs

Pedagogics working in the day care centers base the structure of their work on the *early childhood curriculum*. Sections include body, movement (activeness and exercise) and health, social and cultural environment, communication (lan-

guage, writing and media), mathematics, nature and environmental awareness, art and music. It also elaborates on the needs of a child such as a trust based educator – child relationship, general interaction as well as learning and playing (Department of Labor, Social Affairs, Family and Integration, 2014).

In addition to the early childhood curriculum Hamburg has established 40 Parent-Child-Centers (EKiZ= Eltern-Kind-Zentrum) in areas where additional support is needed. These Centers provide parents and their children under the age of three a safe environment where they can receive support regarding educational or health questions. Parents can use the center as a place to meet and interact with other families in similar circumstances. Due to a different cultural background parents may hesitate in bringing their young children to day care centers so that they receive early childhood education. The importance is explained and parents can obtain detailed information on the German educational system from staff and other parents.

The *Kita-Plus program* – set up in 2013 – is designed to give additional 12% funding to child day care centers in social focal points, especially with high numbers of children with a migration background. About 320 day care centers profited from the 17 Mio. € spent in 2017 to improve children´s language skills, foster inclusion, enable cooperation with parents, building networks and enhance team cooperation. Furthermore the *federal government* supports *additional language learning* through financing a program to improve language skills especially for children with migration background.

Development and increasing children's language skills has proven to be one of the most important factors to allow children with a migration background a good start in school (Kalicki 2015). One of the best ways to do this is an early and long lasting attendance in day care centers. At the age of 4 ½ all children living in Hamburg have to undergo a testing 1 ½ years prior to their enrollment in elementary school. The test contains – among other areas – language abilities and provides remarkable results on the impact of day care attendance: While almost 50 % of all children with a migration background that only attended a day care center for a year needs additional language support, these needs drops to 13% after an attendance of more than 36 months (three years) in a day care center. This gives proof to the fact that every additional year in a day care center helps children that do not have German as their mother tongue to get a good start in elementary school. Due to this experience Hamburg has increased its efforts to convince mothers with a migration background in areas with high immigrant population through peer programs (mothers coaching mothers) to send their children to day care centers earlier in order to support good starting conditions for successful schooling in elementary schools.

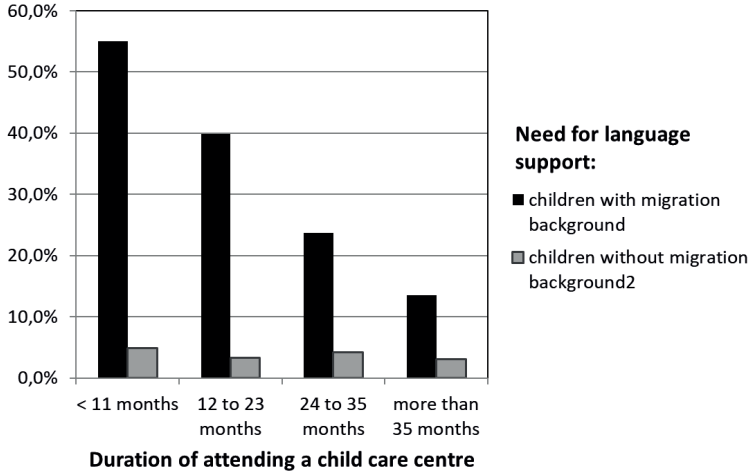

Figure 5. Positive effect of language support in child care center (Data Source: Ministry of Labour, Social, Family Affairs and Integration 2018)

In addition to these official programs a large number of volunteer or government-funded projects exist to provide support for these families.

As soon as families move to the public housing sides or after a period of 6 months all refugee children have the same rights to attend day care centers as all other children in Hamburg.

5. Transition to elementary school and improvement of Quality

One of the crucial factors for a good start to elementary school, next beside language skills, is a smooth transition from the day care center to school. Hamburg enforces staff from both day care centers and elementary schools to come together with the parents and the child about 1 ½ years before the child is going to elementary school to talk about the child's competences and define if and what kind of further support, especially in language development is needed before starting school. This includes the choice that in the child's final year before going to primary school (USA elementary school) the parents, the day careeducators and the school decide whether the preschool education for the child should take place at the day care center or a primary school that offers preschool classes.

In order to improve the general quality of Hamburg's early childhood education, to ensure professional standards must and to fulfill expectations of parents and children an internal evaluation system has to be undertaken by the providers

every 2 years. In addition the youth welfare office is planning to establish an external child day care-inspection by a state agency.

Another important step to improve quality is to increase the educator-to-child-ratio. Beginning with 2018 the City of Hamburg improves the educator-to-child-ratio in the crèches in four steps from 1:5,6 to 1:4.

Excursus: Refugee children

In 2015 Hamburg quickly had to adjust to accommodating large numbers of refugees due to the war in countries such as Syria and Irac. 57.000 refugees came through Hamburg during 2015–2016 and 30.000 were able to stay. After arriving in Hamburg refugees initially stay in one of the shelters, although these are only developed to be a very short-term accommodation of up to six months. Once available they are moved to one of 128 public housing sites that are widespread over the city of Hamburg. Currently over 26.000 refugees are living in public housing sites around Hamburg and many of them are young children and minors and therefore in need of child day care and school education.

In the initial shelters where refugees are housed up to six months the government has set up shelter based care services for children between the age of 3 to 6 years and parent cafes (slender version of the EKiZ) for families to communicate and receive additional child or education related support.

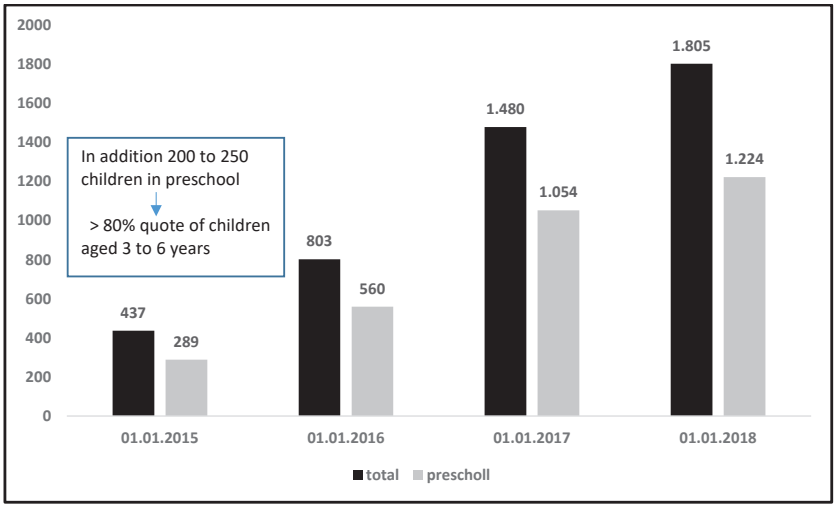

Figure 6. Developement of refugee children living in public housing sides attending child care centers and day care by childminders (Data Source: Ministry of Labor, Social, Family Affairs and Integration 2018)

6. Summary

Since 2010 Hamburg has more or less doubled the amount of money spent on early childhood education (see above). The number of professionals working in child care has grown from 10.880 to 14.353 (Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig Holstein 2017). In these years the number of children regularly attending one of the provided day care services has increased by around 22.600 children (see above). The legal claim to give every child in Hamburg the right to attend a day care center for five hours which includes receiving a hot meal for free is one of Hamburg's largest social achievements in the last decade. It is at the same time a huge positive investment in Hamburg's future. Hamburg is a growing city, an arrival city and a city of hope for many. Hamburg's political aim has been to provide equal opportunities for all young children living in the city, regardless of their social and cultural background or whether they are being challenged by a disability. The fact that families have started to move back from the outer suburbs back into the city because providing day care for children in Hamburg is easier and cheaper than in the neighboring counties is a proof of its success. Further it helps avoid many of those "repair costs" that come along with school problems, dropping out of school early, child neglect and family problems. In the long-term the benefits of investing in a well-established children's day care system is tremendous. An equal start for a young child's life to learn and develop in all facets is crucial for every child's further education.

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SECTION IV:
INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Working as early childhood centre directors and deputies – perspectives from Australia, Finland and Norway[1]

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English Abstract

This research is based in early childhood centres in Australia, Finland and Norway, considered the leadership work of centre Directors and Deputy Directors. Theoretically, this study is situated within the global landscape of neoliberalism that Sims (2017) describes as forcing the reshaping of early childhood policy in numerous OECD countries. Essentially qualitative in design, this exploratory study uses data gathered via a short background survey questionnaire, content analysis of job description statements, and a follow up interview with each participant. Findings indicate that there are differences within and across the three countries in the way these jobs are structured. It appears that the expectations of each role and how participants engage in leadership are framed by their centre contexts. In Australia, leaders of centres achieving an excellent quality rating tend to focus on relationship work when making leadership decisions. In Finland, Directors and Deputy Directors are expected to collaborate as partners when overseeing the work of 2-3 centres and other services. In Norway, there has been a redistribution of work where Deputy Directors have a co-responsibility in leadership enactment. When taken together, these findings illuminate new insights on how Directors experience leadership when Deputies are part of the leadership team in early childhood settings.

German Abstract

Dieser Forschungsbereich Bericht basiert auf Kindertageseinrichtungen in Australien, Finnland und Norwegen und befasst sich mit der Arbeit von Einrichtungsleitungen und stellvertretenden Leitungskräften. Theoretisch ist die Studie angesiedelt in der globalen Landschaft des Neoliberalismus, den Sims als richtungsgebend für die Neuausrichtung der frühkindlichen Bildung in zahlreichen OECD-Ländern beschreibt. Grundsätzlich qualitativ im Design nutzt diese Studie Daten, die in einem kurzen Fragebogen für Hintergrundinformationen, einer Inhaltsanalyse von Stellenbeschreibungen und einer anschließenden Befragung aller Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer gesammelt wurden. Die Ergebnisse zeigen Unterschiede innerhalb und zwischen den drei Ländern in der Strukturierung der Stellen. Es scheint, dass die Erwartungen an jede Rolle und die Art und Weise, wie die Teilnehmerinnen und Teil-

1 This article has been object of double blind peer reviews.

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219918

nehmer ihre Leitungsrolle ausfüllen, durch den Kontext ihrer jeweiligen Einrichtung gerahmt sind. In Australien tendieren Leitungen, die eine exzellente Qualität erzielen, dazu, bei Leitungsentscheidungen den Fokus auf Beziehungsarbeit zu legen. In Finnland wird von Leitungskräfte und stellvertretenden Leitungskräften erwartet, dass sie partnerschaftlich zusammenarbeiten wenn sie für 2-3 Kitas sowie andere Einrichtungen zuständig sind. In Norwegen gab es eine Neuverteilung der Arbeit in der Weise, dass stellvertretende Leitungen eine Mitverantwortung in der Leitungsarbeit tragen. Insgesamt erlauben die Ergebnisse neue Einblicke, wie Leitungskräfte ihre Leitungsaufgaben erfahren, wenn Stellvertretungen ein Teil des Leitungsteams in Kitas sind.

Finnish Abstract

Tämä tutkimus, joka tarkasteli päiväkodin johtajien ja apulaisjohtajien johtajuutta, on toteutettu Australiassa, Suomessa ja Norjassa. Teoreettisesti tutkimus sijoittuu uusliberalistiseen ajatteluun, jonka Sims (2017) kuvaa laajenevasti muokkaavan varhaiskasvatuksen toimintatapoja useissa OECD maissa. Tutkimus on luonteeltaan laadullinen tutkimus ja sen aineistona on osallistujien lyhyt taustakysely, työnkuvien sisällönanalyysi ja yksilöhaastattelut. Tulosten mukaan erilaisuutta työn rakenteissa on sekä kunkin maan sisällä että maiden välillä. Tutkimuksessa havaittiin, että odotukset jokaisen roolista ja siitä, kuinka henkilöt osallistuvat johtajuuteen muovautuvat päiväkotikontekstissa. Australiassa johtajat hyvän laatuarvion saaneissa päiväkodeissa näyttävät toteuttavan yhteistoimijuutta päätöksiä tehtäessä. Suomessa johtajien ja apulaisjohtajien odotetaan toimivan yhteistyössä johtaessaan 2-3 päivähoitoyksikköä. Norjassa on tehty työn uudelleenjärjestelyä, jolloin apulaisjohtajat ovat johtajan rinnalla vastuullisia johtajuuden toteuttamisesta. Yhteenvetona voi todeta näiden tulosten tuovan esille uusia näkökulmia siitä, miten johtajat kokevat johtajuutensa, kun apulaisjohtajat ovat osa johtajuustiimiä varhaiskasvatuksen yksiköissä.

Introduction

This chapter is based on a small scale unfunded tri-nation study of early childhood education (ECE) centre Directors and Deputies in Australia, Finland and Norway. As a pioneering study, however, the goal was not to compare these three nations, but to ascertain insights about current developments in an area of shared interest in ECE leadership. The research aimed to understand aspects which frame the leadership of these early childhood practitioners who occupy positions of authority by virtue of their employment position and leadership status. Previous research and publications around ECE leadership influenced the design of this research. In this paper, we focus on time-based issues which framed the work expectations of centre Directors and Deputies. Ethical aspects of this study were approved by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics

Committee (Ref. No 52016007 33) and equivalent authorities at the other universities were all informed of this research.

With increasing interest in leadership responsibilities, the work of Centre Directors and Deputies is evolving rapidly in each of the three countries involved in this research. In all three countries, there is limited research about the work of Deputies who work within and across clusters of centres. Likewise, there is little or no mention of the work of Deputy Directors in research focusing on Centre Directors. This lack of research does not allow for comparing our findings with the research done in other countries. Although the tradition of Deputy leadership is stronger in school education, research is also limited in that context. In a few studies focusing on Deputies, findings note a lack of training and unclear job descriptions (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004). In addition, research related to distributed leadership rarely focuses on Deputies as a specific group further confirming a dearth of literature exploring the role of the Deputy in ECE settings.

The extent to which the distribution of leadership can influence the core pedagogical tasks and the quality of the settings is not yet fully understood in the early childhood sector in Australia, Finland and Norway. With a view to contributing to this knowledge base, this study examined the influence of context in framing the work of ECE centre Directors and Deputy Directors in Australia, Finland and Norway. Key findings in this research are used to consider implications for future research as well as professional practice from a global perspective.

