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## New Public Management in Education: A Call for the Edupreneurial Leader?

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### ABSTRACT

The leadership inside and outside the schools envisioned in the context of output-oriented new public management reforms reacts upon the complexity and visibility of changes in a school environment. Thus, the main purpose of this conceptual article is to explore the under-theorized and under-researched relationship of the new public management mix of autonomy and accountability on the one hand and leadership styles (as they are practiced by school principals) on the other hand. We investigate this relationship in an effort to reposition the ongoing discussion of whether a new public management policy mix leads to a new leadership-styles hybrid.

From the perspective of political science, the introduction of quality-oriented new public management approaches has emerged as part of an output-oriented educational and political innovation strategy (Aoki, 2015). More specifically, in the light of this criticized (Tolofari, 2005), but surprisingly predominant, output-oriented new public management paradigm, school systems around the world are more and more characterized by more degrees of freedom regarding schools on the one hand and high accountability on the other hand. In that regard, it is essential to investigate factors that determine whether a mix of new public management concepts such as *accountability* and *autonomy* simultaneously introduced seem appropriate for a reorientation for what school principals are supposed to be doing in their schools in order to create more efficient and more effective learning environments leading to improved student outcomes. Therefore, school leadership, as practiced on the ground, seems to be a good example to empirically test the practical proof of this new public management mix, since school leadership is positioned at the interface between external and internal operations and leaders are responsible to moderate and mediate the influences of the inner and outer school worlds (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011).

This exploration is undertaken by first presenting some global trends of new public management policies in education, and their pressures on school leadership approaches, as new challenges to be dealt with and to be implemented on the ground. Following, (1) the asymmetry between the expressed influence of those new public management reforms on school leaders' roles and functions, and (2) the lack of theoretical and empirical soundness of those studies dealing with this relationship and making those strong and not evidence-based statements, is critically discussed. Then, a conceptual approach is presented, which acknowledges the theoretical and empirical limitations of previous studies by offering a refined perspective for a research design about the influence of new public management policies on school leadership styles on the ground. Based on the empirical findings of the Leadership Improvement for Student Achievement (LISA) study, a new hybrid of

leadership styles will be presented and discussed as an effort of aligning the inner and outer worlds of a school's challenges.

## **School leaders operating under the new public management philosophy: Intended and unintended effects**

### ***Intended effects***

In view of findings from international assessments on student achievement, an ever-growing number of countries have kicked off the most recent education innovation by changing governance from an input-based steering approach to an evidence-based, output-steering approach (Brauckmann et al., 2010). The underlying assumption of those output-oriented approaches is that high-quality outcomes can be delivered economically and purposefully (Halasz & Altrichter, 2000). The shift of decision-making competencies and accountability from the outside world of reform policies to the schools has led to an increasingly important role of the school and its leaders as a self-governing organization (Brauckmann et al., 2010). As a first result stemming from these new public management policies, the scope of tasks newly assigned to school principals has been broadened, since individual schools are increasingly facing higher demands regarding self-organization and responsibility. In that regard, advocates of these new public management approaches draw heavily on research findings from school effectiveness and school improvement, where tribute is paid to the key role assigned to school leaders with respect to quality assurance and quality development (Bonsen, Gathen, Von Der Iglhaut, & Pfeiffer, 2002; Wissinger, 2011). According to the implicit expectation setting, as formulated by the advocates of those new public management policies, the school leader as a "strategic head," holding an even more important and distinct role regarding the character of the school (Mintzberg, 1992; Pashiaridis, 2000), who is supposed to demonstrate a more autonomous and responsible leadership, which leads to an environment conducive to better learning outcomes and better working conditions within the school.

However, it is one thing to introduce public measures newly stipulated by educational policy, targeting a sustainable change in the leadership of an organization, and it is another thing to ask critically, "Which leadership styles, behaviors, and actions seem to be more relevant and more effective toward the implementation of these goals: Which aim for more efficiency and more effectiveness with regards to student outcomes?" Against this background, school leadership has been identified by a number of researchers as a key element in the effectiveness of school organizations (Brauckmann & Pashiaridis, 2009; Gronn & Ribbins, 2003; Jacobson, 2011; Kythreotis, Pashiaridis, & Kyriakides, 2010; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Mulford & Silins, 2011; Pashiaridis & Brauckmann, 2014; Sammons, Day, & Ko, 2011; Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Nowadays, it is an undisputed fact that leadership has become central to schools and their main "reason for existence," which is *teaching* and *learning*. Moreover, school leaders have become the "custodians" through which quality and equity are accounted for in our schools. As a result, the various stakeholders have widened their expectations from school leaders, demanding higher academic results and performance standards (Weindling & Dimmock, 2006). Additionally, leading the process toward increased effectiveness is not an easy task for any principal; it is a balancing act between what society at large requires and what school leaders can deliver within the school premises.

