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Sustainable development for whom? A view from Oceania

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Sustainable development, like climate change, has become the new rave globally, regionally, and nationally. At the University of the South Pacific (USP), where I work, it is in your face when you open its website: "Excellence and sustainability in higher education". It is also assumed that most people in the world today know what the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are and most educators know about Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Many people who talk about, teach, and do things related to ESD know that ESD is not straightforward or as easy as they would like or had expected. In this presentation, I problematize the notion of ESD by first providing a brief background of what ESD means to the international community by discussing the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD 2004-14). I then examine selected Pacific notions of ESD and their implications for formal education.

Keywords: ESD; DESD 2004-14; Pacific pedagogies; Pacific research

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development, like climate change, has become the new rave globally, regionally, and nationally. At the University of the South Pacific (USP), where I work, it is in your face when you open the USP website: "Excellence and sustainability in higher education". It is also assumed that most people in the world today know about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that most educators know about Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Many people who talk about, teaching and doing things related to ESD know that ESD is not as straightforward or as easy as they would like or had expected. In this presentation, I problematize the notions of ESD by first providing a brief background of what ESD means to the international community by discussing the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD-2004-14). I then examine selected Pacific notions of ESD and their implications for formal education. But before I do so, I share some basic assumptions underlying this presentation, and that are common features of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS):

- All things are inter-related and there is no single reality; and because there are multiple realities we need to find out about these.
- Knowledge and value systems and, hence, appropriate behaviour are time and context-specific.
- Indigenous and local knowledge (i.e., traditional knowledge) ensures rigour, validity and reliability in the discourse on sustainable development.

- Indigenous worldviews provide alternative epistemological places and spaces for negotiating ESD, especially for Indigenous people.

UN DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (DESD 2004-14)

My involvement in ESD began in 2005 when I was asked to join a group of people from the Asia Pacific region in Bangkok to draft an ESD Framework for the region. Later, I was invited to join another group (of "experts") in Apia, Samoa, to draft a Pacific Framework for ESD. I was also a member of the UNESCO Global Monitoring Committee for the DESD and have attended a number of ESD-related symposiums and conferences. I have been teaching a postgraduate course on ESD at the USP since 2010 and have found many students grappling with what ESD concepts mean to them in the contexts of the communities and schools in which they work and/or live. So, we spend some time trying to unpack and understand what the international community means by SD and ESD, and what the students, as well as the people with whom they interact in various contexts, consider to be SD.

DESD 2004-14 came and went, and, like many international instruments and pronouncements about the Year of this or the Decade of that, not many people living in Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PIC&T) knew about it, despite the fact that, as mentioned earlier, there was a Pacific Strategy for ESD. At this stage, I would like to quote from an earlier conference presentation on ESD:

> *It is important not to see ESD as another school subject but mainstreamed into all subjects. Conceptual frameworks for incorporating ESD into the school curriculum need to be developed and adopted by curriculum planners and teacher educators. Different perceptions of ESD need to be taken on board by curriculum personnel as well as teachers who need to appreciate that ESD involves both content and pedagogies . . . finally current international (and regional) programs also need to be reoriented to address ESD. (Thaman, 2010, p. 8–9).*

A world conference to celebrate the end of DESD2004-14 was held in Nagoya, Japan, at the end of 2014 where most participants agreed on the four main outcomes of the Decade: i) capacity building and networking at the regional level; ii) adoption of a contextualized approach as a critical factor to success of ESD; iii) multi-institutional partnership approach linking universities, schools, civil society, and public sector; and, iv) importance of the presence of a national structure such as a National Committee for successful implementation of ESD.

The success stories from the Asia Pacific Region were mainly related to the Environment dimension of ESD, especially integrating climate change and environmental education into different levels of schooling, such as the Green Schools in Indonesia and Community Learning Centres in Vietnam. There were fewer initiatives related to the economic and social dimensions of ESD, although there were a few examples of attempts at green growth, youth initiatives to foster inter-ethnic understanding and peace, multicultural education, and some documentation of traditional knowledge.

As well as achievements, there were challenges in realizing the main goals and targets of ESD as identified by participants at the Congress. They included: i) the need for more political will, especially in strengthening relationships between development policies and education policies; ii) the need to more deeply institutionalize ESD into education

systems at all levels; iii) the need for more monitoring and evaluation research; iv) the need for more work to bridge gaps between schools and society; and, v) a need for more capacity building for teachers/educators.

Specific challenges relating to the Asia Pacific region may be worthy of repeating here. They include: i) the need to promote a comprehensive understanding and consensus around the nature of ESD; ii) developing a clear, generic definition of ESD; iii) conceptualizing the link among peace, ESD, and education for international understanding; iv) gaining a better balance among the various dimensions of ESD; v) developing evidence-based national policy frameworks for ESD; vi) integrating core concepts of ESD in the curriculum; and vii) systematic research and innovations in ESD (Shefller, 2014). As we proceed from ESD to SDGs, there are two important tasks for educators to note: the first relates to improving the tools that we use for ESD monitoring and evaluation, and the second is mainstreaming ESD in SDG goals, especially: climate change (13), biodiversity and ecosystems (15); ocean and seas (14); poverty alleviation (1); nutrition (2); health and well-being (3); gender equality and empowerment (5); economic growth (8/9).

Another challenge faced by those working in ESD related to the difficulty of finding appropriate indicators for success in ESD. The usual ones were quantifiable indicators including percentages of such things as curriculum subjects with ESD content; teachers who could speak and teach in their learners' mother tongue; time dedicated to activities taught by the community; and government budget devoted to ESD. Another was the development of an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework, such as HOPE (ACCU, 2009).

RATIONALE FOR DISCUSSING PACIFIC PERCEPTIONS OF ESD

Some of the issues raised above provide a background for the need to understand the diversity of perspectives among Pacific Island communities about whom ESD was meant to focus on and on which of the17 SDGs to focus right now. I use Pacific Islanders to refer to those whose ancestral homes happen to be in the region that UNESCO calls Oceania or Moana, the name that many indigenous Pacific people use to call their "place". The debate about the movie Moana notwithstanding, I must confess a preference for people of the Moana because of its invocation of the ocean in us, and what Hau'ofa (1993) referred to as a sea of islands, and people's interconnectedness in a physical as well as a metaphorical sense.

One of the positive aspects of DESD 2004-14, in my view, was a suggestion by UNESCO that the three pillars of Environment, Society, and Economy, should be underpinned by Culture, thus acknowledging culture and cultural diversity in how ESD is perceived. For my purposes, culture is defined as a way of life of a people which includes their knowledge and value systems, passed down through generations in context specific teaching and learning systems, using their languages. For most us who still live in our island homes, culture is lived, not debated. It provides the contexts for what we do and who we are; what we know and believe in; how we choose to live our lives, and what preoccupies our thinking.

Thinking
you say that you think
therefore you are
but thinking belongs
in the depths of the earth
we simply borrow
what we need to know

these islands the sky
the surrounding seas
the trees the birds
and all that are free
the misty rain
the surging river
pools by the blowholes
a hidden flower
have their own thinking

(Thaman, 1999:15)

Pacific perspectives have been influenced by exposure to mainly Anglo-American and European cultures and their languages, mainly through formal education and, more recently, through the mass media. In our conversations about ESD, we are reminded of the contexts in which education and development in Pacific contexts take place: people and their cultures. So, for me, in order for development to be sustainable for Pasifiki people, it has to be culturally inclusive for all. I know this is a huge ask in a region where education and development have been totally dominated by foreign cultures, their languages, knowledge systems, communication networks, and research paradigms, for over a century now. Consequently, any suggestion to shift from business as usual, looks almost impossible. However, I believe it is worth a try.

CONCEPTUALIZING ESD

So what is problematic about ESD and what is the future of the SDGs in the Pacific? For many years, the development community viewed our region and people as under-developed, so we worked to "improve" our lot by educating ourselves in the ways of the West. The process of "improving" has resulted in varying dimensions of cultural transformations and re-orienting ourselves and our cultures to fit a predominantly Western, scientific, and industrial worldview. Examples of ensuring that this was done included the banning of different aspects of Indigenous religious practices that did not reflect Christian beliefs and values, as well as the introduction of schools and the requirement of teaching and learning in foreign languages. Formal education in the Pacific today, from ECE to university, is largely undemocratic as it does not consider the cultures of learners and teachers. Today, participation and success in formal education has become the best indicator of the colonization of the indigenous mind, which continues through our unquestioning pursuit of so-called universal truths, such as literacy, numeracy, democracy, and sustainable development as measured through various global instruments with their concomitant goals and targets, such as MDGs, EFA, DESD, and, of course now, SDGs. In this regard, I am reminded of Fanon and Nandy's claim, quoted by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005, p. 28), that imperialism and colonialism brought complete

disorder to colonized peoples, disconnecting them from their histories, landscapes, languages, social relations, and their own way of thinking, feeling, and interacting with the world.

As most people know, the global development agenda emphasizes education for all and the expansion of market-driven products with its concomitant emphasis on science and new ICTs—mostly framed and dominated by Western-derived ideas, concepts, and practices. Today, many of us are being asked by foreign donors (now euphemistically called "development partners") as well as our own government officials, who are responsible for market-oriented development plans that largely mimic those of the development partners, to comply with their plans because this is what is required in order to obtain needed finance. These processes are evident in much of the implementation of many international instruments, including SDGs; processes that are mostly Western-imposed, materialistic and culturally ahistorical, with the only thing that is Pacific about it being the word "Pacific" in the project document. Consultants (including from the Pacific Islands), attend high level meetings in Paris and/or Geneva and decide on the process as well as the outputs of ESD. Consultants help governments to write proposals for development partners who are asked to fund the development projects. They help our governments implement the projects and they evaluate the projects in order to see whether the objectives of the projects have been achieved, with some often assuming technological superiority and, a few, cultural and personal superiority as well. When talking about ESD, I suggest that we need to assume that all cultures are important and equal but with different perspectives and worldviews and, in relation to Pacific cultures, that we recognize that they have highly evolved and integrated social systems and histories, some dating back thousands of years.

Today, I see the problems associated with framing ESD and SDGs as problematic not so much because they are often Western and one-sided or inappropriate, but because they are so pervasive. Despite attempts in the last two decades by Pacific scholars, such as those of the Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative (200-present), to theorize Pacific education as well as development, many continue to oversimplify our development needs and landscapes, resulting in further entrenching non-Pacific approaches and ideals, including the very indicators of sustainable development success. A good example relates to the methods that are used to assess development needs, such as the input-output model, which is largely mechanistic, materialistic, atheoretical, and assumes a linear notion of time that is past, present, and future. Yet, most Pacific Indigenous people know that Pacific Indigenous societies are multi-dimensional and flexible with equal emphases on the physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions and in which the past is the present as well as the future (Mahina, 2015). Sadly, all too often, one culture's sense of reality is put up as the reality against which all development in all cultures will be measured.

When my students, who come from different Pasifika communities, search, in their own languages, for an equivalent word or concept or approach in order to translate the three pillars of ESD, they often have difficulty. They are forced to indigenise the pillars using their own vernacular terms and, often, what they come up with is an indigenised version of the foreign terms. The opposite is also interesting in that a search for an English equivalence of indigenous concepts often falls short of the true meaning of a concept, such as, for example, using the word "land" to refer to the notion of *fonua/vanua/whenua*.

It is, therefore, important that we understand the need to be more careful and not pretend that ideas that originate in one culture have equivalence in all others when considering

the three ESD pillars or the SDGs for that matter. Most Pacific indigenous people do not have equivalent concepts of the three pillars because their worldviews are holistic and do not separate aspects of life into economic, environmental, or social. The words that are used to refer to these are often localized versions of the English words, such as the Tongan *sosaieti*, and *ekonomika*, simply because the holistic nature of their knowledge systems as reflected in their languages continue to struggle when trying to explain this particular conflict to non-indigenous colleagues who often say they understand the holistic nature of indigenous cultures but then proceed to treat culture as a variable in the ESD development agenda rather than its foundation.

The Asia Pacific Framework for ESD includes a call for researching people's ideas of SD before initiating ESD projects. Some of the research into Pacific traditional knowledge and its role in understanding ESD and change have found that, although ESD may be a new concept for many Pacific people, sustainable living and sustainable livelihoods are not.

In Fiji, for example, Nabobo-Baba (2006), Mataitonga (2010) and Naisilisili (2011) explain that SD is closely linked to the indigenous Fijian notion of *Vanua*, an all-embracing concept that fully describes and embraces people, their culture, cosmologies, epistemologies, and, most importantly, their languages. Other Pacific cultures have similar notions, such *as fonua* (Tonga) and *whenua* (Maori). Within such framings, inter-personal as well as inter-group relationships (*vaa/wah*) are seen as central to the survival and continuity of a culture and impact people's behaviour and practices. In Kiribati, on the other hand, SD is life itself and involves understanding the past in order to sustain the present and conserve resources for the future. For other Pacific indigenous people, SD is always about relationships. Maeltoka (2010) reports that, for his people in Vanuatu, SD includes processes and protocols that ensure the protection and maintenance of important relationships. It is, therefore, clear from the information we have gathered so far that SD is about nurturing relationships among different aspects of a culture—people and other living and non-living things—for the purposes of cultural survival and continuity.

The separation of education from SD is inherent in the ESD literature. What we have found in many Pacific contexts is that learning and living are two sides of the same thing: one assumes the other. The embeddedness of learning in sustainable living is illustrated by the Tongan conception of sustainable livelihood. The Sustainable Livelihood and Education Research Project describes the Tongan notion of SD as *mo'ui fakapotopoto* (living in the way of a *poto* (wise) person) (Johansson-Fua, 2006). *Moui* is a way of living-nay, *mo'ui* is life itself**;** *poto* is the basic concept of Tongan education—the end result of learning or, as Kavaliku describes it, the positive application of *'ilo* or knowledge (Kavaliku, 1968). *Poto* privileges learning, understanding, and behaving in a culturally appropriate manner. In other words, knowing what to do and doing it well (Thaman, 1988). Such learning is not confined to formal education but occurs in different epistemological sites within indigenous communities and reflects all aspects of a community's way of life, including their heritage arts (Koya, 2013). It is obvious, therefore, that the current discourse on ESD does not adequately capture many of these processes; that more research is urgently needed in order to obtain a better and fuller understanding of what SD means to Pacific island peoples and how educators may improve their approach for facilitating learning for sustainable development.

PACIFIC PEDAGOGIES

There is a dearth of literature about indigenous learning in Pasifika communities. Some of us have experiences of the type of methods that many indigenous students positively react to because we know ourselves how we learned best in a particular teaching/learning situation. The following are ways of learning that seem to benefit Pacific indigenous learners with whom I have interacted over the years. There are others, of course, but I list here some that I have tried as well as others that I have learned from colleagues' experiences and research:

- Learning through trial and feedback
- Learning from observation and imitation of those who have learnt
- Learning in groups such as peer group tutorials
- Learning in a holistic manner
- Learning from audio-visuals
- Learning by doing
- Learning that is contextualized and spontaneous
- Learning from teacher demonstration (rather than verbal instruction)
- Learning through real life situations and performance (rather than contrived situations)
- Learning that is focused on the mastery of context-specific skills rather than abstract, universal principles that can be applied in un-experienced situations
- Learning that is person-oriented rather than information oriented
- Learning from teachers who respect and can connect with students rather than those who have "qualifications"

More specifically, in Tonga, Johannson-Fua and her colleagues found that Tongans learn mainly through *sio* (observation), *ala* (practice/touch), *fanongo* (listening) and *ta* (demonstration), with the main outcomes of learning being *poto* (wisdom), and *mo'ui fakapotopoto* (sustainable living) (Johansson-Fua, 2006).

In Solomon Islands, the main learning strategies include: observation and imitation (Wasuka et.al., 1989); participation in adult activities; listening and remembering, and verbal instruction about important aspects of life, such as genealogies and important relationships, types of work, and cultural values (Ninnes, 1991).

It is obvious that when we talk about learning for sustainable living, we need to recognize the importance of understanding that both education and sustainability are notions that are embedded in indigenous people's cultures and reflected in their teaching methods as well as learning styles. It is, therefore, important for Pacific educators, curriculum developers, planners, and others who are interested in facilitating ESD goals, to accommodate indigenous concepts of sustainable development as well as indigenous pedagogies in their work because this will allow for empowerment of Indigenous people and ensures sustainability in education itself. The next section addresses the question of "how do we get information about Pacific indigenous concepts of education for sustainable development?" Through research is, of course, the answer, although not any old type of research but specifically Pacific Research. The balance of this presentation will briefly outline what I mean by Pacific Research.

PACIFIC RESEARCH

The RPEI movement in general and Pacific researchers in particular, have stipulatively defined Pacific Research (PR) as research that is informed by and embedded within Pacific Knowledge Systems (worldviews, languages, knowledges, practices, and beliefs). Pacific in this sense includes indigenous and local communities and their research needs and processes. PR, therefore, involves the active participation of Pacific people and communities and is relevant and responsive to their needs. The values that underpin PR include: respect; relationships; cultural competence; utility; active engagement; participation; reciprocity; collective as well as individual rights; protection; capacity building; and participation. Ethical behavior is important in PR and is culture-specific and expressed verbally as well as non-verbally, in the language of the culture, its important ceremonies, manners of dress and other protocols. PR has been described by some non-indigenous people as "culturalist", assuming, I suppose, that Western research is culture-free (Wood, 2003).

In my view, PR is a more useful way of gauging Pacific people's views of SD as illustrated in some of the projects mentioned above. Tuhiwai-Smith (Smith, 1999) argues that this type of approach to research is an important part of the de-colonization agenda––a way for Pacific researchers to "get free" from the dominance of non-Pacific research paradigms, that often produce data which is irrelevant and meaningless to Pacific islanders. Solomon Island scholar Gegeo (2002) says that PR is also an important way of addressing the epistemological colonization and sometimes silencing of Pacific peoples and their spaces while at the same time addressing the question of what is worth knowing? (Meyer, 1998; Nabobo-Baba, 2006). Johansson-Fua (2006) suggests that PR also provides an authentic contribution to knowledge production, especially in relation to what SD means for Pacific people. For me, however, PR is fun and worthwhile in itself.

Associated with the PR approach are the many PR frameworks and methodologies that have been developed and used by research students over the past two decades to help frame, conduct, and report research findings. They include: *Kakala* (Thaman, 1992), *Kaupapa Maoroi* (Smith, 1993), *Fa'afaletui* (Tamasese et al., 1998), *Tivaevae* (Maua-Hodges, 2000), *Ta-Va* (Mahina, 2001), *Vanua* (Nabobo-Baba, 2006), *Fale* (Koya-vaka'uta, 2007), *Fonofale* (Pulotu-Endemann, 2009), and *Iluvatu* (Naisisilis, 2011),

The Kakala Research Framework, is a Tongan contribution to PR. Originally developed in the early 1990s, as a philosophy of teaching and learning, it is sourced from Tongan culture, in particular, Tongan valued contexts of thinking as well as ideas about learning, knowledge, and wisdom. In these contexts, language is important because it reveals what generally occupy people's thinking; in other words, what they emphasize in terms of their everyday life. My research showed that valued contexts for Tongans include: spirituality, rank, and authority; specific contexts; inter-personal relations' *'ofa* or compassion; and restraint behaviour (Thaman, 1988). A conceptual analysis of Tongan notions of education using Wittgenstein's (1963) use theory revealed that *ako* or learning is a precondition for *'ilo* or knowledge and understanding. The beneficial use of *'ilo* is *poto*, the basic idea of Tongan education and the Tongan notion of the educated person. Although *poto* had been reconceptualized in modern times to include the product of formal education, its meaning continues to reflect utilitarian outcomes. Hence, the passing of examinations, considered by many to be the main purpose of school learning, is associated with the belief that success in school would mean moving further either to

the next level or to a job with the ultimate goal of being more useful or better able to meet one's obligations to family and community.

In Tonga, *kakala* is a generic term given to all fragrant plants and parts thereof, such as flowers, leaves, and bark, that have mythical origins. In the context of Tongan culture, *kakala* have been socialized and ranked just as people are ranked. When strung together or woven into garlands, the end products are themselves ranked. The different ways of making a *kakala* together with the patterns used have been standardized and have remained generally unchanged over many centuries. There exists a full and sophisticated vocabulary as well as an elaborate etiquette associated with different *kakala*, not only in Tonga but also in most Pacific cultures. Today, because of modernization, the materials needed for making a *kakala* have changed, from fragrant flowers to plastic ornaments, sweets, and even money. Perhaps this is the new sustainability?

The relevance of the *kakala* metaphor for research may best be understood with reference to the three main processes associated with it, namely *toli*, *tui,* and *luva*. *Toli* refers to the gathering or collection of the materials needed for making a *kakala*. They include mainly flowers, leaves, and stems. This process can be demanding as it requires knowledge of where to go for the best materials as well as knowledge of and skill in picking and storing the flowers in order to ensure that their fragrance and freshness are long-lasting. Several people may be involved in *toli* depending on the complexity of the exercise or the difficulty of obtaining the appropriate materials.

The second process*, tui* is the actual making of a *kakala* and is usually carried out by persons who are skilled and experienced in the making of different k*akala*. The type of occasion for which a *kakala* is to be presented or the person for whom a k*akala* is intended are important considerations in the nature and complexity of the *kakala* being made. For example, there are sacred or mythical flowers that are regarded as chiefly flowers or *kakala 'eiki,* such as *heilala* and *langakali* that are usually arranged on the top layers of a *kakala,* while the more common or lowly flowers, such as *frangipani* and other more recently introduced flowers, are placed underneath to provide support. Finally, the context as well as the prevailing season are also important because these would influence the type of *kakala* materials that are easily available for making the desired k*akala*.

The last process is *luva*, literally meaning to "give away" a *kakala* to someone else who may then pass it on to another person, since all *kakala* must be shared and not kept to oneself. In Polynesian traditions, in general and in Tongan traditions in particular, *kakala* has an added significance as a symbol of '*ofa* (love) and *faka'apa'apa* (respect). These values must underlie all teaching and research acts if they are to be beneficial. Finally, symbolized in *kakala* is a combination of elements from the natural, social, and spiritual dimensions of culture, together with the celebration and recognition of a selection of the best of a culture the transmission of which must not be left to chance but entrusted to creative, skilled, and compassionate people. In 2005, after a critical analysis of the *Kakala* framework by two Tongan scholars, two additional dimensions were identified and added to the three steps: *teu* or preparation before the first stage, *tui*; and a final stage, *malie/mafana* as evaluation and assessment. These new dimensions were assumed within the original framework but it is now made more overt (Johansson-Fua, 2014).

APPLYING KAKALA TO SD RESEARCH IN TONGA

Kakala was used in the design and reporting of the Sustainable Livelihood and Education Project (SLEP) in Tonga in 2005/06. Tongan methods of data gathering were used, namely *nofo* (to stay) and *talanoa* (meaningful conversations in the Tongan language). The research participants were from 80 households selected from eight villages; five development groups; 20 individuals who had come out of hardships; 40 teachers; and 350 school students. The researchers were 40 teacher trainees from the national teachers' college and some curriculum staff from the Ministry of Education. As noted earlier, the main research related to what Tongans regard as SD, being *mo'ui fakapotopoto* (learning to live sustainably in the context of Tongan culture). The term itself reflects the inter-relationship between the notion of *poto* (wisdom) and *mo'ui* (life/living). The study also identified important knowledge, skills, and values needed to be taught/learnt in order for Tongan people to attain sustainable livelihoods (Johansson-Fua, 2006).

In her report of SLEP, Johannson-Fua (2006) suggests several lessons that can be learnt from SLEP. They include:

- Ease of conceptualization–people were familiar with *kakala*—the real thing as well as the metaphor.
- The research purpose was clear.
- The project required involvement of people as *participants* rather than subjects of research.
- The data gathered generally concurred with what is regarded as Tonga's existing knowledge system.
- The participants were transformed; the teacher trainees who were the main research assistants came to see research as something they could do and not confined to university graduates.
- The research products provided an authentic contribution to Global Knowledge (on ESD).
- There were multiple beneficiaries, for example., Ministry of Education personnel, curriculum planners; teacher educators; teacher trainees; and, of course, other researchers.

Despite the usefulness of PR, several challenges remain. Here are some that many of us continue to face:

- Lack of overt institutional support (continuing dependence on foreigners for intellectual and financial assistance).
- Epistemological silencing continues.
- Continued marginalization of indigenous knowledge creation, indigenous scholars, and researchers in the Academy.
- Constant need to justify, evaluate, and adapt representation of indigenous processes and methodologies to current issues/concerns.
- Shortage of mentors, teachers, and risk takers.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to argue for a different way in which to address issues of development in general and sustainable development in particular by better understanding how Pacific people, especially indigenous people, conceptualize, learn and research SD. Furthermore, I suggest that we may need to use more Pacific-centered research frameworks and methodologies if our findings are to be more useful and relevant to the communities for and in which we work. It is my hope that those who work in our island communities, where the majority of the populations are indigenous to those islands, would more seriously try and see SD from the perspectives of the people themselves rather than from those of the international community or those who fund SD projects. In shifting our gaze towards the people whose livelihoods we are interested in, rather than focusing on the requirements of our benefactors or disciplines, we may find that the information we are seeking is already there—within the cultures and the people themselves, whether they are related to ways of learning, or mitigating against climate change, or judging quality education. For some of us, such a shift may amount to taking risks in an age where strategic plans, KPIs, quality assurance and other types of global concerns dominate much of the discourse in the various institutions and organizations in which we work, often devoid of the voices and perceptions of the very people we are supposed to help or teach. I suggest that taking risks should be our core business, for now anyway, if we are serious about SD in islands, big or small.

Sunscreen (*Thaman, 1999*)

Every day
Do something that scares you
He said
Take risks
But don't forget to wear your sunscreen

So I took my laptop
And deleted my past
Saving only the part
threatened to digest
the dreams that dared
to frighten a frail
and divided heart

and in my attempt
to re-create the moment
i found several scars
left by unknown people
i have loved in my mind
and wondered

what judgements
or inconvenience
i would cause if caught
trying to escape
from the fear
of getting burnt
basking in a slice of sun

Malo 'aupito

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Teachers' professional standards and Indigenous Education in Australia and Chile

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This paper explores the strengths and limitations of mandatory professional standards for teachers in Australia and Chile, two countries containing colonized societies. First, the paper compares the reality of the countries with a focus on the structure and principles of mandatory professional standards for the professional development of teachers. In Australia, professional standards for teachers includes strategies to teach in Indigenous contexts, highlighting the importance of understanding and respecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their traditional culture. However, in Chile, the Indigenous education debate is limited. Second, the paper discusses the strengths of approaches used to frame standards within the professional development of teachers. Strengths consider how teacher's expectations are impacted by an improvement in their knowledge of Indigenous. Finally, the paper explores the limitations of the mandatory standards in both. These reveal how diversity encountered among Indigenous cultures in Chile and Australia proves challenging when preparing teachers to perform in a particular Indigenous context. In Chile, teachers need specialized training to develop the necessary skills to work in Indigenous contexts. However, the Chilean standards of teacher professional development present limited guidelines for teaching in these contexts, which impact local language retention and culture. Recognizing the importance of Indigenous Education and inclusion in national policies is crucial. The new challenge for Chilean universities is to improve their teacher education programs for success in Indigenous Education.

Keywords: Indigenous education; professional standards for teachers; teacher education; Chile

INTRODUCTION

In Chile, Indigenous people are defined as "the descendants of the human groups that exist in the national territory since pre-Columbian times, which preserve their own ethnic and cultural manifestations, being for them the earth the main foundation of their existence and culture" (Ministry of Planning and Cooperation of Chile, 2017, p. 1). The term "Indigenous education" refers to the educational service provided to Indigenous peoples. In Australia, the concept of Indigenous education has encouraged the incorporation of special programs to address the special needs of Indigenous people within the mandatory Teacher Professional Standards (Australian Institute for Teaching

and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011) in the National Curriculum. These standards consider strategies to teach Indigenous students and also highlight the importance of understanding and respecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their heritage.

By contrast, Chile's educational policies continue to be heavily impacted by colonization, and the current teacher education programs do not include training for teaching in Indigenous contexts (Quintriqueo, Torres, Sanhueza, & Friz, 2017). There is an urgent need for improvement in Indigenous education.

The Chilean Standards of Teacher Professional Development (Ministry of Education of Chile [MINEDUC], 2011) do not include specific guidelines for teachers in Indigenous context. Furthermore, specialized training for teachers to work specifically within the Indigenous population is not contemplated. This situation impacts the quality of Indigenous education and is already resulting in the loss of local languages, dialects, and culture. The Chilean Government needs to acknowledge the importance of Indigenous education and make adjustments within national policies to reflect this. Additionally, universities must incorporate necessary improvements in teacher education programs to allow teachers to perform successfully in Indigenous contexts.

In this article, I will discuss the main strengths and limitations of Australian mandatory professional standards for teachers, and how the introduction of similar standards could make a positive impact on the Chilean reality. In the first part of this paper, the Australian situation is compared with the Chilean context. In the second part, the paper discusses the fundamental strengths of approaches that have been used to mandate standards to be followed by teachers; that includes the impact on teacher knowledge and teachers' expectations. Third, the main limitations of mandatory standards will be analysed in relation to the diversity encountered among Indigenous cultures in Chile and Australia, and the gap between theory and practice in teacher education, as well as the results of the current standards regarding the marginalization of Indigenous students.

AUSTRALIAN PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) (2011) proposes two primary standards strands for teacher professional development: Professional Knowledge with a focus on the knowledge of the students and how they learn; and Knowledge of the Content and how to teach it.

The first area refers to the domain of students' characteristics (culture, language, physical, social, intellectual) and understanding of how they learn, which includes special needs or disabilities. With regard to Indigenous perspectives, the relevant standard is 1.4 "Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students" (AITSL, 2011, p. 2) which considers the need for understanding the Aboriginal culture, implementation of effective teaching strategies taking into account the local background, support from community representatives and engagement in collaborative work with the community members, including representatives, families, and carers.

The second standard, 2.4, "Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians" (AITSL, 2011, p. 3), refers to content knowledge and how to teach it. This standard focuses on teaching strategies, curriculum organization, and strategies for literacy,

numeracy, and technology. This standard considers the development of knowledge from understanding and respecting Aboriginal cultures and language through to the provision, support and leadership of students and colleagues.