Situating the Study

The neoliberal political agenda is evident in various forms across much of the western world, and its impact is being felt in public education globally (Giroux, 2015). Thus, it is useful to examine how it impacts on ECE policy development, particularly in relation to how leadership is positioned. Giroux (2015), a vocal critique of the impact of neoliberalism on civilisation, positions the marketisation of society, and especially education and social services, as responsible for:

> *… a ruthless quest for profits and the elevation of self-interests over the common good. The educational goal of expanding the capacity for critical thought and the outer limits of the imagination have given way to the instrumental desert of a mind-deadening audit culture. (p. 120)*

This is particularly pertinent in the early childhood sector where, in the past, a focus on supporting children's developing interests and passions, encouraging imagination, critical thought and free play were long-held goals. Modern

ECE settings are increasingly characterised by curricula that specify what children have to learn along with the teaching strategies required to support their learning. These are accompanied by accountability processes that demonstrate settings are compliant to externally imposed standards designed to ensure good quality service delivery. It appears "democratic and value-based arguments seem to have disappeared from the public debate" (Vandenbroeck, 2017, p. 10). As a consequence, the work of ECE educators has moved more towards technocratic processes which "focus the educator's gaze outwardly on the child who is to be assessed, measured then changed" (Campbell, Smith, & Alexander, 2017, p. 58). This is reflected in the ECE sector by requirements for documenting, observing and analysing children's every emotion, expression and behaviour.

This panoptic surveillance of children is justified by the neoliberal positioning of them as human capital (Hunkin, 2017). An extensive, highly esteemed and much cited body of literature supports this position (Black et al., 2017; OECD, 2017; Penn, 2017; UNICEF Early Childhood Development Unit, 2014; World Health Organisation and UN International Children's Emergency Fund, 2018). Additionally, Heckman's work (2006, 2011, 2014) provides the economic rationale for investing in quality settings for young children as this investment results in improving the chances of good outcomes. Thus, this is not only an effective, but an economically viable strategy to reduce societal disadvantage. However as others argue, this positioning also continues to support the advantages claimed by the elite (Chomsky, 2016; Monbiot, 2017). This highlights a fear that children are no longer valued for who they are, with rights to learn and develop following individual strengths and inclinations. Rather early childhood education risks becoming "a mere preparation for the real learning that takes place in compulsory school" and "pedagogy risks being reduced to the development of effective methods to achieve the predefined goals" (Vandenbroeck, 2017, p. 14).

The situation in Australia foreshadows directions in which other nations may move, given it is claimed educators in this country are subject to more extreme neoliberalism than anywhere else in the world (Smyth, 2017) and that this is a direction emerging in policy initiatives elsewhere (Moss & Urban, 2017; Sims, Alexander, Pedey, & Tausere-Tiko, 2018; Sims et al., 2018a; Sims & Pedey, 2015; Sims & Tiko, 2016; Sims & Tiko, 2019). In the Australian early childhood sector this is exemplified by a range of policy and legislative initiatives (see Sims, Mulhearn, Grieshaber, & Sumsion, 2015 for an overview) that shape and ultimately define practice.

The 'technocratic-alisation' of education arises from neoliberal-based "coercive and controlling social engineering by the state" (White & Wastell, 2017, p. 38) and it is in this context that leaders are put into a position where they become the tools used to attain the goals of the state (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2017). In other words, leaders in early childhood are positioned, by neoliberal policy,

to act upon educators, becoming the agents responsible for shaping educator practice into the required parameters (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016). Thus, educators themselves are becoming more and more deskilled and, within early childhood settings, this situation manifests itself as de-professionalisation (Jovanovic & Fane, 2016; Sims, Forrest, Semann, & Slattery, 2014).

Contextualising ECE Leadership in Australia, Finland and Norway

In situating this study globally, it is appropriate to consider the enactment of leadership across the different national contexts. Such an examination will not only articulate the ways in which neoliberalism is performed in different contexts, it may also provide opportunities to identify the different ways in which some leaders are able to operate to create an organisational context where values, other than those foregrounded by neoliberalism, operate. The understandings of Directors and Deputy Directors operating in ECE settings, and the ways in which they work together will help shed light on some of the complexities of operating an ECE centre in a world where neoliberalism "perverts the modern ideals of justice, freedom, and political emancipation" (Giroux, 2015, p. 3), shapes individuals to become dehumanised, self-interested and lacking in empathy (Jurkiewicz & Grossman, 2012) and where organisations most likely to succeed do so by aggressively pursuing organisational goals to the detriment of individuals, communities and the environment (Jurkiewicz & Grossman, 2012). In the following section, we provide a brief overview of the contemporary ECE policy landscape in Australia, Finland and Norway to assist in contextualising the findings of this research.

Within Australia

In Australia, the role of the Educational Leader (equivalent to that sometimes identified as a 'Pedagogical Leader' in international literature) was established in 2012 to work with educators to ensure practice aligned with the required quality standards (Waniganayake & Sims, 2018). The creation of this position aligns with the neoliberal focus identifying leadership as a necessary tool to develop educator "discipline, order, mindless enthusiasm, conformity, and loyalty" (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016, p. 17). Thus, leaders are seen as responsible for shaping an overall culture of conformity which is supposed to ensure quality (Giroux, 2015). However, the role of the educational leader was left undefined by the government and centres determined their own job descriptions (Cumming, Sumsion, & Wong, 2013; Fleet, Soper, Semann, & Madden, 2015; Grarock & Morrissey, 2013; Sims, Waniganayake, & Hadley, 2018a). Within the neoliberal context, there is

an emphasis on compliance and the expectation that the role will shape practice towards compulsory standards.

Extant research indicates that leaders (Educational Leaders/Directors/Deputy Directors – the differentiation remains unclear in many circumstances) in the early years of implementing the *National Quality Framework* spent as much as a third of their time on compliance focused activities such as monitoring pedagogical documentation created by the educators they were supervising, and working on the compulsory accreditation standards (Garrock & Morrissey, 2013; Rouse & Spradbury, 2015; Sims et al., 2018a; Sims & Waniganayake, 2015). This research found that whilst many leaders thought they were doing relationship work with their staff, their perceptions of the way in which they performed their work did not reflect this approach. In reality, many were intensely focused on trying to understand the new requirements and teach their staff how to enact these so that their centres would receive the best possible accreditation outcome.

Agency is a key element in professionalisation (Goodson, 2007; Skattebol, Adamson, & Woodrow, 2016) and unquestioning acquiescence to external imposition of definitions of quality is, in itself a form of de-professionalisation (Sims et al., 2014; Sims et al., 2018a). Leaders exemplified this acquiescence but it is important to note that in accepting this form of control, followers are also participating in their own de-professionalisation (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016). It is interesting to note that later research, undertaken after settings had been subject to the new legislative regime for some years, suggested that in selected high quality centres, leaders were less likely to focus on compliance and more likely to engage in supportive, collegial relationships with their staff (Sims, Waniganayake, & Hadley, 2018b).

Within Finland

Finland is currently in the process of making policy changes focusing on ECE. The *Finnish National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care* (EDUFI, 2016) was revised two years ago. The previous curriculum provided specific directions that educators were required to follow. The revised version has taken a different approach, requiring municipalities and ECE centres to develop their own curriculum based on the national policy. Thus the national curriculum steers the provision, implementation and development of ECE with the exception of the pre-primary sector which has its own curriculum. The roles of Directors and educators are outlined in the National Curriculum including the role of teachers as leaders. At the time of writing this article, the sector awaits the new Act for ECE which will replace the 1973 version. It is anticipated that the new Act will provide new regulations for staffing ECE settings in Finland.

Since the 1990s, in most Finnish municipalities, smaller day care units have been merged with larger ones. Whereas in the past, most Directors led one centre

and simultaneously had teaching duties with children, today most focus wholly on leadership and run a cluster of centres. Vesalainen, Cleve, & Ilves (2013), for instance, report that 60% of the Directors led at least three types of services and units. Despite this, there are still Directors who continue to hold the traditional double role of director and early childhood teacher within a centre.

The tasks of Centre Directors are also set at the municipality level. Eskelinen and Hujala (2015) and Vesalainen et al. (2013) report the main areas of leadership responsibility of a Centre Director include pedagogy, service, knowledge, human resources management and other daily operational tasks. The Centre Director has a key role in developing the organisational culture of ECE settings. Developing the organisational culture involves pedagogical leadership, development of education and care programmes, assessment of children's learning as well as ensuring good working conditions for staff and developing their vocational competence (EDUFI, 2016).

Deputy leadership is also not a new concept in the Finnish ECE context but its importance has increased (Halttunen, 2016). There are no national regulations identifying how leadership in ECE operates thus municipalities decide how Deputy Directors are appointed, what positional terms are used, whether they receive any extra salary and how their roles and responsibilities are defined. Despite municipalities potentially determining tasks and duties for Deputy Directors, job descriptions, if they exist, tend to be developed at the centre level. Often, the appointment of a Deputy Director is undertaken by the Director who tends to identify a suitable staff member from those already employed at the centre. Some municipalities have now started to open the position of Deputy Director for application by the early childhood educators of the municipality. In addition to a position of a Deputy Director, municipalities may appoint other leadership roles. As there are no set positional titles, there is a variation in the titles used.

Within Norway

In Norway, there is a similar evolution of the role of Centre Director from one of working in small centres with a few early childhood teachers and assistants, to the present day where small ECE settings are likely to be merged into larger ECE centres. This change is accompanied by a change in the role of EC Directors; in more recent times the role focuses more clearly on leadership with a lager emphasis on external tasks (Børhaug & Lotsberg, 2010). In Norway, 46% of ECE settings are public and 56% are private, with both forms being regulated under the same laws and regulations. In 2016, 91% of Directors and teacher leaders had an early childhood teacher education Bachelor degree qualification.

Norway, like Finland and Australia, has recently revised core ECE laws and regulations. There has been much debate in the media, trade unions and the ECE sector in relation to these changes and the direction in which the sector

should develop. From 2009, children's right to access ECE was introduced for children born before September 1st the year before admission. As of the autumn of 2017, children born in November were entitled to access ECE settings, enrolling in the autumn of the following year. The same year, changes to the way in which children's age was recognised enabled children to stay 6 months longer in the younger children's section. This change benefited children given the better adult:child ratios and smaller group sizes required for the younger age group.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has now adopted stricter standards for educational staff (number of children/early childhood teacher educated with at least a Bachelor's degree) with 7 children per early childhood teacher if the child is below three years and 14 children per ECE teacher if the child is more than three years old. This norm demands a minimum of 43% of early childhood teachers with a Bachelor's degree make up staff in ECE centres. From August 2018, the new early childhood teacher norm became mandatory. Simultaneously, Directors' time for leadership and management is no longer to be included in the calculation of the standards for the educational crew. The Kindergarten Act states that ECE centres shall have a Director who is a trained early childhood teacher (Kindergarten Act, 2018).

In Norway the National Framework Plan for ECE has recently been revised (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). Despite the huge international intrusion of neoliberalism into ECE politics in this country, the revised version of the framework plan maintains a holistic approach to learning. This approach encourages play, relationships, curiosity, and the desire for meaning making based on activities that value both children and educators in a co-constructing environment. In the new framework plan, leadership roles and responsibilities have been emphasized and clarified (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). The Norwegian Kindergarten Act (2005) states that ECE centres shall have both pedagogical and administrative leadership (Ministry of Education and Research, 2005). Leadership positions and time allocated to leadership tasks are regulated through special agreements between employee and employer (SENTRAL FORBUNDSVIS SÆRAVTALE, 2016). These requirements apply to both public and private centres and create the space in which Deputy Director positions have arisen. For example, a center with 100 children may have two full-time leadership positions: a Director and a Deputy. Centres with 45–59 children are required to have 0.6% full-time equivalent (FTE) leadership positions. Centres with more than 100 children are required to have 1.7% FTE leadership positions (Vassenden et al., 2011).

How to divide leadership responsibilities between Directors and Deputies is determined by the municipality or at the centre level. The leadership tasks formally delegated to the Deputy Director can also vary according to factors such as the organisational size, structure, the nature of decision-making and culture

of collaboration within centres. Accordingly, currently in Norway, the leadership structure and responsibilities of Directors and Deputy Directors can vary significantly between ECE centres.

Research Methods and Participants

In each country included in this research, centres did not always have a Deputy Director and usually these appointments were dependent on the size of the centre. For example, the requirements discussed above for Norway, clearly align the appointment of Deputy Directors to centre size. In contrast, neither Australia nor Finland had similar legislative guidelines requiring the appointment of Deputy Directors.

Research on early childhood leadership internationally shows the increasing complexity of the work of early childhood practitioners. Given the importance of leadership in supporting this work it is clear that this increasing complexity requires effective communication and sharing of leadership responsibilities (Aubrey, Godfrey, & Harris, 2012; Ho, 2011; McCrae, 2015; Rodd, 2013), including the enactment of leadership in guiding the pedagogical work of the centres. How this operates in the real world may be very different to how leadership is positioned in organisational discourse. As Aubrey et al. (2012) noted it is possible that "the organization was regarded as hierarchical at the strategic level and collaborative at the operational level" (p.19). There is however very little known about how Directors guide the pedagogical work and/or support and cooperate with other staff who are pedagogical leaders. Given increasing leadership responsibilities, there is an urgent need to investigate the allocation of leadership tasks between Directors and Deputies in ECE centres.

In this small scale exploratory study, an inductive approach to data collection and analysis was adopted. In each country, participants completed a short background survey questionnaire, their job description statements provided by employers were analysed and they were interviewed individually. In this paper, the findings arising from the survey data and the job description statements are used.

Krippendorff's (2013) framework was used to critically examine these statements to ascertain an initial understanding of the job expectations of each participant.

Participants were purposively selected from ECE settings recognised as high quality given the research evidence showing that highly qualified practitioners can demonstrate effective leadership (Rodd, 2013; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007). Overall, the three main inclusion criteria used in the selection of participants were:

1. Having a Diploma or Degree in early childhood;
2. Two or more years of experience working in ECE in their country; and
3. The centres where participants were employed were identified by key informants as one of good quality (centres could be either private or public).

Given these selective criteria about qualifications and experience, this study relied on convenience sampling through known professional networks in the researchers' local communities to identify suitable participants. In Australia, this identification was based on the rating posted on the public national register of the accrediting agency (a rating of either Exceeding National Quality Standards or Excellent – the top 2 rating categories possible to achieve -see https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-registers). In Finland and Norway, the centres selected were well known in the community for their good reputation.

The national distribution of the 17 participants in this study are specified in Table 1. Given the small sample size, for the purposes of this paper, there will be no separation between centre ownership or size in the data collected and analysed.