### ***Unintended effects***

At the same time, unintended effects that occur while introducing new public management concepts need to be considered. Even more so, it is necessary to deliver knowledge of whether more or less regimenting procedures were chosen in introducing both increased school autonomy measures and school quality assurance. A critical discussion on the unintended side effects stemming from the new

public management philosophy (some might say ideology) has just begun in a few countries (Kowalczyk & Jakubczak, 2014; Rajbhandari, 2016). This includes, for instance, the discussion about how much autonomy needs to be coupled with how much accountability. This debate is just beginning and it is an interesting one: in essence, school systems are trying to find out the “magic balance” between the two so that when they are trying to inform the societies (which provide their budgets, i.e., being accountable), they don’t jeopardize the art and craft of teaching and learning along the way, thus rendering it a mere technocratic and transactional activity. In fact, the debate is about how much is enough, and what is the threshold, so that we do not overburden leaders, teachers, and students along the way, with the excuse that society (at-large) needs to be informed and receive account for the money it spends on educating its youth.

In short, it is necessary to find the extent to which school leaders agree in implementing a changed public management philosophy and if their leadership reflects (to some extent) that new public management philosophy. Moreover, it is necessary to find out the extent to which it was possible to integrate school leaders as *process owners* when introducing this new public management mix, by enabling them to participate in debating and formulating new directives on autonomy and accountability for implementation. To sum up, we need to identify the “right threshold” of how many quality-assurance measures are “good enough” and, on the other hand, to specify when the introduction of new measures has “crossed the line” and, therefore, has become detrimental and an obstacle for a school’s ability to function as an organization within the new public management context.

Regarding the more-or-less robust findings of the implications of new public management reforms on leaders’ roles, actions, and behaviors, remarkably few theoretical foundations are available (Brüsemeister, 2002; Heidenreich, 1999; Weiler, 1990). A number of researchers have indicated the paradox and contradictory aspects and dilemmas regarding the relationship between the theory and practice of new public management approaches on the ground. At the same time, by focusing on the documentary analysis of new public management-inspired rules and regulations, researchers quite often, nolens volens, risk reproducing the assumptions of policymakers. In other words, researchers are offering plausible assumptions in a merely descriptive way regarding what is being prescribed by the policymakers. This purely descriptive approach makes a new perspective on the relationship between new public management and leadership on the ground even more necessary.

As a consequence, currently a divide is discernible between the rhetoric and the reality of new public management approaches, which were designed to foster effective leadership in schools, as indicated by empirical, task-analysis research on principals. Thus far, research on the introduction of new public management in education systems has not yet managed to deliver a satisfying explanation of the extent to which assumptions on the effectiveness of new output-oriented public management concepts are justified (de Grauwe, 2004; Eckholm, 1997; Schümer & Weiss, 2008; Summers & Johnson, 1994). While the importance and intentions of new public management reforms have frequently been described, a profoundly practical, empirical analysis of what school leaders do or prioritize still needs to be undertaken. It is also interesting to observe that the proponents of new public management reforms are trying to build up settings characterized by rigidity and by explicitly defined tasks, methods, and job descriptions of what school leaders are supposed to do. This is even more surprising, as this approach is usually taken as if one is faced with stable environmental conditions and not constantly changing and/or highly diverse environments (Owens, 2001, p. 99). Thereby, researchers aim to gain more insight into the practical proof of new governance approaches that target an increase and an improvement of quality assurance in schools.

### **Putting new public management and school leadership in perspective—Conceptual guidelines**

As can be understood from the previous section, acting as a school leader in ever more complex school environments always relates to acting in the context of orders of interaction, mediated via

external and self-reference, interests articulated by others and oneself, and externally as well as internally provided support. So far, the assumption that the change of system conditions (by introducing an output-oriented form of new public management) constitutes a key challenge for multilayered school leadership is accounted for by an integration of school system-wide context characteristics in frameworks and effect models. Generally, authors have pointed out that an education system and the conditions described above are reciprocally related, yet there is no empirically sound evidence as to how different variables at the system/macro level influence and interact with each other, or which of the variables in particular are relevant for the governance and organization of educational institutions. Accordingly, albeit with a few exceptions, evidence is yet scarce regarding the relationship between system reforms and school leadership actions.