The aforementioned standards respond to the need for competent professionals with the ability to teach in schools when assisting Aboriginal students. This idea agrees with Ma Rhea (2015), who claims that Indigenous Education must be recognized as a method. Thus, pre-service and in-service educators must have specialized teacher preparation in Indigenous lifeways and culture. However, Ma Rhea, Anderson, and Atkinson (2012) claim there is a lack of evidence of the effectiveness of the Australian Professional Development Program for teachers. They also suggest that there is no clear evidence that the program has been assessed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHILEAN REALITY

Thirteen percent of the Chilean population claim to belong to an Indigenous group (National Institute of Statistics, 2017). Indigenous people in Chile have long suffered social discrimination. This social discrimination is the result of social inequality and the pedagogical practices within classrooms and in school organizations (Williamson, 2004). In addition, Indigenous peoples live in the most socially disadvantaged areas and with lower levels of education (Lagos, 2015). After the enactment of the *Chilean Indigenous Law (19,253),* the Intercultural and Bilingual Program was proposed (Leyton, 2013). The objective of this program was to provide Indigenous students from Mapuche, Aymara, Rapa Nui, and Quechua communities with the appropriate knowledge to develop a sustainable education system (Becerra-Lubies & Fones, 2016). The program allowed schools to adjust the curriculum according to students' requirements while maintaining the mandatory contents of the National Curriculum (Catriquir & Duran, 1997). In 2006 this program was improved through the incorporation of Indigenous languages as a key language area in schools with a high percentage of Indigenous students. More Indigenous groups were also recognized and included: Atacamenos, Collas, Diaguitas, Alacalufes and Yagan (Ministry of Planning and Cooperation of Chile, 2017). The objective of this improvement was the development of Indigenous languages and culture, and an increase in community participation in educative programs (Infante, 2010). The Intercultural Program is being implemented in some small communities but does not include special teacher training for implementation and is not effective in places with a larger Indigenous population (Ortiz, 2009).

Becerra-Lubies and Fones (2016) and Ortiz (2009) have criticized the implementation of this program, noting that the main problem is with the teachers' limited knowledge about Indigenous languages and culture; thus, there are not enough professionals capable of implementing it effectively. Chile requires teacher leaders in the creation and implementation of inclusive strategies. Infante (2010) suggests that a greater focus by educators on inclusiveness would help to eliminate the discrimination and social oppression that exists in the Chilean educational system. There is evidence that Indigenous students in Chile receive low-quality education as well as losing their ancestral culture. In the words of Ortiz (2009), "numerous inequalities persist in the allocation of human and material resources for Indigenous schooling" (p. 98).

Similar to the Australian case, the Chile Ministry of Education (2011) proposes standards for graduates of pedagogy in Primary Education. Also analogous to Australia, these are

divided into two domains: pedagogical and disciplinary. The first has a focus on the students' knowledge, National Curriculum, and learning strategies. The pedagogical domain includes ten focus areas. Focus area number eight could be interpreted as similar to Standard 1.4 of Australian AITSL standards, and states as the main aim: "Attention to the diversity and promotion of the integration in the classroom". The focus contains point 8.2: "Respects and values diversity of students in relation to gender, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, nationality, disability, socioeconomic status, and talents, avoiding discrimination, preventing it and promoting inclusion" (MINEDUC, 2011, p. 37). However, none of these areas explicitly refers to Indigenous education (Baeza, 2019), and point to the need to make significant changes to Chilean teachers' professional development. The need is a crucial challenge for Universities; for example, teacher education needs to produce professionals who can think critically and can break down barriers faced by their students such as their socioeconomic situation, cultural background, and learning styles, and thus better encourage students' participation and access to education.

STRENGTHS IN APPROACHES THAT HAVE BEEN USED TO MANDATE TEACHER STANDARDS

There are many advantages to the existence of teachers' professional standards. This article focuses on two of the strengths: the impact that standards have on the teachers' knowledge about Indigenous culture and the implications that the knowledge and clear guidelines for professional development would have on teachers' expectation.

Teacher knowledge about Indigenous culture

As noted, Australian Standards acknowledge the need to understand the culture and identity of students from Indigenous backgrounds, but Chilean standards do not. The limited knowledge of Chilean teachers is causing resistance to learning from local communities because they see teachers as foreigners to their ethos and they believe that teachers are not prepared to appropriately consider the needs of Indigenous education (Toledo, 2015). In other words, teachers are not being trained to teach Indigenous students and use the same teaching strategies as in urban school settings or intuit how to teach in Indigenous classrooms (Lagos, 2015). The outcome is a cultural clash and reduced respect for teachers by the locals (Bauch, 2001). With the right standards and teacher training, these issues could disappear or at least decrease.

The first step in the process of improving teacher' knowledge is to consider the value of Indigenous culture in the Chilean Standards for teachers' professional development—in the same way as it is recognized in Australia. After all, the aim of education should be to preserve these communities' ways of life (Ma Rhea, 2004) and allow all student to develop, including students with Indigenous backgrounds. According to Ortiz (2009), the simple fact of recognizing that Indigenous knowledge exists is an important advance in epistemological resistance. To teach in a respectful manner in Indigenous contexts, teachers need to at least know about the protocol of engagement, culture, language, identity, history, rights, socioeconomic justice, citizenship, and celebration (Ma Rhea, 2015; White & Kline, 2012). If these skills are absent, the schools could become disconnected from the local indigenous culture, and pedagogical practice might have a negative impact on Indigenous students' identity (Ortiz, 2009).

Teachers could improve learning through the use of the local knowledge as a tool for student engagement (Kroma, 1995). Studies have found that there is a direct relationship between teacher effectiveness and student performance; so, well-prepared teachers in Indigenous Education would positively impact Indigenous students' achievements. For example, Ma Rhea (2015) argues "inside the classroom, the teacher makes the greatest difference to student outcomes" (p. 117). Documentation of local knowledge is also necessary; for example, about agricultural and pastoral lifestyles, medicine and social information. This documentation might contribute to local knowledge preservation (Ma Rhea, 2004) and it could be a tool that teachers can use to learn more about local cultures and in their planning. An example of how to apply this knowledge is exemplified by the case of Northern Chilean Indigenous students: they come from an agricultural background, their families are specialists in crops and plants, thus, teachers can use information in relation to this context and apply it in different subjects, such as Science or Math. Lagos (2015) suggests that an Indigenous lesson must take advantage of the knowledge and abilities of locals that work in the school, such as cleaners and cooks. There is no doubt that if students are familiarized with the context, they could improve their learning by giving meaning to the new knowledge and skills.

Teachers' expectations and guidelines

The limited preparation and knowledge that teachers have about Indigenous communities and their lifestyle might cause newly arrived teachers to hold misleading impressions. In Australia, Ma Rhea et al. (2012) found that "there is a consensus that non-Indigenous teachers have little knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society whether historical or contemporary" (p. 69). In addition, most teachers arrive without experience of living and teaching in Indigenous communities (Warren & Quine, 2013). Teachers' erroneous expectations may cause them to leave the Indigenous schools prematurely. White and Kline (2012) suggest that teachers' beliefs about rural communities including "geographical, social, cultural, and professional isolation; inadequate housing; and a lack of preparation for rural multi-age classrooms" (p. 3) could be the cause of teacher shortage in regional areas. From this perspective, if teachers have access to clear guidelines and training for teaching in an Indigenous context, they would arrive better prepared to face the situation and have more realistic expectations of students. The existence of standards for teacher professional development represents guidelines for not only teachers but also principals and local authorities. In the words of Ma Rhea et al. (2012) "the national collaborative efforts are providing opportunities for all State and Territory jurisdictions to work under a common umbrella" (p. 39).

Additionally, the existence of clear standards would give educators a general perspective of how communities live and how the interaction between community members is, and this could allow them to fit in. In the Chilean context, Baeza (2019) claims that teachers have limited interaction with the Indigenous local community. However, "better preparation and community involvement could also reduce the cultural shock between teachers' expectations and the reality of life inside the communities when they arrive" (Baeza, 2019, p. 14).

In Chile, rural areas have a population of 2,000 individuals or less, and at least half of the population works in primary production activities. Many Chilean schools are located in these areas, and these schools have a high percentage of students with Indigenous background (National Institute of Statistics, 2017). This fact could motivate new teachers

who arrive at these communities with high expectations and looking for new professional experiences. However, living in these areas is challenging for many reasons, such as: weather conditions; lack of basic amenities such as health services, hot water, limited electricity and Internet connection; poor housing for teachers; and isolation (Osborne, 2003; Williamson, 2004). Additionally, the reception by the members of the community is not always as expected because, for some, teachers are foreign and, consequently, they are not considered as an integral part of their community (Warren & Quine, 2013). However, if newly arrived teachers were forewarned and educated about the general background of the Indigenous culture and community lifestyle, they could be more prepared to engage with the locals and to live in these areas.

Another strength or utility that mandatory standards could have is providing teachers with a have deeper knowledge of students' characteristics. Some educators believe that learners with Indigenous background are less capable and more vulnerable; others have a low expectation about their students' educational outcomes (Webb & Radcliffe, 2016). Mistaken teacher perceptions of Indigenous student abilities have a negative impact on learners (Moreton-Robinson, Singh, Kolopenuk, & Robinson, 2012). This idea accords with that of Harrison (2008), who suggests that low teacher expectations could damage teacher relationships with students.

In Chile, it is common to hear new teachers say that Indigenous students living in rural areas have fewer skills than non-Indigenous students who live in urban zones based on lower performance results in the National Standard Test (Agency of the Quality of the Education, 2015). However, the poor results achieved by Chilean Indigenous students in the national test could be caused by the use of inadequate pedagogies for the context (Turra, Ferrada, & Villena, 2013). Sometimes, Indigenous students have different skills that are not recognized by teachers. As an example, in 1992, in the Australian context, Colquhoun-Kerr (1992) found that some teachers denigrated Indigenous students because they did not speak correct standard Australian English but, in fact, some students were able to speak two or three different languages. The problem here was not related to the learner's language skills, the real issue was that teachers did not recognize the student's capabilities because of their own limited training and understanding of the local culture. Teacher expectations could be managed through better preparation and training embodied in standards for teacher professional development. Thus, special guidelines for Indigenous education could greatly impact teacher performance and, consequently, learner achievement.

LIMITATIONS OF MANDATED TEACHER STANDARDS

Guidelines for professional development have many benefits but also limitations. The main limitations are how to incorporate adequate training that recognizes the numerous Indigenous cultures that exist; closing the gap between theory and practice in teacher professional development; and possible marginalization of students with Indigenous backgrounds caused by the existence of specific standards.

Diversity of Aboriginal cultures in Australia and Chile

As is the case in Australia, Chile has many different Indigenous groups. Each community has different cultural norms, language, religion, tradition, and lifestyles. Therefore, a single guideline for professional development for teachers working with Indigenous

students is problematic. The Australian Government explains that inappropriate teacher training is causing teachers to not understand communication and social interaction norms in Indigenous communities. Moreton-Robinson et al. (2012) note that the deficiencies in teacher's training include a lack of training in Indigenous pedagogies. It is important for Indigenous communities (Ma Rhea et al., 2012) to validate the knowledge that teachers receive in their professional development. If these elements are not present in teacher training, there is no doubt that teaching in the diversity of Indigenous educational settings could be affected. From this perspective, the Australian proposal to work with an Aboriginal Education Officer, which is a community member, would contribute to support teacher performance. Harrison (2011) claims that working with this kind of professional help in modelling a cross-cultural relationship for learners would be quite beneficial. In the Chilean case, mothers or uncles could work as Indigenous Education Officers. It also might contribute to generate stronger alliances within students' families and build mutual trust between them and teachers.

Another significant limitation of the Indigenous cultural diversity in Chile is the paucity of teachers' knowledge about local lifestyles. Teachers could receive "cultural training" because they need to know about the lifeways of the communities and, also, they could be integrated into daily school life (Ma Rhea, 2015). This training must be carried out within the communities and guided by local people. Ma Rhea et al. (2012) suggest an immersion program, which could help teachers in their professional development within required AITSL Standards 1.4 and 2.4. The idea is a program developed by the members of the community in which the teacher will teach. This kind of program might impact positively on teacher performance, especially among non-indigenous educators who have little options for training in Indigenous Education (Ma Rhea, 2015).

The gap between theory and practice in teachers' professional development

Even if the national policies propound clear guidelines for professional development and standards for educators of Indigenous students, if these are just theoretical and do not consider practical application in real settings, their impact could be void. Evidence of this is the focus of Chilean Universities in which most teaching programs are centred in theory; therefore, when early career educators begin to work in schools, they feel that they are unprepared to face students' characteristics, daily school situations, and other issues. It is worse in rural and Indigenous contexts. Williamson (2004) critiques the Universities' curriculum. He claims that in order to prepare educators to teach in rural and Indigenous contexts, universities must include learning about work and participation with local communities, Indigenous culture, knowledge, and history. Similarly, studies of the Australia context find that the effort in pre-service teacher training in universities is more focused on the transfer of knowledge than in skills development (Moreton-Robinson et al., 2012). Consequently, new teachers know the theory, but they do not know how to apply it inside the classroom. In fact, their teaching style usually depends on their own student experiences and not necessarily of their university preparation. Thus, they need to learn which styles work best with concrete Aboriginal learners, and this can only be learned when they are teaching inside the school (Ma Rhea, 2015). With these arguments, the importance of within-school training is again highlighted. Kroma (1995) adds that "the interface between school and traditional knowledge can be seen daily in the classroom" (p. 4). From this perspective, the role of the school community is crucial, especially from school principals who must take on the responsibility of guiding teachers in the "right direction" (Ma Rhea et al., 2012, p. 49).

Marginalization of students with Indigenous backgrounds and dominance of Western culture

In Chile, the lack of guidance for teachers of Indigenous learners is leading to the reproduction of Western culture in Indigenous schools. In Australia, something similar is happening. The schools located in Aboriginal areas are reproducing the dominant knowledge, and Indigenous traditional knowledge and language is being pushed aside and, consequently, dying. Indigenous students are losing their identity. Ortiz (2009) argues that it is a typical characteristic of the Colonial Conquest, a common aspect that Chile and Australia share. In addition, Ma Rhea (2004) claims that "western-based education has been criticised for dismissing and attempting to supplant Indigenous knowledge" (p. 10). At a macro level, also, the globalization of universities is causing the homogenization of human thinking, and this is producing knowledge that is predictable and mechanistic (Ma Rhea & Teasdale, 2001). The problem caused by these situations is not just the loss of traditional culture but also that Aboriginal students are simultaneously failing in developing Western skills (Colquhoun-Kerr, 1992).

In rural contexts, most students are afraid to move to urban areas because they consider it difficult to persevere in their studies while being away without their communities' support (Colquhoun-Kerr, 1992). However, Aboriginal parents have expressed a desire for their children to be able to function successfully in both their own culture and the wider Australian community. They accept that some parts of their traditional education program should be complemented with those skills which will allow the Aboriginal people the opportunity to participate in the general Australian society (National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC), 1978, as cited in Ma Rhea, 2015, p. 75).

The same can be observed with Chilean Indigenous students: some of them want to continue their studies in high schools or universities located within urban cities but the lack of support and school preparation make it difficult for them to be successful in tertiary studies. In addition, as in Australia, parents of Chilean students feel that their children are receiving second class education because schools are not "providing the mainstream skills in the dominant language that their children will need outside their indigenous communities, from which they will have to migrate sooner rather than later due to the lack of economic opportunities" (Díaz-Coliñir, 2004, as cited in Ortiz, 2009).

Summarizing, the knowledge that students with Indigenous backgrounds receive at the school must be local as well as global; it requires specialized teacher training that is not considered in the current standards and is in relation to successful integration of these students into the global society.

CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

In this paper, the main strengths and limitations of including standards for Teachers' Professional Development with relation to the teaching of Indigenous students were discussed. In Chile, a clear guideline for teaching in Indigenous communities does not exist. In Australian standards for teaching, the teaching of Indigenous students is made explicit and there is a guide to novice teachers with regard to the skills they must have to effectively teach within Indigenous contexts. However, some elements of the standards need improvement, particularly with regard to the integration of theory and practice in teachers training, and teachers' knowledge of the Indigenous culture and their lifeways.

An evaluation of the impact of the present standards on Aboriginal education is also needed and would contribute to the improvement in the teacher professional development.

In the case of Chile, the first step is the acknowledgement of Aboriginal Education and its place in the official national curriculum on behalf of the Chilean Government (Ortiz, 2009). It is important to think of pedagogy in favour of diversity: teachers must be prepared to teach to all students regardless of their backgrounds or contexts. Such a philosophy would help to avoid the marginalization of Indigenous students. As Ma Rhea et al. (2012) argue, in Australia, an immersion program, created by the communities and within them could contribute to better professional development. Also, this could help teachers develop real expectations about how to live in local communities, what the characteristics of their students are, how the relationships with the community members and local leaders are, and which challenges they will face. This information would allow them to arrive prepared and, consequently, perform successfully.

Opening the debate in universities about the importance of including specialized courses to prepare teachers to teach Indigenous students and generate alliances with the local communities to make teachers' immersion programs together is crucial. These programs would create mutual trust between teachers and community members, contributing to respect for local culture and traditions. Teacher training requires a contextualized education, especially in countries where the production and use of knowledge are bounded by ethnic, geographical, historical, and cultural subject positions such as in Chile and Australia.

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Designing the Lebanese public education budget: A policy document analysis

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Education has become a high-stakes, big-budget item worldwide and is often a major contributor to the country's GDP. Each country's public expenditure on education differs but there is a general recognition that education is a catalyst for country growth and development. In Lebanon, public sector education is viewed by the government as unproductive and the gap between private and public schooling is vast. The strong centralization and governance of Lebanese public schools' finance, management, and curriculum hinders the development of the public education sector and influences the performance of students and teachers. Although the total expenditure on education is high (about US$1.2 billion annually: approximately 2.45% of GDP and 6.4% of total public expenditure), Lebanon's public expenditure on education is lower than expenditure by its neighbors. This study used an interpretive document analysis method to analyze the design of the public budget policy used to determine the allocation of funds to the Lebanese education sector's development plan for the educational section. The study determined the uniform guidelines for the education's budget design by comparing the design used by Finland with that of 33 other developing countries. Analysis of results found that the Lebanese public education development plan uses six of eight best-practice guidelines. This study is potentially useful for educational policymakers and researchers interested in educational budget policies design in low performing systems. Comparative document analysis will assist policymakers in Lebanon to follow benchmarked guidelines in resource allocation to improve the quality of education.

Keywords: Education budget policy; policy design; Lebanon public and private schools; centralized and decentralized education systems

INTRODUCTION

The global trend towards increasing school autonomy over control of budget and resources has been a catalyst for more effective education systems (Chin & Chuang, 2015). Findings are that school autonomy is associated with student performance and reducing the constraints caused by centralization and governance over school personnel, curriculum, instructional methods, disciplinary policies, budgeting, facilities, and student admission will lead to the better performance of schools (Nechyba, 2003). Schools in most Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries have complete responsibility and authority for resource allocation: they hire and fire teachers, establish teachers' salaries and increases,

formulate school budgets, and decide on budget allocations within the school (Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016).

In Lebanon, school autonomy is minimal and school principals work under a highly centralized bureaucratic structure. The role of the school principal is limited to assessing the school's human and physical needs, and reporting such needs to the provincial education bureau. The provincial education bureau assigns teachers and evaluates their work, leaving no room for principals to hold teachers accountable for their performance (Mattar, 2012). The bureau also allocates the educational equipment and mandates teaching and learning regulations without considering the individual needs of the schools.

The country's economic and political instability and the Syrian civil war has caused a dramatic deterioration in, particularly, the public sector. The Lebanese civil war, which spanned 1975 to 1990, weakened the development of public education and damaged most schools buildings (Frayha, 2009). Public schools lack proper infrastructure and technological materials and science laboratories, they do not have inclusion-based policies, and the curriculum and textbooks are outdated and do not reflect 21st century skills (Ghamrawi, 2010; Shuayb, 2016). Besides that, public schools attract mostly non-qualified human resources because of low salary offerings compared to salaries offered in private sector schools (Ghamrawi, 2010; Shuayb, 2016). Teachers working in public schools operate in a context in which most of their needs are unmet (Mattar, 2012). Teachers regularly protest on the streets to demand pay raises, a proper allocation of resources, and the improvement of schools' buildings (Mattar, 2012). In response to protests, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education developed a five-year development policy and allocated US$2.424 million by 2011 to develop the education sector. This reform plan aimed to improve and update the national curriculum and teaching strategies through providing them with training and professional development programs (Bou Jaoude, & Daith, 2006).

Research purpose and questions

This study analyses the design of the budget policy related to the development of the public education sector in Lebanon. Public sector reform in poorer income countries can always benefit from the experience of higher income countries despite the different conditions under which they have to operate (Bale & Dale, 1998). Therefore, it makes sense to examine the education policy of a more developed country. Finland was chosen for such examination for several reasons:

1. Finland has decentralized its education structure by giving greater authority to local municipalities (Mølstad & Karseth, 2016).
2. Finland has a high success rate in tests of students' school achievements (Vitikka, Krokfors, & Hurmerinta, 2012).
3. The community and state put great faith in Finnish teachers (Vitikka et al., 2012)
4. New approaches to education, such as New Public Management, are found within this successful education system (Varjo, Simola, & Rinne, 2013).

Specifically, the research questions for this study are:

1. Did the allocated funds fulfil the goal of improving the quality of public education in Lebanon? To answer this question, two sub-questions needed to be addressed:
    a. How is the budget policy designed?
    b. Does this design follow benchmarked guidelines?

The study reviewed related literature and policy documents to examine the Lebanese education budget policy for developing its public education system. Results from this study are potentially useful for education policy makers and researchers interested in studying education budget policies design in low performing systems. The comparative analysis will alert policy makers in Lebanon to benchmarked guidelines in resource allocation for improving the quality of education.

Theoretical model

Designing budget policy and school funding is the responsibility of local school districts or the state. While having it centralized within the state could create greater equity, it could also lead to other unintended consequences (Zimmer & Jones, 2005). Limited school autonomy is among the consequences of a strongly centralized system. If the state is the sole body to have governance over schools' finances, management, and curriculum, it will decrease the autonomy of schools and negatively affect its overall performance (Nechyba, 2003). Hence, understanding the consequences of both centralized and decentralized systems is linked to understanding how the budget was designed and allocated. Hence, this section is divided into two parts. The first part presents an overview of centralized education by focusing on the financial centralization of school budgets. The second part examines the design of the budget policy by benchmarking it against a more experienced, developed, and richer country, Finland, and with other similar developing countries contexts. This comparison will provide the study with rich data from two contexts.

Centralisation and decentralisation of educational systems

Taylor (1997) notes that the centralization of education involves embedding authority in the governance bodies, which could be the central government; provincial, state or regional governing bodies; municipal, county or district governments; and schools themselves. Taylor also highlights that there are three main dimensions of centralization in Education: fiscal, administrative and political. Fiscal is when the governing body regulates and controls the level of schools' revenues and expenditures. Administrative is when the allocation of human resources is within the authority of the governing body, and the political dimension refers to authority over decision-making.

While many countries still follow and favour the centralized education system to ensure equality across all schools in the country, over the past 15 years, a decentralization model has been gaining favour (Chin & Chuang, 2015). Having a decentralized education system have met the strong demands for education of families in wealthier districts that are no longer matched under a system of equalized funding (Fischel, 1989, 1992). These demands are mostly about the quality of teaching materials and technological resources that could not be measured with in a centralised system (Theobald & Picus, 1991).

To date, few countries give complete autonomy to schools or local authorities because of a distrust in such customer-oriented ways of thinking (Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016). For instance, some people argue that financial authority should be given to local units or schools because they have a better understanding of the needs of their community and how to allocate money to meet those needs; other people argue that the units and schools might lack the knowledgeable and qualified individuals who will ensure good funds management (Honig, 2006). Even in advanced educational systems, such as the US system, public schools are provided with some autonomy over their finances but they cannot control the level of funds they receive. These funds are mostly provided from federal, state, and local governments and planned in alignment with the school's vision, mission, and with its instructional plan related

directly to student achievement (Taylor, 1997). In cases where the state has complete power over school finances, schools struggle because such control affects teacher and staff income, working conditions, and opportunities for advancement (Taylor, 1997), as well as access to resources. This is the case in Lebanon, where high centralization and bureaucracy is correlated with teacher unhappiness concerning their incentives, employment security, the quality of teachers being hired, and the physical conditions of school buildings (Mattar, 2012). Unfortunately, the highly centralized Lebanese system suffers from a fragile central governance structure, weak rule of law, and lack transparency (Van Ommering, 2017). Weak governance is a consequence of 15 years of civil war that impacted government institutions and enabled corruption to spread into all public institutions.

By comparison, Finland's secure and stable context, prepared the ground for the state to transform its centralized structures to a more decentralized one. The increased decentralization in 1994 gave local municipalities the authority and freedom to finance and manage schools and provided teachers with increased responsibilities for developing and deciding on curriculum content (Mølstad & Karseth, 2016; Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016). Local municipalities also became responsible for inspecting schools, allocating resources to students—including those with disabilities—and organizing schooling and subjects offered (Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016). By doing so, the Finnish education system created a strong link between schools and communities to promote a shared responsibility towards student performance (Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016).

From centralized towards greater decentralization

Lebanon's education system is a highly centralized system in which even the smallest decision is made by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. This ministry regulates and governs all policies, budgets, curriculum, teachers, and staff recruitment through the provincial education bureau (Ghamrawi, 2010). Private schools have control over their own organization (Ghamrawi, 2010) but all Lebanese schools must implement the national curriculum. Should a school want to implement a foreign curriculum, it must apply to do so as an add–on to the Lebanese curriculum.

The Lebanese education system is similar to what the Finnish system was back in the 1970s and 1980s, when it was highly centralized, with the Finnish National Board of Education being the only decision-making authority and little power was granted to local municipals or schools (Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016). When the decision to decentralize was made in 1994, principals were trained to participate in school development and reform (Saarivirta & Kumplulainen, 2016) and to manage the school staff and finances as well as internal and external networking. However, the hiring and firing of teachers remains in the hands of the municipality authority, though by taking the principal's opinion into account.

Although Finland has decentralized to some extent, it has not gone as far as developed countries such as the Netherlands and UK (Saarivirta & Kumplulainen, 2016). Finland is continuously developing the human resources at both federal and local authorities to ensure that they are qualified to make the right decisions towards educational improvement. This is not the case in Lebanon, where administrators are not well trained or qualified to manage and improve the educational sector with even the small amount of flexibility they have over school affairs (Ghamrawi, 2010; Shuayb, 2016). The possibility of transferring to a less centralized system in Lebanon is debatable. Many more challenges exist in the Lebanese education sector and, in response, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education issued a new budget policy to serve the public education development plan (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Even though educational policy makers count on outcomes in quantitative terms to make reliable judgments with policy reform, interpretations of qualitative data resources remain the best method to provide a good understanding of the impact and consequences of educational policy (Halpin & Tyrona, 1994). To address the financial challenges of the Lebanese educational sector, this research used a phenomenal instrumental case method to seek in-depth understanding and insights (Bowen, 2009). Interpretation of documents gives voice and meaning to the similarities and differences of the themes found when analysing the design of the policies between different contexts (Bowen, 2009). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested that analysing, reviewing, and interpreting printed and electronic documents is the best method for producing rich descriptions of the investigated topic (the Lebanese education system) as a single phenomenon. Following this method will also serve the purpose of this research to gather a broad array of data on the design of the educational budget (Halpin & Tyrona, 1994).

Data collection

Source identification. Four document sources were found through a preliminary search using three terms associated with educational budget policy: centralized education system, policy design, funds, and resources allocation. Then, the researcher identified four sources for documentary data on centralized educational budget: (a) ProQuest Research Library (library database), (b) Google Scholar, (c) BUID library, and (d) The Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education Official site.

Sample selection, inclusion and exclusion criteria. The four data sources used an extended list that included eight terms: (a) Advantages of centralized educational system, (b) disadvantages of centralized educational system (c) school autonomy (d) developing countries (e) educational policies design (f) funding of public schools (g) teacher's incentives and performance (h) educational outcomes improvement. The researcher searched library databases for peer-reviewed literature then sources for grey literature. Reports, statistics, manuscripts, and other written materials were selectively chosen for content analysis and comparability. Documents had to be similar in topic and type. For instance, budget allocation forms were selected from both public and private schools in Lebanon. As part of centralized and decentralized educational budget policy issues, areas were further divided into sub-issues: expenditures per student and allocation of budget. In terms of the public education development policy. The researcher chose the most recent documents related to the design and implementation. Genuine and credible documents from Lebanon and Finland were selected to make the comparative analysis and identify gaps or present alternatives to the Lebanese education policy design and implementation. Document analysis of public education budget policy in Lebanon was selected from a review of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education documents dated between 2010 and 2015. Other documents from public and private schools were included to address the centralization of the Lebanese public school education system. Finland's budget education policy was also included to compare and examine the gaps that lie in the design and implementation within the Lebanese context. Due to time limitations, only four main documents were selected to support the analysis of the educational public budget policy in Lebanon, three will be analysed for comparison.

Data analysis

Data were analysed following a content analysis technique to organize information into categories related to the central questions of the research and to evaluate documents in such a way that the understanding of the design of budget policy is developed (Bowen, 2009). After identifying categories, the researcher used a comparative method to identify patterns and concepts that seemed to cluster together. Concepts were compared by asking: What kinds of ideas are mentioned in both documents? How is this concept like, or different in the documents? Hence, similarities, differences, and general patterns were identified to develop an understanding on budget policy design and implementation in both centralized and freer systems. Documents were analysed and the component of policy design is represented by structures: (a) Rehabilitation and equipping of science and informatics laboratories, (b) Capacity development of teachers, (c) Stimulating the participation of parents in schools, (d) Developing the administrative capacity of principals, (e) Development of standards and specifications for textbooks and educational resources, and (f) Development of a mechanism for measuring performance.

Overview of education budget policy

Document 1: Quality education for growth: National education strategy framework (2010)

Document 2: The Lebanese Ministry of Education and higher education achievements (2011)

In the period during and after the civil war of 1975–1990, the Lebanese Government's investment in public education dropped, opening up opportunities for the private sector to provide educational opportunities (Shuayb, 2016). Only 29.2% of students are enrolled in public sector schools even though the number of public and private schools are almost the same (HEART, 2015). This is because of the inefficiency and unproductivity of public education, which is linked to the poorer quality of teaching, shortage of qualified teacher, low teaching standards, and lack of resources and infrastructure (Mattar, 2012; Shuayb, 2016).

The Ministry of education and Higher Education acted in 2010 by putting in place a reform of the educational system based on a five-year development plan (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2010). The new system emphasizes many issues essential for the achievement of equality of access to and quality of education. It highlights the gap in success rates in official exams between the public and private sectors and emphasizes the importance of counselling and guidance (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2011). A budget was then designed and allocated based on Lebanese educational sector priorities (see Table 1). The plan raised US$2.424 million by 2011 by signing agreements with several agencies to obtain internal and external funds for education sector development.