Table 1. Number of participants in each country

	Directors	Deputies	Total
Australia	5	2	7
Finland	2	2	4
Norway	3	3	6
Total	10	7	17

All 17 participants were women, whose age ranged between 31 to 60 years, with at least one third falling into the bracket of being either 31-40 years or 51-60 years. All participants had achieved either a Diploma or Degree in Early Childhood Education. Centre Directors from Norway however, had additional qualifications in another discipline such as Economics and Psychology. Apart from one Centre Director in Australia who had been employed in ECE settings for just two years, all other participants had at least ten years or more experience working in the sector. The majority (n=10) had been employed in the sector for 20 years or more, with the most experienced participant being a Centre Director from Australia with an employment record of 35 years in ECE settings.

Findings

The work of the Directors and Deputies was supported differently across the three countries and also within each nation. Australia and Finland had no national policy or legislative regulations regarding the appointment of Centre Directors and Deputy Directors. In Norway, the appointment of Directors and Deputies was specified in national legislation according to child enrolments. In all three countries, there were no national regulations about the actual work responsibilities of Deputy Directors. In Finland and Norway, typically, the responsibilities of all early childhood educators, including the Deputy Directors, were defined by the municipality and in private centres by the owner. It was also possible that the municipality set the guidelines and the specific tasks were discussed and refined within centres. In Australia, these decisions were set by individual centres or by a central office if the centre was part of a group or a chain of centres. In presenting findings, the focus is on time resources allocated to these roles and on how the job descriptions described and defined the work of the Deputies.

Time resources

As it can be seen from Table 2, most Centre Directors were allocated fewer hours than the Deputies for programme planning. The Australian participants had the smallest non-contact time allowances where they could engage in curriculum and pedagogy planning. In contrast, the Directors and Deputies in Norway were allocated 30 or more hours per week for programme planning. In Finland, this allocation was depended on the Director's position and the manner in which their Deputy role interacted with their early childhood teacher role.

A Centre Director in both public and private settings in Norway was expected to work 37.5 hours a week with the same requirements operating independently of centre size. The size of the center (number of children) defined the resources allocated to the Deputy's position. Full-time appointed Centre Directors and Deputy Directors did not work directly with the children during the day. However, Directors had the main overall responsibility for pedagogical work at the centre. This did not mean however that these full-time Directors had no contact with children or staff during the day. Often these Directors, walked around the centre to, for example, say hello, give information, support staff. Being a full time Director in Norway means doing both administrative tasks and pedagogical leadership tasks as well as leading staff and working with external stakeholders.

Table 2. Weekly hours away from children allocated for programme planning

	Directors	Deputy Directors
Australia	1-2 hours = 1 1 hour = 1 NA = 3	3 hours = 1 4 hours = 1
Finland	3,45 =1* NA =1	3.45 hours = 2
Norway	37.5 hour = 3	30 hours = 2** 37.5 hours = 1

**Note: This director worked simultaneously as an early childhood teacher*

***Note: These two Deputy Directors each held a 80% position and did not work directly with groups of children.*

In Finland, the normal working week was 37.5 hours as specified in regulations. Of this time, 3.45 hours is identified nationally in the collective agreement of early childhood teachers as the required time they should have available to them for programme planning. This planning work is done at the local centre. One of the participants, a Centre Director worked simultaneously as an early childhood teacher and thus was subject to the same regulations as all teachers. The other Finnish Director worked only as a Centre Director and there was no separation as to how much of her work time was reserved for different duties. As in Norway, Directors have the main responsibility for pedagogical work of their centres. However, in Australia this pedagogical responsibility could be held by the Director, Deputy or another early childhood educator in the centre.

Table 3 presents the weekly hours reserved for the work as a Centre Director or a Deputy, reflecting a variable pattern across the three countries.

Table 3. Weekly hours allocated to do the work of a Director/Deputy Director

	Directors	Deputy Directors
Australia	25 hours = 1 7 hours = 1 NA = 3	24 hours = 1 No time = 1
Finland	37.5 hours =1 5-8 hours =1	4 hours = 1 No time =1
Norway	37.5 = 3	37.5 hours = 1 30 hours = 2

Firstly, time allocated to the role of Directors in Australia is the lowest of the three countries. In contrast, Directors from Finland and Norway mainly worked full-time in this role. The Director from Finland who had direct work with children reported very little time (5-8 hours) for the work as a Director. Interestingly, there were two Deputy Directors – one each from Australia and Finland, who reported not being given any time to dedicate to these roles as their main task was to be a teacher who was responsible for a group of children. Her role as Deputy Director was enacted only when the Centre Director was absent or away from the centre.

Participants were asked to assess if the time they were given to undertake their role as Centre Director or a Deputy was sufficient.

Table 4. Adequacy of time to do the work of a Director/Deputy Director

	Totally insufficient	Usually sufficient	Somewhat sufficient	Totally sufficient
Australia				
Directors	3	-	1	-
Deputies	1	-	-	1
Finland				
Directors	1	-	-	-
Deputies			1	1
Norway				
Directors			1	2
Deputies			1	3
TOTAL	4		4	7

Note: From Australia and Finland, data from one Director each is missing

Most of the Finnish and Norwegian Directors and Deputy Directors found the time reserved for their work as the Director or Deputy Director was either totally or somewhat sufficient. In Australia, three Directors and one Deputy answered that they did not have enough time for this work. The most satisfied participants in relation to the availability of time resources were the Directors and Deputies from Norway.

Job descriptions and focus areas

In Australia, the working conditions of Centre Directors and Deputy Directors were highly variable and influenced by industrial awards and enterprise agreements which set the conditions of employment of early childhood educators. Most educators in prior to school settings in Australia work on a 38 hour week,

with one rostered day off a month. There are also a variety of job titles for these positions of leadership including Centre Director or Coordinator and they could also be identified as the nominated supervisor for the whole centre. Likewise, the Deputy Director's role or title could also be identified as the Second-In-Charge (2IC) or Assistant Director or Co-Director. Under Australian legislation there is also a required role of a 'nominated supervisor'. This person is the one legally responsible for compliance with the National Law and National Regulations and it is not unusual for this legal position to be filled by a teacher or educator other than the Director or Deputy.

In Australia, participants also noted that their role as Deputy Directors tended to be focused on administration tasks, with an operational and compliance focus, as reflected in the analysis of their job description statements presented in Figure 1. Their work in leading pedagogy was the second most mentioned in the job descriptions.

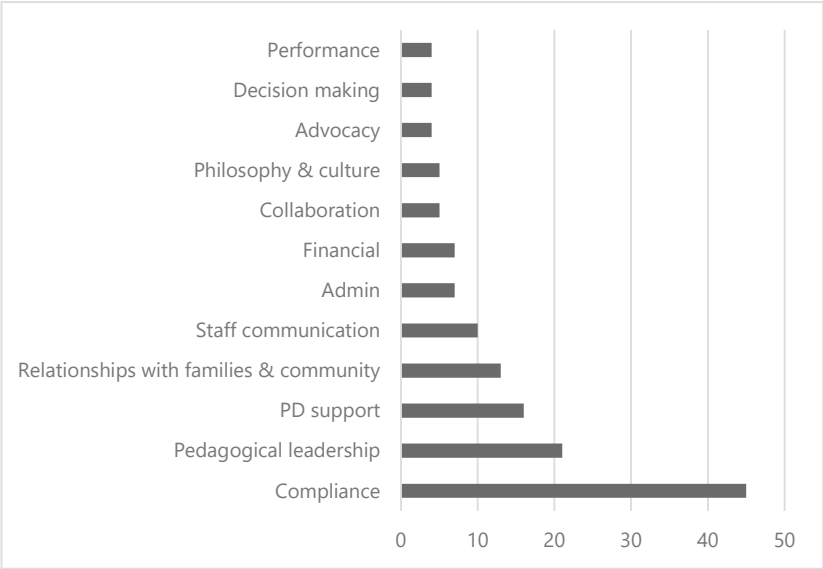

Figure 1. Analysis of job descriptions of Australian Deputy Directors

In Finland, job descriptions of both the Directors and Deputies in public centres were developed at the municipality level but redefined individually with the supervisors. Directors were given agency to identify the main duties and demands of the job and these varied among the Directors. Deputies' job descriptions were similar with a list of duties. Most of the tasks of a Deputy should be done in col-

laboration with the Centre Director addressing tasks such as client service, financial issues, placing a new child at the centre, arranging annual leave for the centre staff and coordinating the duty arrangements of all centre staff. If needed, the Deputy had full responsibility to rearrange the work shifts of the staff. However, there was nothing about the relationship between the Deputy and the Director in the very detailed job description of the Centre Director of this same municipality. The Deputy Director from the private centre had several administrative tasks such as reporting to the Director about the work shifts or sick leave. The Deputy was also expected to collaborate with the Director in designing pedagogical plans for the centre. Unfortunately, the job description from the private centre was not provided so comparison is not possible. Guidelines provided by the municipality provided information on the work of Deputies. Deputies should work in a playgroup for children between 3-5 years, there should be another teacher working in the same group and their work shift should be between 7:30-16:30.

In Norway, the analysis of the job descriptions indicated that the Director and Deputy Director followed each other closely, but the wording of their responsibilities was different. With the Directors, the words "in charge of" was used and with the Deputy Directors, the words used were "contribute to". These words make it clear that the main responsibility lies with the Director and that the Deputy Director was perceived as a support, assisting the Director. In the private centre, the main responsibility of the Director was also reinforced as leading as in this context the Director participated in the leadership team with the centre owner.

How the work was distributed depended largely on the Director`s wishes and needs, but the division of labor was developed through dialogue and cooperation with the Deputy Director. One of the Deputy Directors from Norway was working one day a week in one of the departments (groups of children) together with the room leader (teacher leader with formal leadership responsibility for her department), assistants and children. Here, she had specific tasks in relation to observing children and to guide, support and challenge staff in pedagogical work with children. She was also responsible for supervising staff so that the team worked as well as possible. Although most of the time the work of both Directors and Deputy Directors work was away from the children, they both acknowledged the importance of getting to know the children and their parents. Therefore, they often stepped out of their offices to talk to children and parents, as well as staff.

Discussion

Based on the findings of this study presented in this paper, we offer three key observations about the work of early childhood centre Directors and Deputy Directors in Australia, Finland and Norway.

i) Time resources

- Formal allocation of time resources across the three countries varied significantly.
- Only the Norwegian participants agreed there was sufficient time allocated to do the Deputy Director's work.
- Some Directors worked as teacher-Directors, whereby they had regular responsibilities for a group of children.
- Additionally, Directors in Finland also worked with playgroups and Family Day Carers.

The data demonstrated different approaches to sharing the leadership work between Directors and Deputies both within and between countries. In some situations, the data showed Directors held sole authority (leading alone). Elsewhere, there appeared to be multiple roles being performed by Directors and Deputies, with the adoption of a collaborative approach to delineating leadership responsibilities (leading together). Elements of these two approaches arising from the data are identified below.

ii) Leading alone

- Deputy Director positions were not required by regulation in Australia and Finland. In Norwayleadership positions and time allocated to leadership are regulated by the size of the centre. Centres with 100+ children have Deputy Directors. Directors and Deputy Directors, who worked collaboratively.
- Deputy Directors tended to develop their role informally through negotiation with the Director. Generally, the Director held strong leadership responsibilities, delegating tasks to the Deputy as needed.
- Directors lead from a position of power and responsibility, and carried the main responsibility. The Deputy Directors stepped into this role only when the Director was away/absent from the centre.

This study included a mix of ECE settings comprising both stand-alone centres and those that were located within a cluster of ECE programmes that also included family day care and playgroups as in the case of Finland and Norway. In the case of Australia, ECE centres could belong to a group or chain of centres that were owned by a private individual or corporation. However, the small number of participants involved in this study makes it impossible to comment about the

nature of leading alone, on the basis of the structural arrangements of each setting.

iii) Leading together
- Leadership is enacted through democratic relationships between Directors and Deputy Directors
- The Director involves the Deputy in meaning making and how to improve centre practices.

It appears that across all three countries, there was a prevailing sense of collaboration within each ECE setting participating in this study. Likewise, all participants were also aware of the need to balance the pedagogical and administrative/compliance requirements of their leadership responsibilities that were being shaped by the expectations reflected in their country's national policy landscape. Overall however, given the small scale of this research, it is important to note that the generalisability of these findings are limited. In particular, only one participant from each centre was included in the study, and this means that the findings reflect one person's perspectives of the work at each organisation. Inclusion of multiple participants from one centre could provide a richer analysis of relationship dynamics between Centre Directors and their Deputies.

Conclusion

Overall, it appears that the enactment of neoliberalism in Australian early childhood may well foreshadow developments elsewhere in the world. The neoliberal positioning of leaders as the agents of compliance-driven change becomes possible when both leaders and followers accept the roles into which they are placed. As Freire (1973) wrote many years ago, we can choose to be complicit in our own oppression, or we can chose to resist. More recently Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2017, p. 2) remind us that leaders have a significant impact on the culture of an organisation and that "leaders who are ethical have improved employee physical, psychological, and job wellbeing". They define ethical leadership as consisting of a range of characteristics including transparency in decision-making and considerations of social justice, equity and fairness. Leaders in ECE have a huge responsibility to secure and support their leadership team to direct and facilitate pedagogical work with children (Bøe, 2016; Hognestad, 2016). In contexts where Directors and Deputies are leading together, they emphasize building strong teams.

The question remains – when does a centre require a Deputy Director? To what extent does this decision rely solely on structural elements of child enrolments and child:staff ratios? Other factors, apart from the purely economic ones

associated with size might need to be considered. For example, the contextual elements of the community taking into account child and family background variables, require deeper consideration in leadership enactment. Where settings work with particularly challenging communities, families and or children, should they prioritise a Deputy position to enhance capacity to offer appropriate supports?

Waniganayake and Sims (2018) suggest that in addition to this, there is a need to consider the relationship elements of leadership work. They argue that a strong focus on building supportive relationships with staff, and an ability to build on staff strengths, is likely to be reflected in high quality service delivery to children and families. In these neoliberal times where investment in good quality ECE settings is seen as the pathway to national economic well-being should ECE settings be advocating for Deputy positions to create space for relationship-focused, empowering leadership to occur? The insights gained from this research alert us to critically reflect on the impact of compliance requirements shaping the role of pedagogical leadership with care. Although formal job descriptions can provide boundaries and clarity about roles and responsibilities, the extent to which they can inhibit agency for those enacting leadership roles requires deeper exploration.