Therefore, it seems that the correlation between system variables and leadership actions is not often considered as a focal matter of investigation. In fact, what is being argued here is that, when there is instability and uncertainty in the larger environment around us, school leaders ought to convert their schools into more flexible organizations, which will have quicker decision-making mechanisms and rely more on human interaction “by accommodation,” rather than relying on the formality of rules and bureaucracy. However, when school leaders decide to operate in these ways, this kind of behavior also involves dangers and risk-taking, which is something that not everybody is willing to do. Accordingly, explanations shall be delivered for dynamic patterns of relations and influences within an organization, as well as between an organization and its expanded environment. Moreover, this approach integrates the general openness of the school as a social system, as well as the power of context. General principles of organization and management, on the one hand, can thus be connected to unique features on the other.

Thus, open-systems theory offers to an individual school theoretical access to the dynamics of external environments that have changed owing to the new public management philosophy. Open social systems are highly complex; different factors impact on each other, and in an exclusively technical conception they are no longer governable. Rather, changes in the setup of organizations (vertical and horizontal structures of the organization) that have been externally initiated must, in the context of new governance, be viewed in conjunction with process-oriented organizations (König, 2002). For school leaders, this primarily implies that: (1) externally defined goals have to be (re)interpreted, (2) organizational goals have to be changed, and (3) competing goals, which respectively come into conflict between different organizational goals, have to be dealt with.

This descriptive approach focuses on actors within the organization, together with the conditional frameworks within and outside a school. At the same time, formal structures are addressed that are conducive to the achievement of superordinate organizational goals (Gebert, 1978; Haug & Pfister, 1985; Meißner, 1989; Probst, 1987). Hence, person-oriented and institutional perspectives are taken into account: human beings are viewed as a relevant factor regarding the tasks they have been assigned within a framework of given technical and legal procedures, instead of being perceived as simply holding a role in a bureaucratic organization (von Saldern, 2010, p. 46). Thus, it is also perceived as a necessary prerequisite that there is a good “match” between the holders of a role/position and their personality and skills. If this correspondence is lacking, their organization will inevitably malfunction.

Moreover, the school leader represents the school inside and outside the organization, which makes him/her susceptible to external as well as internal influences. A school leader depends on collaboration with both external strategic partners and colleagues within the school. In many cases, school leadership actions require the balancing of strikingly different interests and motivations, calling for adaptations against the background of changing conditions and increasingly more complex environments. In particular, this relates to a consideration of a school’s starting conditions.

Additionally, in more than one way, school leaders represent an interface within the multilevel school organization, as described above; thus, a theoretical frame of reference is recommended which, at the core, depicts mutual relations between an organization and its context(s) while aiming to integrate different theoretical approaches. It is thus possible to investigate—albeit partially—

school leadership actions directed within and outside the organization, in the context of a school's social reality, from different perspectives. With the preceding discussion and arguments in mind, we now move to examine leadership approaches required to deal with some of the aforementioned new contextual and organizational approaches at the system level.

## Testing the practical proof of new public management in educational leadership—The LISA study as a European example

### Modeling school leadership through different lenses

Consequently, a theoretical framework that would adequately serve to describe school leader actions should contain (1) an integration into certain societal and organizational framework conditions (organizational culture, structure, organizational climate), (2) enablement of actions by making means and resources available (qualification and intervention systems), and (3) motives for participation in the process. Likewise, it should be clear that actors are bound by the law, and committed to self-determined, societal norms and values (attitudes, mind-sets, convictions). Moreover, given the theoretical framework, it should become clear that material, time and local conditions impact on school leader actions (Timmermann, 2006). Therefore, school leadership can be presented as an open system with reciprocal influences, which organizes itself in cooperative fields of action, allowing ever more possibilities and variations (Dahlke, 1994, p. 10), between styles of action and numerous hybrids of the “main” styles (Pashiardis, 2014).

In an effort to examine these very actions and (inter)actions as described above, Brauckmann and Pashiardis (2011) conceptualized a system context and school leadership model, as presented in detail below (Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2008). This was done within an EU-funded project called the LISA project (Leadership Improvement for Student Achievement), which was initially executed in seven countries in order to create this common foundation on which to further expand current thinking on school leadership as a situational approach based on environmental and (largely)