The design of the policy is aligned with the top priorities of the educational development plan over five years (2011–2016), but what was not expected has happened and shifted the allocations entirely. Funds were no longer spent as planned. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education had to cater for an increase in Syrian students in classrooms as a result of increase Syrian refugees, who now outnumber Lebanese students. Arab donors, the UNESCO, and UNICEF provide funding but it is well below that necessary to close the financial gap and provide support to the Lebanese government to educate all children residing in its territories. Hence, the design of the budget policy and the real implementation of the development plan is controversial.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education claims that 14 billion Lebanese pounds (US$9,256,198) were allocated to hire teachers on contract bases to teach arts, sports, second foreign language, and IT. Schools were also rehabilitated and provided with the necessary supplies and equipment for science and IT laboratories. The Ministry has sponsored several capacity-building programs using teachers from foreign languages who teach mathematics, sciences, French and English in various cycles. Finally, several partnerships between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and The Hariri Foundation and the Arab Thought Foundation developed the integration of information communication technology in Education. In spite of all these efforts, the education sector in Lebanon still struggles and student performance is still below average when measured on international standardized tests (Martin, Mullis, Foy, & Stanco, 2016).

The purpose of this study is not to investigate how the money was spent but to analyse the design of the policy when compared to a similar one in one of the most successful OECD countries, Finland.

Table 1: Lebanese budget policy for educational sector development projects.

Fund Type	Budget	Agency	Project	Project purpose
Grant	US$75 Million	US Agency for International Development	Developing rehabilitation assistance to schools and teacher improvement (D-RASATI).	Rehabilitation and equipping of science and informatics laboratories. Capacity development of teachers. Development of extra-curricular activities. Stimulating the participation of parents in schools.
Loan	US$40 Million	The World Bank	Education development project II	Equipping of KGs Developing the administrative capacity of the cadres of MEHE Developing the administrative capacity of principals
Loan	Euro 13.7 Million	The European Union	Education development project	Strengthening the management of public finances. Improving the planning, implementation and Monitoring of the education sector reforms. Improve management, increase transparency, enact accountability Promoting awareness of students' citizenship concepts.
Grant	US$3 Million	UNESCO	Follow up and evaluation of public schools' performance	Developing monitoring tools. Developing the mechanism for measuring performance. Identifying teacher's training needs.
Grant	US$0.66 Million	UNICEF	Annual work plan for development of requirements of early childhood	Parental awareness program. Developing standards and specifications for textbooks and educational resources. Producing support lessons for underachieving students. Contributing to the "back to school"

				media campaign for the school year 2010–2011.
Grant	US$2.4 Million	The United Nations Development Program	Providing technical support to MEHE to implement the Education sector development plan	Developing the development of institutional competencies. Activating the education management information system to render it accessible to all units in the Ministry. Developing a system for monitoring and evaluation of the programs. Providing tools and capacity building of staff.
Contribution	US$100 Million	Lebanese State	Education sector development plan	Developing of the overall education sector.

Document 3: European Commission – Education and Training Monitor 2015 – Finland

Finland's education system requires no tuition fees and divides funding responsibilities between the federal (57%) and municipal authorities (43%) (European Commission, 2015). The total spending on Education in Finland represents 6.5% of total GDP in 2013 compared to 5.9 % of the GDP in 2008, which is well above the EU average of 5% (European Commission, 2015). The Ministry of Education and Culture oversees all publicly funded education; however, local municipal authorities appoint principals then leave the management of the schools to the principals, teachers, and staff (Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016). The Ministry of Education and Culture constitutes 13% of the state budget. Additional funds come from local authorities, the private sector and citizens.

The Finnish budget is distributed according to the variety of the educational needs. It provides meals to fulltime students and free transportation to dispersed schools. The key to its success and effectiveness is the continuous professional development of teachers and the development of programs that involve parents in their children's education. Finnish teachers starting salaries are 10% higher than the EU average and they are educated to high standards at master's level (European Commission, 2015). The Finnish education system is considered among the most effective systems in the world but has its own flaws.

Reducing the achievement gap among pupils and integrating immigrants into the Finish school system has caused the education ministry to allocate a new budget policy to fund further system development (European Commission, 2015). The new budget also funds training to increase teacher competency and experience in using ICT resources within their teaching and additional training to develop assessments skills. In addition, the budget allocates a significant amount to the LUMA program (Finland's science education) for the period 2014–2019 to motivate children to move beyond the arts fields and take a greater interest in subjects such as mathematics, natural science, and technology education (Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016).

In short, the Finnish education system is more advanced than the Lebanese education system because it not only identifies and attempts to solve problems but also makes a substantial public investment in education. However, this observation would not be useful for helping to advance the Lebanese education system if the context in which the systems operate remained unexamined.

Document 4: Improving educational outcomes in developing countries: Lessons from rigorous evaluations (2014)

Income per capita is a key predictor of performance on learning in developing countries but other factors are also important. A systematic review of 33 middle and low income countries identified four necessary factors for improving educational outcomes:

1- reducing the costs of going to school
2- building parents' capacity
3- employing resources to change the daily experience of children at school
4- providing well-designed incentives for teachers and training low-skilled teachers.

Applying these four factors in the Lebanese context would make a difference in the public education sector; Ganimian and Murnane (2016) recommended policy makers include them in the design of the budget policy for education. Reducing costs of going to school, such as providing free transport to schools, especially schools in rural areas, and free meals and free eyeglasses at public schools, are effective ways to change children's daily experiences and increase their attainment rate (Ganimian & Murnane, 2016).

This section discussed the conditions that favour a decentralized educational system and to which extent it is needed to increase overall school performance. While schools in Finland and most developed countries have almost full autonomy, in Lebanon it is minimal or absent. Hence, when the public policy budget was designed, it did not include schools funding in the decision-making process. If schools had been included, then the design would be more beneficial to the improvement of students and teachers because they are best placed to determine their needs

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study examined the design of the public budget policy allocated to the development plan of the educational sector in Lebanon and determined benchmark guidelines from the Finnish education context and the context of developing countries similar to Lebanon.

To answer the general question on whether the funds allocated are expected to reach the anticipated goal of improving the quality of public education in Lebanon, the study identified six factors from the Finnish education system. Listed below are the actions taken by each country in relation to those factors. It should be noted that, despite the efforts of the Lebanese government, the majority of the objectives of the 2010 strategy have not been achieved (Shuayb, 2016). Equal education is still not available for the majority of Lebanese and non-Lebanese students. Particularly, the education system fails to support the needs of Lebanese students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds or are non-Lebanese; such students are at high risk of underperforming and dropping out of school (Shuayb, 2016).

1 Rehabilitation and equipping of science and informatics laboratories: In the design of both the Finnish and Lebanese budget policy designs, this guideline was associated with the development of educational quality. As noted, in Finland, funds were allocated to the launch a new educational program called LUMA. In Lebanon, the shortage of laboratories, ICT resources and lack of teacher interest in the use the ICT resources and in integrating such resources within the curriculum (Nasser, 2008; TIMSS, 2011) is evidence that the money allocated was not enough or was not deployed properly.

2. Capacity development of teachers: Teacher quality and qualifications is directly associated with student performance (Woessman, 2016). The Finnish budget allowed for the further development of teachers, raising their level of education to the level of masters and then to provide continuous professional development (Saarivirta & Kumplulainen, 2016). In Lebanon, teachers are provided with little encouragement to further their professional development or even collaborate with their peers (Van Ommering, 2017). It is true that, in public schools, teachers receive training three times a year that aims to develop their teaching methodologies and assessment skills. However, such training is not customized to fit the needs of individual teachers, nor does it consider their background and years of experience (Van Ommering, 2017). More experienced teachers are benefiting little from professional development programs and, therefore, hold on to their traditional teaching techniques, thus failing to develop the critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity skills of students (Abd-El-Khalick et al., 2004; Osta, 2007).

3. Developing the administrative capacity of principals: In Finland, principals are continuously trained to participate in school development and reform (Saarivirta & Kumplulainen, 2016). Each school can manage its own staff and finances as well as internal and external networking. The limited authority that principals have in Lebanese public schools does not encourage the implementation of serious professional development programs for either themselves or their staff. Neither is pre-service and in-service administrative training available for the majority of principals (Mattar, 2012). Studies have found that principals tend to adopt an authoritarian style and give limited attention to the instructional dimension of their principalship (Akkary, 2014). In low performing schools, such as in Lebanon's public school system (Akkary, 2014; Mattar, 2012; Martin et al., 2016), school principals do not motivate teachers to perform at higher levels and cannot promote the potential of and contribution by teacher. In high performing schools, such as those in Finland, principals can adopt a stronger instructional leadership style (Mattar, 2012).

4. Development of a mechanism for measuring performance: This guideline is aimed at ensuring that education budgets allow for workshops to develop teacher assessments skills (European Commission, 2015). Assessments are tools for learning about curriculum, teacher instructions, and assessments aimed at learning whether students actually learnt what has been taught. Teachers are expected to be professionally developed and experienced in how to use assessments inside the classroom and how to benefit from the data generated from them (Gipps, 1994). For instance, assessment data can give teachers detailed information about the quality of their teaching methodology and how they can improve it. However, in Lebanon, the shortage of qualified teachers and technological resources for schools are challenging the capacity of schools to improve by making use of the assessments data (Osta, 2007).

5. Stimulating the participation of parents in schools: This guideline is in the Lebanese budget design but there is no evidence that any action has been taken by public schools to stimulate parental engagement (Shuayb, 2016). Parents rarely visit the schools to follow up on their children's academic achievements (Van Ommering, 2017). They are not even encouraged by the school to become engaged in the education of students (Van Ommering, 2017). In Finland, schools have programs for parents and support low-income parents by providing free meals and reducing the costs associated with their children going to school (Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016). Parental engagement is considered an essential component for student academic success. In Lebanon, the

potential advantage of having parental involvement include: the power to promote teachers' working in a situation of conflict and for peacebuilding inside the classroom. In other words, teachers will have a better ability to manage classrooms containing Lebanese and Syrian students if relationships between parents and teachers are strong, as well as strengthening the sense of teachers in the security and stability of their employment (Van Ommering, 2017).

6. Development of standards and specifications for textbooks and educational resources: The availability of school resources is a significant factor in determining student performance (Woessman, 2016). In Lebanon, textbooks and classroom conditions are relatively poor and the national curriculum has not been updated since 2000 (Sarouphim, 2009). Despite the newly developed textbooks with the ministry's intention of developing students' problem solving skills and scientific inquiry among other educational outcomes, the build-up of textbooks and assessment practices are still outdated and not aligned with the 21st century skills that students should have (Abd-El-Khalick et al., 2004). This is mainly because of the lack of authority teachers and school administrators have in the decision making process of bodies such as Ministries of Education and currilcum development agencies in the design of textbooks, tools, and interventions (Van Ommering, 2017

Although the Lebanese education budget policy is designed as per benchmarked guidelines, it lacks two core guidelines necessary for overall educational quality improvement: the provision of free meals and transportation to public school students. When these needs to help student attendance are satisfied, absenteeism rates will decrease and student perform at school will increase (Ganimian & Murnane, 2016).

CONCLUSION

This study reviewed the design of the public education budget policy in Lebanon and explored whether the current centralized system is providing quality education for Lebanese students. To do so, this research followed an interpretive document analysis approach and compared the Lebanese education policy budget against literature on international budget policy design. The examination found that the budget policy of the Lebanese system follows uniform guidelines in money allocation and distributions of resources but is missing two major guidelines that other, more advanced educational system use: allocations of funds for providing free meals and transportation for students. Both of these are necessary for meeting the basic physiological needs of students (Ganimian & Murnane, 2016). Students who are hungry cannot perform well and children in rural areas clustered in the economically disadvantaged regions of Bekaa, and South and North Lebanon cannot afford transport to schools (Shuayb, 2016).

In addition, examination of documents found that in more experienced, richer, and socio-politically stable country contexts, schools are given greater autonomy than found in Lebanese public schools. However, the necessary components for moving Lebanese schools to greater autonomy are almost non-existent. For example, there is a lack, at the school level, of qualified and competent human resources to develop a school budget and adjust it as necessary. However, if school staff were initially appropriately trained, they could help with the reduction of education sector debts and avoid unnecessary expenditures without detrimentally influencing student achievement (Shuayb, 2016). Hence, in the design of the education budget, the Ministry could, for example reduce the current budget allocated for training school administrators by providing in-house training and allocate the savings to providing free meals and transportation—at least in the most disadvantaged areas. The Ministry could also use its

own people, rather than consultants. to train school administrators and teachers on education sector objectives and priorities, teachers rights, pedagogy, and good governance in schools (Van Ommering, 2017).

This study provides policy makers in Lebanon with a deeper understanding of current budget allocations and provides insights for policy makers of benchmark guidelines for improving the public sector education.

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Assessing the impact of a student loan program on time-to-degree: The case of a program in Peru

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This paper evaluates whether student loans given to poor students at a large university in Peru are effective in reducing the time-to-degree. It uses a methodology that avoids the "selection problem" because the students voluntarily request a loan depending on their economic situation. The econometric results confirm the negative effect of educational loans for students.

Keywords: student loans; time-to-degree; higher education

INTRODUCTION

It is widely known that the absence of some kind of financial aid is one of the most significant barriers to completion of higher education. When free or subsidized tuition is not available, a student with financial problems may choose to either apply for a loan or work while studying. This latter option affects the time a student dedicates to his or her studies, which may prolong the time required to complete all the courses in the program (called time-to-degree). Moreover, because students can choose the number of courses they take each semester, taking fewer courses could be desirable for working students as it would also mean lower fees (which they could afford). By contrast, a student who benefits from a loan can take as many courses as he or she wants (depending only on his or her time and capabilities), and the program forbids the student from working. This becomes a problem for students entering the labour market at an older age because they would receive lower college wage premiums for each additional year (Monks, 1997; Taniguchi, 2005). Based on the theory of investment in education, students without a loan and with a longer expected time-to-degree will find it more costly to invest in post-secondary education.

Unlike grants and free tuition schemes, student loans are self-financed and create incentives for student effort. However, despite their benefits, student loans in many countries are perceived as risky by most banks because of the absence of collateral or guarantees (Ferreyra, Avitabile, Botero-Alvarez, Haimovich-Paz, & Urzua, 2017). Unsurprisingly, only a small fraction of students at the high education level successfully obtain student loans in many countries, especially if the repayment relies on their graduation (an uncertain event).

In 2006, the percentage of enrolled students at higher education levels who benefited from a student loan reached over 35% in countries like Canada, US, New Zealand and the UK, while the overall percentage in China, Peru, Mexico, and the Philippines is below 5% (Ruíz-Devesa & Blom, 2007). More recent statistics show that, in Chile, the percentage is above 20% and just above 10% in Brazil and Colombia (Ferreyra et al. 2017). Given that other forms of financing (e.g. grants and free tuition) are limited, the out-of-pocket cost of higher education as a percentage of GDP per capita is around 60% in Latin American countries, compared with only 19% in high-income countries (Murakami & Blom, 2008).

This paper analyses a specific experience in Peru, a less-developed country in which loans for higher education are virtually non-existent. For decades, the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru (PUCP), a large middle-class university located in Lima, has been providing student loans to some of its students who have demonstrated satisfactory academic performance but currently have financial difficulties that might hinder their ability to complete their studies. The paper takes this experience to show statistical evidence that can support policies in favour of student loans.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

This paper attempts to assess the extent to which the PUCP loan program called 'Préstamo Universitario' has benefited students and, in particular, its impact on time-to-degree. To that end, the paper examines two main research questions: (1) To what extent can student loans affect the period in which a student needs to earn a bachelor's degree? (2) Does the number of semesters covered by a student loan affect the impact of the loan on time-to-degree?

The main hypothesis of this research is that student loans in higher education can help students complete their course of study more rapidly than students who do not receive loans. It is expected that the time-to-degree would be shorter for a student who receives a loan for many semesters than a student who receives the same benefit for only a few semesters.

An evaluation of the program should consider the fact that students who voluntarily seek financial aid typically have greater economic difficulties; therefore, they are more likely to extend their time-to-degree. Consequently, a simple estimate using ordinary least squares (OLS) could obtain a positive correlation between the financial aid they receive and their time-to-degree, instead of the expected negative effect. As an alternative, a methodology that can produce estimates with causal interpretation must be employed.

This paper takes advantage of exceptional data that are not normally available to researchers. Student loans are not common in Peruvian society. Consequently, discovering the effectiveness of such a program can provide insights into what would happen if student loans were offered to higher education students outside the PUCP, and this could help determine what would be necessary to make these types of programs effective.

LITERATURE REVIEW: STUDENT LOANS, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND TIME-TO-DEGREE

The literature on financial aid and the time-to-degree is related to the extensive literature on participation in higher education, dropout rates, persistence, retention, and degree attainment. In the academic literature, these topics have traditionally been studied from both economic and sociological perspectives. At present, many empirical studies on the subject have attempted to integrate these approaches into a more complete analysis (Chen, 2008; St. John, Cabrera, Nora, & Asker, 2000). This section provides a brief summary of these approaches.

From an economic perspective, students who face problems financing their studies run the risk of dropping out of school because they must either work to support their families or they perceive that it is no longer profitable for them to continue studying, based on a rational cost-benefit decision. Another strategy students use is to work to pay for their studies and living expenses, which means that they spend less time studying, thereby decreasing their academic performance (Stinebrickner & Stinebrickner, 2003), or they only enrol in a few courses each semester, prolonging the time-to-degree (Behr & Theune, 2016; Theune, 2015; Tyson, 2012).

Depending on how serious a student's financial problems are, he or she could extend the time necessary to complete his or her degree beyond the time suggested in the curriculum, and may even abandon the effort. In that sense, if a student needs financial aid, educational loans and scholarships can reduce the likelihood of them abandoning their studies, positively affect their persistence and reduce the time necessary to complete their degree.

There is also economic literature that links participation in higher education with the cost of tuition (Carneiro & Heckman, 2002; Heller, 1997; Kane, 1994; Leslie and Brinkman, 1987). However, this paper focuses on how financial aid in higher education (which affects the cost of studies) is related to dropout rates, persistence and completion of studies, and time-to-degree.

Non-economic approaches emphasize the relationship between students and the institution of higher education from the point of view of their integration into the academic community (Tinto, 1975; 1987). This integration includes the social and academic aspects of a student's relationship with his or her peers and teachers. A student's family and social background, which determine the education acquired at an early age, also influence academic performance. There are approaches that seek to integrate sociological and economic factors; for example, according to Cabrera, Stampen, and Hansen (1990) and Cabrera, Nora, and Castañeda (1992), financial capacity not only limits the academic expenses of students but also how successfully they integrate into the institution, and their commitment to that institution. This has both a direct and indirect effect on finances.

Effect on dropout rates, persistence and degree completion

A considerable amount of research has linked financial aid with dropout rates, retention and degree completion. For example, Nora (1990) and Cabrera et al. (1992) found that financial aid increases the persistence of students in college institutions in the US. In another group of studies that tested the financial-nexus model for colleges in the US, St. John, Paulsen, and Starkey (1996) reported that financial aid (grants and loans) have an insignificant or negative impact on persistence. Similar results have been found for low-income students (Paulsen & St. John, 2002) and for different racial groups (St. John, Paulsen, & Carter, 2005). In these three papers, the authors argued that this counterintuitive result is due to the amount of financial aid being insufficient to overcome a student's financial difficulties. Kim (2007) also reported a negative relationship between financial aid and attainment for low-income students in the US. It could be that the negative relationship mentioned above occurs because students who demand financial aid are those that have the most economic need and the probability of dropping out is greater for this subpopulation than for students who do not need this type of help.

However, other studies have found a positive relationship between financial aid and academic results, such as attendance and persistence. Dinarski (2003) assessed the impact of financial aid eligibility on full-time college attendance and completion through exogenous changes in a financial aid program in the US. While, Dinarski (2003) reported that financial aid programs have a strong and positive effect on full-time attendance, the study found no significant effect on college completion. In a study using data from the University of Oregon, Singell (2004) estimated a bivariate profit model to assess the effect of different types of financial aid on retention. He found that a $1,000 increment in need- and merit-based grants and subsidized loans increased the retention probability by 1.4% and 4.3%, respectively. However, the effect of unsubsidized loans was close to zero. In their study of a university in Spain, Lassibile and Navarro Gomez (2008) reported that students who receive financial support have lower dropout

rates than those who do not have this type of support. Gross, Torres, and Zerquera (2013) found that financial aid given to Latino students in baccalaureate degree institutions in Indiana, US, increased the students' persistence when compared to students from other racial groups; however, they reported a negative correlation between student loans and the students' odds of graduating. Gross, Zerquera, Inge, and Berry (2014) found that financial aid had a positive effect on degree completion for Latino students. In Mexico, Canton and Blom (2010) studied the impact of a loan program on accessibility to higher education and academic performance. Using a regression discontinuity design, they found that receiving a financial package contributed to an improvement in the students' academic performance.

Effect on time-to-degree

The effect of financial aid on time-to-degree for undergraduate students has received less attention in the literature than the same effect on doctoral students. However, in recent years the interest in this effect on undergraduates has increased. One preliminary idea is found in Nora (1990), where the number of semesters is associated with persistence. As persistence increases, a student manages to advance to more semesters. Lam (1999) reported that students who receive student loans earn a bachelor degree faster than those who do not secure loans. Meser and Wolter (2010) proposed a different idea; they affirmed that students with financial aid can continue studying and accumulating credits when macroeconomic problems occur, while those without financial help and who work to pay for their education are forced to prolong their time-to-degree. Bound, Lovenheim, and Turner (2010) found that financial aid would help reduce time-to-degree because of changes in students' labour supply. Scott-Clayton (2011) also found that receipt of a merit-based financial scholarship increased completion rates and increased the probability of a student completing 120 credits in four years in West Virginia, US. Similar results have been reported by Lassibile and Navarro Gomez (2008), where financial aid was found to reduce time-to-degree. Using data from Germany, Glocker (2011) reported that students who received student aid completed their degrees faster than those who received other sources of funding, such as parental or private transfers. By contrast, Letkiewicz, Lim, Heckman, Bartholomae, Fox, and Montalvo (2014) studied a sample of students from Ohio and found that students who expect to have high debt at the end of their studies have a higher probability of taking more than four years to complete their degree.

To the best of the author's knowledge, the impact of loans on time-to-degree in less-developed countries has not been evaluated using formal statistical techniques with causal interpretation. Ferreyra et al. (2017) showed that, on average, the ratio of actual time-to-degree over statutory time-to-degree is 1.2 in Brazil, 1.28 in Colombia and 1.42 in the US. Such a finding reveals a positive relationship between time-to-degree and student loans as the US has a higher loan penetration rate than the other two countries. However, this relationship does not have a causal interpretation as it does not control for possible sources of selection. Using structural models with causal interpretation, Rau, Rojas and Urzua (2013) studied the impact of the Chilean State Guaranteed Loan (SGL) program on enrolment, dropouts, and adult earnings and reported that the SGL program increased enrolment and reduced dropouts; however, the authors did not address time-to-degree in their paper. The same limitation can be found in Horn, Santelices, and Avendaño (2014) whose data only allowed them to study persistence but not time-to-degree. Regarding the Colombian case, Melguizo, Sanchez-Torres, and Jaime (2011) reported that student loans reduced dropout rates, especially among the middle- and high-income students. However, again, their work did not consider the impact of student loans on time-to-degree.

In summary, the literature from the developed countries shows that financial aid, in the form of student loans, has a significant impact on time-to-degree; moreover, students with loans tend to obtain their degrees in a shorter time than students without loans. However, the same phenomenon has yet to be fully studied in less-developed countries like Peru.

THE STUDENT LOANS PROGRAM AT PUCP

Peru's rate of loans for students in higher education (less than 3% in 2006) is one of the lowest in the region (Universia, 2009). In that country, only one public institution, and very few private institutions, provide loans to students in higher education. Private banks have minimal participation in these types of loans, despite the great expansion of other forms of credit in the Peruvian economy in recent years.

The student loan program at PUCP was created in 1967 to assist students with financial problems that could threaten their status as regular students.[1] To apply for a loan, students must be able to meet two requirements: (a) a family income lower than four times the current minimum wage and (b) a satisfactory academic performance (the student's grade point average [GPA] should be above 60% of the maximum possible score).[2] To evaluate these two conditions, a permanent commission was established consisting of social workers and academic representatives. Students who were granted loans would not be required to pay tuition and other fees for one year (two academic semesters); in special cases, they could also receive extra funds to pay for lunch and books. Six months after graduation, the students were required to contact the authorities at PUCP and arrange a repayment plan with a flat interest rate. This plan depended on each student's repayment capacity and was typically negotiated with the social assistant. These rules were maintained for about 30 years with minor changes. However, in 2002, the program was revised to include stricter conditions for new applicants.

For many reasons, it was common to observe students receiving a loan without fulfilling these conditions. In some cases, the committee members considered that some schools inside the PUCP had different standards for grading their students. In other cases, the committee members took into account reports on the applicants' motivation and perception based on information provided by their teachers. Committee members also understood that other personal and qualitative factors (the environment in which the students grew up, their relationships with their parents, the development of skills during childhood and socialization problems) could affect their academic performance. Another important factor that characterized this program was that students applied voluntarily for the loans, and the committee members decided who would be the beneficiaries.

To determine the amount of money that students must pay for tuition and fees, PUCP has a tiered fee payment structure that takes into account the income distribution in Peruvian society, and it seeks to ensure that all students are able to receive an education regardless of their financial circumstances. That fee payment structure currently has five levels, with Level 1 corresponding to low-income students and Level 5 corresponding to students with the highest

[1] The information on the characteristics of the program was obtained from interviews with representatives of PUCP who were in charge of the program during the period of analysis.

[2] Academic grading in Peru employs a scale from 0 to 20 points, where the passing threshold is 11 points. These scores are absolute and not relative to the class. In higher education, a student who receives a score in the 0-10 range in one course must repeat that course. A student who repeats the same course three times is expelled from school. The weighted average score is calculated per semester using the numbers of credits of all courses as weights. The cumulative score is the weighted average score of all the courses taken (whether passed or not) from the first semester to the present.

level of income. When students are admitted to PUCP, a thorough socioeconomic study is conducted to determine how they should be classified based on their financial situation. This process also includes interviews with a student's parents and other relatives.

Students could be reclassified at any time if a change occurs that worsens their financial situation, or they could apply for a loan. In either case, a new socioeconomic study is conducted. In addition, students who are granted loans are permanently monitored to detect any positive change in their financial status. If this occurred, or if the students' academic performance is not as good as expected, they could be expelled from the loan program.

To provide figures related to the program in the 1990s and the first five years of the 21st century, Table 1 shows the number of enrolled students from the second semester of 1998 to the first semester of 2002, with the numbers broken down into five levels and student borrower status.

As seen in Table 1, out of the total student population, less than 5% of students applied for and received loans. As expected, the majority of the students who applied for and benefited from this program belonged to Level 1 (the lowest income group), and only a few belonged to Level 2.

Table 1: Number of Students at PUCP by loan status and tiered fee system

	With Loan		**Without Loan**						**Total**
Level:	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6[a]	
1998-2	691	0	3,649	2,556	2,223	1,686	988	1,304	13,097
1999-1	666	0	3,937	2,744	2,332	1,717	970	1,267	13,633
1999-2	729	7	4,086	2,934	2,434	1,671	871	1,194	13,926
2000-1	733	0	4,284	3,241	2,508	1,757	967	1,210	14,700
2000-2	724	2	4,436	3,225	2,531	1,676	896	1,096	14,586
2001-1	665	1	4,298	3,353	2,706	1,813	898	1,104	14,838
2001-2	626	0	4,529	3,475	2,614	1,712	774	1,011	14,741
2002-1	504	1	4,744	3,724	2,791	1,793	1,758	--	15,315
2002-2	434	0	4,871	3,866	2,747	1,676	1,507	--	15,101

[a] Since 2002, levels 5 and 6 were combined.
Source: PUCP data bases

RESEARCH METHODS

Econometric issues[3]

The data available for this study came from student records; therefore, the observational data may suffer from different selection biases. Thus, it is important to consider the selection mechanisms that underlie the observational data. The first mechanism is related to the students who apply for and receive student loans. As seen in Table 1, most of the students who obtained loans are from the low-income group, and this selection mechanism is the result of the program rules. One part of the identification strategy suggests that the data for the students (with and without loans) must be restricted to poor students. A similar argument can be made about the merit-based component of the program, in which higher grades are expected to be observed for

[3] Readers who are not familiar with regression analysis and instrumental variables are directed to read Chapter 15 of Wooldridge (2006), or may skip this subsection.

students who received loans. One way to address this problem is to restrict the sample to students who meet at least the basic requirements stipulated in the program rules.

However, the voluntary decision regarding whether or not to apply for a loan and the yearly evaluation of the loan conducted by PUCP create a second selection mechanism, which leads to the problem of selection in observable and unobservable variables. In this scenario, simple linear regression analysis fails because it only controls for observable covariates. To address these problems, this study used instrumental variables, which, under certain conditions, can remove the hidden bias caused by unobservable characteristics.[4]

Thus, a parametric approach was used based on a linear regression model, where the treatment variable d_i is an endogenous regressor:

$$y_i = \beta_1 + \boldsymbol{\beta}_2' \mathbf{x}_i + \theta d_i + u_i \qquad (1)$$

where $\mathbf{x}_i$ is the vector of observable characteristics and d_i is a dummy variable, which indicates that i-th individual received or did not receive the loan. Two methods using instrumental variables were employed to consistently estimate the parameter θ.[5] The first method is the standard 2-stage least squares (2SLS) estimator; the second method is the treatment effect model. In its first stage, 2SLS estimates a linear regression model where d_i is regressed on the instrument z_i and other exogenous covariates; then it estimates model (1) after replacing d_i for $\hat{d}_i$, which is the linear prediction in the first stage. The treatment model specifies one additional equation:

$$d_i = 1[\alpha_1 + \boldsymbol{\alpha}_2' \mathbf{x}_i + \alpha_3 z_i + \varepsilon_i > 0] \qquad (2)$$

where the $1[.]$ operator takes the value 1 if the expression in brackets is true, and 0 otherwise. It is assumed that u_i and ε_i are independent normal error terms. Equation (1) and Equation (2) are estimated simultaneously by maximum likelihood. Finally, because the estimation of the previous methods is restricted to individuals who did not drop out of the university, there can be an additional source of selection that could bias the results. To correct for this additional source of bias, a Heckman approach was added to the 2SLS estimator in both stages. This approach estimates the probability of not dropping out of school, and it has the advantage that it incorporates information from individuals who quit studying into the estimation.