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International review of ECE Leadership Research – Finland, Germany, Japan, Singapore, South Africa and the United States under Review

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Abstract

This chapter reviews selected research about leadership in early childhood education (ECE) in Finland, Germany, Japan, Singapore, South Africa, and USA. A short general introduction to ECE in each country is offered, followed by the summary of the research conducted in the country in question. In addition, a comparative synthesis of research is presented in which the methodological choices, broader societal and educational background and the research contributions to understanding leadership in ECE are discussed from international and transnational perspectives. This review concludes that ECE is of growing interest in the countries included in the study and its impact is widely recognised. Furthermore, the review indicates that in Finland and the USA, there has been extensive research on ECE leadership research, while in Germany, Singapore, South Africa and Japan research into ECE leadership has only recently emerged. Despite the differences in the traditions and roots of leadership research, good quality early childhood education is seen as the main objective of the leadership in every country.

German Abstract

Dieses Kapitel gibt einen Überblick über ausgewählte Forschungsergebnisse über die Leitung in der frühen Bildung in Finnland, Deutschland, Japan, Singapur, Südafrika und USA. Zu jedem Land wird eine allgemeine Einführung in die frühe Bildung gegeben, gefolgt von einer Zusammenfassung von einschlägiger Forschung zur Leitung von Kindertageseinrichtungen. Außerdem wird eine vergleichende Synthese der Forschung präsentiert, in der die Wahl der Methoden, der weitere gesellschaft-

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219919

liche und bildungspolitische Hintergrund und die Beiträge zum Verstehen von Leitungsaufgaben in der frühen Bildung in einer internationalen und transnationalen Perspektive diskutiert werden. Das Review kommt zu dem Schluss, dass die frühe Bildung in den betrachteten Ländern von wachsendem Interesse ist und deren Bedeutung erkannt wird. Weiterhin zeigt der Review, dass in Finnland und den USA bereits sehr viel zur Leitung in der frühen Bildung geforscht wurde, während dieses Thema in Deutschland, Südafrika und Japan erst vor kurzem aufgegriffen wurde. Trotz der Unterschiede in der Forschung und den Wurzeln der Leitungsforschung wird eine gute Qualität der frühen Bildung als Hauptziel der Leitung in jedem der beteiligten Länder angestrebt.

Finish Abstract

Kansainvälinen katsaus varhaiskasvatuksen johtajuustutkimukseen – Suomi, Saksa, Japani, Singapore, Etelä-Afrikka ja USA tarkastelun kohteena

Tässä artikkelissa tarkastellaan varhaiskasvatuksen johtajuustutkimusta Suomessa, Saksassa, Japanissa, Singaporessa, Etelä-Afrikassa ja Yhdysvalloissa. Artikkelin aluksi kuvataan lyhyesti kunkin maan varhaiskasvatusta, jonka jälkeen esitetään tiivistelmä kyseisen maan varhaiskasvatuksen johtajuustutkimuksesta. Lopuksi vertaillaan johtajuustutkimuksia ja tarkastellaan niiden metodologisia valintoja ja yhteiskunnallisia ja koulutusjärjestelmään liittyviä taustatekijöitä sekä tutkimuksen antia varhaiskasvatuksen johtajuuden kehittämiseen. Yhteistä tutkimukseen osallistuvissa maissa näyttää olevan varhaiskasvatukseen suuntautuvan kiinnostuksen kasvu ja sen vaikutuksen tunnustaminen. Suomessa ja Yhdysvalloissa on varhaiskasvatuksen johtajuustutkimusta tehty runsaasti, mutta Saksassa, Singaporessa, Etelä-Afrikassa ja Japanissa aihealueen tutkimus on vasta hiljattain noussut esille. Vaikka tutkimusmetodologiassa ja johtamisen lähtökohdissa esiintyy maiden välillä eroja, laadukas varhaiskasvatus nähdään aina johtamisen päätavoitteena.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, early childhood education (ECE) is the subject of many reforms in national contexts. The importance of ECE for societies' future has been noted in many ways and developments at the administrative, legislative and practical levels have been launched. Leadership is argued to be one of the key factors for the quality of ECE.

This review has been conducted in "Discourses of leadership in the diverse field of early childhood education", an international ECE leadership research project with participants from Finland, Germany, Japan, Singapore, South Africa and the United States. The objective of the project is to investigate through focus group interviews the perspectives on ECE leadership of ECE directors and teachers. The purpose is to provide an understanding of the various discourses and the range of expectations of ECE leadership. Through discursive analysis, it is pos-

sible to provide understanding and to bring clarity to the essence of leadership. The aim is to increase pedagogical quality, work well-being and children's and parents' satisfaction with ECE through clarifying the possibilities and limitations of leadership. As McDowall Clark and Murray (2012) emphasized, a redefinition of leadership is needed. Having a shared vision and common understanding are the basis of distributed leadership (Kocolowski, 2010).

A short introduction of the countries participating in early childhood education and the ECE leadership research is presented, followed by a comparative consideration of ECE and leadership research in these countries. As is customary of meta-level inquiries of this kind (see e.g. Bolden, 2011; Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä & Paloniemi, 2013; Matusov, von Duyke & Kayumova, 2015), no research method *per se* was used. Rather, after the passages for each country had been completed, these were carefully read and re-read to see "what patterns emerged in us", as Matusov et al. (2015, p. 425) so aptly phrased the idea. Of special interest in our analysis were emerging differences and similarities that could be expressed in terms of broader theoretical and methodological questions.

2. Finland – ECE transformation and research into contextual leadership

ECE in Finland is currently undergoing a major transformation at a number of levels. The most significant of these is new legislation (2015) which defined ECE as an educational institution, governed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Act on Early Childhood Education and Care, 36/1973). This is a major shift from the previous legislation (1973), in which ECE was perceived as a social service and governed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. However, the shift from a care-oriented paradigm into an education-oriented paradigm is not reflected in the regulations regarding the adult-child ratio and group size, which were increased in the legislation reform. The adult-child ratio is 1:4 for under 3-year-olds, 1:8 for 3–5-year-olds and, in compulsory pre-school, 1:13 for 6-year-olds, with the maximum group size being 3 adults and the corresponding number of children (239/1973). A second major transformation concerns the provider of ECE services. The law (36/1973) defines the provision of ECE as a responsibility of municipalities, yet it is up to the municipality to decide whether they run the service themselves or buy it from an outside public or private provider. Recently, the number of privately run ECE centres has been increasing (Karila, Kosonen & Järvenkallas, 2017). Third, in the second stage of legislation reform, major changes especially to qualification of ECE professionals took place. The new Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018) took effect in September 2018. While in the previous legislation (1973) one third of staff was required to have a tertiary bachelor level education with the rest qual-

ifying as nurses through secondary vocational education, in the new legislation at least two thirds of staff in ECE should have a tertiary education. Together with the new requirement of a master's degree for leaders of ECE centers this amounts to a major shift upwards in the level of qualifying education. It remains to be seen how these changes affect the future of ECE in Finland.

The first wave of Finnish ECE leadership research was published at the turn of the millennium, using the framework of contextual leadership theory. According to Hujala (1998), contextual leadership theory investigates leadership as a socially constructed, situational and interpretive phenomenon. This early research (Hujala et al., 1998; Nivala, 1999; Hujala, 2002; 2004) focused on the roles and responsibilities as well as positions and the "nature" or significance of leadership. The findings showed that ECE leadership was a multi-dimensional phenomenon, with various administrative and educational foci. Nivala (1999) in particular points out that ECE leadership needs to cope with the pressure between a pedagogy-oriented interest in substance and a care-oriented interest in administration and social service.

These early studies and results have shaped subsequent ECE leadership research in Finland by showing the importance of contextual factors in constructing leadership and the role played by the core function of an institution in defining leadership tasks (see Nivala, 1999). For the most part, research conducted in the latter half of the first decade and first half of the second decade of the 21st century has focused on the effects of distributed leadership and organisation models, which are typical in Finnish ECE institutions, and on issues relating to how the core function of an ECE institution defines leadership tasks for centre directors and teachers, as well as macro level managers.

Contextual aspects were brought to the fore in the first of a new wave of leadership research in 2009 as Halttunen conducted her doctoral thesis on leadership in distributed organisations where a single director leads at least 2 ECE centres. Building on this, Soukainen (2015) found, rather surprisingly, that staff working in a physically different location from their supervisor felt that they received more pedagogical support than staff working in the same location as their supervisor. Several studies have also examined macro level contextual factors. Akselin (2013) conducted a narrative study on how strategic leadership abilities develop during a person's career path. Her results also showed the need for an understanding of the core function on the administrative level. A similar conclusion was reached by Alila (2013), who analysed administrative documents from 1972 to 2012 in order to ascertain how quality of ECE is construed at the administrative level. Her results show that systematic work is needed so that a unified and comprehensive understanding of quality can be achieved to work as a guideline for administrative control of ECE.

There have also been studies that focus on the core function of ECE institutions as a key factor for leadership. Fonsén's dissertation research (2014; see also Fonsén, 2013) used a narrative methodology to examine the concept of pedagogical leadership in terms of how it is understood and implemented and in terms of the challenges it faces. The results showed that knowledge of what good quality pedagogy entails and how it is implemented in practice are central to pedagogical leadership but need to be complemented by human management skills and an ability to argue for pedagogy in order to achieve success in the varying contexts. Heikka (2014), on the other hand, compared the perceptions of pedagogical leadership of different stakeholders in municipal administration of ECE, thus merging the perspectives of contextuality and core function in leadership research. This study showed that macro level stakeholders were not sufficiently well acquainted with the daily practices of ECE centres to establish efficient strategies for pedagogical improvement.

Issues concerning the core function of ECE institutions have gained added importance as a research aim because of the gradual transfer of ECE services in Finland from the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social affairs and Health to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture. In line with this development, Halttunen and Heikka continue their ECE leadership studies with the topical phenomenon of teacher leadership (Heikka, Halttunen & Waniganayake, 2016) while Fonsén and Akselin (later Keski-Rauska) are conducting a case study of joint ECE leadership in the city of Hämeenlinna. (Fonsén, Akselin & Aronen, 2015; Keski-Rauska, Fonsén, Aronen, & Riekkola, 2016; Fonsén & Keski-Rauska, 2018, Fonsén & Mäntyjärvi, forthcoming). In addition, Soukainen and Fonsén (2018) have recently studied sustainable leadership in ECE.

3. Germany – diversity of ECE and leadership research for quality

Today's ECE system in Germany developed from two different societal systems that existed before the uniting of the former east and west in 1989. While in western Germany ECE was organised by non-profit organisations according to the social civic code VIII (SGB VIII), in East Germany, ECE was organised by the state as part of the health system for crèches and of the educational system for the kindergarten. In West Germany, most of the ECE providers were free social non-profit enterprises, initiatives of the churches or parents, but also municipalities under conditions of subsidiarity (Merchel, 2008). A variety of pedagogical perspectives was implemented as opposed to in East Germany, where one central curriculum, regulated by the state, was in use. In West Germany, most of the children aged under 3 years were educated in the family or in private home-based ECE settings, while in East Germany, it was normal for children from the age of

1 year to be educated in a ECE centre. Nowadays, a majority of the more than 55,000 ECE centres are run by non-profit organisations while municipalities and private profit organisations run 31% and 3% of the centres, (Destatis, 2017). ECE provision varies a lot in size, structure and management. Centres care for 10 or up to 300 children and the organisations employ from 2 or 3 up to more than 5,000 people to work in the centres or administration. Many non-profit organisations are managed by volunteers, although some of them employ professional managers.

Studies revealed non-optimal pedagogical quality in German ECE centres (Tietze, 1998; Tietze et al., 2013). Since the German "PISA shock" at the beginning of the century (Germany was only in the middle range), major reforms were initiated in the German ECE system. Since 2013, parents have been guaranteed to get a place in a ECE centre for their children starting from the age of 1 year. Consequently, nowadays ca. 3.5 million children are educated by nearly 700,000 pedagogues in the ECE centres (Destatis, 2017; Autorengruppe Fachkräftebarometer 2017). Staff members have to be qualified in (non-academic) professional education which is recognised by the state. Since 2005, bachelor programs for ECE ("Kindheitspädagogik") came into being at many universities of applied sciences.

Educational programmes, laws and financing are regulated by the 16 states of the federation. Therefore, the conditions for the children to receive education and their opportunities for learning and support as well as the working conditions for the staff in the centres vary a lot. For example, child-staff ratios, qualification requirements for leaders and financing systems are different in the different states. In some states, ECE is free, but in others, parents have to pay large amounts of money for the institutional ECE of the child. This variety of regulations and practices is a defining feature of ECE in Germany at the moment.

There has been little research on leadership in ECE to date, with educational research having focused on later stages of the system of education until recently. However, three directions of research stand out. First, in the course of efforts to improve quality and to standardise the structural conditions of ECE, a number of expert papers were written to define the necessary equipment for pedagogues and leaders to achieve good quality in the ECE centres. For example, on the basis of a literature review, work analysis, diaries and interviews, Strehmel (2016) developed a task profile for leaders in ECE, criteria for their qualification and a formula to calculate time resources necessary for the leaders, depending on the size, structure and pedagogical challenges in a specific ECE centre.

A second research direction has been descriptive studies of leaders' work. Working conditions, the time for leadership tasks and necessary qualifications vary between states and this was put down to a lack of knowledge of leadership tasks (Beher & Lange, 2014). Fthenakis, Hanssen, Oberhuemer & Schreyer,

(2003) conducted a survey on the tasks of managers in ECE and revealed ten dimensions of tasks, e.g. the development of a conceptual framework, organisation and service development, human resource management, cooperation with parents and social services, financing, administration, and room management. Recent studies on working conditions, work satisfaction and health of educators and leaders in ECE revealed a level of high job satisfaction, but at the same time, higher levels of stress than in other professions. In addition, four out of five leaders suffered from a "gratification crisis", which means an imbalance between the job involvement and work engagement on the one hand, and the (not only monetary) appreciation and gratification of their work by parents, managers and the society on the other hand. (Schreyer, Krause, Brandl, & Nicko, 2014; Viernickel, Voss & Mauz, 2017.) Münchow and Strehmel (2016) conducted a survey with 141 Berlin centre leaders on the time used for undertaking different leadership tasks (under conditions of limited time resources) and found that most of the time was used for management, administration, team leadership and cooperation (m = 9h per week), followed by human resource management, pedagogical organisation and concept work (m= ca. 7.5h each). Many leaders pointed out not having enough time for organisational and quality development, networking and self-management.

Thirdly, a few studies have focused on different leadership styles. Nentwig-Gesemann, Nicolai, & Köhler (2016) described the tasks and daily challenges of ECE leaders in a qualitative study with 10–12 leaders from each of the 16 German states. The authors identified three leadership styles dependent on their focus on management and organisation, care for the staff or team leadership. In contrast, Strehmel and Overmann (2018) found that although being dependent on the size, values and philosophy of the different organisations, the majority of leaders interviewed across different organisations performed according to an employee-oriented leadership style striving for commitment and professional development of their collaborators. Viernickel et al. (2013) investigated the conditions of good pedagogical quality and described styles of team leadership to cope with pedagogical goals given by governmental ECE programs under conditions of narrow child-staff ratios. The results show that teams which developed their own pedagogical concepts in a participatory way and adapted them to the official program of their state managed better than teams that tried merely to transfer the contents of the state program into practice.