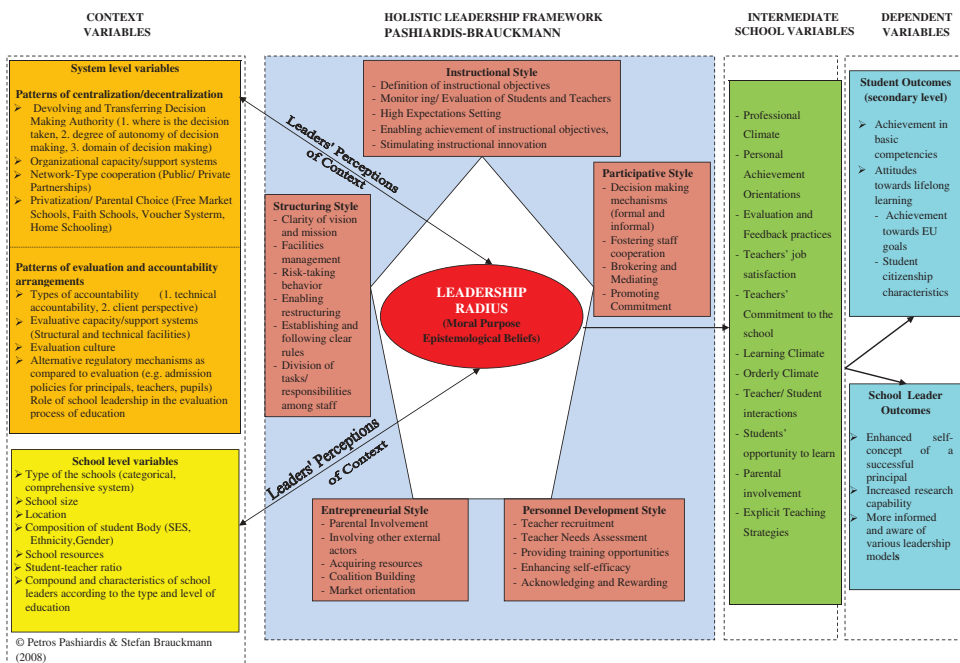


Figure 1. The Pashiardis-Brauckmann Holistic Leadership Framework.



situational factors. Thus, the Pashiaridis-Brauckmann Holistic Leadership Framework was developed and validated, as presented in [Figure 1](#).

At this point, it should be stressed that models of school leadership and their effects on student achievement have been in the making for the past forty years or so. For instance, two very important conceptual models of instructional leadership were designed during the 1980s in the US. These were developed by Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) at the Far West Lab for Research and Development in San Francisco, and another model (as a follow-up) was developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). These two models have predominated (and are still being utilized in) the American school leadership arena for decades now. These models (alongside with transformational leadership) acknowledged that school leaders do not operate in a vacuum, but on the contrary, they operate within an organizational context, thus establishing that leadership is influenced by organizational factors such as school and district size and complexity, socioeconomic status of the family and the community, and sociocultural features of the education environment (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986; Hallinger, Murphy, Weil, Mesa, & Mitman, 1983). Another school leadership model that dominated the American scene was Bolman & Deal's four leadership styles theory (1991, 2013), which attempted to examine the theory of leadership in a multi-prismatic way. On the basis of this theory, depending on the leader and the occasion, one or more leadership frames can guide leaders to an efficient performance at work. When the leader emphasizes the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization in a specific context, any of the four advocated styles could be suitable.

Why, then, did we feel the need to come up with yet another model? Our response is that indeed there have been excellent and elaborate conceptualizations and designs of school leadership models. However, one common criticism for all is that almost none of them attempted to really explore further the relationship between school leadership and the context in which it is enacted in an integrated model. It can be said that indeed this relationship is difficult to measure because of the myriad of variables which fall into this compound "super-term" that we call context (at the macro, meso, and micro levels), thus rendering it very difficult to grasp (let alone to explore its relationship with school leadership). Therefore, researchers have been stressing that yes, context is important, but on the other hand, it is also an elusive factor. Indeed, when one tries to (empirically) measure context, then everything we call context goes into the equation and, in essence, renders it impossible to discern the important from the unimportant. In fact, all the variables that are entered into the factor called *context* tend to "zero-out" each other's influence, thus making it an almost mission impossible to measure it.

However, more recent encapsulations of context, especially within the OECD arena, have included measures of context in a more systematic way. This is exactly what we tried to do when we developed the Pashiaridis-Brauckmann Holistic Leadership Framework, in an attempt to "bring context out of the shadows of leadership" (Hallinger, 2018) and, thus, reposition this under-researched and undertheorized concept of "context" within its rightful place of school leadership research and its effects on student outcomes. Moreover, as we began to conceptualize the relationship between school autonomy/accountability and leadership, it became more evident that the complexity of this relationship is even more difficult because it is certainly nonlinear. On the contrary, it falls into the realm of complex adaptive and chaotic systems. In any case, the exploration to create a holistic framework was undertaken.