The data and variables

The main source of data comes from the administrative and academic records of the PUCP. The socioeconomic information of the students was obtained from the information provided on the Household Socioeconomic Form, which each student completed upon entering the university and each time he or she requested a change in his or her fee payment scale. Likewise, information about the semesters in which the students were enrolled, the semesters in which they were not enrolled, their grades and their GPA were obtained from the official databases.

[4] Some unobservable characteristics are: (a) attitude toward borrowing, (b) preference for "working and studying" or "only studying," (c) student's motivation to regard studies as a personal effort and (d) other psychological aspects of the students' personalities.

[5] The effectiveness of this technique relies on the validity of the instrument; it is to be correlated to the variable d_i and uncorrelated to the error term u_i.

The population of individual to be analysed is the group of students who entered PUCP from 1997 to 2002.[6] Students' files before 1997 lacked basic information that can be used to conduct the study, and some program rules were changed after 2002. Therefore, the author preferred not to increase the sample size with students enrolled before 1997 and after 2002. Most of the students in the sample graduated between 5 and 10 years after the year of admission, although others took longer to graduate. During this period (1997 to 2002), the Household Socioeconomic Form was completed on paper, so the information had to be entered into a computer. Due to the limited budget for the study, the author had to take a random sample of students who met the socioeconomic level 1 requirements (Level 1 as in Table 1) and obtained a GPA ≥ 12 points. Although some students who received a loan had a GPA below this level, this threshold was used in this study to define a "potentially eligible student".[7] These two conditions (belonging to Level 1 and having a GPA ≥12) were applied to select the study sample.

From the random sample of 1,009 students admitted in between 1997 and 2002, 885 students had graduated from PUCP and 124 had dropped out of by 2018.[8] As seen in Table 2, 305 students received financial aid (student loans), while 709 did not.

From this point onward, the individuals who obtained a loan will be referred to as "treated" students and the remaining students will be referred to as "untreated". The treated group is further subdivided into two levels of treatment, generating two treated groups that are compared with the untreated group.

Table 2: Number and Percentage of students in the sample, by participation in the program[1]

	Graduated by 2018		
Type of student	No	Yes	Total
Untreated	79	625	704
	[63.7%]	[70.6%]	[69.9%]
Treated: 1 to 5 semesters	27	109	136
	[21.8%]	[12.3%]	[13.4%]
Treated: 6 or more semesters	18	151	169
	[14.5%]	[17.1%]	[16.7%]
Total	124	885	1,009
	[100%]	[100%]	[100%]

[1/] Column percentages in brackets

Three arbitrary and distinct levels of treatment were considered, as shown in Table 2. In this study, S=0 stands for the untreated students, S=1 stands for students who received the loan for one to five semesters and S=2 refers to students who received the loan for six or more semesters. The dependent variable in this study is time-to-degree, which is defined as the

[6] The data were originally collected for the "XXII International Course of Student Loans for Higher Education" organized by the *Asociación Panamericana de Instituciones de Credito Educativo* (APICE), which took place in Lima in 2009. The data were updated by the author in subsequent years.

[7] The GPA used here is the weighted average of all the courses taken by a student during all the semesters he or she has been enrolled as a regular student at PUCP, weighted by the number of credits. The sample was restricted to this condition. However, administrators also provided the GPA data for each semester, and the author observed that, in some semesters, the GPA could be below 12 points. As the rule of 12 grade points was not strictly enforced, it was normal for the students with a GPA<12 in one semester to obtain a loan immediately after that semester.

[8] It is very unlikely that students who dropped out of school will return after 2018.

number of semesters from entry to degree completion.[9] It does not include the semesters that a student spent away from school.

The instrumental variable used in this research is related to the legal minimum wage (LMW) in Peru, which is set by the country's Ministry of Economy and Finance. In practice, many Peruvian workers earn salaries lower than the LMW; this is because of the high degree of informality in the Peruvian economy. As previously explained in the section that describes the student loan program, the LMW was used to determine if the student's family was sufficiently poor to be eligible for a loan. When family income was four times lower than the minimum wage, the probability of obtaining a loan increased. The value of the instrument equals four times the LMW at the date a student applied for a loan, or four times the LMW at the date of admission at PUCP if the student never applied for a loan. Remember, all students are evaluated socioeconomically when entering the university. This instrument provides two pieces of information. First, it captures the intention of a particular student to apply for a loan (which does not guarantee that he or she will receive the loan). Second, if the LMW is high enough, the student's chances of receiving a loan increases.

Figure 1 shows the LMW in constant Peruvian soles in 1997 by each semester in the sample; as seen, this wage increased in real Peruvian soles in 1997 (adjusted according to the annual inflation rate). In Figure 1, the "jumps" in the time series correspond to changes in the nominal minimum wage. Those changes occur irregularly and respond to pressure from political parties, election promises or the ideological reasoning of the authorities. In the scope of PUCP, changes in the LMW are not related to student academic performance or time-to-degree; therefore, they could be considered as exogenous to the model.

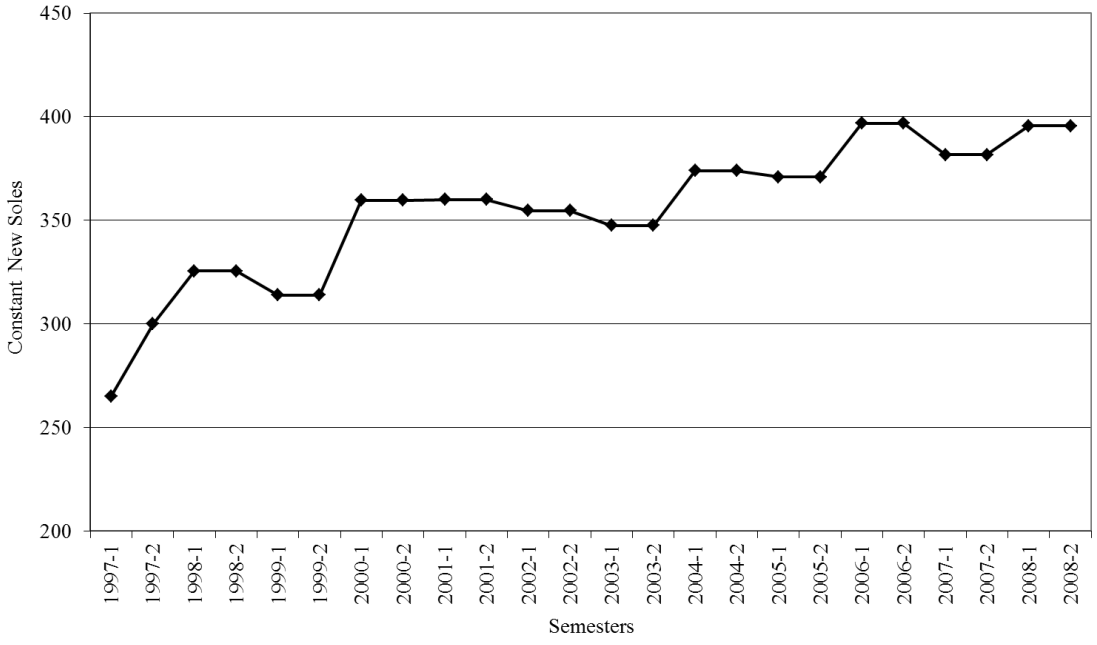

Figure 1:Minimum Wage in Peru
(Constant Peruvian New Soles of 1997)

Regarding the covariates, the Household Socioeconomic Form provided data on individual and household characteristics, including household income (declared and imputed). Social workers

[9] In Peru, degree completion for undergraduate students requires passing all courses for the duration of their studies.

checked bills and paycheques, as well as other sources of income. The imputed household income was the information on income that was used in this study. For all the untreated students, the data on household income corresponds to the imputed income during the admissions process. For all the treated students, the data on household income corresponds to the imputed income at the time they applied for the loan (an update of the information provided previously).

These data were appended to the academic record of each student. These records included GPA and percentile rank by semester, the school in which the student was enrolled, the semester in which each student received the loan, the date of graduation, etc.

The observed covariates were classified into two groups: student characteristics and household characteristics. The first group includes age (at date of admission) and sex. Some dummy variables on the undergraduate school to which the students belonged were also included in order to capture the variety in the study plans among the schools at PUCP (the schools of Law, the school of Social Sciences and the school of Sciences and Engineering have longer study plans than other schools at PUCP). A set of dummies for year of admission was also included as covariates. The next student characteristic is the percentile rank for the first semester in which the student studied at PUCP, which is a measure of his or her academic performance. The percentile rank was measured in the first semester to ensure that it was a pre-treatment variable. The last covariate is the type of high school (private or public); this was included because, in Peru, there are major disparities in the level of education of each type of school (Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento, 2006).

The second group shows four household characteristics: imputed household income, number of floors in the dwelling, number of siblings living at home and number of household members suffering from chronic diseases.[10] The main idea about the last two covariates is that if these variables increase, it is more difficult for poor students to focus on their studies, possibly forcing them to work and, ultimately, affecting their time-to-degree.

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics of the endogenous variable and the aforementioned covariates in the sample. As seen at the top of this table, there is evidence of some degree of association between time-to-degree and treatment status (treated or untreated). Without controlling for any covariate, the number of semesters at PUCP is smaller for students who received a loan for six or more semesters, which is not a surprising result given the rules of the program. Across these groups, there are also no significant differences in the students' age and the number of floors in their dwellings.

Table 3 shows some important differences between the treated and untreated groups. There is a significant difference in the percentile rank for the first semester (a measurement of student ability), where the academic performance was better for the treated students than the untreated students, and academic performance increased with the intensity of the treatment. The tests show that, because the monthly household income is lower for students with loans, the treated students came from a subpopulation with a lower economic status in comparison to the untreated students. This result shows that, although the student sample was limited to individuals who belonged to Level 1, there are still income differences within this level, and those treated students seem to be poorer than the untreated students. In addition, there is a significant difference in the number of siblings living in the household (with a greater number of siblings in the households of treated students who received loans for one to five semesters),

[10] It includes reports of household members with mental health problems, disabilities, etc. Typically, only serious diseases are reported on the Household Socioeconomic Form.

and there are differences in the number of household members who suffer from chronic diseases (more frequent in the treated students' households).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for covariates in sample[a]

			Treated	
		Without loan	**1 to 5 semesters**	**6 to more semesters**
Outcome variable:				
Median time-to-degree (number of semesters)		14.000	14.000	13.000
Average time-to-degree		14.066	14.193	13.166
			(0.5908)	(0.0000)
Quantitative covariates: (average values)				
Students Age (in years, at the time of admission)		18.058	17.908	18.079
			(0.4869)	(0.9089)
Percentile Rank (at first semester)		62.229	69.619	81.601
			(0.0050)	(0.0000)
Household Income (in constant Peruvian Soles of 1997)		1354.127	1108.336	968.060
			(0.0000)	(0.0000)
Number of siblings living in household		2.264	2.713	2.407
			(0.0001)	(0.1556)
Number of household members who suffer of diseases		0.668	0.908	0.840
			(0.0068)	(0.0297)
Number of floors in dwelling		1.328	1.275229	1.238411
			(0.3898)	(0.0894)
Qualitative covariates: (percent)				
Sex	Male	50.40	49.54	47.02
	Female	49.60	50.46	52.98
	P-value		(0.869)	(0.456)
Type of high school before PUCP	Private school	66.67	56.88	55.63
	Non-private school	33.33	43.12	44.37
	P-value		(0.048)	(0.011)
Undergraduate school	Administration and accounting	16.48	18.35	5.96
	Architecture and urbanism	0.8	0.00	0
	Art	1.6	1.83	0.66
	Sciences and engineering	32.16	42.20	47.68
	Social sciences	4.48	5.50	10.6
	Communications arts and sciences	9.92	11.93	11.26
	Law	22.56	13.76	17.22
	Education	4.48	3.67	2.65
	Administration and executive studies	0.64	0.00	0.00
	Liberal arts and humanities	6.88	2.75	3.97
	P-value		(0.263)	(0.000)

[a]. For quantitative variables, p-values of t test of equal means with respect to untreated students. For qualitative variables, p-values from the Pearson Chi2 test with respect to the untreated group

To summarize, being identified as a treated student is clearly related to a student's academic performance, the economic situation of his or her family, the number of siblings he or she has and the number of relatives with chronic diseases living at home.

The bottom part of Table 3 presents a comparison of the treated versus untreated students for the qualitative variables in the sample. No significant differences were found in terms of the students' sex. By contrast, the proportion of students who come from private high schools was lower for the treated students than the untreated students. Finally, many treated students were enrolled (at the time of evaluation) in the School of Sciences and the School of Engineering (around 45%); for the untreated students, the percentage enrolled in that specific school at PUCP was lower (32.2%).

RESULTS

This section presents the main results of this research. The impact was calculated using four methods: OLS, 2SLS, a treatment effect model and 2SLS with a sample selection correction.

Table 4 presents a summary of the estimation of the parameter of interest θ from equation (1) under the four methods, including a set of covariates (not shown in Table 4), such as sex, number of children in the household, number of household members who suffer from diseases, family income, number of floors in the dwelling, year of admission to PUCP, percentile rank of the student, type of high school, PUCP school to which the student belongs and the time dummy variables. To evaluate the impact based on the intensity of the treatment, the subsamples were defined with respect to the number of semesters for which a student obtained a loan, and a linear regression model was used to analyse each subsample. The first subsample included S=0 and S=1 students (students without a loan and students who received a loan for one to five semesters). The second subsample included S=0 and S=2 students (students without a loan and students who received a loan for more than five semesters).

The OLS estimates are shown at the top of Table 4; the impact was not significantly different from zero when a student received a loan for fewer than six semesters under any of the four aforementioned methods. Using 2SLS, the impact is only significant at the 10% level. Notice that the instrument employed is valid because the F-statistic of the excluded instruments is greater than 10 units, which agrees with the well-known "rule of thumb".

The bottom part of Table 4, shows the impact of the student loan variable on time-to-degree when a student received a loan for six or more semesters. In this case, the estimation is significantly different from zero, and its sign is negative under the four methods; however, the size of the impact varies.

The impact is smaller under OLS, where the estimated impact is only -0.87 semesters; this means that students with a loan complete the course of study faster than students without a loan. Controlling for endogeneity through the instrumental variables, the 2SLS estimation jumps to -2.085, and the treatment model estimator is -1.830 semesters. These two results demonstrate that students who received student loans for more than six semesters graduate one year faster than those who did not receive a loan. The F-test and the Wald-test results for the excluded instrument (the instrument related to LMW) show that the "rule of thumb" is satisfied. Nevertheless, these estimates do not consider the information of individuals who dropped out of PUCP. The estimation under 2SLS with a sample selection correction requires an estimate of the inverse Mill's ratio, which is performed by using the probit model to regress a binary variable; this takes the value 1 if the student graduated, and 0 if not. The regressors included in this auxiliary estimation are: type of high school (public or private), if the student still lives

with his or her parents, family income, number of household members with chronic diseases, a set of dummy variables for each school (Engineering, Law, etc.) and some indicators of academic performance. As seen in Table 4, the estimated impact is -1.264 semesters, which is smaller than the estimations under OLS and the 2SLS and treatment effect model.

Table 4: Regression results

1 to 5 semesters				
	OLS	2SLS	Treatment Model	Heckman-2SLS
Program dummy (1=with loan, 0=without loan)	0.095	-1.102	-0.431	-0.367
P-value	0.67	0.07	0.38	0.52
R-squared	0.22	0.19	--	0.31
F-test (joint significance)	13.41	13.10	--	19.97
F-test (exclud. instrum.)	--	113.60	--	111.74
Wald-test (joint signif.)	--	--	204.77	--
Wald-test (exclud. Instrum.)	--	--	52.87	--
Mill's ratio coefficient	--	--	--	5.127
P-value (Mills ratio)	--	--	--	0.00
Observations	724	724	724	706

6 to more semesters				
	OLS	2SLS	Treatment Model	Heckman-2SLS
Treatment Dummy (1=with loan, 0=without loan)	-0.872	-2.025	-1.830	-1.264
P-value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02
R-squared	0.25	0.22	--	0.36
F-test (joint significance)	16.81	15.84	--	25.93
F-test (excluden instrument)	--	130.32	--	105.43
Wald-test (joint signif.)	--	--	254.17	--
Wald-test (exclud. Instrum.)	--	--	59.82	--
Mill's ratio coefficient	--	--	--	5.003
P-value (Mills ratio coeff.)	--	--	--	0.00
Observations	766	766	766	740

This result could be explained by the sample selection correction. The academic performance is less satisfactory and the socioeconomic status is lower for students who drop out than students who stay in school. The omission of this drop out group in the 2SLS and the treatment effect model creates a sample selection correction that affects the time-to-degree. As seen in the bottom part of Table 4, the coefficient of the Inverse Mill's ratio is statistically significant, which supports the idea that sample selection occurred. Consequently, the results of the last regression are used as the best estimates of the impact of student loans on time-to-degree.

The result can also be interpreted as the accumulated effect of the loan. Being a beneficiary of a loan for a long time helps students take and pass their courses; however, students who do not

receive any kind of loan are sometimes forced to work or take fewer courses, which prolongs their time-to-degree. In the curricula of all the school programs at PUCP, many courses are prerequisites for more advanced ones ("gateway courses"); therefore, after several semesters, if a student does not enrol in or does not pass even one of these courses, the time-to-degree is automatically extended.

Table 5, presents the full results for Equation (1) by 2SLS with a sample selection correction for the (S=0, S=2) subsample. The sex variable was not significant, which means that no significant difference in time-to-degree was found based on sex. Age was also a significant variable; students who are admitted to the university at an older age require more time to graduate; however, the impact is not very large. Additionally, a student's age does not affect the probability of him or her obtaining a loan. Whether or not a student attended a private high school was not significant at the 5% level; therefore, this variable is not a good predictor of time-to-degree, although it explains the probability of obtaining a loan for six or more semesters.

The percentile rank was found to be significant in both steps, but with different signs. In the first step, students with a higher percentile rank were more likely to obtain a loan, and in the second step, time-to-degree decreased with percentile rank, which means that students with a stronger academic performance obtained their degrees faster than the less skilful students. Regarding the number of household members who suffer from chronic diseases, this variable was also significant in both steps with a positive sign. This means that it is more likely for a student to obtain a loan for a long period if he or she has household relatives who have a serious disease, and it also increases the student's time-to-degree. The number of children living in the student's household was only found to be significant in the first stage. The logarithm of household income was found to be significant in both regressions, and its effect was negative. This result suggests that a higher income reduces the probability of obtaining a loan, and it also reduces time-to-degree because those students do not have financial restrictions. The dummies for the schools of Engineering, Social Sciences and Law are significant and positive in the time-to-degree regression; this means that it takes more time to graduate from these schools than the other schools at PUCP.

Table 5: Results for 2SLS with correction for sample selection (6 to more semesters)

Variables	Time-to-degree	First stage
Treatment Dummy (1=with loan, 0=without loan)	-1.264**	--
	(0.528)	--
Sex (1= Male, 0 = Female)	0.163	-0.022
	(0.143)	(0.026)
Students Age (at the time of admission)	0.078**	-0.002
	(0.034)	(0.006)
Type of School (1=Private, 0 = Non private)	0.262*	-0.083***
	(0.153)	(0.027)
Log (Percentile Rank)	-0.853***	0.096***
	(0.130)	(0.021)
Number of household members who suffer from chronic diseases	0.182**	0.035**
	(0.079)	(0.014)
Number of children living in household	0.109	0.049***
	(0.068)	(0.012)
Log (Household Income in Peruvian Soles of 1997)	-0.435*	-0.299***

	(0.225)	(0.030)
Number of floors in dwelling	0.052	-0.006
	(0.116)	(0.021)
School of Science and Engineering	0.995***	0.100***
	(0.180)	(0.032)
School of Social Sciences	1.139***	0.090
	(0.313)	(0.057)
School of Law	2.081***	0.008
	(0.182)	(0.034)
Dummy 2000	-0.446**	-0.507***
	(0.200)	(0.054)
Dummy 2001	-0.857***	-0.510***
	(0.187)	(0.053)
Dummy 2002	-1.013***	-0.500***
	(0.182)	(0.053)
Inverse Mill's ratio	5.003***	-0.336***
	(0.537)	(0.089)
Instrument	--	0.002***
	--	(0.000)
Constant	17.342***	-0.380
	(1.758)	(0.346)

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

CONCLUSIONS

The number of student loan programs for higher education has increased around the world, and this paper presented an in-depth exploration of the experience of students at a large middle-class university in Peru. This study focused on the impact of this program on time-to-degree, which is the time a student takes to complete all the courses in his or her curriculum. This variable is usually affected by the student's socioeconomic status and family characteristics. In this sense, student loans can help students partially overcome these problems and allow them to have more time to complete their studies and feel more enthusiastic about doing so. If this assumption is true, students who receive financial assistance should complete their study plans in a shorter time than students who do not benefit from a loan program.

This paper showed that student loans are effective in reducing the time-to-degree when a student obtains the loan for six or more semesters. Based on the results, a student who receives a student loan for six or more semesters can complete his or her course of study more than one semester faster than a student who does not apply for or receive a similar loan. However, for students who receive the loans for less than six semesters, the effect was not significantly different from zero. This result is accurate, valid and trustworthy because the study used an instrumental variable that is exogenously related to the "treatment variable", and it also controlled for sample selection that may occur inasmuch as time-to-degree is only observed for students who do not drop out of the university.

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Self-efficacy and quality of classroom interactions of EFL teachers in Niger

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This study explores the relationships between self-efficacy and observed quality of classroom interactions of EFL teachers in Niger and how they compare to their American counterparts. We collected and analyzed self-efficacy data from 609 EFL teachers using the Teachers' Sense of Self-efficacy Scale (TSES). In addition, classroom interaction data were collected from 53 Nigerien EFL teachers using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). All the self-efficacy subscales were significantly correlated with the CLASS Instructional Support domain. When we compared the self-efficacy and classroom interactions scores of Nigerien teachers with those of American teachers, a significant difference was only identified in the classroom management scale of TSES. In terms of the CLASS score difference, Nigerien teachers showed significantly higher scores on the Negative Climate and Analysis and Problem-Solving subscales. These findings suggest both teachers' self-efficacy and the classroom interaction quality may need to be assessed in different ways across the two cultures.

Keywords: self-efficacy; classroom interactions; English as a Foreign Language (EFL); Niger; teacher education

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in ways to measure effective teaching practices around the world (e.g., Hamre et al., 2013). Effective teaching practices can be broadly defined to include teacher knowledge, practices and beliefs as well as student type (Bell, Gitomer, McCaffrey, Hamre, & Pianta, 2011). In this article, we focus on teacher-student interactions within the classroom because of the relationship between such interactions and student learning (Hamre et al., 2013; Hamre & Pianta, 2007). Based on the assumption that daily interactions between students and teachers promote student learning and development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998), the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008) was developed and has been widely used in research. Student learning is also significantly influenced by a teacher's belief system. Teacher self-efficacy—teacher's perceived confidence on their specific teaching ability—is known to be one of the

most important aspects of the overall teacher belief system because it is directly linked to their implementation of effective instruction (e.g., Guo, Piasta, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010).

Though much research has verified the impact of teacher-student relationships and teacher self-efficacy in Western countries on student learning, little research has been carried out to test the relationships in economically disadvantaged countries in West Africa. In this study, we focus on Niger, one of the most impoverished countries in the world according to Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2018). Similar to other West African countries, there are increasing needs for high quality teachers in Niger, but the reality is that many teachers in Niger are temporarily employed and do not have official teacher certification (Kielland, 2016). An additional challenge for Nigerien teachers is that they are expected to implement the national curriculum by using uniform textbooks and assessment systems despite inconsistent training and support, which may lead to limited teacher self-efficacy in the classroom—particularly regarding instructional planning (Nabi, 2010). In this educational setting, teachers' self-efficacy and interactions among teachers and students may show different patterns and trends from those in Western countries. This study aims to contribute to enhancing understanding of what counts as effective in economically disadvantaged West African countries like Niger by situating it in local cultures and contexts.

For the purpose of the study, we operationally define quality of classroom interactions as the nature and characteristics of interactions between teachers and students in the classroom; such interactions have three observable domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). Each domain will be explained below in the section named Classroom Observation as Teaching Effectiveness. Using this definition of classroom interactions, this study examines the relationship between Nigerien EFL teachers' self-efficacy and the quality of classroom interactions in the Nigerien EFL context, in which US-based texts are used within the classroom. We believe that the findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of EFL teachers in developing countries and provide useful information for the systematic improvement of their teaching practices.

The following research questions underpin the study:

1. To what extent are the Teachers' Senses of Efficacy Scale (TSES) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed to assess US teachers, transferable to the Niger EFL context?
2. To what extent are Nigerien EFL teachers' self-efficacy consistent with their observed quality of classroom interactions?
3. What are descriptive patterns identified in terms of self-efficacy and quality of classroom interactions of EFL teachers in Niger compared with those of American teachers?

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Teachers' self-efficacy (TSE)

Definition and perspective. TSE often refers to a teacher's self-perception of their teaching competence. It is a future-oriented belief about the capabilities one expects to display in a given situation (Bandura, 1997). TSE does not only refer to a teacher's sense of their own capabilities as a teacher but also their self-assessment of external resources and constraints to accomplish

a specific teaching task in a particular context (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). It is important to study teacher self-efficacy because it is related to such varied educational outcomes as student achievement, motivation, teachers' planning and organization abilities, commitment, and instructional behaviour (Allinder, 1994; Chacón, 2005; Johnson, 1992; Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012; Thoonen, Sleegers, Peetsma, & Oort, 2011; Tournaki & Podell, 2005). This line of research suggests that an investigation of the relationships between teacher self-efficacy and educational outcomes can provide researchers and educators with valuable information regarding how to improve classroom instruction and enhance student engagement.

Sociocultural natures of TSE. Bandura's (1993; 2001) social cognitive theory proposes that an individual's efficacy is shaped and affected by social and cultural surroundings. TSE is a type of human efficacy that largely determines instructional behaviour, which, in turn, impacts students' learning. In other words, TSE is context-dependent and subject-matter specific. This raises a concern as to what extent TSE is transferable across contexts (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Using Bandura's social cognitive theory, we examined how an instrument developed to measure TSE by US researchers can be adapted and used as a reliable and valid measurement tool to assess teachers' self-efficacy with the consideration of a specific EFL teaching context in Niger. In addition, using the data from the TSE instrument, we further analyzed the relationship of the EFL teachers' self-efficacy representing their espoused abilities and actual abilities, which was measured by CLASS.

EFL teacher self-efficacy. EFL teachers have unique resources and constraints in their teaching context. EFL learners live in their own country in which English is not the dominant language; teachers thus have few opportunities to practice English conversation. Students in Francophone countries, such as Niger, learn English as a third or fourth language after their regional language(s) and an official language (French). Only a small number of researchers have focused on EFL teachers' self-efficacy and its relationship to different factors such as teaching experience and gender (Karimvand, 2011), their English proficiency (Choi & Lee, 2016), burnout (Ghaslani, 2015), their motivational teaching behaviours (Huangfu, 2012), and emotional intelligence (Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009; Rastegar & Memarpour, 2009).

The relationship between EFL teachers' TSE and their actual instructional practices has been a relatively neglected topic in research. Nishino (2012) investigated the relationship among Japanese high school teachers' beliefs, their practices, and external factors regarding Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Her analysis revealed that teachers' CLT self-efficacy had a weak but direct impact on their classroom practices. Eslami and Fatahi (2008) found a positive relationship between self-efficacy and practices: EFL teachers with higher self-efficacy tended to use communication-based strategies. Chacón (2005), who examined self-efficacy of EFL middle school teachers in Venezuela, also found a positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and instructional strategies. Although these studies offer important insights into the close relationship between self-efficacy and practices, they all used teachers' self-reported instructional strategies as data. That is, the actual instructional strategies the teachers used in their classrooms were not directly observed. The current study builds on the previous research by implementing direct observation of teachers in order to understand the relationship between self-efficacy and teaching practice.

Classroom observation as teaching effectiveness

One of the common beliefs of policymakers—that students' scores on standardized tests can be used to evaluate teachers' instructional quality—has been criticized by education

researchers. As an alternative to this accountability model, more direct observational methods have been recommended because they can provide "rich, descriptive information about teachers' practices and students' experiences" (Pianta & Hamre, 2009, p. 110). In a time of national scrutiny of current teacher evaluation systems in the US (see Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012), there has been a "renewed emphasis on developing standardized classroom observational measures with adequate reliability and validity" (Pianta & Hamre, 2009, p. 110). This call for high-quality standardized classroom observational measures is aligned with the consensus that "evidence of teacher contributions to student learning should be part of teacher evaluation systems, along with evidence about the quality of teacher practices" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012, p. 8).

The CLASS framework focuses on teacher-student interactions as a key component of student learning. Numerous studies have demonstrated a link between classroom interactions as assessed by the CLASS and student learning (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Pianta & Allen, 2008). CLASS captures the complexity of the teaching processes, conceptualizing teaching in three different domains (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008): 1) Emotional Support, 2) Classroom Organization, and 3) Instructional Support.

Emotional Support focuses on the affective qualities of classroom interactions, including the emotional tone of the classroom and how supportive the teacher is of students. Classroom Organization examines how the teacher manages the classroom environment and creates a productive atmosphere for students. Finally, Instructional Support focuses on what instructional methodologies are practiced and how the teacher provides feedback to students. Taken together, these three domains provide an illustrative view of classroom interactions.

Classroom observation for EFL instruction. Although research has been conducted on evaluation of teachers' instructional quality through classroom observation, we lack such research in the global context, especially in the EFL setting. Some qualitative studies, such as that conducted by Suryati (2015) and Tsai (2008), used observational protocols they created as tools for collecting data. Mostly, those protocols include specific instructional components, such as classroom activities, classroom instruction, and feedback. In contrast, Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) and Smit, van de Grift, de Bot, and Jansen (2017) used quantitative methods to develop and test observation protocols for EFL instruction. However, these observation protocols focus on such particular instructional components as motivational strategies (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008) and scaffolding strategies for reading comprehension (Smit et al., 2017).

To the best of our knowledge, there is no study that relates EFL teachers' self-efficacy to the quality of teacher-student interactions as measured by a comprehensive observation protocol like the CLASS. As EFL learners have unique characteristics and needs, especially in economically disadvantaged countries, investigations of their teaching interactions can expand our understanding of the field from a cross-cultural perspective.

METHODS

Research design

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design "to explore relationships among variables" (Martella, Nelson, Morgan, & Marchand-Martella, 2013, p. 207).