4. Japan – aspiration to harmonize ECE systems

In Japan, two main kinds of institutions are involved on ECE: kindergarten (4 hours per day in principle) and day nursery (8 hours in principle). Historically, kindergartens and day nurseries have existed under separate systems in the ed-

ucation and welfare sectors. Recently, to meet the growing needs of ECE, both sectors have collaborated in the establishment of a new unified system. Thus, currently there are three systems in the field of ECE. Between the two traditional institutions, there has been a long debate regarding the interpretation and positionings of the terms "*Hoiku",* meaning both education and care, and "*Kyoiku",* meaning education. Historically, "Kyoiku" has been used in connection with kindergartens to position them within the school system, while for day nurseries "Hoiku" has been used to define a different status and function – one integrating care and education (Yukawa, 2016). Although there are presently two administrations in ECE settings, the term "*Hoiku*" is used in both areas (Yukawa, 2016) and is more popular in the ECE field. In 2017, curriculum guidelines for ECE have been revised and improved in terms of consistency of policy. All 3-5-year-old children should participate in ECE of the same quality. Despite historical conflict and three systems of governance in the ECE setting in Japan, the starting point for supporting children's growth in the future is a promising one (Tamiaki et al., 2017).

Recently, research on ECE leadership in Japan has been connected with the idea of quality. Conventionally, retired principals of elementary schools or junior high schools take up positions at kindergartens. Likewise, in nurseries, it is not necessary for the principal to have competence in ECE. To change this, the government has demanded research on, and consequently the implementation of, a future vision of ECE leadership (CEDEP, 2016; Akita,Yodogawa, Sagawa, & Suzuki, 2017). Though there have been several publications of directions for implementing leadership in ECE (e.g. Kobayashi et al., 2009; Imai, 2016; Yato, 2017), and from 2018, on-the-job -training will be conducted by the government for leaders all over the country (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2016), academic research in the field is still in its infancy.

The research on leadership has so far focused on two themes. The first of these is the relationship between leadership and staff improvement. Ueda (2004) interviewed five practitioners who had been transferred from one job to another about their views of the past and present supervisor. The findings indicate that personal competencies are affected by the leaders that practitioners work with. Following this, Uzuhashi (2009) analysed the relationship between staff motivation and leadership by sending a questionnaire to 3,000 practitioners. The results showed that practitioners were motivated by leaders' preferences for performance, support for staff, and responses to parents and policy. Ueda (2014) has revealed an essential leadership factor in "building a learning community and team culture", and also, that leaders placed emphasis on self-improvement through in-service training (Ueda, 2015). This indicates that leadership which promotes a collaborative work culture by facilitating frequent discussion is effective for training.

The second theme of research is leadership tasks. Ito (2002) interviewed ten leaders and revealed their role as both managers and holders of exclusive knowledge in ECE. This double role was confirmed by Hujala et al. (2016) in a cross-cultural study between Finland, Japan and Singapore. Japanese leaders spent most of their time on service management, human resource management, and daily managerial tasks, whereas pedagogical leadership remained in the background. The discussion about leadership in ECE overlaps with society in general. For example, as a part of studying recent societal reforms in Japan regarding taxation and decentralization of regulation, Ito (2014) revealed the role of leadership and current issues in heads and cadres of municipal government in the ECE sector. According to the research, heads recognize that they influence municipal ECE, for example by selecting the best measures among several options, policy formulation and implementation of the measures.

5. Singapore – National investment and governance

Since 2013, the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), jointly overseen by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social and Family Development, has served as the regulatory and developmental authority for ECE in Singapore. The ECE industry can be described as a largely private sector, comprised of for-profit and non-profit centres. There are currently about 450 private kindergartens, 1,400 childcare centres and 15 government kindergartens (ECDA, 2017a). The industry faces various challenges (see Masood, 2017), which have led the government to prioritise the progressive development of the sector by doubling its recent expenditure on early childhood education to S$1.7 billion by 2022 (Goy, 2017).

During the last decade, efforts in the sector have focused on improving outcomes for children, affordability and accessibility, teacher quality and status as well as regulatory framework and accreditation (Lim, 2017). ECDA has established recommendations to support the delivery of a quality curricula (Ministry of Education, 2013; ECDA, 2017b), an assessment framework for certification for quality assurance (ECDA, 2017c) and affordability schemes (ECDA, 2017d). There has also been an emphasis on providing a systematic and upstream support for low-income and vulnerable children through the KidSTART program. It is expected that by 2023, two-thirds of the early childhood education industry will be controlled by the government (Chua, 2017).

To meet the challenges of the growing sector, new legislation was introduced in the form of the Early Childhood Development Centre Act in 2017, which gives the authorities stronger control over centres (Singapore Statutes Online, 2017). Labour force issues have also been addressed through the creation of career progression pathways, professional development programs and competency

frameworks (see ECDA, 2017e; Skillsfuture, 2017). In 2019, a National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC) will be established through the amalgamation of four existing training institutions, to strengthen teacher education and research (Ministry of Education, 2017).

With a national effort to improve accessibility, affordability and quality of the preschool sector, there is a realisation that effective leadership will be critical to the achievement of those goals. The current literature on ECE leadership in Singapore includes a limited number of independent reports, journal articles based on small scale studies and several unpublished theses. Although this does not qualify as extensive academic research, it highlights the scope of leadership-related issues relevant to the local context.

Ang's (2012b; see also Ang 2012a) report Vital Voices for Vital Years provides an insight into 27 leaders' perspectives about the challenges faced within the Singapore ECE landscape. Conducted as a focus group study, the report was written as a critical independent study of the sector. The final chapter highlights the importance of political leadership as an essential ingredient for effective change within the sector. It also recognises the multi-faceted role of leaders and the need to have a well-developed training system to enable leaders to translate policy into quality practice.

Following this, Ebbeck, Saidon, Soh, & Goh, (2014) conducted a small-scale action research project study on 64 practicing teachers to explore how ECE teachers would be ready to take on a leadership role. Adopting the Trait theory (Johns & Moser, 2001) and Situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) as a theoretical framework, an online survey was conducted followed by a focus group discussion. Respondents highlighted the lack of experience, mentoring and preference for teaching as push factors for leadership. On the other hand, positive responses to leadership roles were reported to have been influenced by prior experience in ECE or other fields, a belief in their leadership competencies and the view that leadership was an element of career progression.

In 2016, a cross-cultural research study was conducted by researchers in Finland, Japan and Singapore to examine and compare leadership tasks in each country (Hujala et al., 2016). Building on Finnish leadership research and using contextuality as a theoretical framework, a semi-structured questionnaire was administered. In the Singapore segment, 100 program principals and supervisors in Singapore participated in the survey in which the results were examined using Hofstede's concept of four cultural dimensions. The findings revealed that pedagogical leadership and service management were the two highest tasks of Singaporean ECE leaders.

In addition to these published studies, a number of doctoral theses on ECE leadership have been completed in local and foreign universities. Teo (2016) explored the extent to which principals in Singapore believed in the relation-

ship between leadership training and quality ECE provision. She identified both quality and leadership dimensions as important in quality ECE provision. In addition, the research showed the challenges posed by the Singapore preschool accreditation framework and inconsistencies in the leadership training experience. Wu's (2017) doctoral dissertation presented an interpretivist case study on pedagogical leadership and showed how an effective leader advances program and centre quality. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the research showed the influence of macro and micro factors which affect pedagogical leadership. At the exosystem level this was observed in the need for the centre's compliance to national policies and frameworks whilst at the mesosystem level this was evident in the collaboration with family and community to enhance learning and development. Perisamy's thesis (2017) focused on strategic leadership of 6 case sites in their response to the Quality Rating Scale for preschools. The study found that transformational dimensions of leadership were closely linked to strategic leadership. The findings also suggested that, in shaping strategies, leaders in decentralised settings were influenced by environmental conditions that affected the management of each centre, whereas those from centralised settings were influenced by decisions from senior management.

6. South Africa – searching leadership competence for ECE

In South Africa, the term 'early childhood development' is commonly used to refer to the procedures under which children from birth to nine grow and flourish emotionally, morally, socially, physically and spiritually (Department of Education, 2001). In South Africa, ECE is a priority that is being supported by legislation, national policies and strategies. Three government departments lead the ECE sector: the Department of Health, the Department of Education and the Department of Social Development. They are responsible for monitoring and supporting compliance with Health, Curriculum and Social issues respectively. ECE in the country can be divided into three categories. The community centres (independent, municipality and non-governmental organisations) which cater for children from birth to 4 years, the school-based centres (public schools) catering for pre- Grade R (5-year-old) and Grade R (6-year-old) learners and the Grade 1 to 3 (7–9-year-old) learners in the Foundation Phase. This discussion focuses on the ECE sector accommodating children from birth to Grade R, which is in line with how ECE is understood internationally. At the school level, the governing bodies are responsible for governance and employment issues for ECE teachers. The learner teacher ratio is defined as two teachers per group, with the group size steadily increasing from six for infants (birth to 15 months) to 20-24 for kindergarteners (6-year-olds). At the school level, the governing bodies are responsible for governance and employment issues for ECE teachers.

The National Development Agency (2016) emphasises that it is important for the ECE sector to be led by skilled and efficient leaders who understand their roles and responsibilities, that is, leaders who have a thorough knowledge of ECE practice. The majority of ECE leaders (South Africa) still seem to be lacking in skills and knowledge of leading the ECE centres because of their lack of professional training (see e.g. Atmore, 2013). Also, the research on ECE leadership in South Africa does not yet reflect the importance given to the topic in policy documents. There have been several empirical studies on ECE in South Africa, but few studies have focused specifically in leadership. However, some studies do hint about aspects of leadership.

Atmore (2013) found that, for community-based ECE centres, proper administrative and management systems are lacking. This is in line with the finding that managers' lack of skills can be an obstacle in implementing innovative practices in ECE centres (Fourie & Une, 2016). Muswala (2014), in turn, revealed that ECE principals are faced with a number of challenges such as burglary and poor communication coupled with inadequate subsidies often paid late by the Department of Social Development, poor salaries and infrastructure, lack of fundraising skills and trained teachers as well as inadequate funds, food, educational equipment, blankets and mattresses for children. Furthermore, Modise's (2017) results show that supervision of grade R practitioners by school management teams and heads of department was not regularly and effectively carried out because of their lack of skills, Grade R knowledge, and practices.

Despite these difficulties, school governing bodies and principals play a critical role in the effectiveness of ECE centres. The roles for the governing bodies were specified as governance, accountability, ensuring financial stability, decision making and administration, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and conflict resolution. Even though practitioners are key figures in constructing a creative environment, they do need support from their managers. According to Atmore (2013) and Fourie (2013), there is a shortage of well-trained teachers for early childhood development in South Africa. Kadji-Beltran, Zachariou and Stevenson (2013) indicate that leadership indirectly affects learners' outcomes through creating the cultural and structural conditions for meaningful and effective teaching and learning to take place.

The research presented here certainly supports the National Development Agency's (2016) notion that the ECE field should be served by competent and knowledgeable people, and that ECE services necessitate strong leaders who understand their roles and responsibilities in such a way that they are able to offer supportive teaching, learning and care. However, further research is called for to address the various practical and theoretical challenges. This is suggested also by Fasoli, Scrivens & Woodrow (2007) who argue that, since the context of ECE leadership is continually changing, a relook into the field of ECE leadership

is in order, especially in the previously disadvantaged communities and public schools.

7. The United States – view from hierarchy towards educational leadership

Traditionally, ECE in the USA is considered to be the responsibility of families; therefore, ECE is not part of public education. Recently, however, the growing awareness of the benefits of high quality ECE (see e.g. Schweinhart et al., 2005; Campbell et al., 2008) has been generating more political support for the increased funding of ECE (Barnett et al., 2008). Several types of institutions provide ECE. When parents are at work, the child from birth to age 3-4 can be enrolled in childcare centres or family childcare centres. In addition, community organisations, parent cooperatives and faith-based groups operate preschools which serve children aged 3-4. Both childcare and preschools are privately funded and subsidised for families at-risk. Public pre-kindergartens and federally funded Head Start programs for families whose income is below the official poverty level (Head Start, n.d.), offer affordable options for ECE. Some states, for example, Florida, offer universal voluntary prekindergarten for all four-year olds regardless of the family income level. At the age of five, children enter kindergarten, which is part of the public education system and free of charge in most states. In general, preschool participation rate is growing; however, the family income level predicts whether a child is enrolled in preschool or not (Barnett & Yarosz, 2007). The National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC) is the largest national organisation that strives to ensure high quality early childhood programs through determining standards for early learning and education, and standards for professionals as well. For example, to meet the NAEYC accreditation requirements for teacher- child ratio, a 1:8 ratio is required in a classroom of 16 four-year-olds. Furthermore, NAEYC highlights that investment in ECE should be a national priority.

The proper contextualization of educational leadership and consequently, of ECE leadership in the United States, is vital in order to understand its emergent theories and practices. Educational leadership studies in the United States were shaped by leadership approaches proposed in business administration theories, arising out of management studies generated in the late 19th century and early 20th century, by the introduction of new disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, and political science (Jacobson & Cypres, 2012). The concept of leadership has been examined mainly in the humanities and social sciences, with diverse theoretical approaches that propose a two-way relationship between a leader and followers to achieve specific goals (Northouse, 2016). According to this approach, schools are described as learning organisations with structures,

hierarchies, culture, power relations, and politics that characterize bureaucratic organisations (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

The traditional corporate views of leadership and those applied in ECE settings are different (Kagan & Hallmark, 2001; Mujis, Aubrey, Harris & Briggs, 2004). Specifically, business-based leadership is focused on hierarchy, large, product-oriented organisations driven by a competitive ethos, and usually led by male figures. On the other hand, leadership in ECE must be adapted to smaller, informal, people-oriented organisations, commonly led by women requiring collaboration and shared leadership (Schein, 1985, 2004). Furthermore, Fullan (2005) asserted that an effective school leader is one whose actions positively affect student achievement. Also, educational organisations must seek a sustainable leadership model which understands and pursues change at every level and works in collaboration to ensure the system quality and long-lasting outcomes (Burns, 2016; Ferdig, 2007; Fullan, 2005). To address the specific characteristics of ECE settings, Abel, Talan, and Masterson (2017) built on an earlier work by Kagan and Bowman (1997) in developing the Whole Leadership conceptual framework, stressing the concept of shared leadership.