### **Conceptual outline of the LISA study**

The framework includes five effective leadership styles that school principals are likely to employ in their work. Therefore, within the leadership radius five styles may be distinguished as follows (see [Figure 1](#)): (1) Instructional Style, (2) Structuring Style, (3) Participative Style, (4) Entrepreneurial Style, and (5) Personnel Development Style. These styles emerged from the data gathered from the teachers and school leaders involved in this research endeavor; interestingly enough, the model was validated in all seven participating countries. Each leadership style

consists of specific behaviors, actions or practices which are likely to be exhibited by school leaders. It should be stressed on the outset that the leadership radius is the epicenter of the Pashiardis-Brauckmann Holistic Leadership Framework. In essence, this is the core operating area for school leaders. By *leadership radius*, we mean all that a school leader does in order to create a well-functioning school that is able to fulfill its mission. This leadership radius consists of the five main styles through which leaders exercise their influence within the school boundaries. However, it should be noted that the sum of the five styles does not equal the leadership radius; this concept is more than the sum of its parts and it really revolves around the leader's personality, epistemological beliefs, and moral purpose in order to make this complex concept operational. Moreover, the five styles partially overlap and are congenial to each other when they are operationalized. Thus, in reality, there are not just five leadership styles, but rather hundreds of them, since, within their overlapping, other "hybrid" styles emerge that are shaped by the situation at hand, as well as by the people who are involved at the school site, and their abilities and readiness for action (Pashiardis, 2014). This leadership radius is what we came to call the "leadership cocktail mix."

In the framework, however, it is also acknowledged that school leaders do not operate in a vacuum. On the contrary, their actions greatly depend on their perceptions of the particular system and organizational context in which they work, that is, how the school leaders interpret the external environment and legal framework related to their practices (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011). Thus, contextual variables were included to couple the interaction between the systemic, external demands on the one hand, and the organizational reactions on the other, as described in the previous sections of this article. Priority was placed on assessing aspects of new public management approaches, such as autonomy and accountability, that have entered not only the conceptualized new system architecture, but also the processes and conditions faced by school leaders. This dimension also comprises aspects such as the school leaders' translating, mediating, and moderating external governance impulses, such as greater competition between schools, privatization, and accountability for improved academic results (Weindling & Dimmock, 2006).

Finally, leadership in the LISA framework was treated as a multilevel and multidimensional construct which may affect school and student variables but is also likely to be influenced by contextual variables. Indeed, leaders' actions greatly depend on their perceptions of the particular context in which they work. In essence, we assume that the way school leaders interpret their external environment and legal framework, and how they relate to their practices, is an important concept encapsulated within the framework. More specifically, the new mix of accountability and autonomy needed to be aligned with what school principals do as leaders at the individual school level. Thus, the choice of seven initial countries (England, Norway, the *Länder* of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, Slovenia, Hungary, Italy, and The Netherlands) to participate in our LISA research project included a purposeful sample of countries with high and low school autonomy and with high and low school accountability measures. Thus, this mix of various school systems in Europe (different degrees of accountability and autonomy as a new public management mix, based on OECD indicators) strengthened our hypothesis about the importance of context, mainly at the macro level.

At the same time, another strength of our model was investigating all the hypothesized relationships through the experimental lenses of school principals and teachers, thus contrasting the perceptions of school leaders and teachers. Moreover, the data were generated and collected through a tripartite working relationship between the lead researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in all seven participating countries, thus testing simultaneously for a multitude of leadership styles and possible hybrids in order to create a baseline for effective leadership which enhances student achievement (for more details on methodological as well as instrument-development details on the validation of the Pashiardis-Brauckmann Holistic Leadership Framework, please see Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011; Pashiardis, 2014).



### ***Findings of the LISA study<sup>1</sup>***

One of the main findings of the LISA study with regard to leadership styles is that there is a general trend towards the Entrepreneurial leadership style among the seven participating countries in the LISA project. By Entrepreneurial leadership style we mean the actions and behaviors of school leaders in order to increase parental involvement, to involve other external actors, to acquire more resources, to strategically build coalitions, and to create a market orientation for their schools. In order to explain this trend, we realized that this emphasis on the Entrepreneurial style could be regarded as a strategic approach in order to respond to “potential” budget cuts or generally as a response to limited resources in terms of money, time, and personnel. It is also interesting to note that the Entrepreneurial leadership style emerged as the most important style in the majority of the countries participating in the LISA study, irrespective of the wider systemic context of the country involved. By systemic context, we mean the degree of autonomy and accountability mix that exists within a particular education system. In a sense, it is the leadership style through which school leaders are asked to do more with less and do it better, without considering how autonomous a school is and to what extent accountability is called for. Furthermore, the trend toward this style could be perceived as a strategic effort in order to create other support systems which were originally situated at other governance levels within the educational system. In fact, it seems that school principals are trying to create their own “privately organized” systems in order to close the gap of the support systems as organized and provided by the state at the national and/or regional levels, thus enhancing their radius of influence with regard to areas of decision making where the school cannot decide autonomously.