Specifically, we investigate, in detail, the overall characteristics of EFL teachers in Niger in terms of their self-efficacy and quality of teacher-student interactions. The data reported in this study comes from a larger study of EFL teachers in Niger (see Wiens, Andrei, Anassour, Smith, 2018; Wiens, Jang, Liu, Anassour, Smith, 2018; Wiens, Andrei, Chou, Smith, & Anassour, 2018).

To better understand our Niger data, we compared it to data from the US. We used the information from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) and Pianta, Hamre, and Mintz (2012) to compare the TES and CLASS scores of the Niger teachers with those of US teachers. The mean scores of CLASS reported in Pianta et al. (2012) were obtained from 698 teachers of 7th through 9th graders. The mean scores of TSES were obtained from 366 pre-service and in-service classroom teachers who participated in the Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) study.

Participants and settings

All EFL teachers in Niger were sent paper surveys, which were distributed to schools via regional teacher supervisors. Paper surveys were sent to regional teacher supervisors to distribute to all EFL teachers in Niger. Teachers were then given one week to complete the surveys and completed surveys were then returned all together to the research team. Members of the team entered the survey data into a password-protected computer. In total, 609 EFL teachers completed the survey for a response rate of 30.5%. The average teaching experience of the participants was 7.4 years. Out of 609 teachers, 89% were teaching in public schools with 68% reporting they were working in rural schools.

Teacher-student interactions data were collected through observations of 53 EFL teachers in middle and high schools in Niger. These recordings were completed after the printed surveys were sent out to EFL teachers. Then we videotaped and examined the classroom instruction of approximately 9% of the survey participants (53 teachers). We chose specific schools for these recordings in a major city in Niger based on geographical access to the teachers. Unfortunately, we were unable to record teachers in rural schools due to constraints in our resources and limited amount of time for data collection. A local former EFL teacher was hired as a research assistant who traveled to schools located in proximity to the research team. The research assistant recorded as many teachers as time and resources would allow within the constraints of the research budget and timeline. Independent *t*-tests showed that there was no significant difference in terms of their perceived teaching self-efficacy between the ones video-recorded (N=-53) and the ones not video-recorded (*N*=556) (all *p*'s >.05). All research procedures were approved in advance by the Niger Ministry of Education in accordance with human subjects protections.

Niger is considered one of the poorest countries in the world, with much of its land area located in the Sahara Desert. According to the *CIA World Factbook*, Niger ranked among the bottom countries in median age, underweight children, life expectancy at birth, and population growth rate (CIA, 2016). Niger has substantial challenges in its educational system, with a literacy rate of 19% and a school life expectancy of five years (CIA, 2016). Five different ethnic groups make up nearly 98% of the Nigerien population—each with its own language. However, French is the official language of the country and the language of instruction in schools. Niger has implemented English as a foreign language in its middle and high school programs.

Niger shares many of the same challenges in educating teachers that many sub-Saharan nations face. Because of a push for universal education, combined with rapid population growth

because of high birth rates, this region has needed more schools, teachers, and resources (UNESCO, 2010). Until 2011, when the UN closed the Niger Peace Corps program for security reasons, most EFL teachers in Niger were foreigners from France, US, and other African countries. Today, more than 95% of EFL teachers in Niger are Nigerien nationals. There are no licence or examination requirements for becoming an EFL teacher. Prospective teachers who either have completed a training program (e.g., university-based program, training in a foreign country, a summer training) or have had no training at all can become EFL teachers in Niger (Wiens, Andrei, Anassour, & Smith, 2018). Both the Niger-specific context and shared challenges among West African countries lead to a need for research with EFL teachers in the area. Such research will help inform policymakers on decisions regarding how to train EFL teachers and what contextual factors to consider for improving the EFL teaching and learning environment. Also, it will help Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programs practically prepare future teachers who would like to teach in an EFL context, particularly in African countries.

Measures

Two instruments served as data-collection tools: Teachers' Senses of Efficacy Scale (TSES) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Both instruments were initially developed and constructed in English. The self-efficacy survey provided to participants was translated into French. We asked two interpreters who were also Nigerien EFL teachers to separately translate the survey items. After translation, the two French versions were compared and differences between the two versions reconciled by the interpreters. Finally, members of the research team proofread and edited the French for clarity. The final survey instrument was bilingual, containing both the original English and the French translation.

Teachers' Senses of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The first instrument (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), TSES, consists of 24 items to measure teachers' sense of self-efficacy for EFL instruction. There are three subscales: 1) Efficacy for Instructional Strategies, 2) Efficacy for Classroom Management, and 3) Efficacy for Student Engagement. Each subscale has eight items with a nine-point response scale. The original developers reported high internal consistency of each subscale: Efficacy for Instructional Strategies (.91), Efficacy for Classroom Management (.90), and Efficacy for Student Engagement (.87).

Classroom Assessment Scoring System-Secondary (CLASS-S). CLASS (Pianta, Hamre, Haynes, Mintz, & La Paro, 2007) is a standardized, reliable, and valid measure to assess three domains and 11 dimensions of teaching interactions using a seven-point scale. CLASS-S is a secondary school version of the original CLASS, which was initially developed for early childhood settings. The CLASS-S intends to capture teachers' ability to create a positive classroom climate, effectively manage classroom time, and deliver high-quality instruction and feedback by measuring the quality of interactions between teachers and students in secondary classroom settings. The Emotional Support domain includes three dimensions: positive climate, teacher sensitivity, and regard for adolescent perspectives. The Classroom Organization domain contains three dimensions: behaviour management, productivity, and negative climate. The Instructional Support domain consists of five dimensions: instructional learning formats, content understanding, analysis and inquiry, quality of feedback, and instructional dialogue. The CLASS is coded at the dimension level and then generally composited and analyzed at the domain level. Hamre et al. (2010) reported reliability ranging from alphas of .81 to .89.

As part of the current study, two bilingual individuals (fluent in English and French) attended a three-day CLASS training in the US. These coders then passed a computer-based reliability test on the CLASS measure prior to coding the videos. All the videos were double coded. Per CLASS manual guidelines, rater agreement was calculated within one score of each other and coding agreement was calculated at 83% between the two coders. Additionally, analysis of differences between coders was calculated using an independent samples *t*-test and found that there were differences between the coders, MD = .19 on a seven-point scale, $p < .001$. However, the two coders' scores were highly correlated $r = .70$, $p < .001$ and, therefore, the CLASS scores were averaged between the two coders to create a final CLASS score for each participating teacher.

Data analysis

Prior to the data analysis, frequencies for all the items were run to ensure that no data-entry errors occurred. The missing data was identified as missing at random and dealt with by Expectation-Maximization imputation. A measure of internal consistency was computed to determine the reliability of each subscale and of the overall instrument. McDonald omega reliability coefficients for the assessment were .90 for the full scale. Cronbach's alphas were $\alpha = .84$ for the Efficacy for Instructional Strategies scale, $\alpha = .78$ for the Efficacy for Classroom Management scale, $\alpha = .86$ for the Efficacy for Student Engagement scale.

Using Mplus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012), confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted on the 24 TSES items for the three-factor model. Each factor includes eight items. We acknowledge that there are some concerns in using a nine-point scale in its capacity to reflect participant responses and treating it as ordinal-level data (i.e. responses to categories) (Bond & Fox, 2013), we have used them as interval-level data following the procedures for analyzing both the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and the CLASS (Pianta & Hamre, 2009), which are both well established in the literature. Chi-square, approximate fit indices, including root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), were used to evaluate the models based on the following criteria for acceptable fit: RMSEA ≤ .08, CFI ≥ .90, and SRMR ≤ .10 (Hoyle, 1995).

Finally, we examined comparisons in data between Nigerien EFL teachers and teachers in the US using independent samples *t*-tests. We examined the three domains of the TSES scores among these different sample populations. However, in order to have a more specific understanding of the nature of the differences in classroom interactions, we used dimension-level data for our comparison between US and Niger teachers.

RESULTS

To what extent are TSES and CLASS tests developed for US teachers transferable to the Niger EFL context?

As shown in Table 1, two theoretical models were compared to determine the best-fit measurement to assess the teaching self-efficacy of EFL teachers in Niger. All fit indices indicated that the three-factor model ($\chi^2 = 627.492$, $df = 249$, $p < .01$; SRMR = .046; RMSEA = .050; CFI = .884) is better than the single-factor model ($\chi^2 = 687.281$, $df = 252$, $p < .01$; SRMR = 0.047; RMSEA = 0.053; CFI = 0.867).

However, the CFI index was still not in the acceptable range (CFI ≥.90), indicating that the three-factor model did not fully fit the data. Therefore, following the guidelines of Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), we deleted seven items with factor loadings lower than .48. Three of the authors reviewed those seven items and agreed that removal would not harm the overall content validity. They include four items in the efficacy for student engagement (Q1, Q2, Q6, and Q22), one item in the efficacy for instructional strategies (Q20), and two items in the efficacy for classroom management (Q5 and Q21). The seven items are listed below.

Q1: How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?

Q2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?

Q5. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behaviour?

Q6. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?

Q20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?

Q21. How well can you respond to defiant students?

Q22. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?

Most of the model fit indices, including CFI, were significantly improved and in the acceptable range ($\chi 2 = 272.246$, $df = 114$, $p < 0.01$; SRMR = .041; RMSEA = .048; CFI = 0.937). To sum up, the results of the CFA suggest that measures of the model fit for the finalized three-factor model, after removal of seven items, fit the dataset of EFL teachers in Niger.

Table 1: Model Comparison among the Three Models Compared

	χ^2	*df*	SRMR Good: ≤ .05 Acceptable: ≤ .08	RMSEA Good: ≤ .06 Acceptable: ≤ .08	CFI Good: ≥ .96 Acceptable: ≥ .90
Single-factor model	687.281***	252	.047	.053	.867
Three-factor model	627.492***	249	.046	.050	.884
Three-factor Model with Q1, Q2, Q5, Q6, Q20, Q21, Q22 removed	272.246***	114	041	.048	.937

*** p <.001

To what extent are EFL teachers' self-efficacy consistent with their observed quality of classroom interactions?

We computed descriptive statistics for all six variables included in the analysis and provide the results in Table 2. The EFL teachers in Niger had relatively high self-efficacy for instructional strategies and student engagement classroom management. In terms of the quality of classroom interactions, our analysis revealed that EFL teachers in Niger achieved relatively higher scores on classroom organization than on other two domains of CLASS. CLASS data shows that EFL teachers in Niger received higher scores on class organization (behaviour management, productivity, instructional learning formats) than on emotional and instructional support.

Correlation coefficients among the six factors are presented in Table 3. The highest correlation was identified between the CLASS Emotional Support and CLASS Instructional Support (r=.79). Regarding our second research question, all the efficacy subscales were significantly

correlated with the CLASS Instructional Support domain, but not with the other two domains of CLASS.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of TSE and CLASS

Factors	*N*	Min.	Max.	*M*	*SD*
TSES Engagement (4 items)	609	12 (4)	36 (36)	29.98	5.32
TSES Instruction (7 items)	609	13 (7)	63 (63)	51.02	9.03
TSES Management (6 items)	609	18 (6)	54 (54)	41.71	7.79
CLASS Emotional Support (3 dimensions)	53	4 (3)	13 (21)	7.17	1.81
CLASS Classroom Organization (3 dimensions)	53	10 (3)	16 (21)	12.72	1.39
CLASS Instructional Support (5 dimensions)	53	6 (5)	27 (35)	13.53	4.67

() = maximum/minimum possible values

Table 3: Correlation coefficients among six ubscales

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. TSES Engagement		.642**	.561**	.179	-.102	.346*
2. TSES Instruction			.589**	.140	.114	.318*
3. TSES Management				.270	.052	.319*
4. CLASS Emotional Support					-.049	.765**
5. CLASS Classroom Organization						.171
6. CLASS Instructional Support						

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

What are descriptive patterns in terms of self-efficacy and quality of classroom interactions of EFL teachers in Niger compared with those of US teachers?

To identify unique patterns of the teacher self-efficacy and the quality of classroom interactions of EFL teachers in Niger when compared to US teachers, we compared the mean scores from our sample with those from related studies where the data were collected from US teachers. Using the mean scores, standard deviation, and sample size, we calculated a *t*-score to test the mean difference between the US and Niger groups. In terms of the TSES scores, a significant difference between the two groups was identified only in the classroom management scale (see Table 4).

Table 4: Comparison of the TSE scores between the US and Niger Groups.

	Niger			United States				
	N	Mean	*SD*	*N*	Mean	*SD*	*t*	*p*-value
TSE Engagement	593	7.3636	1.25997	366	7.3	1.1	.75	.45
TSE Instruction	589	7.3821	1.28486	366	7.3	1.1	.99	.33
TSE Management	590	6.9491	1.24445	366	6.7	1.1	3.16	.0016

The CLASS scores were analyzed at the dimension level for more nuanced and detailed comparison and they showed significant differences in most subscales except Content Understanding ($t = 1.27$, $p>.05$). For the Negative Climate and Analysis and Problem Solving subscales, EFL teachers in Niger showed higher mean scores than US secondary teachers. Negative Climate represents the "overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom between teachers and students (e.g., anger, aggression, irritability)," but because the negative climate was reverse coded, a higher score on Negative Climate indicates a less negative climate (Hamre et al., 2013, p. 465). For the other subscales, US secondary teachers scored higher than Niger teachers, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5.*Comparison of the CLASS subscale scores between the US and Niger groups*

	Niger			United States				
	N	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*-value
Positive Climate	53	2.40	.63	698	3.94	.69	15.76	.0000
Teacher Sensitivity	53	2.34	.73	698	3.86	.64	16.28	.0000
Regard for Adolescent Perspectives	53	2.43	.87	698	2.81	.72	3.65	.0003
Negative Climate (reversed)	53	6.85	.41	698	6.42	.51	5.99	.0000
Behaviour Management	53	3.64	1.15	698	5.54	.69	18.23	.0000
Productivity	53	2.23	.70	698	5.46	.69	32.82	.0000
Instructional Learning Formats	53	3.40	1.13	698	3.80	.67	3.95	.0001
Content Understanding	53	3.34	1.18	698	3.47	.67	1.27	.204
Analysis and Problem Solving	53	2.53	1.01	698	2.32	.62	2.25	.025
Quality of Feedback	53	2.02	.93	698	3.12	.66	11.32	.0000
Instructional Dialogue	53	2.25	1.05	698	2.82	.67	5.69	.0000

DISCUSSION

Even among countries where EFL is taught, variations exist, including in educational systems, student populations, and socio-political contexts. This study offers several insights to educators and researchers in foreign language learning and teaching contexts. The findings of the study extend previous research (e.g., Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) by investigating a distinctly different cultural context that holds altogether different stances toward teaching efficacy and quality.

Relationships between self-efficacy and observed quality of classroom interaction of EFL teachers in Niger

The results of our study revealed that all the efficacy subscales were significantly correlated with only one of the CLASS domains: Instructional Support. This finding means that Niger EFL teachers who felt more efficacious about their teaching were observed to provide more instructional supports, including employing activities to promote students' higher-order thinking, offering quality feedback and using active verbal interactions with students. This is a unique finding in that previous research targeting American classroom teachers (e.g. Guo, Piasta, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010; Ryan, Kuusinen, & Bedoya-Skoog, 2015) reported a non-

significant relationship between the Instructional Support subscale of CLASS and the TSES subscales. For example, Guo et al. (2010) reported that the Instructional Support subscale is not correlated with TSES. In addition, Ryan et al. (2015) found that only the Classroom Management subscale of CLASS was significantly correlated with all the three subscales of TSES. Considering that the Instructional Support subscale includes three dimensions of concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling, the Nigerien teachers showed a close relationship between their espoused and actual ability to provide instructional support. However, there appear to be gaps between the teachers' self-efficacy and actual ability in terms of emotional support and classroom organization. Considering that both providing students with emotional support and managing classroom behaviours involve students' social, emotional, and behavioural collaboration, Nigerian EFL teachers may need more sustainable support to reduce the gap between their self-efficacy and observed instructional performance in both domains. Creating a positive and responsive climate in classrooms (emotional support) and helping students regulate their own attention and behaviour (classroom management) will lead to positive language learning trajectories for EFL students.

Another possible explanation of the finding is that Nigerian EFL teachers in this study, most of whom had limited professional training, might have overestimated their actual ability in terms of student engagement and classroom management. Compared to the instructional strategies that include relatively more straightforward knowledge to understand and practice, both student engagement and classroom management require more complicated understandings of various psychological factors (e.g. attitudes, motivation, and goal-orientations) and interactional factors (e.g. peer-interactions and power dynamics among students). Therefore, this finding may be a consequence of only having a vague idea of what is actually required to do specific tasks in those domains. Given the importance of effective instruction in student achievement and success in foreign language learning, we believe that this study contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and classroom interaction quality in the EFL instruction.

Transferability of TSES to EFL context in Niger

It is noteworthy that the factor loadings of some TSES items were lower than what is expected and thus need to be removed. Previous research (e.g. Khairani & Raak, 2012; Klassen et al., 2009) conducting cross-cultural validation of TSES also reported that specific items need to be removed to improve the construct validity. We hypothesize that some of those items reflecting unique social and cultural values as well as specific instructional strategies may not be applicable to the EFL context in Niger. For example, Q22 measures a teacher's self-efficacy in promoting parent involvement in supporting their children's learning in schools. Many EFL teachers in Niger may not feel confident in encouraging parental involvement in school because the practice of parental involvement is not well-established among teachers and parents due to the lack of school-family communication and parenting programs in developing countries (Donkor, 2010; Kim, 2018). Another example is Item 2 measuring the teachers' self-efficacy in promoting students' critical thinking (Efficacy for student engagement). As reported in Ousseini (2016), most EFL instruction in Niger consists largely of grammar instruction: instructors often simply ask their students to respond to the questions that have the "grammatically correct" answers. Likewise, Wiens, Andrei, Chou, Smith, and Anassour (2018) found that grammar and drills were popular instructional techniques among Nigerien EFL teachers. We assume that different instructional focus and goals might have influenced

Nigerien teachers' perception of this item, which, in turn, could decrease the construct validity of the Nigerien TSES.

Comparison of TSES and CLASS between Nigerien and US teachers

Interestingly, Nigerien EFL teachers showed higher self-efficacy regarding classroom management than US teachers. However, most subscale scores of Niger teachers on the Classroom Organization domain of CLASS were actually lower than US teachers. That is, Niger EFL teachers had higher confidence in classroom management than US teachers, but their observed classroom organization scores were lower than US teachers. We assume that Nigerien EFL teachers might have different perspectives on effective methods of classroom management from US teachers. This is an important finding, indicating that the US and Niger may have different ways of conceptualizing effective instruction.

Finally, it is notable that Nigerien teachers showed relatively lower levels of negativity in the classroom and provided higher levels of support for their students' problem-solving and analytic thinking than US teachers, although US secondary teachers scored higher in other categories of Instructional Supports than Nigerien teachers. It seems that Nigerien teachers, like US teachers, agree that creating a positive classroom climate and avoiding negativity in the classroom between teachers and students is critical for effective classroom practice and will support students' social and emotional functioning in the classroom (Pianta & Hamre, 2009). Nigerien teachers' lower levels of negativity in the classroom might be attributed to the weight of English language learning in the EFL context of Niger (e.g., teachers' responsibilities and the resulting pressure) compared to the major academic subjects in the US. Furthermore, the result that Nigerien teachers demonstrated higher levels of supporting students' problem-solving and analytic thinking than US teachers suggests that Nigerien teachers use teaching strategies that promote EFL learners' cognitive skills in learning English language and grammar. However, the result that Nigerien teachers had lower scores on other areas of Instructional Supports might suggest that Nigerien teachers use fewer scaffolding methods than US teachers, such as giving students consistent, timely, and process-oriented feedback. The Niger context—preset national curriculum and assessments, EFL setting, and lack of EFL teacher training and certification—might account for this result.

LIMITATIONS

We acknowledge that these findings may be somewhat limited by lack of comparability in the data from Nigerien and US teachers. We computed the standardized *t* scores using the results (e.g., means, standard deviations, and sample sizes) reported in both Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) and Pianta, Hamre, and Mintz (2012). This may introduce potential validity threats in that the source of difference between the US and Niger groups is confounded. This is because of the differences in the levels of training or teaching experience between the US sample and the EFL teachers in this study. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize that the differences were due to the Niger-specific sample versus the US, or to different topic domains, or different experiences levels, or maybe even just the different language used for the assessment tools. In addition, the Nigerien participants who were video-recorded for CLASS were mainly from a metropolitan area in Niger. They may not be representative of Nigerien EFL teachers working in rural areas.

CONCLUSION

The results from this study suggest that teachers' self-efficacy and the classroom interaction quality may need to be assessed in different ways across the two linguistically and culturally different educational contexts. Research should consider nuanced and cultural aspects of teacher practices and perceptions, especially in economically disadvantaged countries like Niger, so as to more accurately address their professional identities and efficacy and to enhance their future instructional quality. Although such a wide range of sources can impact teachers' sense of self-efficacy as previous accomplishment, learning experiences, positive feedback, and physiological arousal (Bandura, 1997), having high teacher self-efficacy can result in positive educational outcomes such as student success, teacher commitment, and willingness to adopt innovative approaches (Guskey, 1988). Finally, this study may serve as a model for other West African countries seeking to improve both their general and EFL education.

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Refugee young people (re)forming identities: The role of social networks

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Educational contexts around the world are increasingly characterized by diversity, including a rise in students from refugee backgrounds. Much research has focused on the educational needs of these students and the particular struggles they experience in educational contexts. The increasing number of refugee and asylum-seeking children in Australia calls for rethinking approaches to enhance the acculturation process in ways that build on individuals' prior knowledge and understanding of self.

This paper draws on data from a larger case study that focused on Sudanese young people in regional Australia and investigated their out-of-school activities, networks, and practices and how these contributed to their success across a range of contexts. Drawing on perspectives of identity and theories of social capital, we discuss the role of social networks in generating social capital and what this means in terms of the (re)formation of students' identities in regional locations, and we consider how this can contribute to educational success. We suggest that the resources in regional areas present both a challenge and an opportunity for young former-refugee people in terms of repositioning themselves in new social, cultural, and educational contexts. The paper examines how the young people developed their own momentum, rationality, and legitimacy in their identity (re)formation, and suggests that educational settings need to connect with and understand young people's out-of-school resources to avoid deficit narratives that lead to poor educational outcomes.

Keywords: Identity; refugee young people; education; social capital; resettlement; success

INTRODUCTION

Recent developments and changes in migrant and refugee settlement policies and practices in Australia have resulted in increasing levels of cultural and linguistic diversity in regional and rural areas. From 2003, the Australian government, for example, adopted dispersal policies that saw Humanitarian Entrants settled in regional and rural towns throughout Australia in order to "decrease pressure on major metropolitan areas, contribute to the long-term development aims of Australia's regional towns and cities, and help to address labour shortages in these areas" (DIMIA, 2005, p. 43). Between 2003 and 2011, Humanitarian Entrants from African nations were settled in a significant number in regional Australia. The 2006 census recorded 19,050 Sudan-born people in Australia, an increase of 287.7% from the 2001 census, and a further

20% increase was recorded in 2011 census figures (Department of Social Services, 2016; DIAC, 2012). In the 2016 Census, there were around 24,700 Sudan-born people in Australia (Demographic Analysis, 2019). Until recently, they have represented the majority of refugees settled in regional areas. In addition to formal resettlement policies, there has also been an increase in secondary migration or relocation when refugees have moved away from metropolitan areas to other locations around Australia. Key reasons cited for such moves include employment opportunities, joining relatives or friends, living in a smaller, quieter, safer place, and to access more affordable housing (Boese, 2010; Major, Wilkinson, Langat, & Santoro, 2013; Taylor & Stanovic, 2005).

There are, however, challenges associated with settling refugees in regional and rural contexts. Employment opportunities may not be as good as in large urban centres and housing may be less available, although more affordable. Public transport is often limited, as is access to specialized services such as English language tuition, interpreters, and health services. Refugees may also suffer intolerance and antipathy on the basis of their migration status as well as their "cultural distinctiveness" (Perrin & Dunn, 2007, p. 256). In small, ethnically homogenous regional and rural communities, the racialized bodies of Sudanese families are obvious and become targets for persistent, everyday racism and "disturbing practices of unbelonging" (Edgeworth, 2015, p. 362). Even where host communities in rural and regional areas are welcoming and positive about the arrival of refugees into the community, a lack of resources can lead to heavy reliance on volunteers who may be inexperienced, unfamiliar with the needs of refugees, and "ill prepared to welcome and support new comers" (McDonald-Wilmsen, Gifferd, Wiseman, & Casey, 2009, p. 104).

In the context of education, African students of refugee background have been identified as one of the most underachieving groups in Australia, with educational outcomes significantly lower than other refugee groups (CRC, 2006). Refugee students are commonly characterized as illiterate, lacking appropriate education experiences and skills, and facing ongoing trauma from the refugee experience (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012), and schools and teachers in regional and rural areas may lack the resources and expertise to ensure successful outcomes for their refugee background students (Morken & Skop, 2017). In a review of the literature about school-age students from Sudan in Australia, Sellars and Murphy (2018) assert that the lack of a national strategy and appropriate support structures ensures that the learning needs of students with refugee experiences remain unmet (p. 504). Despite the efforts of some schools to overcome racism, experiences of othering and exclusion dominate research findings related to Sudanese young people in education (Baak, 2019; Edgeworth, 2015; Sellars & Murphy, 2018).

Without wishing to minimize the many obstacles refugee-background young people must overcome as they (re)form their identities and journey towards successful integration into Australian communities, in this paper we focus on stories of success. The three case studies described are part of a larger study that focused on Sudanese young people in regional Australia, and investigated their out-of-school activities, networks and practices, and how these may be contributing to their formal education achievements (Major et al., 2013). Here, we consider three key social networks (church, sport, and friends) that these three young people engaged with, and how these enabled them to build social capital (Putnam, 2000) and construct identities as successful young people within their communities. Of importance in such an analysis are the discursive domains and practices that influence identity formation (Gee, 2001; 2011). We conclude that schools should take up and engage with the social capital and out-of-school resources that young refugee people bring to the education context, rather than constructing them as a visible minority group and often in deficit terms (see, e.g. Baak, 2011; Lenette, 2016).

In the next section, we outline the theoretical frameworks of identity and social capital that provided analytical lenses on the data before explaining the methodology of the study. We then describe the three case study participants and go on to discuss social networks in relation to their identity (re)formation. We finish by considering some implications for education.

THEORETICAL FRAMES – IDENTITY

Drawing on the work of James Gee, including Henri Tajfel's and John Turner's perspectives on social change, we understand "identity" as being multiple, changing, and performative, with its formation shaped by particular discourses or combinations of ways of being, thinking, talking, and interacting in order to be recognized as a certain kind of person (Gee, 2001; 2011; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Identities are also contextualized and "tied to the workings of historical, institutional and sociocultural forces" (Gee, 2001, p. 100). Refugee young people experience a different social, cultural, and historical milieu in Australia to that of their home country, and this requires that they draw on a range of cultural and social resources to negotiate their identity positioning within the new environment.

Gee (2001) identifies four perspectives for thinking about identity: Nature-identity, Institution-identity, Discourse-identity, and Affinity-identity. Nature-identity is identity as a state of being that one has no control over; that is, it is determined by nature; for example, being a twin. Despite the predetermined element of nature-identity (N-identity), it only derives power by being recognized as significant by others, so N-identities are always linked to institutions, discourses, and/or affinity groups. Institution-identity (I-identity) is acquired via an institution; for example, being a Justice of the Peace, or an asylum seeker, or refugee. These identity positions are authorized by institutions and gain their power because of this. However, these identities also are instantiated through related discourses and discursive practices. Discourse-identity (D-identity) is an identity performance that draws on an individual trait or characteristic. It is located within discursive structures and shaped in dialogue with others. For example, a student may position her/himself as a good girl/boy and behave in ways that align with this discourse. However, being recognized by others in an identity position is essential for the formation of D-identities. Affinity-identity (A-identity) relates to experiences that lead to shared practices with a group of like-minded others. For example, being a church-goer or a basketball fan are A-identities based on shared experiences which define membership to that particular affinity group.

These identity perspectives or elements intersect in complex ways; in concert, or antagonistically, to offer identity positions that may be taken up or resisted by individuals. For example, the label of "refugee" is an institutional identity in the first instance, as it is officially designated based on certain conditions (i.e. being outside one's country "owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (UNHCR, n.d.). A refugee is a forced migrant who has little choice in the acquisition of this particular label which defines and categorizes in particular ways. This I-identity gives legal power to the state to determine many aspects of life for Humanitarian Entrants, including where they will be settled, and what services they will have access to (OECD, 2017). Being categorized in this way profoundly impacts the process of identity re-formation (Burnett, 2013). In addition, there are also discursive meanings attached to the label of refugee, many of which are negative; for example, victims of violence and trauma, interrupted or poor education, and lack of material resources. Dominant refugee discourses circulating in the country of settlement will shape the identity (re)formation process. In Australia, current prevailing media and political discourses position refugees as economic migrants who take jobs from local people, as highly needy, and as potentially dangerous

politically. Refugees then navigate difficult discursive domains in their quest to reshape identity. An individual may maintain an I-identity as a refugee in order to access services and support and may identify as a refugee within a discursive community of refugees to participate in shared activities (D-identity). Other (former) refugees may reject both institutional and discourse refugee identities and attempt to position themselves in other ways. The interrelationship between these identity perspectives is complex and the boundaries are often blurred, rather like the process of identity formation itself.

In this article, institutional, discourse, and affinity perspectives are taken up as a way of understanding the complex identity work undertaken by the three refugee young people in a range of social contexts. The intersections between these three kinds of identity, within particular social contexts, created strong discursive spaces in which the participants were able to position themselves and experience success.

THEORETICAL FRAMES—SOCIAL CAPITAL

In addition to ideas about identity, this study draws on notions of social capital to understand the refugee young people's engagement in different social contexts. In particular, we use Putnam's (2000) notions of bonding and bridging capital to describe the different kinds of social networks that people draw on to build social capital. Bonding capital is described as "sociological super-glue" creating tight, more inward-looking networks. It is "gained from participating in local social networks that are most often homogenous and supportive, and provide a sense of belonging" (Santoro, 2013, p. 962). Family and ethnic community are key sources of bonding capital. In the context of refugee resettlement, bonding capital has been identified as the experience of "receiving emotional support and encouragement in establishing . . . new lives in Australia" (Murray, 2010, p. 38).

Bridging capital is more inclusive, enabling the crossing of social groupings and acting as "a social lubricant . . . for allowing different kinds of people to mix together freely" (Brough et al., 2006, p. 407). It develops from heterogeneous, outward-looking, and more loosely tied social networks that generate "broader identities and reciprocity" (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). There is a strong and positive relationship between bonding and bridging capital. Research suggests that strong bonding capital within a refugee community provides the emotional support, confidence, and self-esteem that contribute to the development of bridging capital (Strang & Ager, 2010). Bridging capital is important to the instrumental support that helps refugees to "better navigate their new environment" (Murray, 2010, p. 39).