Research studies on leadership in ECE in the United States tend to be descriptive (Abel et al., 2017; Fleming & Love, 2003; Jacobson & Cypres, 2012; Kagan & Hallmark, 2001; LaRocc., Sopko, Bruns, & Gupta, 2014; Mujis et al., 2004; Muñoz, Boulton, Johnson, & Unal, 2015). Few studies employed quantitative non-experimental cross-sectional surveys (Bruns et al., 2017; Myers & Palmer, 2015). To examine how childcare centre directors made their centres visible and successful, Myers and Palmer (2015) collected data at 200 university campus-based childcare centres across the country. The findings indicated a need for a more holistic model to describe directors' responsibilities and their activities in promoting greater visibility, integration, and shared knowledge. Furthermore, Muñoz and colleagues (2015) proposed that leadership in ECE must go beyond everyday roles and routines and requires vision, support, and collaboration in the ECE team. In addition, recent research on ECE leadership, (e.g. LaRocco et al., 2014) proposed that ECE leaders need professional development programs with a focus on special education to acquire specific attitudes, skills, and knowledge to deal with their daily tasks. Furthermore, Bruns and colleagues (2017) identified three fundamental competencies for leaders in ECE and early intervention: effective leadership, professional learning, and shared responsibility.

In a study with 12 beginning classroom early childhood teachers, Armstrong, Kinney and Clayton (2009) found that teachers want to expand their leadership potential, despite the limited opportunities. They also pointed out that leadership opportunities emerge from the school's organisational structure and its norms, mainly in the relationship between teachers and principal. Therefore, effective leadership on various levels is key to promoting a supportive

environment for school staff and children's families that will ultimately benefit children's development. A possible future direction is the proposal (Carr, Johnson, & Corkwell, 2009) that the most effective model for early childhood is the principle-centred leadership (n.b. not principal-centred), which is grounded in humanistic, transformational, and value-based attributes (Bennis, 1993).

8. Discussion and Conclusions

The review of research presented above offers a fertile ground for a discussion of similarities and differences between the leadership research conducted in each of the 6 countries. Though a number of themes suggest themselves, we have limited our examination to a few of the more important. Firstly, a clear transnational trend can be seen to be running through the field of ECE in every country. That is, in each of the countries under review, the importance of ECE is being recognised at policy and societal levels. This shows that the importance of the early years is increasingly being recognized across the globe – a development undoubtedly influenced by studies (e.g. Heckman & Masterov, 2007) showing not only the importance, but also the cost-effectiveness of investing in ECE.

Although a similar national effort to improve the ECE sector is present at the policy level in each of the countries, significant differences arise as we move on to the level of research. In Finland and the USA, many studies have already been conducted on leadership in the context of ECE, while interest in the field is just emerging in Germany, South Africa, Singapore and Japan. Consequently, in the USA and Finland, conceptual frameworks have been established to guide research in the respective countries, whereas elsewhere, research does not yet have such a common ethos. Despite these differences, a shared limitation can also be identified. In each of the countries, though to a varying extent, the focus of the research has so far been on qualitative studies focusing on leaders' own understanding of leadership. Although there have been exceptions, a more systematic investigation of the actual practice and effects of leadership is certainly warranted.

Thirdly, interesting differences and similarities can be seen when the research on ECE leadership is put in the context of broader societal and educational perspectives. A particularly fruitful consideration is between the two major curricular traditions identified, for example by Autio (2014): To use the role of the teacher as an example, the Anglo-American approach sees the curriculum as a manual, the purpose of which is to minimize the possibility of error inherent in human action, thus defining the teacher as an optimizer of learning. The North European "bildung" tradition, on the other hand, considers the teacher to be an active agent, an intellectual who is as much responsible for the making of the curriculum as are the national agencies which publish it. (p.19) The role of a leader

can be conceived as being analogous to that of a teacher, and thus these perspectives can also be seen in ECE leadership research. The background in business management, as well as the various studies that connect effective leadership to student outcomes, are examples how the Anglo-American curriculum tradition shows through in leadership research in the USA. As a point of comparison, research in Finland, in which features of both curriculum traditions have guided curriculum development (Autio, 2014), the broader concept of core function has been developed and research has emphasized understanding instead of specific skills or outcomes.

Building on the differences revealed by the perspective of different curriculum traditions, it seems that an interesting interconnection between the different countries' leadership research arises in the concept of quality. Despite the differing understandings of the concept, quality is unanimously seen as an important goal. Furthermore, leadership is considered to be a key factor in ensuring high-quality ECE: quality in its various interpretations seems to play or have played an important role in motivating leadership research in each country. However, this observation points to a surprising follow-up: there does not seem to be a corresponding body of research on the relationship between leadership and quality, with research regarding this key question being limited to individual studies. In particular, it remains an open question whether leadership has an actual effect on quality and whether the different leadership models contribute differently to the quality of ECE. This calls for quantitative research designs capable of establishing cause-effect relationships as well as a more rigorous theoretical investigation of the concept of quality, due to the centrality of the issue.

Finally, in terms of contributions to international leadership research, a number of robust results can be pointed out. First, the research so far has identified the intertwined nature of leadership and institutional practices and structures. This connection is bidirectional in that the institutional context creates parameters for leadership and, in turn, the leader can guide and empower the practitioners by creating institutional practices and structures. Second, ECE leaders' multifaceted role and tasks have been revealed. In particular, the twin roles of managing the everyday functions of ECE centres and having an understanding of the core function of ECE have emerged across the research. Thirdly, the distributive nature of ECE leadership has been highlighted. This can be seen in the various studies, for example in Finland, the USA and Japan, calling for shared leadership and collaboration. In addition, the aim of building a learning community and the theme of teacher leadership point towards sharing the responsibility inherent in leadership. While this third result can be seen as showing a feature of leadership characteristic of ECE, it should be noted that it can also be seen to be part of a larger development in international leadership research, which has brought the concept of distributed leadership to the fore (see Gronn,

2000; Bolden, 2011). Thus, it is presently not entirely clear whether the importance of distributed leadership is something characteristic of ECE institutions and leaders, or merely a reflection of a theoretical fashion of our time. Further research into the issue of quality, outlined above, might shed some light on this question as well.

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The TALIS Starting Strong Survey: implications for the leadership discourse in early childhood education and care

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Abstract

Leadership of early childhood education and care settings is a central theme of the new OECD international survey on ECEC staff, the TALIS Starting Strong Survey 2018. Nine countries are participating in the survey that collects data on early childhood staff and centre leaders' daily work and practices, including workplace issues, centre management and leadership. Insight is provided into how the concept of leadership is theoretically and analytically framed in the survey and what data on centre management and leadership is collected. The contribution concludes with a discussion of the potential of the survey to empirically inform and enrich the ECEC leadership discourse. As the survey's findings will not be available until autumn 2019, no data are included at this time.

German Abstract

Die Rolle der Leitung in der Frühkindlichen Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung ist ein zentraler Aspekt der erstmalig durchgeführten internationalen OECD-Fachkräftebefragung (TALIS Starting Strong Survey) 2018. Insgesamt nehmen neun Länder an der Studie teil, die Angaben zur täglichen Arbeit und Praxis von Fach- und Leitungskräften erhebt, darunter zu Aspekten wie Arbeitsbelastung, Einrichtungsmanagement und -leitung. Es wird gezeigt wie die Rolle und das Konzept der Leitung theoretisch und analytisch in die Studie eingebettet ist und welche Daten bezüglich Einrichtungsmanagement und -leitung erhoben werden. Der Beitrag schließt mit einer Diskussion zum Potential der Studie, den Diskurs zur Rolle der Leitung innerhalb der Frühkindlichen Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung empirisch voranzubringen und zu bereichern. Ergebnisse der Studie liegen nicht vor Herbst 2019 vor und konnten daher nicht in den Beitrag einfließen.

Finnish Abstract

Johtajuus varhaiskasvatusympäristöissä on keskeinen teema uudessa OECD:n kansainvälisessä varhaiskasvatuksen henkilöstöä koskevassa kyselyssä "TALIS Starting Strong Survey 2018". Kyselyyn osallistui yhdeksän maata. Kyselyssä kerättiin tietoa varhaiskasvatuksen henkilöstön ja johtajien päivittäisestä työstä ja toimintakäytännöistä sisältäen työpaikkaa koskevia asioita, päiväkodin hallinnointikäytäntöjä ja johtamista. Kyselyn esittelyssä avataan johtamisen käsite ja osoitetaan kuinka se on rakentunut teoreettisesti ja analyyttisesti. Kyselyn esittely paljastaa myös sen, mitä

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219920

päiväkodin johtamiseen liittyvää tietoa on kerätty. Tutkimuksen kontribuutio empiiristen tulosten pohjalta on varhaiskasvatuksen johtajuuskeskustelun rikastaminen. Koska tutkimuksen tulokset eivät ole käytettävissä ennen syksyä 2019, mitään empiirisiä tuloksia ei tässä artikkelissa julkaista.

Introduction

Early childhood education has been a high priority on the agenda of international organisations such as the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD), *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation* (UNESCO) and the *World Bank*, and of national and local policy makers for some time now (Mahon, 2016). In many countries early childhood education and care (ECEC) has been extended to include younger children and has become universal for older children during the one or two years before they start school (four to five year olds) in most countries in the OECD area. Consequently, public resources allocated to ECEC have been increased in many countries and the number and size of settings that provide ECEC have grown significantly in those countries that have expanded ECEC over the last two decades (OECD, 2017, tables C2.1, C2.3; OECD, 2012, table C2.2). Moreover, there is not only a demand for more places in ECEC but also a growing call for high quality ECEC (e.g. OECD, 2018).

The expansion of ECEC in many countries is associated with larger ECEC centres that are attended by more children and/or children from a wider age range (e.g. 0-6) and have more staff – not only staff who work pedagogically with children but also staff who are responsible for other tasks (administration, cooking and cleaning, etc.) (e.g. for Germany Autorengruppe Fachkräftebarometer, 2017, pp. 68ff.; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2010, T4 and 2017, T6 for Germany). Simultaneously, the expectations of different stakeholders pertaining to ECEC centres and their pedagogical staff have risen and become more diversified (including expectations regarding inclusion, education, learning and language development, etc.) (Barnett & Nores, 2018, cf. Klinkhammer & Riedel, 2018 for Germany; Flormælen & Moen, 2015 for Norway; Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015 for Finland).

As a consequence of these new developments – larger centres with more diverse teams and rising expectations with regard to children's well-being, learning and development – ECEC leadership has become more complex and demanding, and thus more and more relevant in some countries. Hence, the demands on centre management and pedagogical leadership have likewise increased. Today, being an ECEC centre leader is seen as a regular and independent profession (e.g. Hujala, Waniganayake & Rodd, 2013, p. 14).

The tasks of ECEC centre leaders have broadened and leaders' roles have become more diversified (Whitebook et al., 2012). For example, today, running an ECEC centre not only involves managing the team but also requires leaders to adopt a more outward style of leadership, both as a consequence of and in order to enable closer cooperation with other stakeholders, such as providers, local schools, parents and guardians, health-related institutions, family or social services, local authorities or other ECEC centres (cf. Flormælen & Moen, 2015; Hujala, Waniganayake & Rodd, 2013, p. 14).

This, in turn, requires leaders to possess more knowledge and competences, which they can acquire during initial education, on-the-job training and/or continuous professional development. Training duration, content and modules vary from country to country and/or from region to region. They may include leadership, administrative, human resources, financial and team management training components. A detailed overview of the different requirements for staff and leader positions in 30 European countries can be accessed on the webpage of the project *SEEPRO-R* about workforce profiles (Oberhuemer & Schreyer, 2018). Moreover, in many countries there are still no specific requirements regarding the qualifications of ECEC centre leaders. It is often the case that ECEC centre leaders take up this position without any dedicated training. They qualify on the basis of their long-term working experience as pedagogues in ECEC (Oberhuemer & Schreyer, 2018; Hujala, Waniganayake & Rodd, 2013, p. 14). For example, in Germany fewer than one in five leaders has a relevant degree at college or university level (Lange, 2017).

Often, leaders also work with children and do not always have (contractually) assigned time for centre leadership tasks. Therefore, they cannot be regarded as full-time centre leaders. In addition, this leads to a lack of sole responsibility for leadership tasks which conflicts with the growing demand for functional differentiation (e.g. Hujala & Eskelinen, 2013). Functional differentiation in this context means that, for example, in (larger) centres there is a higher demand for leadership tasks related to human resources, financial management or administration (e.g. Strehmel & Ulber, 2014, p. 40).

Given these above-mentioned recent developments, ECEC leadership has been prioritised by many governments in ECEC policy. The quality framework for early childhood education and care recently adopted by the European Commission also highlights the key importance of strong and professional leadership in providing good quality early childhood education and care for all children (European Commission, 2018). In the area of scientific research, leadership in ECEC is a growing field of research. However, many research projects on ECEC leadership are based on small-scale research and are only available for specific countries or regions, such as Australia, Finland, Germany or Norway. Although there is already some international cooperation between researchers in the field

of ECEC, notably in the *International Leadership Research Forum in Early Childhood* (ILRF-EC), in some countries this topic is much more the focus of attention than in others.

Only limited small-scale comparative international data are available on who ECEC centres leaders are and on the characteristics and consequences of (effective) ECEC leadership (Waniganayake, Rodd & Gibbs, 2015; Hujala, Waniganayake & Rodd, 2013). The *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS) is the first large-scale survey in nine countries that investigates ECEC leaders' professional background, what they do and what they think about in an international comparative perspective. This large-scale survey has the potential to enrich the national and international discourse on ECEC leadership with insights on how leaders manage their ECEC centres and the challenges they face. It is worth noting that this survey, along with its database and results, is an opportunity to gather detailed information about ECEC practices and leadership aspects in participating countries. This also includes countries where, up to now, very few studies in English had been accessible. The next section presents the background to the *TALIS Starting Strong Survey*.

The TALIS Starting Strong Survey

The *TALIS Starting Strong Survey* is a new international large-scale survey developed under the coordination of the OECD in the field of early childhood education and care. Designed as a replicative survey, it collected self-reported data from pedagogical staff and ECEC centre leaders for the first time in 2018. Pedagogical staff and leaders of ECEC centres were asked about a wide range of topics: initial qualifications, background and professional development activities, working conditions and job satisfaction, pedagogical practices and beliefs, the learning environment and the climate in their ECEC centre as well as centre management practices and pedagogical leadership. In the case of the last two areas, which are the focus of this article, the survey includes questions related to beliefs about pedagogical leadership, budget constraints, centre evaluation, centre staff resources and staff shortage, centre management, distributed leadership, staff appraisal and feedback, distribution of tasks, regulatory constraints, resources for and planning of professional staff development, pedagogical leadership practices and information on the time spent on different aspects of centre leadership. The third section will take a closer look at these aspects, too.