Then, there was also a general trend toward the Structuring style. This could probably be seen as an effort to mark unmarked territory through a clear division of tasks and responsibilities and through the clarity and stability that is provided by rules and regulations. In fact, the Structuring style can be seen as the enabling mechanism for the internal restructuring of the school by establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and goals. Moreover, it is the effort to create a safe environment where teachers know exactly what is expected of them, thus enhancing their commitment to the school. In short, this is the leadership style through which school leaders create a safe haven for teachers and students and an environment conducive to learning.

In summary, principals in the seven participating countries of the LISA project found a way (through the application of different leadership styles) to promote aspects central to the school climate, thus influencing student achievement in an important, albeit indirect, way. Apart from the Instructional/Pedagogical leadership style which forms the baseline of effective school leadership across these European countries, it became increasingly evident that there is no best cocktail mix of leadership styles. However, what also seems to be true is that the Instructional, Structuring, and Entrepreneurial styles of leadership, or what can be called the “magic triangle,” are essential components of this “leadership cocktail mix” irrespective of the degree of autonomy and accountability within the system (Brauckmann & Pashardis, 2011; Pashardis, 2014).

The fact that school leadership functioned irrespective of their macro-context was the biggest surprise amongst the findings of the LISA project and, we argue, it is a very important finding. The reason why this is important is because we chose countries with varying degrees of autonomy at the school level and accountability at the system level and yet this macro-context did not seem to influence the kind of leadership mix that school principals were utilizing. Thus, one can conclude that changing the context at the macro level will not really have an impact at the micro (or school) level, because principals operate irrespective (and sometimes in spite of) the degree of autonomy and accountability that exists within their educational system. Thus, it can be deduced that a change at the macro level cannot (and does not) lead to changes in leadership styles at the micro level. On the contrary, as was shown by Schwarz and Brauckmann (2015), what is most important for school

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<sup>1</sup>This section draws heavily on Pashardis (2014).

leaders is the area close to school (ACTS). Therefore, not so much importance should be attributed to the macro level, which current notions of new public management call for, but mainly, it is all about the ACTS. Therefore, we are tempted to say that there is an underlying leadership style hybrid that emerged, which could be called the edupreneurial leadership style.

Thus, within the notion of degrees of autonomy and accountability, it is important that principals incorporate an edupreneurial dimension to the set of their adopted leadership actions and practices. A first element of the edupreneurial style of leadership concerns the involvement of the community, and especially the involvement of parents in school affairs. Parental involvement is an integral part of the edupreneurial leadership style, which graphically exhibits how the external environment interacts with the internal environment to produce a desirable and balanced cohabitation between the external and the internal within a school's daily operations.

### ***The emergence of a new leadership-styles hybrid?***

As mentioned in all the previous sections, in order to acquire balance between external and internal demands, school leaders oftentimes have to align various important factors so that they can achieve success and effectiveness for the schools they lead. Irrespective of the new public management mix of accountability and autonomy, in the seven European school systems we could observe the same kind of magic triangle: Structuring, Entrepreneurial and, in terms of effectiveness, the Instructional/Pedagogical leadership style. Thus, the edupreneurial style emerges as a hybrid.

In order to illustrate this style in more concrete terms, let us assume that an education system provides low autonomy for its schools and the rhetoric from above is for more Pedagogical/Instructional leadership and higher results, within an environment of high accountability. This setup will probably become an impossible task for school leaders to implement, as their degrees of freedom for maneuvering and implementation are probably too limited. This paradox between rhetoric and real life usually directs school leaders toward internal cognitive conflicts which they need to resolve. Thus, depending on their (1) personality characteristics, (2) education and training in school leadership, coupled with (3) experience and common sense, maybe school leaders can opt to become edupreneurs, therefore exercising their own freedoms in implementing the Entrepreneurial leadership style alongside the Pedagogical leadership style. In this way, edupreneurial leadership emerges as the new state of being.