Social networks have been identified as assisting refugees to manage the difficulties they face in resettling and adjusting to an unfamiliar environment (McDonald et al., 2008) and social connectedness has been closely linked with feelings of wellbeing for Sudanese refugees (Murray, 2010). Having come from problematic and often traumatizing social and political contexts, most young people of refugee background need social services, networks and resources to assist them to re-form their identities. While experiences of racism and exclusion, as described in the previous section, undoubtedly limit efforts to build social capital in rural and regional contexts, there is evidence that young refugee people and their families can build social capital via community networks and social institutions (see Santoro & Wilkinson, 2016; Wilkinson, Santoro & Major, 2017). This paper further contributes to understandings of refugee experiences in Australia, discussing how three Sudanese refugee young people engaged with three social networks—church, friends, and sport—to re-form identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), build a sense of belonging, and support their quest to succeed in the new environment.

METHODOLOGY

The larger qualitative project that this paper draws on, focused on case studies of eight Sudanese refugee young people in regional Australia—four females and four males—and investigated their out-of-school activities, networks, and practices, and how these contributed to their success across a range of contexts. The young people were aged between 13 and 18 years and lived in regional New South Wales (NSW). This paper draws on data from three of the eight case studies. The participants were identified and selected through a process of negotiation and recommendation by a range of stakeholders working closely with refugee youth, including government and non-government organisations, community groups, and education personnel. The focus was on young people who were identified as successful, where success was defined in broad terms and encompassed family/community engagement and responsibility, positive attitudes to education and learning in general, belief in one's potential to learn in formal and informal contexts, feeling good about oneself, and being identified by others as successful.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews using, as stimulus, photographs taken by the young people on digital cameras. The photographs were of people, places, and things located outside formal education settings, that were important to the young people and that made them feel successful and good about themselves. Each young person was interviewed twice over several months. Interviews were also conducted with parents or caregivers and a community person nominated by the young person; for example, a sports team coach, leader of a community group the young person belonged to, family friend, or volunteer mentor. We also spent time observing the young people in a chosen community activity; for example, sports practices and matches, and cultural activities. Underlying these data collection methods was a critical methodological consideration; that is, to carry out research with young people that was inclusive, humanizing rather than colonizing, and which engendered trust (Paris, 2011).

Data were analysed drawing on Situational Analysis, a grounded theory approach which centres on mapping the "most salient elements" of a situation and its "relations" (Clarke, 2005, p. xxii). It does so through "lay(ing) out the major human, nonhuman, discursive, and other elements in the research situation of inquiry and provok(ing) . . . analysis of relations among them" (p. xxii). As such, the approach is helpful for understanding the interplay between the human and non-human elements in the situation under analysis. It renders visible the most salient elements of a situation, the relationships between them, and the connections to the larger social worlds beyond the specific context which is being investigated (Santoro & Wilkinson, 2015).

Data were read a number of times for each participant and mapped using the focus question: "What are the factors leading to success in Australian communities?" The human elements which emerged as crucial in building a sense of confidence and self-esteem were: family, friends, members of church groups, volunteers from local community groups, and Sudanese community members. The non-human elements which contributed included: the social and welfare support provided by church and youth groups, religious faith, sport, and the regional location itself.

The participants

Samir was 13 years old and the eldest boy living at home with his mother and six younger siblings. His father was still in Sudan seeking entry to Australia on family reunification grounds, and he had an older brother who did not live with the family. Samir's family is Muslim and had been in Australia for two years at the time of the research. They had recently moved

from Sydney, the original point of settlement, to a regional centre with a small but growing population of Sudanese refugee families. Samir had just started at a public high school and this transition was significant in our interviews with him. Samir was very close to his mother and a significant support to her in the care of his younger siblings. He enjoyed school and was outgoing and confident with a passion for sport.

Jamal was 17 years old and had four siblings. His family was Christian and had been in Australia for two years. Jamal's family arrived on a refugee sponsored visa. This meant that the sponsors, which included his uncle and a local Christian congregation, were mainly responsible for his family's initial resettlement instead of a government agency. Jamal attended a public high school. He played a variety of sports in and out of school with friends from diverse cultural backgrounds. Although he attended the same church as his family, Jamal also belonged to three other youth groups—two in different churches, and a leadership group run by a local not-for profit agency.

Anne was 16 years old and had six siblings. Her family was Catholic and she attended a Catholic school. She had been in Australia for six years. Anne first settled in Sydney with her family but later moved with her mother and two other siblings to a regional town. She said being in a regional town allowed her to do things with friends most of the time. She participated in a number of activities, for example, sporting events, a visual arts certificate course, and her church youth group. Through these activities, Anne met young Australians of same faith. Her decision to attend a Catholic school was driven by her growing identification with and connection to her beliefs.

Whereas the regional town where Samir lived was not a designated refugee resettlement centre, the town where Jamal and Anne lived was. This meant that the support and resources for newly-arrived refugee families in the regional town where Samir lived were relatively new at the time of collecting the data, and more limited compared to what was available to Jamal and Anne. The migrant and refugee support officer interviewed in Samir's town, reported that the City Council had just agreed to establish an office to provide necessary services. The regional centre where Jamal and Anne lived had an established multicultural council that had a long history of settling and working with newly arrived refugees. Thus, there was considerably more institutional assistance available to these families. The contrast between the two regional centres in relationship to the support networks, community engagement among the new migrants, and the available social structures were notable in the responses of the three participants discussed in this paper.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

We interweave the concepts of bonding and bridging capital with Gee's identity framework, to examine how church, sport, and friendship networks facilitated and enabled identity re-formation, as well as building the capital so crucial for full social, economic and civic engagement in Australian society.

Church and identity: "It's part of who I am"

Religious institutions have long played an important role in the settlement of migrants and refugees (Allen, 2010) through their ability to rebuild social networks destroyed by the process of dislocation and relocation experienced by refugees. Religious institutions act to facilitate bonding capital by "reaffirming national or ethnic identities and allowing immigrants to practise familiar rituals", and build bridging capital by connecting migrants to the wider community and culture (Allen 2010, p. 1050). According to Allen, religious institutions that

are "affiliated with a majority religious tradition can play both a bonding and a bridging role for refugees" (p. 1050).

Being a member of a church offered an institutional identity for Jamal and Anne and was especially important for Anne, who identified herself explicitly in relation to her Catholic faith, "I'm a Catholic, which is ... part of who I am . . . You know, it's a faith, that's my faith, my religion . . . I do love praying, it's just like asking God for help in things in life . . . and God is always there if you want to talk to Him and stuff". For Anne, church and school aligned as powerful institutions in terms of her faith and this helped to cement a strong identity from institution, discourse, and affinity perspectives. Her active engagement in the practices of her faith in multiple contexts provided a positive sense of belonging.

Through church, Jamal experienced a sense of acceptance and was able to form friendships with other young people from diverse backgrounds. Jamal said the church youth group "are really friendly and we get along with each other and we are good friends and all that . . . we basically call each other sisters and brothers in the youth group . . . [I feel] real happy, I feel welcome". Church provided an affinity group where Jamal was able to construct identity which contributed to success. For example, some church activities also helped with school-work. Jamal described taking part in an activity organized by the church where participants were asked to share an experience with the group, Jamal asserted that he picked up some lasting life skills including his English speaking and collaboration. He explained, "when we went to the winter camp, that was really hard and so they actually helped me a lot with reading . . . They actually helped me a lot with like summarising . . . and so since then . . . I can summarise". Thus, through church and a community of faith, the young people interviewed developed a sense of self-esteem, bonding and bridging capital.

Faith-based organizations have been recognized as shaping and transforming identities for refugees and other groups in need of humanitarian assistance through their generosity with regard to welcoming strangers out of the belief that all human beings "possess dignity that makes them worthy of compassion and respect" (Wilson, 2011). For some refugees, engaging in faith-based activities enables them to manage the complexities of settling in a new and foreign environment, and the vulnerabilities that this creates. In essence, church provides belonging and "an identity [that] is recognised or accepted as such by a wider community of practice" (Valentine, Sporton, & Nielsen, 2009, p. 239).

Active participation in religion and church-related activities have also been found to be important to the educational success of migrant young people (Antrop-González, Vélez, & Garrett, 2015). Church and the activities offered through ethnically diverse youth groups allowed these two refugee young people to access positive social networks and role models such as youth group leaders, ministers, and priests, and friends' parents that enabled them to build bridging capital. Church involvement can be seen as a "protective measure" (Antrop-González et al., 2005, p. 86) encouraging young people to become involved in activities that develop self-esteem while discouraging participation in "oppositional youth culture" such as gang life (p. 86). Community engagement through church and youth group is also a "form of pedagogic work that can shape refugee youth's habitus in ways that predispose them to educational engagement. Thus, it can provide an alternative trajectory to cycles of disadvantage" (Wilkinson et al., 2017, p. 8). Joining well-established and well-resourced churches that were part of the majority culture enabled Anne and Jamal access to social networks and activities that would otherwise have been less available to them.

Sport and identity: "I learned a lot about teamwork"

Sport is often "advocated as a mechanism to promote a social cohesive society" with the potential to build relationships across religious, ethnic and economic lives (Nathan et al., 2010, p. 2). Sport and sporting prowess are highly valued in Australian society and being a skilled sportsperson is an identity position that has significant social capital. Belonging to a sports club and team is a very important way to develop identity and position oneself positively within a powerful discourse community. Membership of formal sporting bodies provide an institutional identity and leads to development of both discourse and affinity identities. The way the three young people talked about their sporting activities revealed the extent to which this supported their identity formation in their regional locations.

For Samir, sport was a key social network in his identity (re)formation. He described sport as his favourite subject at school and being a professional "footy player" was one of his ambitions. Through playing rugby, Samir was able to make Australian friends. When he started high school, he was able to use his connection to children he knew through sport at primary school to build new friendships. When asked what he did at school, Samir's response was: "We've been playing footy a lot that's for sure", and similarly, his out of school activities revolved around sport, "Rugby league and Union and that's pretty much it", with training during the week and games on Saturday. He played footy after school at his place or the park. Samir was proactive in joining a rugby team outside school and gained significant support from the coach in terms of transport to practices and matches.

The social network provided by sport gave Samir a context for constructing a successful social identity with his peers, and his success in sport contributed to his confidence and positive self-esteem. We can understand the role of sport from three identity perspectives for Samir. As a member of a local rugby club, Samir gained an institutional identity and recognition as a rugby player. Samir constructed himself as a good rugby player and this was a discourse identity he formed with his peer group and team mates. The strong bonds between the boys in his rugby team and their passion for the game created an affinity identity. Sport, then, was a very powerful context for Samir's positive identity formation and part of this power came from the ways in which sport crossed boundaries between school and out-of-school contexts as Samir played rugby at school as well as for a community club, and many of his friends at school were also his rugby team mates.

Sport also provided Jamal with opportunities for positive identity formation and social capital. Like Samir, Jamal talked about playing footy at school with his friends, "I feel really happy because we chill and talk funny and all that, we just kick the footy around . . . Every recess and lunch we kick footy and all that". Jamal played soccer and AFL (Australian Football League) outside school and was selected for a multicultural AFL team for the region, which travelled to Sydney to compete. The institutional identity Jamal gained as an AFL club member and member of the multicultural team opened up formalized opportunities for specialized training and skills development. This went beyond simply the physical skills needed to play the sport and encompassed wider skills of team play and sportsmanship. He described it thus: "I learn a lot of teamwork stuff . . . I kind of learn how to speak . . . how to encourage people, be positive . . . talk positive and not negative about the person on your team". He went on to say, "by actually communicating with the people, with the whole team, talking together and that makes, I learn from that, yeah". Jamal's words here suggest that the program he engaged with demonstrated the characteristics identified by Nathan et al. (2010) as contributing to social inclusion, teamwork and cross-cultural understanding. Such programs include capacity building elements such as training, mentoring, leadership, and partnership development in order to achieve maximum impact (Nathan et al., 2010, p. 2; Terry, Naylor, Nguyen, & Rizzo,

2016). Thus, sport is used to facilitate individual health and well-being in holistic ways and can build "bridges to mainstream community organisations" (p. 2). Sport also acted as discourse and affinity identities for Jamal, and these enabled him to actively position himself as successful, thus contributing to strong bonding and bridging capital which he was able to carry into the school context.

Uptin, Wright, and Harwood (2013, p. 132) identify sport as one of the few ways that young refugee people (particularly boys) can access "acceptable racialised identity markers" and thus access a social life at school. Their study of refugee young people entering school in Australia, described experiences of structural and institutionalised racism in schools, and exclusionary practices by teachers and students. For some of the Sudanese refugee boys in the study, playing football (soccer) or basketball at lunchtime enabled them to positively position themselves in relation to a "cool, black basketball player" discourse amongst their peers. This provided "social capital and access to friendships across class and ethnicity" (p. 132). This affinity identity enabled the boys to overcome some of the negative institutional and discourse identities ascribed to them as refugees and second language learners (Naidoo, 2013). Sport enabled the boys in our study to build strong institutional, discourse, and affinity identities in their out-of-school sports teams, and those identities crossed the boundary into the school context contributing to feelings of confidence and success.

Friendship networks: "It makes me feel good and happy"

Developing friendships across ethnic groups, and especially with those perceived to be members of the dominant culture, can be a significant challenge for young refugee people. Their visible and audible difference marks them as "other" and enables Australian students to position them as "unworthy of friendship" (Uptin et al., 2013, p. 130). Jamal, Anne and Samir appeared to have overcome this challenge and reported strong friendship networks that intersected with their sporting and church-based networks and activities. Their friendship networks included extended family, members of the Sudanese community, and peers from a range of ethnicities, including Anglo-Australians.

The Sudanese community was an important source of friendship for Samir and his family. His mother, Aisha, was parenting Samir and his six younger brothers alone, and Samir recognized the importance of family friends who supported his mother. The first photo he showed us was of a Sudanese family friend whom Samir referred to as an Aunty. He said "She looks after us . . . You know she's kind of like my mum". Not only did this friend assist in caring for the children, she also spent time with Samir on his own. This made him feel special, important, and valued contributing to positive self-esteem and a discourse identity as successful and confident. Samir described an active social life with Sudanese family friends in the regional centre where they lived. He also spoke positively about a wider circle of friends from school, telling us "All my class is my friend". Rugby had played an important role in facilitating the transition to high school for Samir as many of his rugby-playing friends attended his high school, and provided a level of continuity for his identity formation and in building social capital.

Aisha also recognized the importance of Samir's friends for his happiness and successful integration into Australian society, "Is very important you see . . . very nice for my son, friend is very important". The regional setting provided a sense of security which enabled Aisha to be more relaxed about Samir's activities with his friends. She felt a greater connection to his social life and friends and had met the parents of many. The sense of safety meant Samir was able to "hang out" with his friends in the town centre, at the library and local parks, something that would have been much less likely in Sydney. The positive levels of bonding capital from

his mother and the Sudanese community gave Samir the confidence to build bridging capital with his Australian peers and his teachers. He was thus able to resist the deficit constructions associated with refugee identity positions and position himself as a successful Sudanese boy.

Jamal's friendship networks were drawn primarily from the youth groups he attended, which intersected with his sporting interests and school. He was introduced to one youth group via a football teammate. He described the significance of the youth group: "They're really friendly and we get along with each other and we are good friends and all that". Jamal's photos were full of images of his friends from the youth groups, many of whom became school friends and assisted in his transition to high school, in the same way as Samir's sports friends did. Jamal also had many friends that came from the English language support classes he attended. Showing new arrivals around the school became an opportunity for developing friendships, "So the teacher introduced me to them . . . I showed them around and we became friends". This kind of activity highlights the important role that teachers can have in facilitating social relationships amongst minority students in school contexts. Jamal's AFL team was most significant for widening his circle of Anglo-Australian friends, and this also connected back to school, as he described: "Oh it's pretty good because when we get back to school we talk about how we went with the footy". Discourse and affinity identities were formed and maintained in the intersections between sport, church, and school friendship networks. Jamal identified the importance of friendship to his feelings of success and the centrality of the youth groups to building friendships. There was evidence, however, that school could have played a greater role in fostering these connections. He said, "In youth group we are all good friends . . . but at school there is not so much friend stuff". He went on to describe incidents of bullying and "negative talk" by some of his peers at school.

Anne also had a wide circle of friends that encompassed members of the Sudanese community and Anglo-Australians. Her wide friendship network was evident in the photos she shared as part of her interview, which began with her smart phone which she identified as very important for keeping in touch with her friends. The photos and Anne's words emphasized that friendship was about having fun and being happy. School and church were important social spaces where she made and maintained friendships. The institutional identity inscribed through her participation in church was reinforced at school and provided a sense of continuity between in- and out-of-school contexts and social networks.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

For all three young people, their out-of-school networks provided a conduit to social networks within school and contributed to the construction of positive social identities within school contexts. Their ability to connect out-of-school and school networks is perhaps one reason they were perceived as being successful educationally as well as socially. It was clear that tight links between institutional, discourse, and affinity identities enabled positive identity re-formation. We suggest that where these links are fostered in the school environment, young people are more likely to experience successful identity re-formation in this space also.

While friendships were obviously central networks for all three, these networks were built in different contexts, with sport being most important for Samir, sport and church being important for Jamal, and church being most important for Anne. This highlights the significance of connecting out-of-school resources with those in schools. This was relatively straightforward in the case of sport and church for these young people but may not be so easy when a young person's out-of-school resources do not link so well with school. Also, it is crucial to realize that networks are socially constructed and value laden and, therefore, the emerging identities are shaped and influenced by the type of networks available to young people. For these three

young people, community-based organizations, such as sports clubs and churches, offered accessible networks.

The ability for former refugee students to successfully transition and engage productively in Australian schooling depends to a large extent on the manner in which their sense of identity is integrated. That is, identity is "underpinned by notions of exclusion and inclusion in so far as it constructs parameters by which some people are included and others left out" (Ndhlovu, 2009, p. 18), as has been established in this paper. Depending how the concept of identity re-formation is embedded in the teaching and learning practices, schools "can either facilitate or hinder effective participation" (p. 18) of minority student groups such as the refugee students. In schools that have been predominantly Anglo-Australian and monocultural, "visibly different" students need to have a sense of belonging (Wilkinson & Langat, 2012). Knowing about students' backgrounds and lives outside school is a central tenet of culturally responsive teaching (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), and a pre-requisite for schools and teachers to be able to create spaces of belonging and inclusion (Edgeworth & Santoro, 2015).

The educational success or otherwise for former refugee students is dependent on social capital and networks the students are able to identify with both within and outside of school. "This is particularly important because once refugee background students are able to settle effectively into their new environment, they are able to find a degree of security and belonging" that is crucial for future achievement and engagement (Naidoo, et al., 2015, p. 131; Mosselson, 2006).

Identities developed through out-of-school connections can enable or constrain the building of social capital in school contexts. It is, therefore, important for schools to develop strong and diverse community connections to facilitate social capital and identity re-formation across contexts. We suggest that schools need to be proactive in knowing about and building on out-of-school resources by creating partnerships with families and community organisations and including students' interests into the curriculum. Creating such connections will enable young people to transfer their out-of-school resources into the school context. A strong network and partnerships with other key education stakeholders outside of school encourages the convergence of institutional, discourse, and affinity identities across multiple contexts which supports social identity development for refugee-background learners.

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Indigenous creativities, the Australian Curriculum, and pre-service teachers

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This research reports the impact of changes made to an Arts education module in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures within a Bachelor of Education degree, and the learning and experience of pre-service teachers in response to these changes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and visual arts making was presented in the module as rich and abundant material to be reflected on and introduced in the classroom. The authors showcased the transformative possibilities for pre-service teachers of studying, reflecting on, and learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts practises. The authors who crafted the module regarded it as a way to encourage two-way (or both ways) learning in which the celebration of Aboriginal creative knowledges in teaching was encouraged. Pre-service teachers were surveyed, interviewed, and asked to reflect on their exposure to Aboriginal music and visual arts in their learning. The research mapped the growth in respect and understandings that studying Aboriginal arts and Torres Strait Islander creativities developed in pre-service teachers. The research showcased visual arts making from non-Aboriginal students that was produced in response to Aboriginal music and that demonstrated high levels of empathy and understanding.

Keywords: Pre-service teacher education; in-service teacher education; ITE; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; cross curricular priorities; general capabilities; music and visual arts education; Australian curriculum; early years learning framework; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creativities; two-way learning

INTRODUCTION

This research reports the impact of changes made to an Arts education module in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures within a Bachelor of Education degree, and the learning and experience of pre-service teachers in response to these changes. The module was one of three in the unit. Using analysis of survey and interview data completed by pre-service teachers and examples of their visual arts making, this article shines a light on the possibilities of teaching through and with Aboriginal perspectives and arts practise. The study of music and visual arts written and created by Aboriginal musicians and artists encouraged students to self-report on their increased knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and the impact these had on their confidence to deliver Cross Curricular Priorities in the Australian Curriculum (2018) and in the Early Years Learning Framework (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010).

Tasmania has a population of 509,965 of whom 23,572 (4.6%) identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, with a Eurocentric mix of ancestries including English, Australian, Irish, Scottish, and German (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Undergraduate programs in teaching and education at the University of Tasmania have very few international student enrolments and thus are representative of the wider Tasmanian demographic. In 2011, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) introduced the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, with Standards 1.4 and 2.4 requiring graduate teachers to be competent in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2018). Also, in 2011 the newly-developed *Australian Curriculum* introduced the "Cross Curriculum Priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures" (Australian Curriculum, 2018) for inclusion in all primary and secondary classrooms in Australia. One year earlier, in 2010, for birth to 5-year-old children, the *Early Years Learning Framework* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010) also introduced guidance for educators around competence in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in early learning. According to Hudson, Hudson, Weatherby-Fell, and Shipway (2016) "30% or more of preservice teachers . . . [indicated] they lacked confidence to . . . demonstrate understanding for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' (p. 135). When coupled with Tasmania's homogenous, Eurocentric demographic, the need for pre-service teacher training in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is clear (see also Andersen, 2012; and, Taylor, 2014). The module that is the basis of this article, while not a mandatory cultural awareness unit (this occurs in the third year of the degree), seeks to use Aboriginal creativities to expose pre-service teachers to this critical, yet challenging area of the curriculum (Aveling, 2006; Kameniar, Windsor, & Sifa, 2014; O'Dowd, 2010; Thorpe & Burgess, 2016).

The term *palawa* is used to refer to the Tasmanian Aboriginal People in this article. The present-day *palawa* population is largely descended from a small number of women who were stolen by or traded to white sealers in the early 1800s. Apart from this official population, there are believed to be other families who have descended from unions between Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal men who lived in isolated rural districts of Tasmania. Official records establish that there were three distinct groups of *palawa* who formed large families and constituted the contemporary *palawa* community: original families born in the Bass Strait islands; families of Dalrymple Johnson who were born in the islands and later lived on the North-West coast; and the families of Fanny Cochrane-Smith who lived in the Channel district, south of Hobart in 1905.

BACKGROUND

In 2016/2017, the authors embarked on a journey to develop a rich and abundant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander module within an Arts education unit for first-year Bachelor of Education students. The re-conceptualization of the module was informed by earlier consultations with Tasmanian Aboriginal educator, Theresa Sainty, and by formal student feedback and peer reviews. Following future iterations, the module will continue to be reflected on and re-modelled through feedback and data analysis. This unit was taught in face-to-face mode in Launceston and Burnie and in fully online mode, and it had a total of 163 students enrolled in semester 2, 2017, with 84 of these enrolled fully online. It was decided to focus data collection on the fully online cohort as this research was nested within a broader project around pre-service teacher education in online spaces.

The pedagogy employed throughout this unit was "action learning" (Bonwell & Eison, 1991, p. 2), requiring learners to engage in higher order thinking and to both "do" and "reflect." Pre-

service teachers were required to complete weekly learning activities, such as singing a rhyme or painting a response, and to reflect on these with reference to the curriculum (the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum), and the classroom or childcare centre (implementation).

The intention of this unit was to encourage pre-service teachers to engage with the Cross-Curriculum Priorities of "Sustainability" and "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures" (Modules 1 and 2), and the "General Capability of Literacy" (Module 3) while simultaneously developing confidence in using music and visual arts as pedagogical tools. The length of the unit was problematic as each module only lasted for 12 contact hours over a 3-week period and, furthermore, pre-service teachers would not complete a dedicated unit on Cultural Awareness until third year; thus, this unit was their first encounter with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Through music and visual arts, the researchers sought to assist pre-service teachers to: engage with the key concepts and organizing ideas of the "Cross Curriculum Priority," understand the critical concepts of Country and story, begin to understand the impact of colonization on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to apply a process of critical discernment in planning for these to be applied in their future teaching.

The researchers used the conceptual framework for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures and the key concepts of "Living Communities" (Australian Curriculum, 2018) and "Country/Place" (Rose, 1986, p. 7) to frame content and pedagogy redesign. The redesign also enabled pre-service teachers to address one of the two pertinent graduate level standards in the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2018): Standard 2.4, asking graduates to "demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages," was explicitly included, taught, and assessed through this module. The foregrounding of the concept of Country occurred through actively engaging with Aboriginal songs such as "Took The Children Away" by Australian Aboriginal artist and member of the Stolen Generations, Archie Roach (1990). It was hoped that an exploration of the narrative of Archie's own forced separation from his parents through the poignant lyrics of this song enabled pre-service teachers to examine this shameful period of Australian history, and to reflect on its application to classroom learning.

The song, *Songlines of the Moonbird*, (based on the work of respected Tasmanian Elder and academic Japanangaka Errol West) and written by *palawa* artists Dyan and Ronnie Summers, was presented in the module as material to be reflected upon, celebrated, and used in classrooms. Aboriginal creative practise was used as a tool to encourage learning and teaching that iterated both ways, or two-way learning (Harris, 1990) where cultural understanding was prioritized and teachers viewed Aboriginal cultures and histories without deficit. The authors wanted to share Aboriginal music and visual arts practises with pre-service teachers and develop their knowledge of and exposure to Aboriginal creative literacies. They wanted to lead the students from the unknown to the known through active learning in the creative arts. The unit foregrounded contemporary Aboriginal creativities and the digital space was an ideal mode for pre-service teachers to listen to Aboriginal music and view Aboriginal art. Studying, reflecting on, and responding to Aboriginal songs and art was a useful tool that encouraged pre-service teachers to develop their understandings of Aboriginal histories and cultures.

The authors wanted students to have the opportunity to access, discuss and respond to Aboriginal creativities in a variety of different ways: through song, through image making, and through reflection on story. They compiled lists of artists and musicians whose work they found

impactful and started researching visual artists whose work would enable pre-service teachers to understand Aboriginal expressions of Country and story. The selection of music and art to be included in the module was informed by three parameters: feature Tasmanian Aboriginal artists (although not exclusively); could in some way be engaged with actively by students through singing or playing; and, enabled learning in key aspects of the Cross-Curriculum Priority such as the Stolen Generations and the Wik decision, or to the concept of living communities or Country/place. The work of two Tasmanian visual artists, Aunty Lola Greeno and Ricky Maynard, were included. Aunty Lola Greeno continues a tradition of art making that involves creating shell necklaces using shells from the North of Tasmania, enabling a conversation about Country. Photographer Ricky Maynard produced a series of portraits of the Wik people Elders entitled "Returning to places that name us," enabling learning about native title and the Wik decision. Music by Tasmanian Elders Dyan and Ronnie Summers was selected because they speak to a living community and to the concept of song lines. The music of Tasmanian Dewayne Everett smith entitled "milaythina" was selected because it was the first song written in Tasmanian *Palawa Kani* since the recordings of Fanny Cochrane Smith from the late 19th Century, and the work of Archie Roach was selected because it storied personal experiences of the stolen generations.

The assessment for this module asked pre-service teachers to explore deep understandings of the concepts of "Country" and "story", and the impact of the Stolen Generations through singing and playing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songs. Pre-service teachers also explored these concepts by responding to artworks such as those of Ricky Maynard and Aunty Lola Greeno. The assessment for this module required students to respond to the musical creations of a colleague that were recorded and placed on a discussion board, asking them to use these as inspiration for their own visual creative response by drawing a mind map. This assessment task encouraged authentic peer to peer learning, peer support and conversations, outcomes that are entirely consistent with a highly social online learning environment likely to encourage student engagement (Brindley, Walti, & Blashke, 2009) and active learning.

The practice of teaching Aboriginal culture alongside Western disciplines was promoted during the 1980s and developed by Aboriginal teacher trainees such as Mandaway Yunupingu and Nalwarri Ngurruwutthun. During the 1990s, Harris developed the term "two-way schooling to communicate learning that draws on two different fields of knowledge" (Harris, 1990). The pedagogy is described as:

> A strategy to help make the matter of choice real in both worlds; to provide the opportunity for the primary Aboriginal identity to stay strong, though changing and thus continue to be the source of inner strength and security necessary for dealing with the western World. (p. 48)

It has been argued that these domains cannot be kept separate: "Reconciliation is not about the resolution or dissolving of differences, rather in our conception, it proposes a productive, hopeful space for an imperfect, agonistic and ongoing dialogue" (Ahluwalia, Atkinson, Bishop, Christie, Hattam & Matthews, 2012 p. 2). It has been suggested (Craven, 1999) that early career teachers, in particular, need to be encouraged to create tools for knowledge sharing that reinforce a sense of relatedness and community for Aboriginal students; the exposure in this module embedded this approach through creative activities for students. The authors' unit acknowledged Martin's Relatedness theory (Martin, 2003) and its focus on three processes: Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being, and Ways of Doing. The module included learning activities that encouraged pre-service teachers to explore their own ideas of Ways of Creative Knowing through making Art.

It was hoped that the resources and assessment used in this module would enable the authors to address deficit stances. The deficit model emerged as an academic theory in the 1960s and was based on the idea that lower achievement in schools arises from issues with the students rather than the teachers, teaching, or the school itself (Irizarry, 2009). The deficit model has impacted Aboriginal students because of the lower expectations some teachers apply to their learning and achievements. Through this research, the authors wanted to find out if studying, reflecting on, and listening to Aboriginal art and music could shift pre-service teachers from non-Aboriginal backgrounds from taking deficit stances in their learning. During the last two decades, researchers in Aboriginal education have presented the notion that when teachers do not share the socio-cultural backgrounds of their students, they are less able to apply principles of cultural inclusivity (Craven, 1999; Fanshaw, 1999; Foley 1999a, b; Harrison, 2008; Malin, 1990a, b; Malin & Maidment, 2003; Martin, 2003; Partington, 1998). It has been suggested that improved teacher training for all pre-service teachers could assist the shift away from teachers unwittingly perpetuating racist, stereotyped attitudes in their classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research project took place within a larger Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) project being undertaken into the impact of the re-development of this unit on student experience and learning. During data analysis, the quality and quantity of data with reference to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander module became clear and, consequently, author 1 joined the project. The broader research project was designed parallel to the unit and ethical approval for the study was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network.