The target population of the survey is staff working in the field of early childhood education and care. The survey is divided into two studies, the ISCED[1] level 0.2 study, targeting staff in ECEC working pedagogically with children aged three to five or six and the ISCED level 0.1 study, targeting staff working pedagogically with children under the age of three.

The first *TALIS Starting Strong Survey 2018* was conducted in nine participating countries from Asia, Europe and South America, namely in Chile, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Norway and Turkey. Denmark, Germany, Israel and Norway were also implementing the ISCED level 0.1 study which targets staff in settings for children under the age of three.

Via two-stage sampling, first, a sample of ECEC centres was drawn and then up to eight staff members[2] were asked to complete the questionnaire about their work. The position held by the staff member was not important; the only criterion was that he or she works in the centre on a regular basis in a pedagogical manner with the respective age group. He or she was deemed to be a member of the pedagogical staff of the ECEC centre irrespectively of whether the person was employed by the provider of the centre directly or not and independently of their educational or professional qualifications. In addition, one person responsible for the centre leadership had to be named. The *TALIS Starting Strong Survey* considered the ECEC centre leader to be the person with the greatest responsibility for administrative, managerial and/or pedagogical leadership within the ECEC centre. In most ECEC centres this was the official ECEC centre leader. If the centre had a leadership team, only one of the team members was asked to complete the leader questionnaire.

As data collection has not been completed in all participating countries, final sample sizes are not yet available. For Germany, data from 520 ECEC centres are available with 273 completed questionnaires from ECEC centre leaders for the ISCED level 0.1 study and 247 leader questionnaires from the ISCED level 0.2 study. The total number of participating staff is approximately 3000.

Before looking at the survey's approach to ECEC leadership and the contents of the leaders' questionnaire, the development of the *TALIS Starting Strong Survey* is described briefly in the next section.

1 The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) classifies education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields. ISCED level 0 refers to early childhood programmes that have an intentional education component. ISCED level 0.1 refers to early childhood educational development targeted at younger children, typically aged 0 to 2 years. ISCED level 0.2 is pre-primary education targeted at children from the age of 3 years to the start of primary education.

2 Eight staff members were randomly selected to complete the staff questionnaire. If there were fewer than eight staff members in a centre, all staff members were selected.

The *OECD ECEC Network*, founded in 2007, was involved in the development of the *TALIS Starting Strong Survey*. An international consortium led by the *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement* (IEA) in cooperation with *RAND Europe* and *Statistics Canada* was commissioned in 2016 to operationalise the development and implementation of the survey internationally. The questionnaires for ECEC staff and centre leaders were developed by a Questionnaire Expert Group (QEG) which is made up of experts on questionnaire development, ECEC experts, experts responsible for the alignment with TALIS[3] as well as staff members from the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills responsible for policy goals and priorities oversight. National partners of participating countries contributed to the survey development by means of various forms of inputs and feedback at different stages of survey development and were responsible for implementing the survey at the country level.

The international questionnaires were prepared in English and translated into each country's national language(s) under the responsibility of the national partners. Countries underwent a rigid verification process in order to keep the degree of divergence to a minimum with a view to ensuring international comparability. However, the translation of complex concepts into different languages and the requirement to adhere very closely to the international version may challenge the relevance and the fit of questions in what are, in some cases, very distinct national ECEC contexts and finally the validity of the data collected. Different pre-tests and triangulation methods should help to ensure the relevance and validity of the international questionnaires. This includes the piloting of the draft questionnaires of the *TALIS Starting Strong Survey* that took place in autumn 2016 and the field trial that was conducted in spring 2017.

The main study was conducted in 2018 and analysis and reporting are planned for 2019 and 2020. The intention is to repeat the survey every six years. This will allow comparisons over time for countries participating in more than one cycle, and also permit new countries to join the survey.

The topic of leadership in the TALIS Starting Strong Survey

As has already been pointed out in the introduction, the demand for strong ECEC leadership has been and still is growing due to the changing structural features of ECEC centres and the rising expectations pertaining to ECEC centres with regard to children's well-being, learning and development in many countries. Accordingly, the *TALIS Starting Strong Survey* considers effective leader-

3 The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) is an established survey which asks school leaders and teachers about the working conditions and learning environments at their schools, going into the third survey cycle with 48 participating countries/economies in 2018.

ship to be a crucial contributory factor to ECEC quality, the many facets of which should be investigated. From a theoretical point of view, leadership can be seen as an indirect quality factor as leadership can have an important impact on how staff interacts with children or children interact among themselves. The leader or leader team plays a crucial role in facilitating successful teamwork, which is a critical contributory factor to the quality of services, provided for children. Moreover, leadership is an important aspect which can increase staff motivation, organisational learning and knowledge development. This, in turn, can have a positive effect on children's learning and well-being environments (Vannebo & Gotvassli, 2014). Leaders play a crucial role in creating favourable working environments for staff and, both indirectly and directly, in contributing to favourable learning environments for children. Although leadership, specifically the presence of a leader, is not generally considered to be an element of structural quality (e.g. staff-child ratio, group size or staff qualification) but more as part of contextual, organisational or management quality, this assumption follows the common understanding of the relationship between structural quality and process quality which refers to children's daily experiences within the centre and, therefore, encompasses staff-child interactions, too.

The conceptual framework of the *TALIS Starting Strong Survey* makes reference to various theoretical models in the field of leadership which constitute the theoretical basis of the research foci and data analysis approach of the survey. Three forms of leadership are differentiated and will be analysed including their relationship with each other and combined with other factors: pedagogical leadership, administrative leadership and distributed leadership (Sim, Bélanger, Stancel-Piątak & Karoly, 2019).

For example in the case of pedagogical leadership, the framework highlights the importance of continuous learning, knowledge development and organisational change in ECEC centres and ascribes a crucial role to the leader in this context (Siraj-Blatchford & Hallet, 2014; Hallet, 2013; Andrews, 2009; Kagan & Hallmark, 2001). Administrative leadership is considered to be an equally important element of ECEC quality as it affects the availability of resources and how they are spent, for instance, whether resources are spent on the professional development of staff, the hiring of staff, buildings and equipment, salaries, and so on (Wall, Litjens & Taguma, 2015). The survey will also provide information about leaders' participation in professional development and whether they need further professional development for different themes and topics. These data are particular interesting in light of the fact that existing research indicates that leaders feel they are well prepared for tasks related to pedagogical leadership but not for administrative roles, such as financial management (Muijs, Aubrey, Harris, & Briggs, 2004; Hayden, 1997).

One element of administrative leadership the frameworks touches on is managerial leadership. This refers to responsibilities and tasks related to funding and resource management. Another aspect of administrative leadership is the organisation of the staff's activities and cooperation within the centre (Sim et al., 2019, p. 54).

Distributed leadership is one approach to leadership but, as is highlighted in the conceptual framework, it has not been systematically implemented in many ECEC systems. Although in different systems, particularly in Anglo-American countries, distributed leadership is already well established and research discourse has included distributed leadership for at least a decade (or even moves on to new models of leadership, e.g. joint leadership (Fonsén, Akselin & Aronen, 2015)), the conceptual framework considers it to be a relatively new approach to leadership compared to other, more traditional models (Sim et al., 2019, p. 54). According to this, a central feature of distributed leadership is that there are multiple leaders including those with no formal leadership positions. Furthermore, a distributed leadership style is non-hierarchical and is characterised by flexibility and responsiveness (McDowall Clark & Murray, 2012, p. 12). Decisions are, therefore, often taken jointly by the team and involve all actors concerned, including team members. Recent research suggests that there is an important link between a distributed leadership style and pedagogical leadership. It points out that traditional leaders working alone are ineffective when it comes to pedagogical leadership (Heikka, 2014; Heikka, Waniganayake & Hujala, 2012; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011).

The key research questions of the *TALIS Starting Strong Survey* are, therefore, designed to further investigate these different dimensions of leadership and how they relate to each other, specifically how do leader's beliefs relate to reported leadership practices? How do different aspects of leadership relate to various other structural and process quality aspects within ECEC centres, such as the learning environment, the centre climate, the job satisfaction of staff and leaders, etc.? It is also worth noting that an analysis of leaders' characteristics (e.g. qualifications, work experience and professional background, etc.) will provide interesting and, for the first time, internationally comparative results based on a large-scale quantitative study of ECEC centres and their staff.

First impressions of leadership styles have already been gained in the recruitment phase. During the conduct of the study in Germany where the national study centre contacted a large share of sampled centres personally by phone, it already became clear that leaders differ quite markedly in their leadership styles across ECEC centres in that country. Some leaders immediately referred to the centre's provider who decides about the participation in the survey. Others turned to their team members, because they wanted to make a joint decision about their participation, while other leaders decided immediately and with-

out consulting their team. Moreover, a high share of centre leaders could not be reached at all by phone despite several attempts to call them. It is assumed that this may be due to the fact that many of these leaders do not officially have contractually fixed time for leadership tasks and that they are involved primarily in pedagogical work with children. It is worth mentioning at this point that in Germany around one in eight ECEC centres did not formally have a centre leader in 2016 (Autorengruppe Fachkräftebarometer, 2017, p. 92). The shortage of time for leadership responsibilities which includes tasks like reading the information about the study, informing the team and completing the questionnaire in the event of a decision in favour of survey participation, was the main reason why participation was refused in personal contacts (the reasons given for the aforementioned shortage of time were the lack of exempted time for leadership, staff shortage, long-term illnesses, etc.). Only a small number of centres was not interested at all in the study or refused to participate for other reasons. This leads to the dilemma that centres working under the least favourable conditions and high levels of stress are less likely to participate and are therefore unable to report their problems. The reactions of centre leaders in Germany show that in their everyday routine many of them do not have enough time for leadership tasks. Moreover, they assume that their staff do not have enough time either for tasks like participating in the study and suffer from a high level of perceived stress. Similar findings have already been reported from several research studies on ECEC leadership in Germany (Nentwig-Gesemann, Nicoloai & Köhler, 2016; Schreyer, Krause, Brandl, & Nicko, 2014; Viernickel, Nentwig-Gesemann, Nicolai, Schwarz, & Zenker, 2013).

The following examples of survey questions and items illustrate how leadership is measured in the survey. For example, the *TALIS Starting Strong Survey 2018* asks the participating leaders to indicate the average percentage of time they had spent during the previous year on different tasks, ranging from time spent on administrative leadership tasks, to tasks related to pedagogical leadership, interactions with children, and interactions with parents or guardians and other tasks. One assumption that can be explored in this context is that leaders construct their daily routines differently, for example in line with their educational background.

The survey also collects information about who is responsible (i.e. plays an active role in decision-making processes) for different tasks in ECEC, including hiring or suspending staff, determining salaries, deciding on budget allocations, establishing monitoring plans for children's development, well-being and learning, choosing which materials are used or which activities are on offer. The response options the ECEC leaders can choose from include: the centre leader and/or staff members, the ECEC governing board, local/regional or national authorities. These items try to grasp and conceptualise the different organisational

structures in which leadership is embedded and illustrate different ways of engaging in centre management and distributed leadership.

Pedagogical leadership in particular is assessed inter alia by asking how frequently different activities took place within the participating ECEC centres in the previous year (range from never/less than monthly/monthly/weekly to daily). Here some specific items are included, e.g. "I collaborated with ECEC staff to improve how children play together" and "I took actions to ensure that ECEC staff take responsibility for improving their skills in working with children" or "I worked on developing a vision for this ECEC centre". Items like these can allow interpretations of the different levels of leaders' involvement when it comes to pedagogical work/leadership and the degree to which staff is involved in pedagogical leadership decisions.

Since centre leaders not only face growing expectations from different stakeholders but also have to handle various challenges, restrictions and barriers, leaders are asked about what limits their effectiveness as an ECEC centre leader. In the questionnaire they indicate how aspects like "inadequate budget and resources", "government regulation and policy", "ECEC staff shortage" or "lack of opportunities and support for my own professional development" limit their capacity to effectively lead their ECEC centre. It will be of vital importance (e.g. for policy makers) to identify which structural components can be adjusted to support ECEC leaders in their work to ensure high(er) quality.

Not only the leader but also the staff questionnaires contain questions and items related to ECEC leadership. What is particularly interesting is the question to staff as to what, in their view, best describes the leadership of their centre and how satisfied they are with the centre leader(ship). Moreover, they report on appraisal and feedback from the leader.

Implications for the Leadership Discourse in ECEC

The *TALIS Starting Strong Survey 2018* is an international large-scale survey of ECEC centres. It will provide comparative information on early childhood staff and centre leaders' daily work and practices across nine countries. This also includes data on the pedagogical and administrative leadership of ECEC centres.

The survey will provide valuable descriptive information about who are the leaders of ECEC centres in the participating countries, their professional background and professional development, how they spend their time, how they perceive their role, what barriers they are confronted with and what support they receive from different stakeholders, such as their employer or provider, the community, but also the parents and the team.

The collected data can also be used to investigate relationships between different aspects of leadership and personal or centre characteristics, the centre cli-

mate and the children's learning environment. For example, the survey can indicate how different leadership styles or leader types and profiles relate to personal characteristics, such as gender and age. On the centre level one could for example analyse the correlation between distributed leadership and the centre's location in a more rural or urban area, its size or provider. How the centre climate or which kind of leadership relates positively to favourable learning environments for children could be another research question on leadership aspects. This is how the survey will increase the knowledge base on ECEC leaders and ECEC leadership. The results will reinforce existing findings about the importance of leadership for ECEC centres (something that has already been pointed out for school education) or suggest other important indicators for a positive working climate for staff or positive learning environments for children. Moreover, the limits of and barriers to leadership can be identified since the ECEC sector is continuing to grow and is still subject to constant change with regard to different aspects such as collaboration with other stakeholders, changing expectations and other requirements. It is intended to repeat the survey every six years which would provide trend time data that would allow the tracking of changes in the characteristics of ECEC leadership over time.

Finally, the linkage of the *TALIS Starting Strong Survey* to regular TALIS, the OECD Teacher Survey, notably the survey on primary teachers, is an opportunity to compare and assess, for instance working conditions and challenges of ECEC compared to those of primary school teachers. These comparisons will, however, also highlight the particular organisational and pedagogical characteristics and requirements – including strengths and weaknesses – the ECEC sector holds. When interpreting the data collected in the first *TALIS Starting Strong Survey* some limitations do, of course, have to be kept in mind since the results are based on self-reported data including retrospective reporting. High turnover rates, too, among centre leaders and staff cannot be ignored when it comes to data interpretation. The same applies to challenges with regard to limited comparability between different countries with different ECEC systems, different governmental structures and different welfare systems.