However, the leadership actions that follow will also be dependent on (1) the level of success (or lack thereof) that the school is functioning at, as well as (2) the risk-averse or risk-prone personality of the school leader. We are tempted to speculate that more successful schools will be less willing to “experiment” and try out new ideas, as the feeling will probably be that “we are already doing well” and that there is no need to jeopardize our chances through further experimentation. On the other hand, the opposite could be true as well; that the school can “afford” some risk-taking behavior and can “sustain” the possibility of failure. Either course of action will depend on how risk-prone or risk-averse the school leader is (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

On the other hand, if the school is not currently successful, then the feeling will probably be that “we have nothing to lose” therefore, let us experiment with new ideas and policies and see how well we do. Thus, school leaders will be tempted to utilize more of the Entrepreneurial leadership style in order to influence the “outside” environment and, at the same time, utilize more of the Pedagogical style in order to influence the “inside” environment. Thus, through the combination of both the Entrepreneurial and the Pedagogical leadership styles, they exercise edupreneurial leadership as a reaction to changes in the autonomy/accountability structures of their environment. The combination of all of the above is our definition of *edupreneurial leadership*. Other authors have provided different conceptualizations of the term *edupreneur* from the early 2000s onward, when the term had come into popularity (Tait & Faulkner, 2016).

At the same time, we should bear in mind that both of the above courses of action are heavily dependent on the definition of success in a particular education system. Success and quality are

elusive terms and are very much dependent on the phase of an education system's level of development. We are once more tempted to argue that less-successful and less-developed education systems would be more prone to experimentation and innovation, as they do not have much to lose; on the contrary, they have much to gain, and so school leaders in such systems would be more the edupreneur type of leader. Finally, going back to the notion of autonomy, a system that affords low autonomy at the individual school may provide the necessary rhetoric, as we mentioned previously, but not the necessary degrees of freedom and space for school leaders within which to operate. This kind of cocktail mix (rhetoric vs. reality) may lead to inaction and frustration, depending again on the school leader's risk-taking behavior.

### **Concluding remarks and implications, or where do we move next?**

With the above in mind, we thus move into some concluding remarks which include conceptual/theoretical as well as research implications, with the following questions in mind: So what? Where do we move next? The interfacial function of school leaders in the context of new governance is immediately affected by further development of the school from a static organization to a flexible, entrepreneurial organization that endorses customer-oriented services and leadership that faces ever more dynamic relationships and influences. Based on this contention, the realization that schools need to become more fluid and accommodative in order to survive seems to be an inevitable task that needs to be accomplished. Even more so, as the external environment becomes more fluid, uncertain, and full of paradoxes, the notion of becoming more edupreneurial in terms of leadership seems to be like an (almost) one-way street. In order to make it easier to follow, this section is divided into four parts: implications for researchers, implications for school leadership training programs, implications for school leaders, and implications for policymakers.

#### ***Implications for researchers***

So far, contextual information that has been gleaned from qualitative research (e.g., document analysis of school portraits) or quantitative research (e.g., PISA school principal questionnaire) mostly relates to organizational characteristics rather than system characteristics. However, the latter are difficult to estimate and evaluate by school leaders themselves. Even though organizational characteristics can sometimes vary strongly even within one school type (i.e., primary, secondary), in contrast to system characteristics they seem to be perceived as changeable via school leader actions.

Then, the question arises: Might school leaders be more influenced and affected by their immediate environment (ACTS) as opposed to the wider system environment? (Schwarz & Brauckmann, 2015). Might it be easier for school leaders to make sense of their immediate space, which is more visible and more immediate to them? Might it be that the system-wide environment is seen as "something out there," designed by government bureaucrats who don't fully know how "real" schools operate on the ground? The above are important questions to begin to understand the sensemaking process that school leaders initiate in order to effect organizational changes based on perceived situational/structural changes of the outside and inner environments.

Against this background, questions need to be more strongly focused on the appearance and conditions of the new governance model for school contexts, differentiated by the level of implementation, e.g., local, regional/state, and nationwide. Propositions, principles, instruments, and functions of new governance should be analyzed from an international/comparative perspective to more precisely determine different designs of new governance models. In this regard, an explication of (explicit or implicit) ideas of governance is central and justifies the renewed interest on governance mechanisms. Theoretical implications of such expected effects and applied research strategies should become clear in order to move forward.

The general aim should be to investigate theoretical foundations on the one hand, and legal frameworks of governance on the other. Consequently, this should be done in close collaboration between national and regional agencies and through the organization of administrative bodies and applied governance procedures. In the meantime, it remains a big challenge to find out under which organizational/environmental circumstances there is a “best fit” between what is externally (and rationally) required and what is internally (and organically) being offered as a response from an organizational leadership perspective. Is there such a “corresponding match” between the two, i.e., is Situational governance in direct correspondence with Situational leadership? And on whose terms does this correspondence take place? Is there a magic “threshold” of the “best fit” between the two so that the school organization can function optimally? Are the two antagonistic, or viewed as such, or should they be more interpretative, complementary, and accommodating with each other? In short, is it time for school leaders to begin creating their “leadership cocktail mix” based on their reading and interpretation of the “situational governance mix” in which they operate?