The project included two stages: 1) surveys, and 2) semi-structured interviews. Following the completion of each of the three modules, students were invited by email to complete a survey of their learning and experience. Details of participation were included in the email along with a SurveyMonkey link to each module survey. Questions included a mix of closed questions with Likert scale responses, ranging from unsatisfactory to excellent, to those that included open ended responses. Questions sought to establish respondent perceptions of changes in their own knowledge and beliefs. For example, one question asked, “I rate my understanding of the Cross-Curriculum Priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures before starting this unit as…”; and, another asked “I rate my understanding of the Cross-Curriculum Priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures after completing this module as....” Both these questions included an opportunity for qualitative elaboration on the Likert response. Data were also sought about possible reasons for any change, with further questions about assessment, peer discussion and the role of tutors being asked. In total, 1 of the 37 survey responses were received from 84 potential respondents, a response rate of 44%.

Following completion of the survey, respondents were invited to participate in an interview, and seven students agreed to participate in this. Of these, an interview time could not be arranged with one subject, and one subject completed the interview but did not member-check their transcript. Thus, five interviews were analysed. Audio-recorded interviews took place between December 2017 and April 2018 using an online web room. Interviews were transcribed and sent to subjects for their approval. Data were analysed using an inductive thematic process (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006) that uses large Excel matrices to code and search data for meaning. The survey and interview data were entered into these sheets and treated as one corpus for analysis. A process ensued in which data were read and re-read with

units being allocated to evolving, tentative codes and finally to broader themes. All names used in this article are pseudonyms.

DATA

The impact of the unit on student learning and experience was excellent. Overall, 27% (n=10) of survey respondents indicated that they rated their entry level understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as "Excellent" "Very Good" or "Good". By the conclusion of this module 97% (n=36) responded that their "understanding about the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures" was "Excellent" "Very Good" or "Good". This is a remarkable turnaround in self-reported levels of understanding—an improvement of over 300%. Does this turnaround speak to the pedagogy and content of the unit and to the low levels of understanding at the commencement of the unit and generally in the broader community? One survey respondent reflected on the value of this module to their learning, writing that the links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were "incredibly clear and done in a way that was respectful to these cultures and enabled us to understand how to approach and incorporate these histories and cultures into our own teaching" (Respondent 1). Respondent 36 rated their entry level of understanding as "unsatisfactory" also wrote that "I have very little experience in this area and don't remember learning much about it during school." This respondent rated their finishing understanding as "good" and emphasized the desire to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, explaining: "I have learnt a fair bit, but more importantly I am now open to discovering more and learning more myself beyond this unit. I can see the value in understanding this topic."

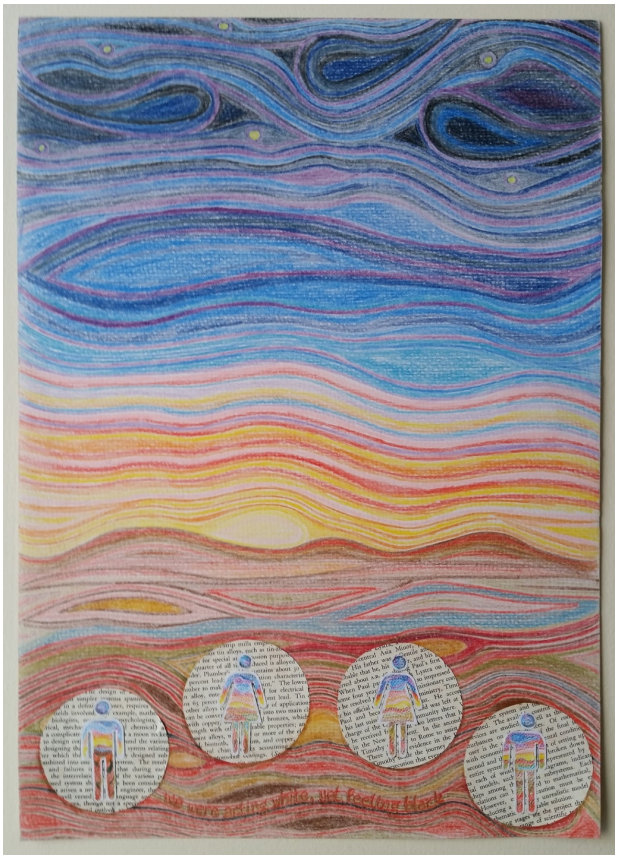

Image 1: Visual Response to Took the Children Away - Lara.

Lara chose to respond to her partner's engagement with Archie Roach's *Took the Children Away* (Roach, 1990) with Image 1. Her visual response demonstrated a deep and authentic engagement with Aboriginal histories of dispossession and trauma. Lara highlighted the dissonance experienced by many of the Stolen Generations and focussed on the lyric "acting white, but feeling black" (Roach, 1990). By creating an art work that responded to the themes of the song, Lara's deep thinking was actualized and her art making assisted and in turn demonstrated her understandings.

Image 2: Visual Response to Took the Children Away - Rebekah.

Rebekah chose to respond to "Took the Children Away" though collage (Image 2). This response represented deep empathy and engagement in the issues communicated by this anthemic song. Rebekah highlighted words such as "invasion" and created a grid in which images of children are shown depicted in lines, or "rounded up." The children are disempowered. They do not play, nor engage with each other but peer out through fences and engage the viewer with their melancholy. Rebekah has worked the words "brother," "sister," and "land" into the collage through painterly layers that remind us of graffiti and her work is powerful and emotive. Red is used as a strong contrast colour, emphasizing the split heart and the bleeding land. The red heart hovers menacingly over the four black stick figures and the yellow cross de-identifies the huddled children.

Rebekah reflected on the importance of this task during her interview with Author 2, stating:

> I really loved . . . knowing what you can and can't teach in the classroom. I found that very useful and helpful, as I didn't even know myself . . . until this class and now I'm doing "Cultural Awareness" [a third year Bachelor of Education unit] it's actually helping me in that subject.
>
> Author 2: So, is that something that you feel you could include in your class now with some confidence?
>
> Rebekah: Yeah definitely.

Later in the interview Rebekah reflected that it was the music component that was critical for her, stating that "music has sort of been a thing to open me up to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories." This was just a starting point for Rebekah, and about six months after completing the unit, Author 2 received the email below from her:

> Hi…I am currently on prac and I am currently setting up some lessons around early explorers, convicts and the conflict between the Europeans and Aboriginals. The children have grasped the concept of children being taken away by the Europeans. So, you would be pleased to know I am going to use Archie Roach's song - Took the children away [sic.] and ask the children to pick up the key words within the song to draw a mind map. (Email, received 21 August 2018)

One of the critical issues faced by the authors in the module was perceived resistance to reflective practice. Deborah was a mature-aged student working as a teacher's assistant in a primary school where, according to her, between 30% and 40% of the enrolled students identified as Aboriginal. Despite the high Aboriginal enrolment, she stated that she did not find any part of the module relevant. She described it as "tedious" and replied when probed about the relevance of the subject: "No, there wasn't one piece. I didn't find it relevant." Deborah may have accepted and perpetuated her deficit thinking or she may have lacked interest in the module for another reason. She may have lacked confidence in her skillset as a visual artist or been hesitant to listen to the Archie Roach song because she feared negative impact on the students in her classroom.

Deborah spoke about being stigmatized by the acknowledgment of Country in her school and stated that "I still find as a person I should not have to apologise . . . um . . . for what's happened in the past. I haven't committed it. I haven't done it." Deborah shifted the responsibility for engaging and suggested that another teacher would have to tell the story of the Stolen Generations in the classroom. She stepped away from all responsibility with her dismissive comments, "It was good to listen to, but somebody probably would try to figure out how they would do it." She reasoned that "Just because I found it probably a bit confronting." Perhaps Deborah lacked the confidence to engage with the histories and stories presented, or perhaps she wanted to distance herself from the apology. Perhaps she found it difficult to understand why she was uncomfortable.

Deborah claimed that even if she was required to teach the truth about the history of colonization and the Stolen Generations that she would resist it, stating "if I had to teach that in a class I probably wouldn't, and I would switch it to something." Her interview suggested that she felt blame whilst listening to the music: "I don't know if it's something I probably assumed for myself [blame] by listening to it." Deborah stated that she would not teach students anything that made her feel uncomfortable or confronted. In reflecting on the Archie Roach song, Deborah stated, "I'm not going to teach that because I feel uncomfortable with it." In the interview, Deborah laughed about the effort that she placed into listening and working with the Archie Roach song studied within the unit:

> I don't think that I actually did any work on that piece at all, it wasn't one that I selected. Just because I hate to see what I actually drew from it. (Laughs). That wouldn't have been very nice at all. But I tend to focus on something that is a little bit more positive.

Deborah may have held views that regarded Aboriginal studies to be only relevant to Aboriginal students, demonstrating a cultural deficit stance (Trueba, 1988). Indeed, she commented that at the school where she was a teacher assistant:

> [W]e do a lot of Aboriginal studies in our class or in our school as a whole. We've had cultural studies for the last three years. They don't mind their kids learning about it, but every class has one session a week on purely Aboriginal studies.

In contrast, Anita stated that she particularly enjoyed studying and reflecting on the music embedded in the module and emphasized: "I was really interested by (it) because I'd never really looked into or was exposed to that sort of thing." Furthermore, she committed to further research and mindfully transitioned from unknowing to the known. In her interview, she described this process and explained: "So I really enjoyed learning about that and I found I went and did my own research into it. As we were doing it I found out a little more." She gave insights into the deep learning behind her actions with her statement: "You got to learn more about the community and arts part of their culture."

Anita did not resist the notion of teaching Aboriginal histories in her future teaching and affirmed the importance of Aboriginal perspectives for non-Aboriginal students stating: "I feel like it would be good for them to be exposed to from an early age." She remarked that "being exposed to that . . . and to give my own students a different approach to it, to what is" was her main goal.

CONCLUSION

This article has reported on the impact on pre-service teachers of a thoughtfully constructed module in Arts education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures. This research has enabled the impact of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures module within an Arts education unit to be evaluated, considered and discussed. The data corpus analysed in this research revealed pre-service teachers reported mostly positive learning and experiences, and the desire to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in their future classrooms. This research also noted a cultural deficit stance maintained by one participant.

While the authors acknowledge the limitations of self-reporting, and the relatively low number of participants, the findings of this qualitative study does shed some light on the possibilities of "active" Arts rich learning to encourage students to engage with and better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. The student experience was heard, discussed, and explored. Participant art works and comments communicated the impact of studying Aboriginal creativities.

This article has presented the impact and value of studying, reflecting on, and responding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creativities for pre-service teachers. It reflects on the value of learning through Aboriginal Arts for non-Aboriginal pre-service teachers and it emphasizes positive pedagogies and ways in which the understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures can be encouraged within classrooms. It shines a light on some of the ways in which modules in pre-service teacher training can be constructed to encourage respect, both ways learning (Harris, 1990), and improved understandings of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cross-Curriculum Priority* and the *Early Years Learning Framework*.

GLOSSARY

Aboriginal

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the

community in which he (she) lives (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1981, cited in Gardiner-Garden, 2000).

Indigenous

The word Indigenous is commonly used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In this study, the term Aboriginal is used.

Two-way learning

This term is interchangeable with 'both ways learning' and describes the mixing of Western and Aboriginal knowledges in teaching (Harris, 1990).

Whiteness

Refers to the unacknowledged position of unearned privilege that 'white' people have occupied in countries such as Australia, UK and the US.

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Visegrad Group countries compared through world university rankings

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The Visegrad Group is an alliance of four Central European countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, founded by the Visegrad Declaration in 1991. The historical, political, and cultural similarities, highlighted by their shared experiences with economic transformation, make the Visegrad Group countries well suited for comparison. The article analyses and compares the performance of Visegrad Four (V4) countries in the recent editions of the most established individual university rankings as well as in the recent rankings of national higher education systems. Czech Republic ranks highest, followed by Poland and Hungary at approximately the same level, while Slovakia falls behind other V4 countries. Relevant socioeconomic factors influencing the country's performance in university rankings are considered and discussed. The results confirm the leading position of the Czech Republic in the region, and they are in line with the recently conducted studies comparing the economic attributes, R&D expenditures and quality of life in the V4 countries. The results thus also prove and confirm the strong interconnection between the economic performance, R&D expenditures and the performance of the higher education sector.

Keywords: higher education, world university rankings, Visegrad group, comparison

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Visegrad Group, also called Visegrad Four (V4) is an alliance of four Central European countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, founded by The Visegrad Declaration in 1991. The initiative was inspired by an initial meeting of the Polish, Czech and Hungarian kings at the Visegrad castle in 1335. The nations share many historical similarities, which significantly affected the educational development. They all belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[1] The 1774 Educational reform of Maria Theresa introducing compulsory schooling in the monarchy is certainly the most remarkable milestone of that era with regard to education. All the nations obviously also share the heritage of the communist totalitarian regime, being members of the former Soviet Bloc in the second half of the twentieth century. Although private higher education institution legally started operating in all the countries in the 1990s, a vast majority of

[1] Poland only partly.

students still remain enrolled in public universities in all countries of the V4 (OECD, n.d.). In 2000, the V4 agreed to establish the International Visegrad Fund, which promotes regional cooperation within the V4 region as well as between the V4 region and other countries, especially in the area of culture, education, science, and research. The V4 countries also joined the EU in 2004 and have been collaborating closely within the EU since. The historical, political, and cultural similarities, highlighted by their shared experiences with economic transformation, make the V4 countries well suited for comparison. Therefore, a number of studies have been conducted which compare V4 countries in various aspects, such as economic performance and environment (e.g. Dorozynski & Marszalek, 2016; Ivanová & Masárová, 2018; Kiss, 2018; Kočenda & Valachy, 2006; Kowalska et al., 2018), R&D expenditures (Bočková, 2013), quality of life (Nováková & Šoltés, 2016), foreign policy (Gazdag, 1997; Marton, 2012), environmental issues (Gałaś et al., 2015; Urbaniec, 2014), and agricultural policy (Svatoš et al., 2013). However, a comparison of higher education is yet to be done. Given the importance of education for economic growth (Aghion & Howitt, 1998; Lucas, 1988; Mankiw, Romer, & Weil, 1992; Nelson & Phelps, 1966) and general quality of life (Ross & Willigen, 1997), there is a need for an up-to-date comparison between the V4 countries' higher education institutions and the whole higher education systems. Such a comparison would certainly be found relevant and interesting for a V4 audience, but also for a broader audience outside the region.

Previous comparative studies show that the Czech Republic surpasses others in the V4 region in terms of the relevant economic indicators (Dorozynski &Marszalek, 2016; Ivanová & Masárová, 2018; Kowalska et al., 2018; Kiss, 2018), R&D expenditure indicators (Bočková, 2013), as well as quality of life as reflected in material living conditions (Nováková & Šoltés, 2016). This study aims to provide a comparison in the area of higher education, and thus to determine whether or not the results will emulate the above-mentioned comparative studies with respect to the standing of the Czech Republic. World university rankings will be used as a tool for the comparison.

The article is structured as follows. It first deals with the scholarly discourse on the phenomena of university rankings, including cross-country comparative studies. Then it analyses and compares the performance of V4 countries in the recent editions of the most established individual university rankings as well as in the recent rankings of national higher education systems. Relevant socioeconomic factors influencing the country's performance in the rankings are analysed and discussed later. In all tables, the V4 countries are presented in the alphabetical order.

UNIVERSITY RANKINGS: SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE

The global university rankings have become very popular since the publication of the Academic Ranking of World Universities (also known as the ShanghaiRanking) in 2003. The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) was followed closely by Quacqarelli-Symmonds World University Rankings (QSWUR) and, later, by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THEWUR). Although quite a few new university rankings have recently emerged, those three world university rankings mentioned above can certainly be regarded as the most established and influential ones (Dobrota et al., 2016; Hou & Jackob 2017; Jajo & Harrison 2014; Millot, 2015; Soh,

2014, 2015). The methodology of ARWU, THEWUR, and QSWUR is outlined in the following section.[2]

University rankings have been critically studied by scholars. It has often been argued that university rankings tend to favour universities from English-speaking countries (Dobrota et al., 2016; Huang, 2012; Li, Shankar & Tang., 2011; Marginson, 2007). Soh (2013a, 2014) finds discrepancies between the nominal and attained indicator weights used by all three of the most established rankings as well as by the ranking of national higher education systems Universitas 21 Ranking. Hazelkorn (2013) summarizes that rankings do not properly measure teaching and learning, including value added, the impact of research on teaching, the humanities and social science research, knowledge transfer or impact of research, regional or civic engagement, and student experience.

The QS-THE university ranking methodology[3] has been heavily criticized for putting too much emphasis on reputation data based on survey among academics and employers (Bowman & Bastedo 2011; Federkeil, 2008; Huang, 2012; Jajo & Harrison, 2014; Marginson, 2007, 2014; Taylor & Braddock, 2007). Dobrota et al. (2016) criticize the QS ranking methodology for its subjective, possibly biased, component indicator weights. Though, Dobrota et al. (2016) appreciate that the QS ranking is not so affected by bibliometric preferences compared to other rankings because it is focused on broad areas of interest to prospective students, that is. teaching, research, employability, and internationalization. Soh (2015) praises the QS rankings for reflecting the conception of the modern university, which values synergic relationships with industry community and international cooperation.

The AWRU methodology has been criticized mainly for the emphasis placed on research and Nobel Prize winners, while neglecting the aspects of teaching and learning (Jajo & Harrison, 2014; Marginson, 2007, 2014; Rauhvarges, 2014; Saisana, d'Hombres, & Saltelli, 2011; Taylor & Braddock, 2007). Marginson (2014) points out that AWRU surprisingly states the Nobel alumni measure as an indicator of teaching quality. Bougnol and Dula (2015) add that the indicator of Nobel Prize winners on staff should be rather regarded as an input to generate the outcome measured, remarking that treating inputs as outputs can lead to rewarding inefficiency. Jajo and Harrison (2014) see the heavy weighting towards the natural sciences at the expense of the arts and humanities as a limitation of the ranking. Saisana et al. (2011) object that five out of six indicators are size-dependent with only one indicator (academic performance per capita) being normalized by size. The ARWU is, however, in spite of its limitations, recognized and preferred by experts due to the data quality and objectivity (Li et al., 2011; Marginson, 2014; Saisana et al., 2011).

Despite all the criticism and controversial nature, scholars frequently conclude their papers admitting that rankings are here to stay, so we need to make sure it is used and interpreted carefully in an informed way (Dobrota et al., 2016; Federkeil, 2008; Hazelkorn, 2007; Rauhvargers, 2014; Taylor & Braddock 2007).

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[2] The QSWUR was originally published jointly by Quacquarelli Symonds and Times Higher Education magazine as THE-QS *World University Rankings* from 2004 to 2009. In 2010, both started publishing their own ranking separately. Times Higher Education adopted a new methodology, while Quacquarelli Symonds kept using the original one.

[3] Since 2010, QS and THE publish their own ranking separately. Both rankings use reputation surveys.

It has been shown that rakings have an impact on the micro (institutional) level, that is. on strategic planning and management of higher education institutions (Federkeil, 2008; Hazelkorn, 2007, 2008; Marconi & Ritzen, 2015; Soo, 2013; Rauhvargers, 2014; Wilkins & Huisman 2012). There is also an impact on the macro (national) level, that is, on public policy. Ranking may have an influence on immigration policy rules, eligibility of partner institutions, recognition of qualifications, university mergers, centres of excellence, or government study abroad scholarships (Li et al., 2011; Rauhvargers, 2014; Saisana et al., 2011).

Several cross-country comparative studies have also been conducted. The following results have been found. Taylor and Braddock (2007) compared rankings of Australian and Japanese universities in the ARWU and THE-QS, finding contradictory results depending on the respective ranking. Soh and Ho (2014) provide a detailed comparison of the two former British colonies of Hong Kong and Singapore with regard to their performance in the established university rankings, concluding that universities in the two cities are on a par.

No study analysing and comparing European countries through world university rankings has yet been conducted. This study narrows the gap in the comparative education literature, starting with a comparison of the V4 countries. The standing of V4 countries is analysed and compared in the following sections of the article.

PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

3.1 Academic rankings of world universities

Universities are ranked by six academic or research performance indicators, using weights assigned as follows (ShanghaiRanking Consultancy, 2017a): Alumni winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals (10%); Staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals (20%); Highly cited researchers (20%); Papers published in Nature and Science[4](20%); Papers indexed in the Science Citation Index-expanded and Social Science Citation Index (20%); Per capita academic performance of an institution (10%).

Since 2017, ARWU has published the top 800 universities, while in the previous years it was only the top 500. Those institutions ranked between 501 and 800 are regarded as ARWU World Top 500 Candidates (ShanghaiRanking Consultancy 2017a).

Exact ranks and overall scores are available only for the top hundred universities, which is not the case for any V4 university. Table 1 shows the rankings of V4 universities in the ARWU 2017.

Only three universities ranked in the top 500, two being from Poland and one from the Czech Republic. The Charles University in Prague performs the best from the V4 region, finishing among the top 300 universities. Poland has the highest number (6) of representatives in the published top 800.

[4] For institutions specialized in humanities and social sciences such as London School of Economics, N&S is not considered, and the weight of N&S is relocated to other indicators.

Table 1: V4 Universities in ARWU 2017

University	Rank
Czech Republic	
Charles University in Prague	201-300
Czech Technical University in Prague	601-700
Masaryk University	601-700
Palacký University	601-700
Hungary	
Eötvös Loràǹd University	501-600
University of Szeged	501-600
Budapest University of Technology and Economics	701-800
Poland	
University of Warsaw	301-400
Jagiellonian University	401-500
AGH University of Science and Technology	601-700
Adam Mickiewicz University	701-800
Medical University of Silesia	701-800
University of Wroclaw	701-800
Slovakia	
Comenius University in Bratislava	701-800

Source: ShanghaiRanking Consultancy (2017b)

The mean values of the individual indicators scores are presented in Table 2. The ARWU individual indicators are not normalized by size, with the only exception for *Per capita academic performance of an institution* (PCP),[5] which makes the indicator suitable for a comparison. With regard to PCP, on average, top Czech universities do the best, followed by Polish universities, with the Hungarian universities being on the same level as the one Slovakian university included in the ranking. Low standard deviations (SD-PCP) show that the mean values reflect the situation well (in a statistically reliable way), taking into account the very low number of universities

Table 2: Comparisons of V4 group universities on ARWU indicator scores (mean values)

	Alumni	Award	HiCi	N&S	PUB	PCP	SD (PCP)
Czech Republic (N=4)	4.0	0.0	3.9	5.9	30.6	17.8	2.69
Hungary (N=3)	7.9	4.4	0,0	4.9	22.6	12.5	0.92
Poland (N=6)	5.1	0.0	3.6	4.4	28.0	14.8	2.92
Slovakia (N=1)	0	0	0	3.6	25.0	12.5	0

Source: ShanghaiRanking Consultancy (2017b), mean values and standard deviations calculated by author

[5] The weighted scores of the five indicators divided by the number of full-time equivalent academic staff.

The THEWUR 2018

The indicators and respective weights used by THEWUR are following (Times Higher Education, 2017): Teaching - the learning environment (30%); Research - volume, income and reputation (30%); Citations - research influence (30%); International outlook - staff, students and research (7,5%); Industry income - knowledge transfer (2,5%).

There were 13 Czech, 6 Hungarian, 12 Polish, and 3 Slovak universities ranked among 1102 institutions published in THEWUR 2018 (Times Higher Education, 2018). The total of 34 V4 universities included in the ranking is the highest number from the three most established university rankings considered. However, only 13 were able to rank in the top 800, which is similar to 14 universities from the V4 group in the top 800 published by ARWU 2017 as well as 14 universities from V4 countries featuring among the best 800 in the QSWUR Rankings 2018.

Table 3 shows the average scores for the individual indicators gained by the respective V4 group universities included in the ranking.

Table 3: Comparisons of V4 group universities on THE indicator scores (mean values)

	Teaching	Research	Citations	Industry income	International outlook
Czech Republic (N=13)	20.1	14.3	24.0	36.5	42.8
Hungary (N=6)	19.6	10.1	36.3	38.6	49.9
Poland (N=12)	19.4	11.0	27.1	33.8	26.9
Slovakia (N=3)	21.9	12.5	20.1	36.1	31.7

Source: Times Higher Education (2018), mean values calculated by author

On average, the Hungarian and Czech Universities included in the ranking do significantly better than the Polish and Slovakian universities for the *International outlook* indicator. The Hungarian universities also perform comparatively well in terms of the research influence indicator measured by *Citations.* With regard to *Teaching, Research* and *Industry income*, there are no significant differences between the average scores gained by the top representatives of the respective countries.

QS world university rankings

Universities are evaluated according to the following six metrics (Quacquarelli Symonds, 2018d): academic reputation (40%); employer reputation (10%); faculty/student ratio (20%); citations per faculty (20%); international faculty ratio (5%); international student ratio (5%).

Table 4 shows rankings of V4 Universities in QS World University Rankings 2018. Five Czech, 6 Hungarian, and 9 Polish are ranked in the top 1000 published by the QSWUR 2018. Again, similar to the ARWU, Comenius University in Bratislava is the only Slovak university considered competitive worldwide. Two Czech and two Polish universities were able to make the top 500. Neither the Hungarian nor the Slovak institutions feature

in the top 500. Exact ranks are specified only for top four hundred universities, which is only the case of Charles University in Prague. As mentioned above, 9 Polish universities got to the top thousand included in the ranking, however 6 were ranked in the last range of 801-1000.

Table 4: V4 Universities in QS World University Rankings 2018

University	Rank
Czech Republic	
Charles University in Prague	314
Czech Technical University in Prague	491-500
Masaryk University	551-600
Brno University of Technology	601-650
Palacký University in Olomouc	701-750
Hungary	
University of Szeged	501-550
Eötvös LoràND University	651-700
University of Debrecen	651-700
Budapest University of Technology and Economics	751-800
University of Pécs	751-800
Corvinus University of Budapest	801-1000
Poland	
University of Warsaw	411-420
Jagiellonian University	461-470
Warsaw University of Technology	601-650
Adam Mickiewicz University	801-1000
AGH University of Science and Technology	801-1000
University of Lodz	801-1000
Nicolaus Copernicus University	801-1000
University of Wroclaw	801-1000
Wroclaw University of Technology	801-1000
Slovakia	
Comenius University in Bratislava	701-750

Source: Quacquarelli Symonds 2018e

There is, unfortunately, only very limited data available regarding exact scores, both overall and individual indicators, which makes more detailed comparison impossible.

Summary: Individual university rankings

Table 5 provides a summary of the appearance of the V4 countries in the most established rankings. Many universities feature in all three rankings, and are, therefore, counted more than once. Average rankings are shown in Table 6.

Table 5: No. of appearance - summary table

	ARWU	THE	QS	Total
Czech Republic	4	13	5	22
Hungary	3	6	6	15
Poland	6	12	9	27
Slovakia	1	3	1	5

Table 6: Average rankings - summary table

	ARWU	THE	QS
Czech Republic	550.0	803.8	546.8
Hungary	616.7	758.3	720.8
Poland	616.7	858.3	767.2
Slovakia	750.0	833.3	725.0

Note: Means of intervals were used for calculating the average ranking

Polish universities had the most appearances in total in the selected rankings, followed by the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. On average, Czech universities ranked highest within the group for ARWU and QSWUR, while Hungarian universities reached the best average ranking in THEWUR.

Graduate employability rankings 2018

Graduate Employability Rankings is one of the QS rankings, and certainly worth considering and discussing because of its linkage to the labour market.

The ranking assesses universities according to the following subcategories (Quacquarelli Symonds, 2018b): Alumni outcomes, employer-student connection, employer reputation, graduate employment rate, and partnership with employers. Again, there is only very limited data available regarding individual indicators.

General ranking performance (intervals) of the V4 group universities is shown in Table 7. There are 3 Czech universities, 3 Polish universities, 2 Hungarian universities, and 1 Slovak university listed in the top 500 published by the Graduate Employability Rankings 2018. Charles University in Prague ranks the best, that is, 161-170, followed by the Brno University of Technology, falling within the range of 251-300, while all other universities from the V4 group listed in the ranking were assigned a rank within the range of 301–500.

Rankings of national higher education systems do not use individual universities but national higher education systems as a unit of analysis. There are currently two relevant rankings of higher education systems, that is, *Universitas 21 Ranking* and *QS Higher Education System Strength Rankings.*

Table 7: QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2018

University	Rank
Czech Republic	
Charles University in Prague	161-170
Brno University of Technology	251-300
Czech Technical University in Prague	301-500
Hungary	
Budapest University of Technology and Economics	301-500
Eötvös LoràND University	301-500
Poland	
Jagiellonian University	301-500
University of Warsaw	301-500
Wroclaw University of Technology	301-500
Slovakia	
Comenius University in Bratislava	301-500

Source: Quacquarelli Symonds (2018a)

UNIVERSITAS 21 RANKING 2017

The Universitas 21 Ranking evaluates performance of the national systems in the following four areas using the respective weights (Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, 2017): Resources (20%), Environment (20%), Connectivity (20%) and Output (40%). The indicators are briefly outlined below. Variables used are standardised for population size.

Resources: expenditures on tertiary education, research and development, etc.

Environment: proportion of female students and staff, financial autonomy, regulatory environment, etc.

Connectivity: proportion of international students, proportion of articles co-authored with international collaborators, percentage of university research publications co-authored with industry researchers, etc.

Output: total articles produced by higher education institutions, average impact of articles, the excellence of a nation's best universities, enrolments in tertiary education as a percentage of the eligible population, unemployment rates comparison, etc.

Table 8: Performance in U21 Ranking 2017

	Rank	**Overall**	**Resources**	**Environment**	**Connectivity**	**Output**
Czech Republic	24	56.9	58.5 (26)	76.5 (33)	56.9 (21)	36.8 (30)
Hungary	31	50.8	44.2 (38)	72.6 (39)	57.6 (20)	31.2 (32)
Poland	32	50.0	52.6 (33)	82.5 (17)	28.4 (46)	34.9 (31)
Slovakia	38	45.9	45.3 (36)	71.4 (40)	38.8 (33)	29.2 (35)

Source: Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research (2017), figures in parenthesis are ranks among 50 nations included

As shown in Table 8, Czech Republic ranks the highest within the group, followed by Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The gap between Hungary and Poland is very narrow as Hungary ranks only a single position above Poland. When it comes to the individual areas of the ranking, we can see Poland doing very well in terms of *Environment* indicator, while doing poorly for *Connectivity.* Otherwise, the ranks gained in the individual areas are not too distant from the overall ranks of the respective countries.