The first results will be available in October 2019. The OECD will publish two international reports in 2019 and 2020 covering different aspects of leadership and with a detailed analysis in relation to centre management and its importance for various quality aspects. It is also worth noting that the international database will be made available free of charge online when the first results are published in October 2019. This will allow all interested researchers to carry out their own analysis.

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Epilogue

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This third research monograph, auspiced by the ILRF-ec, presents a collection of specialised primary research studies about some of the current challenges for leadership in early childhood education (ECE) across countries from five continents. The monograph offers the international ECE community access to and information about some current foci of international research interest and to signpost trends in and possibilities for researching vital aspects of professional leadership in ECE.

The assembled studies elucidate some of the most recent research findings and their theoretical underpinnings by an international group of early-career, established and leading researchers. They showcase the scholarship of the contributing authors, reveal fresh perspectives, offer discerning insights, pose challenging possibilities for future research, and explicate some implications for advancing theory and practice. This monograph is therefore a valuable resource for researchers as well as a useful source of support for practitioners who wish to broaden their professional perspective, knowledge and expertise.

The collected research studies identify some of the key challenges for leadership in the structurally-complicated organisational systems in which ECE is delivered around the world. Four themes that are fundamental to the delivery of quality ECE provision appear throughout the research, namely leadership preparation and training, enacting and developing leadership in ECE settings, governance, and international comparisons.

The contributors' research spotlight one or more of these themes, some of which share similar features. While some of the issues raised in the research studies pertain to specific contexts, many are universal, and consequently relevant across the global ECE sector as well in particular ECE communities.

The following reflections revolve around aspects of the key themes identified in the international research studies included in this monograph.

Reflections about leadership preparation and development in ECE

As Gibbs, Press and Wong so cogently point out in their chapter 12, there are '… many challenges in assuming and performing leadership in the complex ECE milieu of people, policy and practice'. Unfortunately, as many of the international findings in this monograph evidence, too many early childhood practitioners continue to assume leadership roles, responsibilities and positions without ad-

https://doi.org/10.3224/8474219921

equate preparation, support and individualised plans for ongoing professional development. Such deficiencies in preparation and training can result in poor, perhaps even unethical practice, which is unacceptable when working with potentially vulnerable populations such as young children and families. Furthermore, it seems that some under or ill-prepared leaders also are expected to act as professional mentors for colleagues, without themselves having had any standardised or mandatory preparation and training for this specialised leadership function.

Fortunately, in relation to leadership preparation and training, a range of innovative approaches for addressing such identified shortcomings are proposed by some researchers. For example, it appears that transforming ECE centres into 'learning organisations' helps to create a culture of knowledge-sharing, to establish systems of and generate conditions conducive to learning by adults and children. Furthermore, it seems that enriching the professional development of the ECE workforce by, for example, matching training design to the needs of trainees, to specific learning goals, targets and practice expectations, as well as to specific types of organisation and ECE provision, can give rise to more functional and usable learning. Likewise, 'shadowing' as a learning tool seems to produce beneficial effects for on-the-job and on-site leadership training, especially in terms of reflective and ethical practice. Similarly, joint leadership, as a shared or co-leadership strategy, may have the potential for two leaders to effectively fulfil the distinctive operational and pedagogical roles and responsibilities of leadership in one ECE setting. However, questions remain about the potential negative impact from an arbitrary division of roles and tasks on co-leaders' level of job satisfaction and performance. More importantly, the professional intuition of expert ECE practitioners may give rise to concerns about whether effective ECE leadership is in fact holistic and indivisible, that is, impossible to partition or separate into individual constituents.

Interestingly, empirical findings from related research question the efficacy of leaders' participation in training programmes that offer little or no opportunity or requirement to reflect about and apply new knowledge or skills and effect organisational and professional change. Given that the quality of early learning and education provision is the overarching priority for leadership in ECE, carefully designed training and learning opportunities for leadership preparation and development are crucial. Considerable evidence illustrates the critical link between the quality of leadership and the quality ECE provision (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007). Such findings have important implications for those responsible for designing and delivering professional development and training options for ECE leaders and practitioners, especially in times and in countries where budgetary constraints may impact on the availability of and accessibility to training possibilities.

While considerable research still is needed in the development and implementation of impactful strategies for and approaches to ECE leadership preparation and training, these researchers continue to analyse and evaluate a range of options that appear to offer potential for upskilling ECE leaders and practitioners who wish to practice leadership in today's inherently complex ECE settings.

Reflections about enacting and developing leadership in ECE settings

Many of the observations aired in relation to leadership preparation and development are equally relevant to the theme of enacting and developing leadership in ECE settings. However, the sub-text of many of the research studies centres around concerns about 'what distinguishes good leadership, what makes an effective leader and what learning opportunities transform ECE practitioners into skilled leaders of ECE contexts'.

Numerous theoretical paradigms are proposed as appropriate and relevant for informing various research questions and methodological considerations in the design, conduct and analysis of findings. It is clear from existing research, as well as these current studies, that no one, single theory, for example, distributed leadership, can adequately explain the organisational complexity of ECE settings, given the labyrinth of mandatory laws, policies, regulations and standards that influence the practice of leadership in context. In light of the well-documented limitations of some of the mainstream theoretical models for explaining leadership in ECE, it is encouraging to find that some of the researchers are adopting more unorthodox theoretical models, such as complexity leadership theory and complex adaptive systems theory, to elucidate the complexities of leading ECE settings.

One critical issue that is raised in a number of the research studies is that of how best to lead the operational and pedagogical cultures within individual ECE settings. It appears that, in some ECE settings, a dissonance exists between the administrative or operational demands of running accountable, socially-responsible and economically -sustainable ECE provision, and that of the professional challenge of pedagogy, specifically the principles, practice and professional work of teaching and how these affect learning. Specifically, the question arises as to whether it is possible for one person, who may or may not be professionally qualified in both areas, to competently fulfil these two very different aspects of today's increasingly demanding leadership roles and responsibilities. Alternatively, future research may reveal that the ability to lead ECE pedagogy is, by definition, an intrinsic attribute of genuine leadership in ECE contexts.

While research about the impact of joint and shared (as differentiated from distributed) leadership looks promising, there are obvious challenges and diffi-

culties for ECE practitioners who wish to truly and equitably share leadership roles and responsibilities between each other. In addition, the organisational complexity of ECE settings and an increasing movement towards the devolution of roles and responsibilities among team members means that leaders and practitioners inevitably are mutually responsible and accountable for ensuring the delivery of high quality ECE provision.

Some of the contributors pose very provocative questions for ECE theoreticians and researchers. Questions about whether leadership has been adequately conceptualised in ways that recognise the inherent complexity of ECE settings, or whether leadership exists at all in a particular ECE context appear ripe for future research. Such challenging questions invite the ECE international community to reflect upon and evaluate conventionally-accepted assumptions, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and values that currently underpin the prevailing theoretical explanations about leadership in ECE contexts.

Reflections about governance in ECE

During the past three decades, many countries have expanded their ECE service provision and have implemented more coherent and coordinated policies and structures for improving access, quality and equity, including Australia, Finland and Norway. However, some countries, for example Japan, are still in the process of reforming their ECE system. These processes of reform have usually included the adoption of different approaches to governing ECE systems, thereby affecting the roles and nexus between national government, local authorities, private and voluntary sectors and other stakeholders (e.g. professional bodies, early childhood practitioners and parents) in making key decisions about how the ECE system may better operate. As such, governance continues to be a critical influence on the nature of policies and national programming in ECE worldwide.

While some nations have been slower to recognise the social and economic value of funding high quality ECE provision, considerable evidence confirms that government investment in ECE is an investment in the future (Sylva et al, 2010, Yoshikawa et al, 2013). Leadership is a critical operationalisation strategy for implementing and ensuring compliance with government policies, plans and frameworks. Although ECE leaders are responsible and accountable for ensuring compliance, the crux of the issue is their ability to communicate, translate, consult, integrate and coordinate mandated regulations at the local level, in order to facilitate shared meaning and understanding and subsequent acceptance and adherence.

It is clear from many of the research studies presented in this monograph that the political architecture of different countries shapes and supports their ECE policies and structures, and underscore the importance of good govern-

ance in the delivery of high quality ECE services. However, some authors draw attention to the limitations of top-down approaches and the advantages of reciprocation, that is, where responsible authorities recognise the benefits of utilising grassroots professional knowledge and expertise to inform national policies for and programming of ECE services. Effective leaders of ECE settings can play a vital role in interpreting, translating and mediating government policies and legislation into professionally acceptably practice for ECE practitioners.

The studies presented in this monograph help raise professional consciousness about the critical role and impact that each country's strategic ECE policies and plans have for the delivery of high-quality early learning environments for young children.

Reflections about international comparisons of ECE leadership research and practice

One of the hallmarks of this monograph is that it includes research studies about leadership in ECE that identify differences within and across countries. As such, it offers a window into intra, inter and transnational research paradigms that are underpinned by different cultural ontological, epistemological, theoretical and methodological choices.

Researchers across the countries and continents represented in this monograph bring with them different philosophies and approaches to researching leadership in ECE contexts. Connecting and linking researchers from different countries in collaborative investigation has the potential to generate cross-national scrutiny that advances knowledge and understanding about how leadership is assumed and performed in different ECE communities.

A Maori saying that is often quoted in New Zealand government publications, including those about ECE (Ord et al, 2013, p.iii) illustrates the importance of this monograph's collaborative and collegial approach to research about leadership in ECE. 'Success is not the work of one, but the work of many'.

Given the increasing global interest in the role of leadership in the delivery of high quality ECE provision, this cross-national, multi-disciplinary and cognitively-diverse group of researchers has potential to advance creative and rigorous approaches for investigating the principles and practice that give rise to effective leadership in ECE.

Currently, the role of ECE in lifelong education and wellbeing attracts significant global interest, especially given its evidence-based social and economic benefits for nations (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013). However, for ECE provision to achieve the level of quality necessary to effect such positive outcomes, significant government investment is required. Interestingly, despite acknowledging its

positive effects, some nations appear reluctant to dedicate sufficient funding that will assure the espoused goal of high quality ECE provision is attainable.

One of the realities of ECE leadership around the world is that the landscape in which it is enacted is continually evolving. Effective, flexible leadership is acknowledged to be the keystone of high quality ECE provision. Leaders of the highest calibre are essential to deliver high quality ECE provision. Consequently, today's ECE leaders need to be able to respond and adapt quickly and effectively to changing policies, needs and challenges while simultaneously supporting their workforce to do the same. The findings from a number of research studies in this monograph indicate that today's leaders must be highly knowledgeable about and skilled in leading the intricate synthesis of the interwoven operational and pedagogical facets of ECE provision.

Much of the existing research about leadership in ECE can be described as 'eurocentric', in that it tends to focus on European, Nordic, Anglo and American contexts, and to interpret findings in terms of these cultures' values and experiences. One of the distinguishing features of this book is that it includes research studies about some international ECE contexts that currently can be more difficult to access, for example, Japan, South Africa and Tanzania. This monograph showcases some research findings from countries where research about leadership is still in infancy, for example, the complex system of ECE provision that is currently being reformed in Japan and some of the obstacles to enacting professional leadership in ECE in South Africa and Tanzania.

There is much to be learned about leadership in ECE contexts that differ from the standard 'eurocentric' perspective. ECE contexts across different countries may require different models of, approaches to and styles of leadership. As such, this publication makes a significant contribution in bringing to light understudied contexts, potentially lesser known scholarly potential and research findings, thereby expanding the accessible literature about leadership in ECE in countries that may not be well represented in the leadership literature. The idiosyncrasies of particular contexts, as well as any similarities and differences, can help inform leadership enactment across the diversity of ECE contexts operating in different parts of the world.

Conclusion

This research monograph is intended to stimulate professional learning, thinking, reflection and discourse about leadership in international contexts. It provides a forum for readers who are interested in ECE leadership to move forward from the more commonly available socio-cultural approaches to research design, theoretical perspectives and data interpretation. The findings and analyses incorporate many important messages and lessons that will encourage ECE researchers, leaders and practitioners to engage in fruitful reflection, provocative debate and well-informed discussion that ultimately advances innovative research, policy and practice concerning ECE leadership around the world. As with previous ILRF-ec publications, this monograph raises the international profile of leadership in ECE and illustrates the benefits that can arise from international collegiality, networking and collaboration in the development and application of new and original approaches to this critical endeavour.

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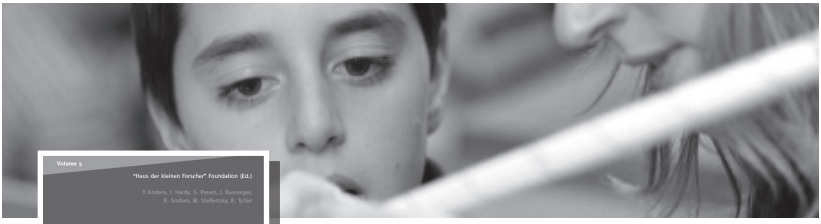

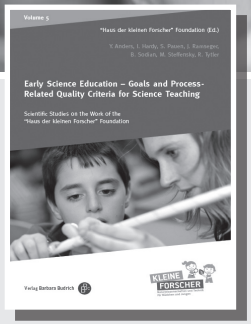

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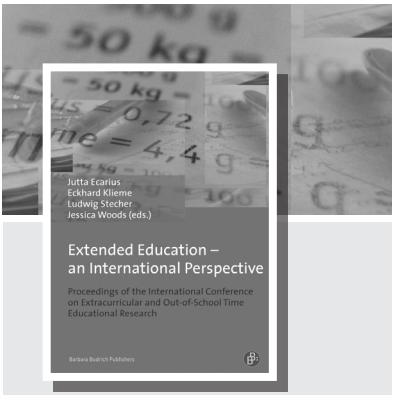

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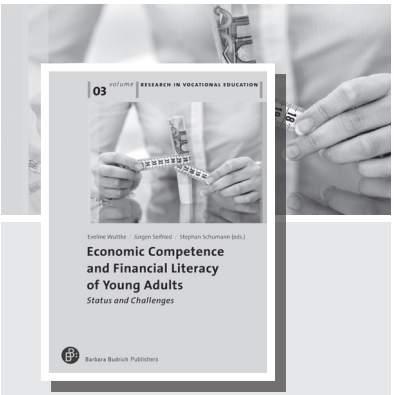

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