There seems to be general agreement that the school as an institution faces problems of an educational and didactic nature, as well as social, communicative, and structural problems. School leaders in particular are challenged to find effective strategies for action and problem solving. Generally speaking, processes of change and development at the individual school level are focused on school leadership because school leadership means working in the school, at the school and with the school (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley, & Beresford, 2000; Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2011; Heck & Moriyama, 2010). However, school leaders can only be pioneers in situations through which new roles and new relationships are prepared and practiced if they are engaged, motivated, and qualified regarding material and human resources, and assertion and implementation of innovation processes. Thus, school development depends not only on local, organizational-framework conditions. A central role is also attributable to the leaders as such who can facilitate or impede prerequisites for successful activities in implementation at the school with their personal qualities, competencies, and personality structures (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015).

### **Implications for school leadership training programs**

In this context, researchers (Altrichter, 2015) have pointed out that the introduction of new governance concepts can evoke assertions of identity, legitimation, roles, and functions in the leaders, resulting from the tension between reform-conditioned demands and traditional professional self-concepts (Warwas & Tenberg, 2013). However, the researchers also argue that such a tension is not so distinctly present in school leaders. Structurally, they argue, the assigned management function is purely a mediating and transformation function of these new governance concepts. This merely relates to the multiple roles of school leaders as agents of change, facilitators of knowledge, and assistants in procedures (Wagner & Kuhlee, 2015; Warwas, 2014). Regardless, this viewpoint does not consider individuals and their prerequisites for fulfilling the new tasks. In sum, and based on the above, the constant training and retraining of current and future school leaders seems to be a *sine qua non*.

### **Implications for school leaders**

At the same time, we can claim that there is no clear-cut solution. In essence we are proposing what situational theories in general have been supporting for quite some time: there is no one “best” style of leadership which anyone can employ at any time or anywhere; on the contrary, there are various leadership styles (and hybrids thereof) from which leaders can select depending on the situation face, at the system, organizational, and personal levels. School leaders will need to be led into a new mode of innovative thinking and functioning by relying on their (1) risk-taking behavior, (2) school leadership training, and (3) experience. Then, based on this kind of cocktail, they should scan their environment and take into consideration their sense making and ability to interpret the

education landscape in which they are operating. The areas to look for are (1) the degree of autonomy, and (2) the strength of the accountability patterns in place. By following the above process, they should strive to formulate their own course of action, bearing in consideration the readiness and abilities of their personnel to function as best as possible. In the end, school leaders must understand and accept the fact that not all environmental conditions and factors are malleable and changeable (Scheerens, 2000). There are some conditions which they have to learn to cohabitate with and do their best, bearing in mind that they are only human with their own “bounded rationality” (Simon, 1959) to effect change. In any case, this realization should not inhibit them from becoming edupreneurs (meaning to be innovative both inside and outside their schools) in order to reach creative solutions which will take their schools and themselves to the next level. Maybe *Edupreneurial Leadership* is the answer to the quest of the required balance between the external and the internal.

### **Implications for policymakers**

Without doubt, new public management objectives, including the mix of accountability and autonomy, are directed toward quality assurance and quality development at the individual school level. At different points in time, these objectives have been outlined in different ways. It is difficult to answer the question whether leadership competence at the individual school level was enhanced at the same speed. The significance of school leaders and their actions have been emphasized but, at the same time, competencies have remained undefined with respect to serving the objectives beyond expanded legal decision-making competencies.

The assumption that the introduction of new school legislation will automatically bring along a new school leadership practice seems plausible to a small extent in this context. This might be stalled or delayed by traditional work structures, processes, and work conduct, perceivable as ineffective and inefficient. School principals are requested to make decisions owing to their newly acquired decision-making power but they are also expected to seek a balance of interests within their schools and communities. In order to do just that, they need to familiarize themselves with some of the criticism that has been accorded to increased environmental and market influences on the schools. This literature is useful in our effort to make sense of the values and philosophy of the continuing “marketization” of public school systems all over the world; by acquainting themselves with this literature, school leaders are in a better position to understand the assumptions about the purposes of public schooling and so better understand their important role as school leaders (Lipman, 2011). More so, school leaders need to do this so that the school is still considered (and should be) a safe haven for all irrespective of where they come from (Ball, 1994; Gunter, 1997, 2001). In essence, it is a balancing act between what is demanded by the system “out there” and the immediate reality “down here,” right around a principal’s school. Moreover, in order for legislated and mandated change to take place, school leaders need to overcome the natural tendency of humans to retreat to their “comfort zone,” which tells them to automatically “reject” any new demands that are perceived as residing outside their daily routine.

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