QS Higher Education System Strength Rankings 2016

The QS Higher Education System Strength Rankings compares the performance of the national systems in four areas (Quacquarelli Symonds, 2018c): *system strength* (to give an overall indication of each country's standing in the global ranking tables), *access* (to give an indication of the chances of gaining a place at a world-class university for residents of the country in question), *flagship institution performance* (based on the premise that the performance of a country's leading institution is a credit to the overall system, often resulting from national investment in developing a flagship institution to lead the way), and *economic context* (to assess the impact of national investment in higher education, by comparing each nation's financial situation to its performance in the international rankings). These four indicators are combined with equal weighting to give the overall scores, with the top 50 countries published. The indicators are further outlined below.

System strength*:* Each country is awarded a score based on the number of its institutions which are ranked 700 or above in the QS World University Rankings, divided by the average position of those institutions.

Access: Scores in this category are calculated based on the number of places available at universities ranked within the global top 500, divided by an indicator of population size. The specific figures used in this calculation are the total number of full-time equivalent students at universities in the top 500 of the QS World University Rankings, divided by the square root of the population.

Flagship institution*:* This is a normalized score, based on the place each nation's top university occupies in the QS World University Rankings.

Economic context: An indexed score is awarded for each university featured in the rankings (7 points for a university in the top 100, 6 points for 101-200, 5 points for 201–300, 4 for 301–400, 3 for 401–500, 2 for 501–600 and 1 for 601–700), and this is then factored against the GDP per capita for the country in question.

Table 9: Performance in QS Higher Education System Strength Rankings 2016

	Rank	Overall	System	Access	Flagship	Economic
Czech Republic	38	31.8	16.5	46.8	46.4	17.5
Poland	43	20	11.2	25.2	29.8	13.9
Hungary	50+	N/A				
Slovakia	50+	N/A				

Source: Quacquarelli Symonds (2016)

As presented in Table 9, Czech Republic does the best out of the V4 countries, followed by Poland. Hungary and Slovakia do not feature among the top 50 countries included in the ranking. The leading position of the Czech Republic in the region is apparently caused especially by the performance of the *flagship institution*, and by the good score in the indicator of *access.*[6] With regard to the two remaining indicators (*system strength* and *economic context)*, the gap between Czech Republic and Poland is not so significant.

In both national higher education system rankings, Czech Republic does the best out of the V4 countries, followed by either Hungary or Poland depending on the ranking. The Slovakian higher education system lags in comparison with the other countries of the region.

RANKING PERFORMANCE DETERMINANTS

What are determinants of a country's success in the university rankings? Li et al. (2011) examined various socioeconomic factors[7] that potentially affect the accumulation of academic talent and found that a large proportion of cross-country difference can be explained by several variables, especially population size and GDP, with the addition of research and development expenditure and an English language dummy (all variables having positive influence).

Table 10 shows potentially relevant socioeconomic indicators for V4 countries.[8] Considering the crucial factors (variables) noted above, Czech Republic leads the group in terms of GDP per capita as well as R&D expenditure, while Poland has the highest population by far. In neither of the countries is English the official national language.

Table 10: Relevant socioeconomic indicators - V4 countries, 2008-2013 averages[9]

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia
Population (million)	10.5	10.0	38.1	5.4
GDP per capita (constant 2010 US$)	19 938	13 332	12 802	16 842
Research and development expenditure (% of GDP)	1.5	1.2	0.7	0.6
Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP)	4.1	4.7	4.9	3.9
Expenditure on tertiary education (% of government expenditure on education)	23.4	21.4	22.5	22.0
Government expenditure per student, tertiary education (in PPP$)[10]	6715	5548	4480	4766

Source: WDI- World Bank, averages calculated by author

[6] In 2016, there were 2 Czech (Charles University in Prague and Czech Technical University) and 2 Polish institutions (University of Warsaw and Jagiellonian University) ranked in the top 500 relevant for the indicator calculation.
[7] The choice of the variables was largely based on human capital theory.
[8] Rankings of national higher education system standardize variables and indicators for country's population size and income to a certain extent (as outlined in the prior text). Hence, these factors should not be influencing the system rankings significantly, unlike the individual university rankings.
[9] The time periods of indicators are chosen to lag 2016-2017 (the release dates of the respective rankings analyzed)
[10] UNESCO Institute of Statistics: Browse by country, http://uis.unesco.org/en/home#tabs-0-uis_home_top_menus-3.

It should be noted that expenditure on education, research and development are obviously treated as an input factor affecting the final performance, while Universitas 21 Ranking considers expenditure as a performance (output) indicator, which is a shortcoming of the ranking, similar to the issue related to the ARWU indicator of Nobel Prize winners mentioned above.

With regard to the determinants on the level of institution, Marconi and Ritzen (2015) conclude that expenditure per student is positively related to a university's score. The Czech Government spent the most per tertiary student as shown also in Table 10.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis and comparison of the available data in light of individual university rankings (number of universities ranked, actual rankings, individual indicator scores) and the national higher education system rankings, I conclude that the Czech Republic ranks highest, followed by Poland and Hungary at approximately the same level, while Slovakia falls behind other V4 countries.

The leading position of the Czech Republic may be explained by the country's economic power, as well as by the comparatively high amount of R&D expenditure and government expenditure on higher education. Poland seems to benefit from its high population, having the most appearances in the established individual university ranking (Table 5). However, only up to a point because the difference is not as substantial as one would expect considering the significant population gap between Poland and the other countries in the region. This could be attributed (or certainly not unrelated) to the comparatively low GDP per capita of Poland. Low population together with low R&D expenditure seem to be the factors limiting the performance of Slovakia in the rankings, having only one globally competitive university.

It should also be highlighted that the leading position of the Czech Republic was significantly supported by the performance of its flagship institution (Charles University in Prague), which does the best in the region considering all the relevant established rankings including the special ranking of graduate employability.

Despite all the criticism, we simply have to accept that university rankings are here to stay and still, arguably, possess the only way to comprehensively and understandably measure the quality of higher education, both on the institutional and national level. The results, however, must be interpreted with caution, bearing in mind all the shortcomings described. Therefore, I don't intend to claim that higher education in one country is unambiguously better than in another and vice versa, the conclusion being based solely on the ranking figures and scores. However, the conducted comparison does provide certain information about the higher education systems of the V4 countries.

The results confirm the leading position of the Czech Republic in the region, and they are in line with the recently conducted studies comparing the economic attributes, R&D expenditures and quality of life in the V4 countries. The results thus also prove and confirm the strong interconnection between the economic performance, R&D expenditures and the performance of the higher education sector.

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Cross-cultural teaching and foreign teacher identity in Singapore

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The international movement of teachers is a global phenomenon that has seen an increasing number of teachers moving from one country to another. Although developed countries in the West are traditionally seen as attractive migration destinations for teachers, countries in Asia, such as Singapore, are also proving to be a draw for many foreign teachers. Despite studies of the experiences of foreign teachers, there are few studies investigating the influence of cross-cultural teaching on the development of the professional identity of foreign teachers. Using a narrative inquiry approach, this study examines how the cross-cultural teaching experience of a Chinese beginning teacher in Singapore influenced the development of his professional teacher identity. The story of the participant tells of why the participant became a teacher and how the change of teaching context from China to Singapore influenced his professional identity as a teacher. The study surfaced the large cultural difference between the two countries.

Keywords: cross-cultural teaching; teacher identity

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has led to an increased connectivity across borders (OECD, 2019). One of its outcomes is the migration and international movement of people. Major cities in the world have attracted migrant workers from around the world who are seeking better employment opportunities. The teaching profession is one of such mobile skilled labour forces (Appleton, Morgan, & Sives, 2006). This includes teachers taking up offers to teach in international schools and English Language in developing countries, and also teachers moving from developing countries to developed countries, such as the US (Dunn, 2011), UK (De Villiers, 2007; McNamara, Lewis & Howson, 2007) and Australia (Sharplin, 2009) to fill teacher shortages.

Such pull factors for migrant teachers also exist for Asian countries. A population census indicated that, at the end of June 2016, 29.8% of the 5.607 million residents in Singapore were non-Singaporeans (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2016). Although no official figures have been released, foreign teachers have been a significant and important source of manpower to address the teacher shortage in specific areas (Tharman, 2001). Both beginning and

experienced teachers from countries such as China, India, and the Philippines, have been recruited into the Singapore teaching workforce over the years.

Previous literatures on migrant teachers tend to focus on the entire process of settling down in the new environment, including the legal procedural experiences to school-based ones (De Villiers, 2007; Dunn, 2011; McNamara, Lewis & Howson, 2007; Shaplin, 2009), or surveying macro structural trends (Appleton et al., 2006). However, the significance of the life experiences of migrant teachers and the impact of such experiences on their professional identity development has rarely been examined. This study aims to fill this gap in research by examining how a Chinese migrant teacher's cross-cultural teaching experience in Singapore influenced the development of his teacher identity.

Previous studies have shown that a teacher's identity development can be influenced by his personal and prior life experiences (Olson, 2008), emotions (Zembylas, 2003), and the environment that he interacts with. These environmental influences refer to features of the teaching context, such as the wider socio-cultural environment, school culture, leaders, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Day, 2002).

Due to the personal and relational nature of such experiences, it is necessary to explore, in-depth, the experiences of the participants in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of their experience. As such, it was decided to adopt a narrative inquiry approach (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000) and focus a study on a single participant.

In the next section, we will provide an outline of the literature on teacher identity development and the theoretical perspective for the study. This will be followed by the research design and methods. In the sections that follow, we will present our findings, and conclude with remarks concerning the implications of our findings on education policy and practices.

BACKGROUND

Although Singapore has been clustered together with Confucian heritage culture countries, such as China, Vietnam, South Korea, and Japan, its colonial past and the subsequent bilingualism policy of 1966 has left significant changes on the population. Despite the Chinese being the majority of the population in Singapore, the official language of communication in government agencies and most work environments is English. In education, other than when teaching mother tongue languages (Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil), subjects are taught in English. It is also common for professional workers, including teachers, to communicate in English at the work place. The Singaporean government has been actively attracting foreign workers to the Singapore labour market (Velayutham, 2007), however, in recent years, there is an increasing degree of xenophobia (Gomes, 2013) or dissatisfaction against the foreign talents of immigrants (Yang, 2017).

Shiraishi and Hau (2012) observed that Chinese descendants with Anglophone backgrounds tend to adopt an Anglo-Chinese identity. They speak English and have acquired Western customs and habits. Such Anglo-Chinese may speak non-English languages to interface with other Asians when necessary but they are more inclined to keep their Anglophone identities. It appears that the Singaporean public tend to consider Chinese talent immigrants as the most undesirable among foreign talents attracted to Singapore (Matthews, 2015; Yang, 2017).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, the focus is to discuss how a Chinese migrant teacher's cross-cultural teaching experience in Singapore influenced the development of his teacher identity. The notion of teacher identity is a complex and fluid one that has been explored from different angles within the literature on teacher development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Thus, in this study, the development of identity of a Chinese migrant teacher will be analysed focusing on the relationships between the following three elements: (1) past experiences, (2) teaching context and (3) cultural issues. This is because teachers' professional identity is rooted in their past experiences, influenced by current teaching contexts, and, if the teachers are working in cross-cultural contexts, the cultural issues they face.

Past teacher experiences may include previous teaching opportunities and experiences in practical teaching (Lamote & Engels, 2010; Schempp, Sparkes, & Templin, 1999). Other social interactions, psychological, and cultural factors (Cooper & Olson, 1996) also intertwine to influence teacher identity in "mutually constitutive ways" (Olsen, 2008, p. 24).

Past experiences can also include teachers' early-childhood experiences in school, and interactions with teachers and family members who were role models (Schempp et al., 1999). These elements could provide reasons for entering the teaching profession (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, & LeCornu., 2007; Lortie, 1975). Wright & Tuska (1967) observed that a person's decision to be a teacher is strongly influenced by his relationships with important adults and teachers early in life. Such experiences will, in turn, inform their future practices, decisions, and behaviours as teachers (Beijaard et al., 2004). Therefore, teachers, including beginning ones, are likely to reproduce the ways in which they were taught (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2007).

Teaching contexts are "the ecology of the classroom and culture of the school" (Beijaard et al., 2000, p. 752). The school environment and its stakeholders, such as school leaders, teachers, students, and parents influence a teacher's professional identity (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Fetherston, 2007; Reynolds, 1996). The wider teaching context beyond the school, including changes in government policies and education reform, have been shown to redefine teachers' expectations and roles and have a significant impact on how teachers perceive their professional identities (Day, 2002; Lee & Yin, 2010; Sachs, 2005).

A third area to consider in the formation of teacher identity is related to cultural issues. People belong to different social groups and are influenced by the social culture within those groups, which can be distinctly different from other types of culture in terms of attitudes and behaviours (Bullivant, 1993). Teaching practice, to a large extend, is also influenced by culture (Hofstede, 2010; Yueng, 2006). Teachers who are unaware of the cultural norms of their students can negatively affect the learning process (Darling-Hammond & Falk, 1997). As a result of their training and upbringing, teachers often assume a particular cultural stance with regard to the classroom interactions in which they engage (Lipka, 1991). It is thus inevitable that a certain amount of adjustment and acculturation are needed when teaching in a cross-cultural context; these can have a considerable impact on teacher identity. Previous studies have documented the challenges and struggles faced by teachers in cross-cultural contexts as they negotiate their professional identities and cope with cultural differences in their new environments (Trent & Decoursey, 2012).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

The participant and the roles of the authors

The participant in this study is Wei Min, a 28-year-old male beginning teacher from Wuhan, China. The study centres on Wei Min's experiences during his first year as a Chinese language teacher in a government secondary school in Singapore and focuses on how he developed and modified his beliefs about teaching and how he negotiated his teacher identity to create a sense of self-efficacy. Through Wei Min's story, this research aims to illuminate the issues faced by foreign beginning teachers in Singapore and understand how these may shape their teacher identities. Pseudonyms are used throughout the report to protect the privacy of the participants.

A narrative inquiry approach (Clandinin, 1993; Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009) was employed to study the lived experience of Wei Min. Limiting the study to a single participant allowed the researcher to delve deep into the narrative space of inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; 2000) to unearth the richness of the participant's stories. The goal of this research is not to generalize the findings but to yield results that were contextual (Creswell, 2011) and detailed (Patton, 2002).

Data collection

The first author heard of Wei Min's plight from her classmate, Claire, a School Staff Developer (SSD) in a secondary school, who said that Wei Min was a teacher from China who arrived in her school a year ago. Claire related the problems Wei Min had in school: how he fumbled during his first year, how he broke down in the classroom, his struggle with classroom management, and his adjustment to his tasks in the school.

Data collection was conducted from December 2011 to February 2012. The first author conducted two interviews with Wei Min, one interview with his Mentor Coordinator, Sue, and observed him in school for a day. The interviews were conducted using the semi-structured interview method (Patton, 2002). The interviews with Wei Min were conducted in Mandarin so that he could express himself freely in a language he was most comfortable in. Each interview lasted about one hour and was recorded, transcribed, and translated. The interviews were conducted in a meeting room at Wei Min's school, as suggested by him, because it was quiet and convenient. All interviews were conducted after Wei Min's last official activity of the day so that he would be more relaxed and not rushed.

In order to gain a more holistic view of Wei Min's life in school, the first author decided to interview his Mentor Coordinator, Sue, who is a Senior Teacher in her 50s. Sue frequently acted as Wei Min's unofficial counsellor and mentor. Because of her nurturing and caring nature, Wei Min frequently sought her advice when he encountered problems in school. As a result, Sue has a deeper understanding of Wei Min than do most of his other colleagues.

With the permission of Wei Min and his principal, the first author was able to "shadow" Wei Min for one day in school to observe his interactions with his students and colleagues to gain a more comprehensive understanding of his experience. Throughout the classroom observation, the author paid attention to how Wei Min interacted with his students, his way of communication and body language and how his students behaved and responded to him during the lessons. She also listened in on the conversation between Wei Min and his colleagues in the staffroom, at the cafeteria, and along the corridors, taking field notes on the content and nature and tone of the interactions. The insights gathered from interviewing Wei Min and Sue, and from observing Wei Min in his school environment allowed the first author to validate and

triangulate the data. As Creswell (2011) explained, having a combination of different types of data allows for corroboration, thus improving the validity and integrity of the findings.

Analytical method

To study Wei Min's cross-cultural teaching experience, the first author adopted a methodology to closely listen to Wei Min's stories (Clandinin et al., 2009) as a beginning teacher in a cross-cultural context. Through close examinations of the transcriptions of the in-depth interviews and field notes, the authors attempted to understand Wei Min's emotions and experiences and thus make sense of his identity as a foreign beginning teacher in Singapore. The qualitative data obtained from the sessions of in-depth interviews are transcribed and presented in the following section according to the guiding framework: (1) past experiences, (2) teaching context and (3) cultural issues. Other information, including classroom observations, interview with Sue and Wei Min's interactions with colleagues are also inserted where relevant to provide a more holistic understanding of Wei Min's experience.

WEI MIN'S STORY

Prior experiences in China

In recounting his early schooling experience, Wei Min shared that he was born the year before the Chinese government introduced the "one-child policy". Because of the large population of children at the time, Wei Min was always schooled in large classes: "Forty to fifty students per class in secondary school and seventy to eighty students in high school". Although the classes were large, they were not noisy. "Except for a few mischievous students who chatted among themselves during lessons, the majority of the students were quiet and attentive".

Wei Min believed that the large population in China had created a strong competitive culture and that the high student-teacher ratio had forced children of his generation to be fiercely independent and to take ownership of their own learning:

> There was much competition among us . . . we were all very disciplined and attentive in listening and taking notes . . . If we didn't listen, there would be nobody to help us.

The strong emphasis on academic excellence has resulted in an examination-oriented approach towards teaching and learning. Wei Min's lessons were always "chalk and board". Wei Min recalled that a native English language teacher tried to incorporate student group activities into her lessons, but failed; this was because the class considered them to be a waste of time.

Applying for a teaching job in China

Prior to going to Singapore, Wei Min had a three-month practical teaching stint in China. He noted that the experience of teaching in China was "totally different" from what he had experienced in Singapore.

> [M]y students (back in China) were very obedient; they would not walk about during lessons or chatter at the top of their lungs . . . There, any of my teaching methods could be practiced in real life—whatever things I learnt were put into use. Hence, my impression of teaching was that it was really, really easy. It was really a shock for me when I started teaching here.

Unlike many who entered the teaching profession with high aspirations and thoughts, Wei Min candidly shared that the key consideration for his decision to become a teacher was the relatively good job opportunities it offers. After high school, Wei Min had wanted to study environmental engineering at university but his parents advised him otherwise:

> My family members are very practically minded. They think that teaching is a profession that will never run out of jobs.

Although he was not keen to enter teacher training college, there was "no room for negotiation". His family is not well-off, and so his parents were very adamant that he choose an economically viable profession.

Teaching contexts in Singapore

Local knowledge.

Wei Min actually did not intend to come to work as a Chinese teacher in Singapore but as an assistant—thus he struggled to come to terms with his new identity as a Chinese Language teacher.

> [W]hen I first applied, I did not know I was applying to teach Chinese in Singapore . . . [I thought] I would be working as a Chinese Language Assistant. They are people from China who promote the Chinese Language . . . It was after I came to Singapore when I realised I would be a full-fledged Chinese teacher.

One of the major challenges faced by Wei Min was his lack of knowledge about the local educational landscape. The situation was made worse by his unfamiliarity with the English language, the official working language here. He reminisced that when he first arrived, he could not understand anything discussed at school staff meetings.

As a result, he was totally unprepared to teach on his first day, and he panicked when his Head of Department (HOD) told him to get ready for classes after the morning flag-raising ceremony.

> I did not prepare anything. There was nothing for me . . . Oh, there were textbooks, but I did not know how to begin teaching, as I was still unfamiliar with the students' standards. So, I thought, "What to teach?".

Wei Min remembered after he introduced himself to the students that he was left with 40 minutes of lesson time. Not knowing what to do, he started explaining classics of poetry (usually taught at the tertiary level here) to his first-year secondary students, unaware that the subject was beyond the students' level of comprehension.

> My HOD came to know of this matter and laughed really hard. Even now he finds it funny.

Colleagues, school culture, and environment

Wei Min described his relationships with the majority of his colleagues as generally very amiable. He was especially touched by their care and concern for him after a particularly stressful day during which he broke down and cried in the staff room.

> I found many cards and small gifts on my desk. They all contained encouragement from my colleagues who had seen me cry. I felt really touched by their gesture . . . Through this incident . . . I felt my colleagues were all very kind and friendly towards me.

However, Wei Min also hinted at tension in his dealings with some colleagues, remarking, "'Time will tell' is a very suitable adage to describe my interactions with them. Over time, you realise what a person is really like". He recounted a "counselling" session he had with his subject mentor who disturbed him greatly:

> He told me it's fortunate that the Normal Technical[1] students are not out in society creating problems and that they are controlled in a school environment . . . He said I have to change my mentality—that I should focus on changing as many students as possible . . . and I just have to not let . . . those whom I cannot influence . . . affect me in any way.

Students

Wei Min described classroom management as the most "pressing issue" of his early teaching days.

> I was totally clueless about classroom management, because the students in China were very obedient—I did not need to discipline them.

He also felt that his students may have discriminated against him because he was a foreigner. He recounted how he was treated by his students:

> No one stood up to greet me. In one corner, they were playing cards, and in another, they were playing with their mobile phones; another group was chatting. They simply ignored me.

When the first author observed Wei Min's teaching, it became evident that he was still grappling with classroom management issues. His classes were noisy, and his students were totally disengaged from his lessons; many were sleeping, talking among themselves, walking about, using mobile phones, eating, or even filing their fingernails during class. A few of the students treated Wei Min rudely, not showing him any respect. When he questioned a boy for walking out of the class, the boy shouted, "I am going to the toilet!"

The students were eager to leave the class. Five minutes before the lesson ended, students were already packing their books and stationery, getting ready to leave. Students packed up and began standing one by one.

Wei Min appeared tense throughout the observation by the first author; he was sometimes helpless and fearful in class, and he demonstrated poor classroom management. By choosing to ignore the misbehaving students, he avoided confronting and addressing the problems at hand. The stress of dealing with difficult classes has taken a toll on Wei Min: he looked tired and drained after only two hours of lessons.

Challenges in cross-cultural teaching

Identity confusion.

Wei Min noticed that teachers in China have a different perception of their role and identity. He observed that "the role played by a teacher in Singapore is a complicated one [which] does not stop at teaching and educating the students". He maintained that he understood the role of teachers in China and, therefore, when he came to Singapore, "[he replicated] the role of a teacher teaching in China over here in Singapore". Since then, however, he has encountered many incidents that challenged his perception of his role and identity and forced him to create a new teacher identity:

> I felt that my role of actual teaching has been engulfed by other activities; I found no time to prepare for lessons or search for course materials for my students—no time to design my lessons to make them crystal clear to my students. I am totally occupied by different competitions, school activities, and settling administrative matters.

[1] Students in secondary school are allocated into different streams (Express, Normal Academic and Normal Technical) based on their academic performance. The lowest performing students are assigned to the Normal Technical stream.

He confessed that most of the time, he would enter the class unprepared. "I would bring in my textbook and study the chapters on the spot (in class). There was absolutely no time for me to prepare". Sue, the school's Mentor Coordinator, also noted the dilemma faced by Wei Min. She observed that Wei Min "felt quite overwhelmed at having to juggle several duties, as he had only expected to teach lessons in his mother tongue and not to manage other professional duties as well".

Adjusting to local environment, standards, and pedagogy.

Having realised that teaching in Singapore is "totally different" from what he had experienced in China and that it is not as "easy" as he had thought, Wei Min concluded that he needed to make adjustments to his thinking and practices in order to be a better Chinese language teacher here. Thus, he began his journey to re-learn how to be a Chinese language teacher in the Singaporean context:

> I had to struggle, but I gradually adjusted and lowered my expectations to fit the level of the system here . . . even after half a year, my standards still did not perfectly accommodate theirs. Even during the second year, I was still adjusting my standards to suit them.

After he observed that his students frequently translated his instructions on the whiteboard into English when they communicate among themselves, Wei Min began to write the English translations for the more difficult Chinese words on the whiteboard. I also observed Wei Min using flashcards for his lower-ability classes, an idea he gleaned from his in-service training here. He shared that this year, he had learnt to differentiate his teaching resources depending upon the various ability levels of his classes; he expressed happiness that his students learn better with the differentiated materials.

Wei Min, however, described his adjustment process as painful. In learning to adjust his teaching to his students' needs, Wei Min struggled with the realization that he needs to put aside much of what he learnt in school.

Stressed, helpless, and fearful

Wei Min confessed that "the stress level [here] is very high", as he rushed to complete his tasks every day and felt as if he could never finish them. Wei Min recalled an incident that caused him to break down and cry in the staffroom:

> I remember one time . . . I took the largest class . . . which has a couple of mischievous boys . . . they were fighting in class, and it was my first time encountering such a problem. I was not sure why they did not take my teaching seriously; I felt like a failure.

At the same time, Wei Min was also overwhelmed by the need to attend to his extra-curricular duties and dealing with administrative matters in English, a language that he is still unfamiliar with. He recalled feeling as though "the problems were thrown in [his] face all at once, and [he] felt really indignant and cried".

Wei Min's action shocked his colleagues and made them more sensitive to his plight. Although nobody in the staff room walked up to console him, when he went back to work the next day, Wei Min found many cards and small tokens on his desk containing words of encouragement from his colleagues who had seen him crying.

> During this incident, I felt that my colleagues were all very kind and friendly towards me. Even if there were some communication problems with the students, at least my colleagues were still really kind to me. This gradually helped me get through the tough times and sort out my thoughts (smiling).

The stress of creating a new identity as a Chinese Language teacher in Singapore, coupled with the adjustment in approaches to teaching and classroom management and the need to be accepted by the students, created enormous amounts of stress for Wei Min:

> I felt really tired . . . the students did not accept me and even said nasty things to me; such encounters made me develop harsh thoughts. At times, I would think to myself, why did I come here? Why am I here to face all of this nonsense? (laughing).

Despite Wei Min's occasional laughter, the pain he experienced was evident: his voice became soft and weak when he narrated his adjustment process. At one point, the first author could see tears swelling in his eyes.

Table 1 below presents a summary of our findings in relation to the shifts in Wei Min's teacher identity as he transited from China to be a teacher in Singapore.

Table 1: The transition experienced by Wei Ming

	China	Singapore
Experience as a teacher	▪ Feels confident and professional as a teacher ▪ Chose to work as a teacher	▪ Feels less confident and is struggling in the profession ▪ Expecting to be a Chinese language assistant and not a teacher
Teaching contexts	▪ Students are docile, quiet and attentive ▪ Respectful towards teachers ▪ Competitive learning culture	▪ Students are noisy and mischievous during lessons ▪ Not as respectful towards teacher ▪ Foreign teachers may face discrimination by students
Cultural issues	▪ Role of teacher is limited to teaching and educating students ▪ Chinese Language is the official language and the main language of communication for most teachers and students	▪ Besides teaching, the role of the teacher also includes managing school activities and administrative matters ▪ English Language is the official language and the working language in school. ▪ Many teachers and students are more comfortable communicating in English.

As shown in the table, Wei Min's original identity was a confident teacher with expertise to maintain order in the classrooms. After transiting to Singapore, he became less confident and was expected to stretch his expertise in more challenging and complex circumstances.

DISCUSSION

Identity as a teacher

Wei Min's past experience provided him with a series of positive stories as a teacher in China which led him to be a confident teacher (Cooper & Olson, 1996; Lamote & Engels, 2010; Olsen, 2008; Schempp et al., 1999). These positive experiences, as well as the stable income and status, were pull factors that attracted him to be a teacher; these factors accord with previous findings of why people become teachers (Beijaard et al., 2004; Groundwater-Smith et al., 2007; Lortie, 1975; Wright & Tuska, 1967). Wei Min assumed that the classroom situation would be similar to what he experienced as a student and reproduced the ways that he was taught: this is also in accordance with the findings by Groundwater-Smith et al. (2007).

The teaching contexts in Singapore, in terms of the make-up of the classroom and culture of the school, were different from that Wei Min was familiar with in China, including the treatment of the teacher by students. This difference in teaching context affected Wei Min greatly and, consequently, his teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2000; Bullivant, 1993; Darling-Hammond & Falk, 1997; Yueng, 2006). The assumption held by Wei Min was based on different contextual expectation (Lipka, 1991).

The majority of his colleagues neither recognized his struggles nor extended their help. Such situation led him to have a lower professional identity and become a less confident and struggling teacher (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Fetherston, 2006; Reynolds, 1996). If such notions of "needs" do not prevail at the school levels, migrant teachers would have to suffer as unwanted or neglected guests rather than professional teachers (Day, 2002; Lee & Yin, 2010; Sachs, 2005). Such phenomenon is also present in other Western countries (De Villiers, 2007; Dunn, 2011; McNamara et al., 2007; Sharplin, 2009).

Third, turning to cultural issues, Wei Min experienced a change in culture as he transited from being a part of a majority in China to becoming a minority as a migrant in Singapore. In addition, he needed to change his official language for daily communication in his workplace (Trent & Decoursey, 2012) from Chinese in China to English in Singapore. This was a source of struggle for him and has also affected his confidence and, consequently, his teacher identity.

Crossing borders as a foreigner: Its meaning in Singapore

Although the experiences of migrant teachers may differ for different schools in Singapore, the findings here are not unique to Wei Min. Thus, it becomes crucial to situate the case of Wei Min in the larger Singaporean contexts. There is a tendency for Singaporeans to view Chinese migrants in a negative light (Matthews, 2015; Yang, 2017) and this appears to be the case for Wei Ming. His negative experience in school made him feel inferior to other local Singaporean teachers and affected his teacher identity. In considering the challenges faced by migrant teachers, especially if there are gaps in languages, circumstances and organizational climates, there is a need for concerted efforts to support the assimilation of migrant teachers. Doing so will allow them to develop a stronger professional teacher identity, greater sense of self-esteem, and self-efficacy to contribute to the countries' teaching workforce (De Villiers, 2007; Dunn, 2011; McNamara et al., 2007; Sharplin, 2009).

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